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Coping strategies among an intersectional group: Muslim women in Hungary

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Abstract

As members of a stigmatised intersectional group, Muslim women in Hungary not only receive unwanted attention but also verbal/physical attacks, assaults, and hate crimes. What kind of individual strategies and collective resilience patterns have they developed to cope with or to improve the hazardous situations they experience? This paper utilises participant observation data and qualitative interviews to study these issues. Two major dimensions of the participants' strategies were detected: active versus Passive and Individual versus Collective. Exposition of these coping strategies was also accompanied by discussing the relevance of the types of reactions to threatened identity as suggested by Breakwell's social identity theory-inspired model and Pargament's studies on religious resilience practices.

Keywords: Muslim women, resilience, coping strategies, minorities in Hungary.

1 Introduction

The goal of this research is to contribute to the existing literature on Muslims in Hungarian society with the help of a qualitative study. Specifically, our research is directed to a truly intersectional group of contemporary Hungary (Hankivsky, 2014; Sauer, 2009; Schiek & Lawson, 2011; Weber, 2015) insofar as our research participants are Muslim women: Muslim female immigrants living in Hungary, Hungarian female converts, and the daughters of mixed families. As our participants are part of an intersectional community, they experience the outcomes of relevant intersectional identities—Muslim, immigrant, female, convert, Hungarian, non-Hungarian—in multiple ways. Also, religious resilience (Pargament et al., 1998; 2000; Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Peres et al., 2007) is pivotal in this study as the common identity of the participants is being Muslim and religion presumably plays a profound role in their reaction to the individual and collective experiences. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the possible resilience of the actors and uncover the Individual and Collective strategies applied by them to cope with discrimination, exclusion, hate crime, and intra- and intergroup oppression.

2 Self, identity, and threatened social identity

In sociology and social psychology, the self and identity has been considered as a multi-dimensional concept that consists of consistently changing components or aspects. Conceptually, identity can be considered as a discursive formation shaped by a complex of various orientations, schemes, and social prescriptions that people rely on during their daily lives (Bodor, 2012). In this paper, we rely primarily on Social Identity Theory because it focuses on the issues of relating self to its group memberships, on the aspects of the self that are shaped by one's multiple group memberships, such as gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, family, etc. In their seminal work, Tajfel and Turner describe social identity as 'the knowledge that (one) belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance of the group membership' (Tajfel, 1972, p. 31). Breakwell (2015), Tajfel's former student, discusses the coping strategies of minority group members when their identity is threatened by external groups, namely by a higher status group. She suggests five possible coping strategies: Passing, Compliance, Negativism, Isolation, and Transition. Her typology is especially relevant for our present purposes since this study explore how the participants react when they are discriminated and feel disadvantaged due to their Muslim, convert, immigrant identities. Passing, as a strategy, suggests that the agents choose to leave their threatened identity position and move to a high-status group as it is proposed in the Individual mobility strategy. In the Compliance strategy, the low-status group member accepts the way he/she is perceived by the external groups and complies with their expectation from him/her to ensure his/her continuity, uniqueness, and self-esteem. For example, if the prejudice or judgment of a high-status group expects his/her group to be less educated, then he/she complies with this profile rather than challenging it. Negativism, as a coping strategy, implies an active and direct counter-reaction against the source of the identity threat. As opposed to Compliance, Negativism requires refusing the expectations of the external groups and instead confronting them. Isolation strategy focuses on minimising confrontation with the threatening source; to succeed in this, it proposes to avoidance, isolating the person to escape from negative experiences coming from external groups. Transition as a coping strategy suggests a transition from a low-status situation to a higher one, such as from a less educated status to a highly educated status. In this way, a member of a low-status minority group can cope with external threats to his/her identity; examples have been documented with regard to Roma in the Hungarian context (Bokrétás, Bigazzi & Péley 2007).

Additionally, Pargament and his colleagues' (1998) paper discussing the influence of positive religious coping strategies as resilience-building methods on trauma patients with a religious background is also relevant for this study. They list examples of positive religious coping strategies as benevolent reappraisal, seeking spiritual support, active religious surrender, seeking spiritual connection (Pargament, 1998; Peres et al., 2007).

The coping strategies identified by Breakwell and the positive religious coping strategies of Pargament and his co-workers are helpful for us to understand and categorise the resilience practices of Muslim women in Hungary. As we show below, our data attests that practices similar to Negativism, Isolation, Transition, and examples of positive religious coping strategies can be found among our participants' accounts.

The emancipation of immigrant women is another important issue when it comes to understanding the experience of immigrant women, especially women who are part of a religious group. Earlier it was thought that emancipation has a direct relation with modernisa-

tion and that immigration to European countries for Muslim women may eventually lead to emancipation, since modernisation has a direct relation to emancipation (Abadan et al., 2015). Abadan Unat describes ‘the decline of extended family relations, the adoption of nuclear family arrangements, fragmentation of the family structure, access to wage-paying work, exposure to the media, a decline in religious practices, and an increase in the adoption of egalitarian values for girls and boys in terms of education and the adoption of consumption-oriented behaviour’ (Ergün, 2016, p. 173). However, one can argue that if identification with religion increases among immigrants following their settlement in a non-Muslim host country, as Peek (2005) claimed, then it is possible to assume that the emancipation of women may be negatively influenced by the more salient religious identity. Therefore, in this research we argue that emancipation can also have a direct influence on the reactions or coping strategies that participants of this research build in the wake of negative inputs from the in-groups or host country members.

Research conducted in Hungary regarding Muslims in general, and Muslim women in particular, is relatively scarce and mostly based on surveys which are not particularly sensitive to the lived experience of the members of a minority group—to say the least. There are several studies of immigrant and minority groups in Hungary on various topics (Fülöp et al., 2007; Bigazzi & Csertő, 2016; Nguyen Luu et al., 2019; 2009), but none specifically on the Muslim community despite the presence of ethnic groups, such as Turks and Arabs, that can be considered as predominantly Muslims. Previous research on immigrant groups has explored their experiences of discrimination (Sik & Várhalmi, 2012), their labour market status (Hárs, 2013; Várhalmi, 2013) and the social integration among them (Cartwright, Sik & Svensson 2008; Várhalmi, 2013). Additionally, plenty of academic studies also focus on ethnic minorities, particularly Roma people (Csepeli & Simon, 2004) and ethnic Hungarians from Transylvania; they mostly focus on examining their experiences as members of a minority group, their identity construction, the intergroup relations between them and Hungarian people and Hungarian institutions (Csepeli & Zavec, 1992).

Knowledge on the female members Hungarian Muslim community can be deepened. There are a couple of articles written about Muslim women; one of them regards the marriage of Hungarian and immigrant Muslims and how it can be explored as a process of appropriation (Belhaj and Speidl, 2014). Another study by Belhaj (2017) was based on the concept of modesty in Islam by evaluating the websites and discourses of two big Muslim institutions in Hungary, Magyarországi Muszlimok Egyháza (Church of Muslims in Hungary) and Magyar Iszlám Közösség (Islam Community of Hungary) to explore what modesty means for them and how they locate modesty within Hungarian context. Our paper adds to the qualitative studies on Muslim women in Hungary by exploring their lived experience and reconstructing their coping strategies for the negative experiences they encounter.

3 Methodological considerations

The target of this research is Muslim women in Hungary. This group has not been studied intensively per se and social scientific reflection of this group is still at the exploratory phase. Furthermore, it is a relatively closed group: due to a set of cultural and political factors it is not easily accessible for outsiders. In this way, it seemed to us, a qualitative research

design would be an appropriate and culturally sensitive option, both in the data gathering and analysis phase of the research. Therefore, this current research has an explorative and qualitative focus on the coping strategies of Muslim women who live in a non-Muslim and politically anti-immigrant country, Hungary.

The main applied methods in this study are participant observation and qualitative interviews. In terms of data gathering, we applied a triangulation of participant observation, qualitative interviews, and online documents such as articles, websites of Muslim associations in Hungary, and social media sharing of Muslim participants. Since the first author of this paper is a Muslim immigrant woman who was once a visible Muslim, practising hijab, she had the role of an insider and participant observant. During field research, she certainly had moments when she felt that she had the same experience and feelings voiced by the participants. Still, particularly in the interviews, she avoided sharing any of her emotions and did not prompt any of the interviewees during the interview. In the sessions of participant observations conducted predominantly in two Budapest mosques, she observed impassively. When she did reveal her ideas or feelings, the aim was to encourage the other participants to make clear their perspectives and emotions on the subject as the proponents of active interviewing advise (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003).

3.1 Remarks on participant observation

The researcher can choose among four ways of participant observation as Brewer (2000, p. 84) identified: (1) complete participant, the researcher takes the covert role and performs full participation; (2) participant as an observer, overt role is taken and researcher has full participation; (3) observer as a participant, overt role is taken with minimum participation; (4) complete observer, overt role with minimum participation. In all these four types, the researcher either assumes an overt or covert role, and passive or active participation—and each has its benefits and challenges (Atkinson et al., 2007; Borman et al., 1986; Brewer, 2000; Bulmer, 1982; Kawulich, 2005; McKenzie, 2017; Whyte, 1979).

Our field researcher adopted the posture of participant as an observer: full participation and in an overt role (Brewer, 2000). A significant amount of data was gathered during the field research, compiled in a research diary. In participant observation, keeping field notes is highly recommended to both record observations and also to enable the researcher to reflect upon them (Brewer, 2000; Emerson et al., 2001; Fabietti, 2001; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Malinowski, 2003). Therefore, scratch and mental notes were taken during the participant observation sessions. The whole set of field notes and research diaries kept during participant observations include precise data related to actors, so they are kept on a PC to which only the first author of this paper has access with a password due to ethical concerns. She has changed and modified personal information such as names and professions or other details to safeguard participants' identities.

Not each approached person agreed to be interviewed. At the same time, note that the participant observation sessions were helpful to capture the daily communications of Muslim women regarding their lives in Hungary and provided us insights that one cannot easily get through interviews. These insights assisted us a lot at the phase of data analysis. After each encounter with the members of the given community and each participant observation session, the first author of this paper logged her observations, the dialogues she gathered, and

her position during these happenings. During the participant observation sessions, the field researcher was a mere Muslim participant, adopting the covert observer role; as a member of the Muslim community she was not prevented by any gatekeepers. One can discuss the ethical side of the covert role but it has been used and suggested by many prominent ethnographers and cultural anthropologists (Atkinson et al., 2007; Borman et al., 1986; Brewer, 2000; Bulmer, 1982; Kawulich, 2005; McKenzie, 2017; Whyte, 1979). Additionally, as stated above, we have taken steps to protect the anonymity of the actors by changing names and other profile details.

3.2 Characteristics of the qualitative interviews

The most efficient way to gather qualitative data among Muslim women was to conduct semi-structured qualitative interviews. Observations and first contacts within the Muslim community indicated that they feel under investigation all the time. This research cannot prove if there are enough justifying reasons for their uneasy feelings, but it was the researcher's responsibility to put them at ease during the interviews. The field researcher built a rapport with the actors during the participant observation sessions, in which she took the covert role by not revealing her researcher identity and participating merely as a Muslim immigrant. Then she revealed her researcher identity to the actors she chose to interview. To ease their uneasy feelings and to obtain genuine replies, we arranged semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions practical and well-suited for the study. We believe that one of the advantages of qualitative research is that it is 'more similar to creating bricolage than to assembling some flat-pack furniture' (Bodor, 2013, p. 13).

This paper is part of a larger research project in which Muslim women in Hungary have been studied in terms of identity formation, group identification, hijab practices, and religious identity and coping strategies. 30 Sunni Muslim women participants were interviewed. 12 of the participants were Hungarian converts and 17 of them were immigrant Muslim women. The study included only one second-generation Muslim woman because the second generations of the Muslim community are mostly under the age of 18; among the adults, only one agreed to be interviewed. The ethnic backgrounds of our participants are diverse. To keep their anonymity we did not share their exact ethnicity. Our immigrant participants were from Middle Eastern, Gulf, Asian and former Soviet Union countries. The convert participants were all ethnically Hungarian.

Interviewing proceeded as follows. Firstly, networks were built among the Muslim community in Hungary by making acquaintances with Muslim women. The purposive sampling method was utilised to choose the potential interviewees who have different experiences and backgrounds to enrich the research data. The snowball technique was used to assist purposive sampling.

3.3 Analysis of data

In qualitative research informed by grounded theory, field research and interviews generally continue until the data saturation is reached and the researcher is confident that no new categories will emerge (Anells, 1996; Charmaz, 2000; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Walker, 2012;

Fusch & Ness, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Keeping memos, scratch and mental notes, and recordings of the interviews help the researcher to manage the data gathered during the field research (Fielding, 1993; Kvale, 1996; Newbury, 2001). As previously stated, we collected data employing qualitative interviews, participant observation, field research notes, and on-line documents. Simultaneous to data collection, we transcribed the interviews and created field research notes, including memos when advisable. After transcribing the data and populating the software with the available data documents, an iterative coding procedure was applied. Here we relied on ATLAS.ti, which is designed to assist the researchers to ascertain and systematically analyse complex data sets.

One of our principal analytical procedures was coding that can be taken as meaning condensation in our view. Indeed, it is a major procedure in systematic qualitative research (Charmaz, 2000). At the outset we coded the data with eight main codes, namely the thematic areas of Conversion Process, Becoming Religious, Hijab, In-group Relation, Out-Group Relation, Challenges, Advantages, and Strategies of Coping. Applicable codes were applied to all interviews and field research notes. In the second phase, relying on constant comparison, the initial codes were divided into sub-codes using the split code feature. After splitting the main codes into sub-codes, the main codes become code groups that include their subcodes. Participants' accounts regarding the identity-challenging experiences are typically followed by statements about how they react or behave in the face of such experiences, and how they cope with them. These types of discourse sections are labelled with the code Strategies of Coping as we explain below.

Being an interpretive project, the goal was to analyse the participants' own experiences. In appreciating these experiences, we benefited from the background of the field researcher, a Muslim woman, as an insider. At the same time, the background of the second author as an outsider was pivotal to balance the interpretations of the observations and field research data. Therefore, the direct accounts of interview participants, the coding scheme, and participant observations are utilised in the next section. One can argue that the relatively long extracts presented below unnecessarily complicate the study. However, providing space to our participants' voices is pivotal; without their presence, anything we claim would not be properly substantiated. Hence, the argumentation is based on the available accounts and their analysis with the help of related theories and concepts evolved in the coding processes.

4 Strategies for coping

Research data indicates that some Muslim women in Hungary feel that they are targets of unwanted attention or disturbing actions of host country members, and the members of their own-group (Aytar & Bodor, 2019). In that earlier study, we relied on interview extracts on the vicissitudes of wearing and not wearing a hijab and participant observation data. Here, we reconstruct the types of reactions Muslim women exhibit to the challenges they face with interview extracts and participant observation data. As we will see below, the relevant sections of the interviews provide testimony regarding how they react or behave in the face of challenging experiences, and how they cope with them. Accordingly, discourse sections and documents that featured coping were labelled and subsequently coded as Strategies of Coping.

Upon inspecting instances of coping in our sources, a new layer of coding emerged gradually. It relied on the insight that our participants produced either passive or active ways to handle the problems they encountered. A strategy of coping is Active if the actor(s) aims to change the behaviour of the person(s) or institution(s) challenging her identity. A strategy is Passive if the actor(s) engages in behaviour that aims to avoid, mitigate, or re-define the challenges to her identity.

Individual strategy manifests when a particular individual's action seeks to overcome or mitigate the effects of identity threat. At the same time, Collective strategies imply the concerted effort of some collectivity. Neither of these strategies implicates a lack of agency on behalf of our subject. A further note on our typology: we consider Active-Passive and individual-Collective properties as characteristic dimensions of coping strategies and to be taken ideal-types instead of ontologically fixed and exclusive features of reality. Indeed, we confer analytic value to the Individual-Collective distinction despite the fact that there is whole cluster of religious activity—such as praying—where determining actions' individual versus collective nature seems difficult. After some consideration we decided to label praying and connected spiritual activities as Collective ones.

We show examples of coping strategies applied by members of the given groups, but do not attempt to offer repertoires of strategies of any particular individuals. Four main types of coping strategies manifest among our participants: Passive-Individual, Active-Individual, and Passive-Collective, Active-Collective

Table 1: Summary of strategies of coping with recurring characteristics and examples

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
INDIVIDUAL	Showing active resistance: Exc. 1; Exc. 2; Exc. 3; Exc. 4; Exc. 5 Defending themselves verbally on the spot: Exc. 2; Exc. 3; Putting forward Hungarian roots/identity: Exc. 3; Filing official complaints to authorities: Exc.1 Claiming the challenged (Muslim) identity: Exc. 4; Exc. 5;	Distancing themselves from the attacker: Exc. 6; Showing passive resistance: Exc. 6; Ignoring the attack/assault: Exc. 6;
COLLECTIVE	Organising events and gatherings: World Hijab Day; Walking tours; Minority Right workshop involving an NGO	Seeking solidarity among the Muslim community Healing themselves with spiritual means

Table 1 summarises our main findings. Among the four main types of coping strategies we identified, as we will see, examples of Breakwell's Negativism, Isolation, and Transition as well as Pargament's positive religious strategies can be found. Below we exemplify the coping strategies with excerpts from interviews and observational data, and highlight some of their further characteristics. We show examples for coping with identity threat that emanating from out-group and in-group alike. Furthermore, we reflect upon the issue of possible differences of applying Passive versus Active strategies by immigrant Muslim women versus

Hungarian-born and converted Muslim women. Demonstrating the differences in preferential use of strategies by immigrant versus locally socialised women is complemented with explicating the reasons our participants offered for using Passive versus Active strategies.

4.1 Individual strategies: Active versus Passive

Active-Individual Strategy. Among the Muslim immigrant interviewees, only two described an Active-Individual strategy attesting their resistance to a challenge of their identity. It is also characteristic of Breakwell's (2015) Negativism strategy when the agent directly confronts a threatening situation rather than accepting the expectations of the external source. In the first example, DA filed a complaint when staff at a government office mistreated her. She received an apology letter from the authorities.

Excerpt 1.:

DA: Sometimes I am having problems outside of my workplace because I don't speak Hungarian well. For instance, I didn't know that you could not get off the front door on the bus. The driver started saying something to me in Hungarian, and he was talking so fast, I didn't understand. When he noticed that I didn't understand, he pretended to speak Chinese (assuming that I was Chinese due to my physical appearance) and started laughing. [...] I felt really bad. I was going to take the plate number and file a complaint, but I didn't get it. I had the same situation at the post office once. [...] The working lady spoke so long that I could not understand her. [...] I thought there was a problem, so I called my Hungarian-speaking friend and asked him to talk to her. She got so mad at me, she kept staring at me badly when she was on the phone. [...] So I wrote a complaint, and I said I'm trying to learn Hungarian, but I don't have enough time due to work. They answered my letter and they apologised. [...] They sent a warning to this branch. I'm relieved when I file a complaint in these situations.

Another participant, GŞ shared her way of coping with assaults or offensive treatment. She found defending herself and not being intimidated as a way of coping. Thus, our next excerpt indicates an immediate interactional reciprocation of the verbal harassment.

Excerpt 2.:

GŞ: If I get assaulted, I always defend myself. For instance, if I am intentionally targeted with a joke or unnecessary discourse at my workplace by an ignorant colleague, I am clever enough to return the favour. As I am not hijabi, I am not getting directly verbal or physical attacks publicly. I have experienced a couple of discriminative acts in a hospital or other offices due to my lack of Hungarian knowledge. In such cases, I prefer to make myself stay emotionally stable. I am a hard-working person who knows three foreign languages. If the person I am interacting with knows only Hungarian that is her problem. Instead of blaming myself, I blame him or her. It is okay if she and I cannot find a common language to interact but if she keeps behaving to me like any other customer then I keep making an effort to explain myself in Hungarian. If she just prefers to discriminate against me or takes a negative attitude then I do the same to her. I can be an immigrant but I pay taxes more than Hungarian so I deserve equal service.

Hungarian converts tend to cope more actively, that is applying Active-Individual strategy against harassment by putting forward their Hungarian identity. One convert participant narrated as follows.

Excerpt 3.:

EH: I was on the bus with my son. I am a hijabi, so I am visibly Muslim. A man started talking to me in Hungarian, negatively, and clearly about me. Most probably he thought I don't speak Hungarian. I replied to him saying if you have genuine questions, please ask them nicely, [...] and otherwise please stop talking to me this way in front of my son. We are as Hungarian as you are. Before I stood up for myself I was discriminated by him because of my Muslim appearance. After I said I am Hungarian, then he called me a traitor. I kept arguing how I am a working and tax-paying Hungarian and my religion does not make me a traitor to my roots.

Even though this is not a Transition in the traditional sense, as suggested by Breakwell (2015), still it exemplifies Hungarian converts' preference for making the transition by referring to a specific component of themselves, to their Hungarian roots and identity (Bokrétás, Bigazzi & Péley 2007). The factors behind Hungarian converts' more skilful resistance to negative attitudes are that Hungarian is their mother language, they are Hungarian citizens, and they are comparatively more aware of their rights; they do not have to fear deportation and residential document problems, which makes them more daring.

Migrant Muslim women, it seems to us, behave more hesitantly as they are not Hungarian citizens, so they think they may face deportation or other official difficulties as they have the perception that the Hungarian government does not 'guard their rights' the same way they do for citizens. Even though there is no case in which a complaint was filed by a participant and got ignored by the legal system, the feeling of a biased legal system among some participants is understandable considering the anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim policy of the current Hungarian government and rhetoric of mainstream media.

The previous examples are from experiences with host country members, originating from out-group representatives. There are examples of Active-Individual strategies they produced to cope with negative experiences they have with their in-groups, that is, fellow Muslims—Still, TH and RD5 shared how they took a stand against group members who try to interfere in their lives and always behave negatively.

Excerpt 4.:

TH: I really hate when my fellow Muslim friends criticise my way of dressing, praying, and reading the Quran. They say: 'Your skirt is not long enough to pray, you pray well but too quickly, you read the Quran but you have a couple of mistakes that need improving, etc.' I do not want to offend them but I feel uncomfortable when they do so. They excuse themselves by saying that 'I care for you so I warn you.' I am sorry, but I did not ask them about what they think or what they suggest. If I ask them, then they have the right to say so, but if I do not, then they should not interfere in my life.

Excerpt 5.:

RD5: There are many things I do not agree with my community. They can be very judgmental from time to time. They can criticise Muslim women like me who came to Europe and gave up the hijab. We are immoral or less Muslim according to them. On the other hand, I am a practicing Muslim and I am receiving jokes and odd attention when I pray at my workplace or do not drink alcohol when we gather up with non-Muslim friends. They try to appear open-minded but sometimes they are all same with my narrow-minded Muslim friends. These types of dilemmas cause me to feel alone and stressed but I would prefer to live a life in which I am honest to myself and to those around me rather than trying to be happy in a lie.

In these two cases the participants do not feel completely in sync with their in-group members and claim that they are not considered Muslim enough due to their appearances. Dynamic and social group-tied methods of categorisation, in our case identity ascription of being Muslim, is demonstrated by these examples. The way we categorise ourselves could shape the way we perceive and categorise the behaviour of others towards us, as happened in the case of participants RD5 and TH. TH categorises herself as a modern hijabi women while RD5 describes herself as a non-hijabi, modern, and a believer. Both consider themselves religious and modern; they are both emancipated women, but in different ways. From this emerges the argument that modernity and emancipation do not always imply distancing from religion as assumed by earlier researchers (e.g., Abadan et al., 2015; Ergün et al., 2016). Both participants, moreover, explained how they actively respond to negativity from their in-groups and how they do not let harassment prevent them living as they see fit. Their emancipation has an impact on their performance of Active coping strategies without decreasing their religiosity.

Passive-Individual Strategy. While immigrant Muslim women occasionally apply Active-Individual coping strategies, most of our other examples show Muslim immigrant participants more routinely use Passive-Individual strategies, such as distancing themselves from the attacker and the setting, showing passive resistance by ignoring the attack and assault. The following extract exemplifies the Passive-Individual reaction of a Muslim immigrant woman and provides some reasons for passivity.

Excerpt 6.:

TH: If I am targeted in public space, I mostly ignore them and distance myself from the perpetrator. Unfortunately, this is because I am not fluent in Hungarian and also because I fear that I would not be able to physically protect myself, especially if it is a man. I prefer not to complain to the police as a hate crime is not even a crime in Hungary, as the prime minister himself commits it daily. When I am offended by someone from my community, I just warn her/him if we are close, if not, I just write her/him off my life or I just avoid them.

The other immigrant participants who preferred a Passive Individual strategy often echoed the sentiments in excerpt six. Some stated they do not use public transport but drive their own cars or use other means to avoid possible conflicts or the uneasy feeling caused by outsiders. These are examples of Breakwell's (2015) Isolation strategy, enabling individuals to avoid the negative input from out-groups against their identity. Our data suggested that the main reason for the high number of Passive-Individual reactions among Muslim immigrant women is the lack of competence. They stated that they prefer not to reply or file a complaint as they lack competence in the Hungarian language. They also mentioned the lack of legal competence required to proceed in cases of assault or hate crime. It was also observed that they are not exactly aware of what constitute hate crime and assault.

The interview excerpts and our participant observation data indicate that immigrant participants mostly take defensive positions rather than trying to make a change. This is not because they do not want things to change in their inter- and intragroup interactions. Rather, they do not believe that the current circumstances are favourable for such changes, or they believe passivity is a better resilience strategy. Plus, some of them think they are not capable of carrying out these adjustments as they lack language proficiency, a factor frequently mentioned.

Only a couple of Hungarian convert interviewees mentioned reacting passively like the Muslim immigrant women. Yet their motivation is not a lack of linguistic or legal competence, rather they seem to demonstrate introverted personality characteristics; they prefer a positive religious coping strategy to build their resilience. Additionally, they mentioned that they prefer to forgive the wrongdoers (i.e., those who harass or attack them) in order to be forgiven themselves by Allah, an action we consider a re-definition of the challenge. These clear signs of positive religious coping strategies as a way of resilience-building (Pargament et al., 1998; 2000; Peres et al., 2007). The participants chose to follow the religious path to comfort themselves by practising ‘benevolent reappraisal, or seeking a lesson from God in the event and seeking spiritual support, or searching for comfort in God’s care’ (Peres et al., 2007, 98).

4.2 Collective strategies: Passive versus Active

This section documents Collective strategies, ways of acting with the concerted effort of some real or imagined collectivity. A Collective strategy is Active when it includes an active communication with an outer group, in our case with Hungarian society or with a non-Muslim group. A Collective strategy is Passive when it is only within the in-group and tends to soothe the group members or imbue them with solidarity.

Female members of the Hungarian Muslim community have benefitted from Collective coping strategies, both passively and actively. Several examples of Active-Collective strategies emerged during field research. For instance, the Muslim women’s community organised a ‘World Hijab Day’ (*A Kendő Világnapja*, 2018) open to everybody. There, Hungarian converts made a presentation about the hijab, fashion, and the life of a hijabi; and they encouraged non-Muslim women to try being a hijabi. Another example is when Hungarian converts and immigrant Muslim women organised walking tours to Islamic places in Hungary, inviting non-Muslims to these tours. These tours are also an example of the Collective coping strategy, attempting to improve the knowledge of non-Muslims in Hungary about Muslims and to build bridges to decrease the fear of the unknown (Than, 2017).

Still another example of an Active-Collective strategy was an event organised by a well-known NGO in collaboration with one of the Muslim associations in Hungary. The language of the event was Hungarian and English. The NGO informed participants, both Muslims and non-Muslims, about minority rights in Hungary and how they can provide assistance to protect these rights. However, they stressed that there is no quantitative or qualitative data about the cases Muslims have had in Hungary since cases are reported. The meeting aimed to inform the participants about hate crime, harassment, and discrimination. There were relatively few immigrant participants compared to Hungarian women. This may indicate that an event which can be taken as an Active-Collective coping Strategy was not particularly attractive for immigrant Muslim women.

The current research data suggests that Hungarian convert Muslim women seem to be more comfortable applying Active-Collective strategies. The situation of immigrant Muslim women is different. The main reason is that these Muslim women need solidarity among the Muslim community—that is a Passive-Collective coping strategy in itself—to build effective resilience for the problems arising from their intersectional identities in Hungary. Indeed, some of them benefit from Passive-Collective strategies by seeking spiritual connection

(Peres et al., 2007) within the Muslim community and through spiritual means such as praying and performing particular collective good deeds. Therefore, fighting in-group challenges, like negative, overwhelming attitudes, expectations from Muslim women, and the gender gap within the Muslim community, is a much less imminent concern for them.

Solidarity within the community is necessary to provide protect from negative experiences with out-groups. Particularly for minority groups, solidarity equates to protection in the wake of attacks against their group (Collins, 2004; Edwards, 2020). However, it was discussed that this solidarity might have been enabled by suppressing in-group conflicts. In an earlier study (Aytar & Bodor, 2019) we focused on the accounts of some converts, non-hijabi participants (particularly those who gave up hijab willingly), and participants who have an individualised way of practicing Islam that conflicts from time to time with traditionalist and conservative Islamic practice. Considering their accounts, it seems the way non-conservative practising Muslims and non-hijabi Muslim women benefit from the solidarity is not equivalent with traditionalist and conservative hijabi Muslims' experience (Aytar & Bodor, 2019). The solidarity level depends on the group favouritism of each actor and their conformity with the beliefs and practices of the majority. We infer that the majority of our participants will remain aware of issues among the Muslim community but may tend to postpone developing an Active strategy until they feel secure in Hungary and overcome the issues they have due to their Muslim identity.

We observe that, generally, convert women take leading roles in Active-Collective strategies because of their language competency and full citizenship rights. Citizenship as status thus seems to be a prerequisite of citizenship as practice (Piela, 2019). A related misconception has been documented among the narratives of Muslim immigrants in Hungary. They are hesitant in taking active roles in collective events as they believe that their residence permit renewal processes can be influenced negatively, even though no such action of the government has ever been proved.

Additionally, a common feature among the interviewees was that they do not let the unfavourable interactions and tensions, either from their community or the host community, prevent them from living as they wish. We also consider this a form of passive reaction. On the other hand, it also has a sense of active reaction as they carry on living the way they see fit, regardless of the negative attitudes towards them. Here, the active reaction is not directed toward suppressor or suppressing situation but rather the actor makes an active effort to prevent her life from being influenced by the negative input.

Nevertheless, they certainly experience various emotional difficulties: stress, emotional instabilities, fear, anxiety. To cope with these feelings, the Muslim community benefits from Passive-Collective strategies via spiritual means. Mostly, they find a remedy for these tensions and emotional problems by being together with amicable company who support them. In several observation sessions, participants discussed how *du'a* (prayer) can protect them from external attacks and help them to find inner peace. Such beliefs may have a positive influence on the group members so that praying together or for each other as their Passive Collective strategy can help them recover from emotional stress. In this way, they seek refuge in social cohesion and solidarity against social oppression. Some of them also mentioned that spiritual practices like praying, reciting the Quran, and protective prayers give them relief and strength. In this way, they are seeking consolation in religious and metaphysical powers (Durkheim, 1976).

5 Conclusions

The research documented various strategies that participants use to cope with negative experiences and challenges arising from their intersectional identities. These strategies can be categorised as Active-Individual, Active-Collective, Passive-Individual, and Passive Collective. Furthermore, we have confirmed the utility of Breakwell's (2015) typology to understand challenged, threatened identities. And the practices of positive religious coping were also present among the participants' Passive-Individual and Passive-Collective strategies (Pargament et al., 1998; 2000; Peres et al., 2007). As members of a small and disadvantaged minority group in Hungary, most immigrant participants were inclined to apply Passive strategies rather than active ones. They presented examples of benevolent reappraisal, seeking spiritual support, and seeking spiritual connection as effective resilience strategies. On the other hand, some Hungarian convert Muslim women participants showed a tendency toward more Active Individual and Collective coping strategies. As one part of their intersectional identity is being Hungarian, they are advantaged with the competencies of language and legal rights.

In a recent study on a predominantly female Muslim community in the U.S., Piela (2019) suggested differentiating citizenship as status versus citizenship as practise. She argued persuasively that the latter and not the former are required to exercise unorthodox religious plurality in the community she studied. Our data corroborate this argument, revealing the difference of Active versus Passive coping strategies applied by Hungarian versus immigrant Muslim women. In the contemporary Hungarian context, citizenship as a status, in most cases, seems a necessary though not solely sufficient condition for engaging in more active identity work. Furthermore, linguistic competence and knowledge of cultural lore enhance capacities to use Active coping strategies in facing identity threats.

Recent research discusses the emancipation of immigrant women. Some assume that decreased religiosity is a requirement for increased emancipation (Abadan et al., 2015; Ergün, 2016). However, there were Muslim women among our participants who describe themselves as practising Muslims and also took active stances against harassment. Therefore, we can claim that emancipation does not always requires lesser religiosity. Emancipation, moreover, can result in actors applying more Active coping strategies.

Solidarity is one of the main components that keep minorities, particularly religious ones, together and help construct positive in-group attachments (Collins, 2004; Edwards, 2020). In this study, some participants referred to the solidarity within the Muslim community as a way to cope with external negativities and also a feature that attracts the attention of non-Muslims, even leading to their conversion. However, this solidarity can be an 'imagined one' rather than a practised one (Aytar & Bodor, 2019). Solidarity is often premised on group favouritism and an individual's conformity with the majority beliefs and practises. Yet resultant in-group conflicts are mostly disregarded to protect the solidarity needed to cope with outer conflicts. Solidarity strengthens positive religious coping strategies toward attacks to their intersectional identities from out-groups. However, when it comes to building resilience to overcome in-group conflicts, such as the gender gap controversy and negative experiences within the Muslim community, both Hungarian and immigrant Muslim women are still in the phase of accepting the presence of these issues within their in-group, relying more on Passive rather than Active coping strategies.

This study offers insights into the challenges experienced by an intersectional minority group, female members of the Muslim community in Hungary and their ways of coping with them. For the majority, it can contribute to better understanding the vicissitudes of a stigmatised intersectional minority group, and perhaps to lessen discriminatory activities towards them. At the same time, it also provides a reflection of the Muslim community and an opportunity to improve their own activity, transforming imagined solidarity into a practiced one and avoiding discriminative practices towards in-group members.

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