

Anna Dłużewska

The impact of islamization on the interaction between locals and tourists in Kenya = Wpływ islamizacji na interakcje między miejscowymi a turystami w Kenii

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Dr Anna Dłużewska, PhD on geography – Warsaw University (book about social roles in Tunisia) – 1998; MA on sciences of culture – University of Silesia – 1993. Researches made in: Tunisia, Turkey, Morocco, Egypt, Dubai, Kenya, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Uzbekistan etc.

ANNA DŁUŻEWSKA

Tourism Department SWPR Warsaw (Poland)

e-mail: a.dluzewska@chello.pl

The impact of islamization on the interaction between locals and tourists in Kenya / Wpływ islamizacji na interakcje między miejscowymi a turystami w Kenii

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The article is a contribution to the problem of the impact of tourism in developing countries. It is also an attempt to distinguish the disfunctions which are indeed caused by tourists from the prejudice which are an effect of the war in Iraq, the colonial times or mass media activity. In order to amend this contribution with qualitative data the author conducted field studies performed in Kenya in July/ August 2004. The author has chosen three research area: Mombassa, Watamu and Lamu Island inhabited mostly by the Muslim population. The research was focused on the dialog of the culture of the Natives and Tourists, same as on the cultural shock related with the different type of religion. The conception of tourism fits into the conception of *tourism as the contact of cultures* [Przeclawski 1997].

INTRODUCTION

The influence of tourism on changes in local communities is nowadays seen not only as profit but also as a cultural problem. Economical benefits and increase in education are presented as functions while disfunctions are environmental degeneration or threats to the culture [Dłużewska 2005]. On the other hand tourism does not only causes cultural problems but offers cultural benefits as well such as cultural awareness, renewal of traditions and others [Smith, Brent 2001].

It is not a mystery any more that susceptibility to tourism disfunctions varies between different cultures. It depends on the level of social development, education, distribution of income from the tourism industry and many other factors. Religion plays here a major role [Vukonić 1996].

For example, in Buddhist countries which accept differentiation in spiritual development and human imperfection (sources of which are in lack of enlightenment) the susceptibility to the tourism disfunctions is lower comparing with Muslim, Judaist or Christian countries. Similar situation is in Hinduist India which is used to the castes system strengthening material inequality where the susceptibility to the tourism disfunctions (shock caused by the demonstrations effect of the wealth of tourists) is lower than in e.g. black Africa [Jackowski 2003].

Among all religions Islam seems to be the most susceptible to the disfunctions of religion and cultural background (also because Islam has a very high influence on family and social life). Behaviour which is inconsistent with this religion – therefore offending Allah – is far away from the walls of mosques [Dalacoura 2003]. Proper behaviour norms are reflected in a proper dress, behaviour of both genders, etc.

Only Islamic and Christian religions are “missionary” and their members are supposed to convert the unfaithful ones¹ with arguments or with force. In case of Muslims *Djihad* is the one of religion pillars and an obligation of every believer. The *Djihad* warriors expect highest delight in the afterlife and this is an additional argument for many young men who believe in *daar al*.

¹ Public actions encouraging conversion to Buddhism were invented in the western culture. There are no such actions in countries where Buddhism is a national religion. Those of a different denomination are welcome to the Buddhism monasteries and nobody wants to “force” them to convert. Similar situation is in Hinduism. Centres of Hinduism meditation known in Europe have more in common with sects than with the real religion. Judaism is hermetic and not interested in converting anyone.

Islam (rule of the Islam world) [Danecki 1997–98]. This is why there is a common consent for fight with any symptoms of immorality – fight with tourism in this case².

An important question would be also: who is the tourist? Is he aware of local norms? Does he respect them? [Robinson, Boniface et al. 1999; Sharpley 1999; Smith, Brent 2001].

Many times tourism is accused of causing a variety of disfunctions (ecological, cultural), which, in fact, are not caused by tourism but rather by other culprits (industry, mass-media, etc.). On the other hand tourists are often subject to unjust judgements and expectations. This especially pertains to poor countries where images of Europe and the USA are based on TV series, “Dynasty”-style soap operas which show wealthy, idyllic and not existing world. Expectations from the wealthy tourists are too high and cause a lot of bitterness (e.g. the visitor has money but does not want to share). In case of the Muslim countries, the negative judgements are influenced by the war in Iraq [Dłużewska 2005, 2006 a, b].

AIM

The aim of the article is to investigate the main factors responsible for socio-cultural impact of touristic circulation in the Muslim part of Kenya which leads to disfunctions.

Basing on the field studies conducted in other areas [Dłużewska 2006 a,b,c] we assume that one of the factors which amplify the disfunctions is the unequal distribution of touristic investment (in respect of regions) and the unequal distribution of income from tourism. The common awareness of the possible profits from touristic circulation hampers the disfunctions. As most of the citizens have the impression of "being put aside" tourists can cause escalation of the conflict between the governing group and the rest of the society (especially when tourists act in contradiction to the cultural and religious standards set in the given area). We also assume that some types of tourism (e.g. mass tourism) cause social disfunctions in a greater extent than other types of tourism (e.g. cultural tourism) [Cohen 1984; Ghimire, Krishna et al. 2001]. In our studies we have investigated various types of tourism which occur in Kenya and, as far as possible, the predominant types of tourists.

The aim of the research was also to explore the extent to which the state policy supports or hampers the impact of islamization.

DISCUSSION

Kenya is an independent multi-racial and multi-ethnic country, with a remarkably rich and culturally diverse population – it allows to assess social effects of tourism in reference to a different religion and culture.

In Kenya there are more than 42 ethnic groups divided along three main linguistic lines: Bantu – 60% (among them: Kikuyu – 20%, Luhya – 13%, Kamba – 11%), Luo – 13%, Masai – 1,5%). According to official statistics, Christians dominate (26,5% – Protestants, 26,4% – Catholics, 18,9% – African Christians). Muslims account for 17,7%. Nevertheless, it seems that the questionnaire survey providing such information was not verified for years. In reality, the number of Muslims grows very fast causing quick invalidity of the statistics [Pawelczak 2004].

Islam reached Kenya at the end of the first millennium when the coast was being colonized by Arab merchants (ivory and slaves trade). Strong, independent cities like Mombasa and Malindi developed at that time. From the merge of Arab and local culture arose the Swahili civilization [Pawelczak 2004].

Another wave of Islamization took place at the turn of the 18th and 19th century when Kenya fell under the Oman Sultans' rule. Until today the strongest Muslim center is situated by the coast whereas in the center of the country Christian denominations prevail. In recent years the number of Muslim believers is increasing rapidly in contrast to the number of the followers of other religions [Ziętek, Stachurska 2004].

² In Islamic tradition Jihad means also self-improvement. The president of Tunisia Habib Bourgiba interpreted Jihad as a fight for economic and educational development. Nevertheless nowadays Jihad is usually interpreted as a war with unfaithful ones.

The tourism industry in Kenya in 2004 accounted for 12,2% GDP and employed 547 959 people (9,9% of the country working population). According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) forecast, employment in tourism will grow 4,3% annually by the year 2015. The economical profits from tourism in Kenya are unequivocal. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in real terms increased by 4.9 per cent in 1995, compared to 3.0 per cent in 1994. Adjustment efforts fostering macro-economic stability, currency stability and improved investment climate, together with the liberalization of the economy all helped the GDP. Specific macro-economic liberalization undertaken by Government included price decontrol, the removal of import licensing and decontrol of exchange control mechanisms, freeing the movement of maize and other cereals and the liberalization of the petroleum sector [Sharpley 1986]. Real GDP growth is expected to be 5.5 per cent in 2006.

The main touristic attractions in Kenya are: Tsavo National Park, Masai Mara, Amboseli, Meru and Cora, Mount Kenya, Lake Victoria, Lake Turkan, Rift Valley Lakes, Kilimanjaro National Park, tropical savannas, steppes, evergreen forests, where tourists can observe a great plentitude of fauna and flora species, coral reef in the Indian Ocean, etc [Smolaga, Stefanski, 1976]. Most tourists and tourists-to-be associate the notion "Kenya" with safari – the possibility of seeing lions, elephants, hippos and monkeys in their natural environment – all in all a wild and wonderful adventure. The ethnic group frequently associated with Kenya is the Masai community which actually constitutes a rather small percentage of Kenya's population. Few tourists are aware of the fact that the predominant religion on the Kenyan coast is Islam.

A significant percentage of the visitors are tourists who spend their time actively, appreciate contact with nature and seek for the co called African adventure. The second group is composed of people who respond to cheap offers of travel agencies, have their rest on the coast and for whom the main argument is not the actual beauty of the Kenyan coast but the exotic name and the possibility of boasting in front of their friends.

Tab. 1. Visitors arrivals by purpose of visit, 1999–2004 / Tab. 1. Przyjazdy do Kenii ze względu na cel podróży, 1999–2004

Purpose	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004*
Holiday	746.9	778.2	728.8	732.6	684.0	885.6
Business	94.4	98.3	92.1	86.6	182.1	246.4
Transit	107.4	138.5	152.6	163.3	219.0	162.2
Other	20.6	21.5	20.1	19.0	61.0	66.5
TOTAL	969.3	1,036.5	993.6	1,001.3	1,146.2	1360.7

* provisional

Source: Kenya Tourism Board web-side

A very strong recourse ensued between 1995 and 2000. It concerns not the number of tourists' visits itself but rather the income from this sector. It can be explained with the fall of tourist services' prices which was due to the change of the offer. The predominant safari tourism was replaced by the considerably cheaper seaside tourism – leisure tourism. This trend can also be observed in the statistics when we compare the number of visitors with the profits from tourism market (see tab. 2, 3).

Only in 2004 when the number of visitors increased by 318 000 the profit level approached the level noted down in 1990. It is a proof of a significant stagnation of tourism in Kenya especially when we take under consideration that between 1990 and 2004 the touristic circulation was substantially rising (WTO, WTTC).

Tab. 2. Profits from tourism market (in million USD) / Tab. 2. Dochody z turystyki (w milionach USD)

Kenya	1990	1995	2000	2002	2004	% in the region 1995	% in the region 2000	change 2004/ 2003 (in %)
	443	486	283	276	495	5,7	2,7	45,9

Tourism Market Trends, 2005 Edition – Annex, WTO

Tab. 3. Tourists visiting Kenya (in millions of thousands) / Tab. 3. Turyści odwiedzający Kenię

Kenya	1990	1995	2000	2002	2004	In a region (in %) 1995	In a region (in %) 2000	Change 2004/ 2003 (in %)
	814	896	899	838	1,132	4,4	3,4	30,7

Tourism Market Trends, 2005 Edition – Annex, WTO

Among the reasons for the falling interest in safari tourism in Kenya the competitive offer of other countries on the safari tourism market is of high importance. The regional market share regarding tourist arrivals went down from Kenya from 4.4% in 1995 to 3.4% in 2000 (see tab. 3), even worse situation one can observe regarding the share of profits from tourism market: from 5.7% in 1995 to 2.7 in 2000 (see tab. 2).

THE RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

During the research in Kenya several methods were used, among which were methods and research tools from the American School of Cultural Anthropology, widely used for research on cultural identity in Asia and Africa [Riley, Love 2000]. While sociological tools (questionnaires, statistical analysis) provide quantitative data, the Chicago School Tools are used in qualitative analysis. They bring best results in the research on taboo issues and behaviours which the researched group of people is not necessarily aware of [Spradley 1980; Sztumski 1984; Dann, Nash, Pearce 1998]. In the author's opinion one of the taboo issues is religion which is treated by both – Muslims and Christians very emotionally (many behaviours rooted in the religion cannot be easily and logically explained by the believers basing only on the knowledge of the doctrine).

The following research tools [Sztumski 1984] were used:

1. direct participating and non-participating observation [Spradley 1980]
2. questionnaire studies: overt and covert questionnaires, open questionnaires, non-categorized questionnaires.

The results did not provide quantitative but qualitative data.

The information gathered during the field studies have been amended with statistical data published by the Kenya Tourist Board with necessary literature.

Field studies covered three target groups:

1. Native population of Kenya
2. The Westerners who live there permanently, or had an experience to live in Kenya before the year 2000 (where possible)
3. Tourists.

The native population of Kenya was asked research questions concerning i.e.:

- are they glad that tourists visit their country?
- do they see any possibilities to profit from tourism for themselves?
- do they consider some of the tourists' behaviours annoying? which and why?

The information received from the Westerners who live in Kenya permanently, that is from those who learned to know the cultural reality of the island very well, yet have kept a realistic view of a non-committed observer, was of utmost importance. Within this group quite a lot of

remarks concerning the existing situation were made. The information acquired from the questionnaire filled in by the students was used mainly for the Mombassa case where the interpretation of the individual research results (without comparative analysis) could pose serious difficulties.

The questions concerned i.e.:

- why did they decide to start a business activity in Kenya?
- are they satisfied with their decision?
- how do they feel about the natives and their attitude towards tourists?
- what do they think about the tourists' behaviour etc.

The information received from this group provided comparative data – it concerned the period before and after the famous 2001 and war in Iraq.

The tourists were asked questions concerning i.e.:

- the reason for coming to Kenya
- parts of the country they visit and why
- how do they feel about the native population?

The sites where the research was conducted had been chosen so as to reflect a different type of touristic attractions (beach – recreation tourism, diving tourism, safari tourism, active tourism, back packing, etc.). The population in the chosen sites consists of people of diverse denominations and level of affluence.

Statistics concerning the percentage of followers of particular religions in the cities where the research was conducted are not published. The authoress used her own observations (concerning mostly women for in their case some conclusions can be drawn basing on their clothes) for the purpose of working analysis [Esposito 1982]. An additional advantage of such a solution was the possibility to qualify the extent of the external influence on the traditional form of Islam. The replacement of traditional African costume worn so far by Muslim women in Kenya with black chadors and *hidjabs* originating in the Persian Gulf can be a proof of changes in this respect (see tables 4, 5 and 6 placed under the description of each village).

Mombassa

The main and biggest harbour city in this part of Africa (third-big harbour in the Eastern coast after Durban in the South African Republic and Dar Es Salam in Tanzania) renown for its Swahili culture [Smolaga, Stefański 1976]. Established by Arab merchants Mombassa is sometimes called "the cultural melting pot" where the Muslim culture maintained by the inhabitants of the coast mingles with colonial influences and the customs of poor immigrants from the center of the country who came to Mombassa searching for work and a better life [Abuodha 1991]. The city's characteristic is its highly diverse population in respect of financial status (after Nairobi, the most diversified city in Kenya). The predominant religion is still Islam [Fuglesang 1994].

Mombassa is usually visited by tourists who stay in the neighbouring resorts by the Indian Ocean (1-day-stay, without accommodation). Tourists who came to Kenya for safari rarely reach this area:

Watamu

A tourist city situated on the Indian Ocean coast in the vicinity of Watamu Marine National Park. Huge tourist resorts as well as hotels offering accommodation for individual tourists are situated here. Watamu attracts tourists who long for leisure at the beach as well as amateurs of diving tourism. Profits from tourism are derived by a significant number of citizens (hotels and restaurants owners, souvenirs venders, minibus drivers and agents organizing diving trips). The predominant religion of Watamu is Islam yet the citizens' clothes are far less conservative than in the neighboring Mombassa.

The Lamu Island

In many tourist guidebooks Lamu is described as the most conservative – Muslim – part of Kenya [Fuglesang 1994].

The village was established by Arab and Oman merchants, whose profession was slave trade. After the ban on slave trade had been introduced the island slowly declined. It gained its splendor

thanks to tourists' interest. Tourists admire its XIX century Arab buildings in the harbor, intricate carved details of the tenement houses; they have their rest on secluded beaches, take cruise trips with old sailing boats or absorb the atmosphere of privacy. Mainly individual tourists who appreciate peace and the "boutique" character of Lamu arrive to this place. The hippies also took a fancy for the island. Lamu is a very popular touristic destination for the foreigners who live in Kenya. They spend here their long weekends and short holidays when they cannot go abroad. Many of them have built "summer residences" on the island.

Tourism has been significantly restricted due to the attacks of *shifita* gangs who aimed at tourist buses coming from Mombassa. The road to Lamu is still described as dangerous (the buses are escorted by armed soldiers). Many tourists reach Lamu by plane (the airport is situated on the neighboring island). The predominant religion is Islam.

RESULTS

Mombassa

The inhabitants of Mombassa did not see any possibilities to profit from tourism. They claimed that the whole profit is taken over by the rich who are "sitting pretty". The main accusation towards tourists is that they are not willing to share with people in need and that they tend to swagger (they avoid close contacts). The tourists' overfree behavior irritated the Muslims (although we can hardly talk about ostentation in the tourists' behavior) and many of them were of the opinion that what is going on in holiday resorts (for example wearing bikinis) is an offense towards God.

On the other hand the natives come into contacts with foreigners willingly not to say persistently. Foreigners who lived in Mombassa tried to explain this kind of behavior with the natives' experiences from colonial times. Foreigners have also noticed a progressing Islamization and arrogant behavior of the natives in recent years. Both of those phenomena could not be observed before 2001.

Islamization concerns most of all:

- the clothes worn by women. The colorful traditional costume and turbans are replaced by chadors from the Persian Gulf (which was also noted during the women's clothes observation, see tab. 4)
- the forms of prayers in mosques. Traditional short prayers broadcasted 5 times a day from mosques' loudspeakers are replaced with long debates which last for a few hours. The word "*djihad*" is used very frequently. First prayers begin at 3 a.m. The foreigners who live in Mombassa complained that they "could not have a good sleep". Some of them described the agitation coming from the mosques as "brainwashing" and breeding hate.

Tab. 4. Women's clothes in Mombassa (in %) / Tab. 4. Stroje kobiet w Mombasie (w %)

MOMBASSA	Traditional African costume	"European" costume	scarf	Black chador + face covering
Office buildings quarter	7	18	35	40
Municipal market	33	27	30	10

Source: individual research of the authoress

Tourists who visit Mombassa have not noticed any natives' attitudes of clearly negative kind. Yet they were taken aback by the huge number of women who covered their faces. Few of the tourists were aware of the fact that the dominating religion in this area is Islam. Those who knew it were particularly surprised by the conservative form of this religion. They were also astonished by the clothes of women who worked for British Airways in Kenya (some tourists confirmed their return tickets to Europe). The women were wearing a dress with a flower pattern on, which is common for BA, and huge Muslim scarves covering their hair and neck. It was even more surprising if we consider that the company usually forbids exposing religious symbols (in the same office a BA employee – a Christian – was ordered not to exhibit her crucifix pendant). One

of the tourists was joking that airlines of the conservatively Muslim countries (like Emirates Airline) do their best to make their women employees look elegant and feminine whereas British Airways allows something so nightmarish.

Watamu

Citizens of Watamu have understood what kind of profits can be derived from tourism. Their only claim was that tourists are not generous enough. Rarely did the citizens complain about the promiscuity of tourists. Only a part of schoolgirls and schoolboys showed a claiming attitude (scarf was an element of the school uniform).

Tab. 5. Women's clothes in Watamu area (in %) / Tab. 5. Stroje kobiet w Watamu (w %)

WATAMU	Traditional African costume	"European" costume	scarf	Black chador + face covering
	8	45	40	7

Source: individual research of the authoress

Tourists felt comfortable here, they did not complain about the dislike or aggression from the natives' side. They came into close contact with natives frequently. The only criticized aspect was the theft level but – as they commented – it is still lower than in most parts of Africa.

The Lamu Island

The citizens of Lamu have a very benevolent attitude towards tourists. They recognized the direct profits from tourism if not for themselves then for somebody from their friend or family circle. Among the elderly inhabitants of the island claims did not occur at all. Similarly the beachwear of the tourists, if not worn in the city but on the beaches only – was not the subject of criticism. Despite the commonness of Islam elderly women did not use to cover their whole bodies and hair (they usually did it in certain circumstances, not all the time).

Very strong negative attitudes or claims towards tourists could be observed in the case of schoolchildren (scarf was an element of the obligatory school uniform). Young people coming back from school, usually in groups, treated tourists impolitely and ostentatiously (e.g. they did not make way for the elderly people). They also acted as if they were throwing stones in tourists who were sunbathing on the beaches. The impact of the teachings acquired at school was particularly visible.

Poor young people who do not attend school reacted to tourists very positively. It seems that the aforementioned negative behavior is an effect of what is taught in schools, which is usually not audited in respect of extreme fundamentalism. One of the symptoms of extreme fundamentalism is the introduction of compulsory scarves. Girls who want to learn are obliged to wear them. There is quite a meaningful drawing on the Koranic school door showing the social advancement in form of a tree. The lower branches of the tree are workers, peasants and cleaners, a bit higher we have craftsmen, shopkeepers and schoolchildren. In the upper part of the tree there are doctors, pilots and even a minister. Yet on the very top of the hierarchy we can see... a Koranic school teacher.

Excerpts of Koran, especially those concerning *djihad*, were also played in shops where audio tapes and CDs are sold – many shopkeepers admit that it was an influence of financial support from fundamentalist circles.

It is also common to play tapes with similar content in the buses on the way from one city to another.

Tab. 7. Women's clothes in Lamu Island (in %) / Tab. 7. Stroje kobiet na wyspie Lamu (w %)

LAMU ISLAND	Traditional African costume	"European" costume	scarf	Black chador + face covering
	10	5	15	70

Source: individual research of the authoress

The tourists felt comfortably here, they did not complain about aversion or aggression of the natives, they often came into close contacts with them. They complained about having no access to alcohol (it is banned in most restaurants) and the common forgery concerning potable water. Some of them have come across bad behaviour of the youth. Nobody complained about the behaviour of the elderly people.

CONCLUSIONS

In the Christian part of the country, the active and qualified type of tourism dominates and therefore it can cause social disfunctions only in a very limited way. On the other hand, the relaxation, beach type of tourism dominates at the sea side which is inhabited by Muslims.

Having in mind Muslim restrictions concerning proper dress, one can realise that the occurrence of such tourism can be a natural source of social disfunctions. Nevertheless, we cannot talk here about a mass tourism which is quite primitive when in touch with an alien culture. Here, tourists do not expose naked bodies beyond the terrain of the hotels and do not behave ostentatiously. Nevertheless, the negative attitude towards visitors in the Muslim regions recently clearly intensified. In the author's opinion this is caused not by tourists but rather by a conglomerate of other factors, such as mass-media and education.

The reluctance clearly intensified due to current international socio-political situation (especially due to the war in Iraq) and seems to drive out traditional Muslim hospitality toward all newcomers. The aliens, unfaithful ones are gradually excluded from this hospitality.

Due to a high number of transmissions from Iraq, the wealthiest citizens of Kenya (having access to CNN) start wearing *hijab*, which substitutes traditional dress.

This tendency can be observed on comparative analysis of tables 4, 5 and 6 which shows that *hijab* is mostly dressed in Lamu and in the wealthiest parts of Mombasa (Office buildings quarter) not as much as in the Wtamu and in the Mombasa Municipal market.

Radical ideas are preached without any limitations in Kenya. A call for *Djihad* emitted from loudspeakers in market places is commonly heard, families get donations if women wear chador. In poor societies financial help is a convincing argument for conversion to a conservative Islam. Drivers working in a public transportation play cassettes with fragments of Koran (most often *Djihad*). They also do it for money.

In Kenyan schools, also in those getting financial help from international organisations, teaching contents are not censored and religious hatred is not eliminated. In most schools children must wear *hijabs* and *chadors* which are parts of girls' school dress.

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Słowa kluczowe: funkcje i dysfunkcje turystyki, Kenia, społeczny aspekt turystyki

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł jest głosem w dyskusji na temat skutków turystyki w krajach rozwijających się – próbą wyodrębnienia dysfunkcji turystycznych rzeczywiście powodowanych przez turystów od uprzedzeń będących skutkiem np. działalności mass mediów, wojny w Iraku czy będących spuścizną czasów kolonialnych, pochopnie łączonych ze skutkami turystyki. W celu uzupełnienia materiału o dane o charakterze jakościowym autorka przeprowadziła badania terenowe (lipiec/sierpień 2004) w trzech obszarach badawczych: Mombasa, Watamu oraz wyspa Lamu. Wybrane obszary zamieszkałe są głównie przez ludność muzułmańską. Badania dotyczyły obszaru dialogów kulturowych oraz zderzenia tradycji religijnej Kenijczyków z zachodnim modelem, mieszczą się więc w koncepcji *turystyki jako kontaktu kulturowego* [Przeclawski 1997].