



Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures  
Polish Academy of Sciences

Hemispheres  
Studies on Cultures and Societies  
Vol. 31, No. 3

Warszawa 2016

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e-ISSN 2449-8645  
ISBN 978-83-7452-087-4

HEMISPHERES is published quarterly and is indexed in  
*ERIH PLUS, The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and  
Humanities, ProQuest Database and Index Copernicus*

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## A Bourdieusian Analysis of the Status of Indigenous Languages in the South African Translation Space

### Abstract

This paper seeks to analyse the role of indigenous languages in translation activities in South Africa. While translation activities are on the rise in South Africa, translation involving indigenous languages is very minimal when compared to English and Afrikaans. The paper thus seeks to analyse the problem and explore the role translation activities between indigenous languages can play in forging knowledge production and social cohesion. The paper adopts a documentary method, in which data is drawn from published information, and argues that language inequalities in South Africa are the result of asymmetrical power relations between the different languages.

### Introduction

The place of African indigenous languages in translation is increasingly attracting the attention of research in translation studies on the continent. This interest has stemmed from the fact that despite the dense multilingual structure of Africa, the languages of the continent are still marginalised in the translation industry. According to Bangbose, Africa has more than 2000 languages out of the estimated 6,000 languages of the world.<sup>1</sup> This implies that about one third of the world's languages are found on the continent. This picture is an obvious indication of the fact that a lot of translation activities are taking place on the continent, which is indeed a reality. Most African communities are multilingual, and interactions between them have always been done with the help of language mediators. Bandia has shown that throughout history, the different African communities have interacted with each other, either for trade, war and peace or marriage.<sup>2</sup> Given that these communities speak different languages, communication between them has always been facilitated by local mediators who are skilled in more than one language. This situation is still the same in many informal communities in Africa, as they still interact with other language communities with the help of language intermediaries. There is thus no question as to whether African indigenous languages are playing an important role in translation on the continent. However, this seeming importance of the role of indigenous languages is very limited to the informal economy, as indigenous languages remain on the margins of the formal translation industry in Africa. According to Kelly, DePalma and Hegde, with one third of the world's languages,

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<sup>1</sup> Ayo Bangbose, *African Languages Today: Challenge of and Prospects for Empowerment under Globalization*, in *Selected Proceedings of the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, Eyamba G. Bokamba et al., Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project, 2011, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Paul F. Bandia, 'Esquisse d'une histoire de la traduction en Afrique,' *META*, Vol. 50, No. 3, 2005, pp. 957–971.

Africa only generates less than 1% of the global translation revenue of \$33 billion.<sup>3</sup> This shows the extent of the marginalisation of indigenous languages, which may have a corresponding negative impact on the economic development of the continent given the role indigenous languages are supposed to play in that aspect. It should also be mentioned that even the less than 1% share of the translation that comes to Africa is still dominated by foreign languages, as they still constitute the official languages of most of the countries on the continent. The only African languages which enjoy the status of official languages are Amharic, Swahili and the nine indigenous languages of South Africa, of which Sesotho, Setswana and Siswati are also official languages of Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland, respectively.<sup>4</sup> While the status of these languages has seen them play a more significant role in translation, it should be mentioned that in most cases, the language combinations still always involve a foreign language, and there are rare cases of a language combination involving two indigenous languages.

With 11 official languages, South Africa enjoys the lion's share of the translation industry on the continent<sup>5</sup> and offers an interesting context in which to explore the role and status of indigenous languages in translation. This is what has motivated this study, which seeks to understand the role, challenges and opportunities for translations of indigenous languages in the country. The paper uses a documentary method in which data is drawn from published information accessed online. It then adopts a Bourdieusian framework to critically reflect on the sociological factors underpinning the marginalisation of indigenous languages in the translation field. For the purpose of this paper, Afrikaans is considered an indigenous language based on the fact that although it belongs to the Germanic family of languages, its birthplace is in South Africa<sup>6</sup>, which is also the home of most of the speakers of the language.

### **Translation and the status of indigenous languages in South Africa**

South Africa presents a very interesting linguistic scenario. With the coming of the democratic government, the country adopted a language policy that accorded 11 languages the status of official language.<sup>7</sup> The aim of this policy was to ensure that all South Africans are included in the new rainbow nation, thereby righting the wrongs of the apartheid policy, which had marginalised African languages and given English and Afrikaans privileged status. As a result, indigenous languages have noticed a growing presence in administration and education, thereby

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<sup>3</sup> Nataly Kelly, Donald A. DePalma and Vijayalaxmi Hegde, *The Need for Translation in Africa: Addressing Information Inequalities So that Africa May Prosper*, Lowell: Common Sense Advisory, 2012, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Bangbose, *African Languages...*, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, DePalma, Hegde, *The Need for Translation...*, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Anne-Marie Beukes, 'Governmentality and the good offices of translation in 20<sup>th</sup> century South Africa,' *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2007, pp. 115–130.

<sup>7</sup> Viv Edwards and Jacob Marriote Ngwaru, 'African language publishing for children in South Africa: challenges for translators,' *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, Vol. 14, No. 5, 2011, pp. 589–602.

becoming instruments of development and social cohesion.<sup>8</sup> This has also led to the flourishing of the translation industry in the country, as information has to be made available in all the languages so as to be more accessible to the citizens of the country. In this regard, translation is playing a vital role in the political and socio-cultural development of South Africa.<sup>9</sup> It should however be observed that despite the apparently rosy picture of language equity, the practical reality of the language situation in the country is characterised by ongoing inequalities, as English and Afrikaans continue to dominate the administrative, educational and technological sectors of the country, thereby relegating the indigenous languages to the status of languages for less important aspects of the life of the country.<sup>10</sup> These inequalities are also reflected in the translation field, where English occupies a commanding presence.<sup>11</sup> According to the list of the 242 accredited translators and interpreters published on the website of the South African Translators' Institute, the number per working language is indicated as follows: 240 for English, 137 for Afrikaans, 11 for Isixhosa, 7 for Setswana, 7 for SASL, 5 for IsiZulu, 4 for Sesotho, 3 for Sepedi, 3 for Ndebele, 2 for Venda, 1 for Tsonga and 71 for foreign languages.<sup>12</sup> It should be mentioned that these figures may not necessarily be a reflection of the actual facts on the ground, given that SATI only publishes names of accredited practitioners, and accreditation is voluntary and not mandatory for the practice of the profession in the country. The figures however highlight the trend in the translation market, which clearly shows the inequalities that exist between the languages concerned. The situation is even more dire when one observes that of the language pairs published on the same list, English is present in all the pairs, with no binary pairing between indigenous languages. These inequalities are also observable in the number of texts translated. In a study on the publishing of educational books in South Africa, Kruger reveals that there are more texts translated from English into the other languages than the other way round. While he asserts that there is a growing trend for original productions in African languages, his study clearly underscores the fact that English remains the preferred language of original educational material.<sup>13</sup>

It is the opinion of this paper that the disparity in the status of the languages in the translation context is the result of a power interplay that foregrounds language use in South Africa. Beukes has argued that one of the distinct features of the South African linguistic space is the asymmetrical power relations between languages.<sup>14</sup> It is in this regard that I have applied

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<sup>8</sup> Anna Bernacka, 'The importance of translation studies for development education,' *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*, Vol. 14, 2012, pp. 113–118.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>10</sup> Edwards, Ngwaru, 'African language...', p. 597.

<sup>11</sup> Haidee Kruger, 'Language-in-education policy, publishing and the translation of children's books in South Africa,' *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, Vol. 17. No. 1, 2009, pp. 33–61.

<sup>12</sup> South African Translators Institute. SATI accredittees as at 1 March 2015. SATI database, [http://translators.org.za/sati\\_cms/index.php?frontend\\_action=display\\_text\\_content&content\\_id=3378](http://translators.org.za/sati_cms/index.php?frontend_action=display_text_content&content_id=3378) (accessed 1 March 2015).

<sup>13</sup> Kruger, 'Language-in-education...', p. 44.

<sup>14</sup> Anne-Marie Beukes, 'Translation in South Africa: the politics of transmission,' *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 2006, p. 2.

Bourdieu's social theory to undertake analytical reflection of the place of indigenous languages in translation in South Africa.

### **Bourdieuian framework of language fields**

Bourdieu considers the field as a social space within which social action takes place.<sup>15</sup> These actions are undertaken by agents who occupy field different positions on the field, depending on the amount of resources that the agents possess within the network of inter-power relations that connect them to the other agents on the field. This makes the field an arena of constant struggle, in which agents compete for interests which they all recognise as accruing from the field's struggles. Agents possess different resources (capital) and dispositions (habitus) with which they enter the field, and which determine the positions they take and the leverage they have on the relations of the field. Bourdieu distinguishes three major forms of capital: cultural, economic and symbolic capital. Cultural capital refers to the resources or endowments that an agent accumulates through education or the production of cultural works. In this regard, academic degrees or the works of a writer or artist would endow the agent concerned with cultural capital. Economic capital is the material benefits that an agent has accumulated, and which gives him or her more leverage in the field. Another important element of the field according to Bourdieu is the notion of habitus, which he considers to be the unconscious internalised disposition of an individual to act in a particular way vis-à-vis other actors in the social domain. These internalised dispositions have been embedded in the individual as a result of historical acculturation that predisposes the individual to interpret and define concepts in a particular way. This implies that the way we respond to situations is conditioned by our internal dispositions which shape our appreciation of life. Bourdieu argues that habitus is a product of history, which deposits the lived experiences of an individual in their biological organisms, where they become instruments of 'thought and action, tend to guarantee the 'correctness' of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms'.<sup>16</sup>

Bourdieu applies his theory to language by arguing that language is not merely a method of communication, but also as a mechanism of power.<sup>17</sup> He asserts that the value of language in the linguistic space is determined by the power relations that bind the speakers of the languages involved in the given space.<sup>18</sup> This implies that the capital that is possessed by a community is transferred to the language of the community, thereby making language a symbol of the power relations that exist between the different communities or agents of the linguistic field. Bourdieu further argues that political domination usually leads to one language being made to dominate others, and this domination is then constantly preserved and reproduced by educational

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<sup>15</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Loic J.D. Wacquant, *An invitation to a reflexive sociology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, p. 97.

<sup>16</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The logic of practice*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990, p. 53.

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and John B. Thompson, *Language and symbolic power*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 66.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

institutions.<sup>19</sup> In other words, linguistic dominance is never due to the natural evolution of language, but the result of the political, cultural and economic capital that is controlled by the agents who stand more to gain in elevating the status of a particular language above the others. Bourdieu's social theory has become a central theme in translation studies in recent years, as scholars draw from it to underscore the social factors surrounding translation practice.<sup>20</sup> Applying the model to the translation market of South Africa will thus highlight the power relations therein, which underpin the inequalities that are apparent in the status of the different languages of the country.

### **The South African linguistic field**

The South African linguistic field is constituted of the different languages that are used in the country. They occupy different positions in the field, depending on the status that each of them is accorded within the field's structure. Given that language is an instrument of power in the hands of agents in the field, the status of a language is a reflection of the status of the agents who benefit from the interest that accrue from the relationship of the said language with the other languages of the field.<sup>21</sup> In the case of South Africa, the dominance of English can be said to be the result of the capital that the language has accrued throughout history, first by colonial imposition, and subsequently by institutional preservation. The institutions in this case are educational, administrative and economic in nature. In the area of education, English is still accorded the status of the most important language as it remains the dominant language of instruction at all levels of the educational structure in the country. Administratively, English is also the dominant language in that most policies are first produced in English before being translated into the other languages. Economically, the labour market is still very much dominated by English, and fluency in the language is considered an invaluable asset that guarantees success. Afrikaans is another language that occupies a strong position in the language field. Though it is also a victim of the domination of English, its position is still higher in the structure of the language field than the other official languages.<sup>22</sup> This is also as a result of the capital that the language has accumulated through history, as well as the relative advantage it enjoys when it comes to institutional support. It is the only other language that functions as a language of instruction at all levels of the educational structure. It also has a significant amount of cultural productions, which gives the language more visibility than the other indigenous languages of South Africa.

Bourdieu asserts that the field is a space of struggle for capital and this also applies to the relationship between languages in a multilingual society like South Africa.<sup>23</sup> Every language jostles

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>20</sup> See Jean-Marc Gouanvic, 'A Bourdieusian theory of translation, or the coincidence of practical instances: field, 'habitus' capital and 'illusio', *The Translator*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2005, pp. 147–166; Michaela Wolf, 'The emergence of a sociology of translation,' in *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, Michaela Wolf and Alexandra Fukari (eds), Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2007, pp. 1–38; Moira Inghilleri, 'The sociology of Bourdieu and the construction of the 'Object' in translation and interpreting studies,' *The Translator*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2005, pp. 125–145.

<sup>21</sup> Bourdieu, Thompson, *Language and symbolic...*, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> Edwards, Ngwaru, 'African language...', p. 597.

<sup>23</sup> Bourdieu, Wacquant, *An invitation to...*, p. 97.

for influence and recognition, which implies that it is in a struggle with the other languages in the same field, since they are all struggling for the same finite capital that the field offers, and which would enable them to occupy a position of prominence in the field. If one looks at the language policies of some educational institutions in the country, it is clear that the promotion of indigenous languages is in fact resisted by English. The indigenous languages are thus struggling to accumulate some of the capital that has been to date monopolised by English.

The structure of the South African linguistic field is also reflected in the translation market, where inequalities exist in terms of the quantity of texts translated and the language pairs involved. Here again, English lords it over the other languages as a result of the capital it has accumulated. The colonial imposition of the language means that the language has been an instrument of much of the historical evolution of the country. As such, laws, policies and educational material have been produced mostly in English, making it a language of convenience in today's South African society, given that it would require more efforts and resources to rewrite the educational, administrative and scientific evolution of the country in the indigenous languages. The dominance of English culturally and scientifically has by extension given it economic capital in the sense that English is generally regarded as the language that guarantees economic success. An author who writes in English is more likely to sell to a larger audience than one who writes in Sesotho or Tshivenda. This leads to a reproduction of the hegemony of English, given that the need for economic benefits pushes people to opt for English as a language of production, thereby continuing the marginalisation of the other languages in relation to English. Symbolic capital is evident in the status that has been accorded to English as the most important language in South Africa. Symbolic capital comes with recognition by the agents in the field regarding the relative leverage that is wielded by an agent.<sup>24</sup> The fact that many parents still send their children to a school that gives them more fluency in English is recognition of the importance of English in the linguistic field. The same goes for authors who prefer to write in English rather than their native languages.

The concept of capital also influences the field of translation practice in South Africa. English remains by far the predominant language from which texts are translated. This indicates that more texts are produced in English than in any other language. English is also the dominant language into which texts from the other languages are translated. Actually, with regards to the official languages of South Africa, the SATI website indicates that all South African indigenous languages only translate into English, with no combination pairing two indigenous languages.<sup>25</sup> While this may not be the exact picture of what prevails in the translation field, it clearly demonstrates the extent to which English is the dominant language of the translation industry in the country. This also indicates the economic power of English in the field of translation in South Africa. SATI publishes the list of accredited language practitioners in the country. In other words, these are people who earn a living as language practitioners. The fact that English dominates the field is a clear indication that English is the language that brings more economic benefits to the language practitioners.

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<sup>24</sup> Bourdieu, Thompson, *Language and symbolic...*, p. 38.

<sup>25</sup> SATI database.

Venuti has argued that in the American publishing market, translated works make up only 2% of the total share, while the situation is different in Germany and France where translated works amount to more than 10% of the overall share.<sup>26</sup> This shows the economic value of English as a language of cultural production. In fact, in the case of South Africa, English seems to be an indispensable tool of economic success in the translation market given that it forms part of every translation pair involving South African languages. The significant presence of Afrikaans in the translation field also indicates the capital that the language has accumulated. Though the language shies in comparison to the dominance of English, it carries a significant amount of cultural, economic and symbolic capital when compared to other African languages. The number of texts translated from Afrikaans indicates that there is a significant amount of production in the language, necessitating translation into other languages. Given its place in the educational, administrative and scientific sectors, it is obvious that there have been original texts produced in the language, which have enabled it to acquire cultural capital. The number of practitioners working in the language also indicates that the language brings economic benefits.

The case is very different when it comes to other African languages. Most of the translation into these languages is from English, and this is mostly to do with educational books.<sup>27</sup> While this is a major contribution in the development of these languages as languages of education and knowledge production, it should be mentioned that the situation seems to perpetuate the dominance of English-language culture, indigenous knowledge systems. Language is a vehicle of culture, and translating works from English into African languages gives the impression that the best material for education has to be produced first in English. The situation in the translation field is even worse when it comes to translation between indigenous languages, which do not seem to take place at all. Why is there little translation activity between, for instance, IsiZulu and Setswana or between Afrikaans and Tshivenda? The answer to this can be found in the symbolic capital of English, which is seen as the language from which information needed for advancement is translated and the language into which information that needs more visibility from a wider audience is translated. The case is even more intriguing when it comes to translation from Afrikaans into other indigenous languages. Given the significant cultural capital Afrikaans has accumulated and continues to do so, it would have been expected to see more instances of translation from the language into other indigenous languages, which is however not the case. This is most likely due to the fact that because of its history as a language of oppression, other indigenous language communities have developed an attitude of suspicion and hostility. This has led to a lack of interest in translating from or into Afrikaans.

Finally, linguistic habitus is another factor that can be used to explain the inequalities that exist in the South African translation field. Habitus in this case is applied to the language situation to mean the attitudes that individuals and communities have towards the languages of their societies. Neville Alexander argues that in the context of South Africa, there is a certain habitus that perceives English as the most prestigious and beneficial language, thereby perpetuating its

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<sup>26</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *Translation changes everything: theory and practice*, New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 158.

<sup>27</sup> Kruger, 'Language-in-education...', pp. 33–61.

dominance of the country's language field.<sup>28</sup> This has led to a situation in which cultural goods produced in English attract more interest than those produced in the other languages of the country. As a result, there are more translation activities from English into the other languages in question. Furthermore, whatever is produced in the indigenous languages is considered to gain more market value only when translated into English. This habitus of inferiority of African languages vis-à-vis English explains the near absence of translation activities between the different indigenous languages of the country.

It is thus clear that the inequalities that exist in the South African translation field are the consequence of the power relations that prevail between the different language agents in the field. The struggle for positioning that takes place in the field is characterised by an unequal distribution of capital between the languages, coupled with a habitus that considers some languages more prestigious and beneficial than others. This has enabled English, and to a lesser extent Afrikaans, to occupy positions of higher status in the field, while marginalising African languages which do not have the necessary cultural, economic and symbolic capital to exert significant influence on the structure of the field.

### **Making the case for inter-indigenous language translation**

The negligence of inter-indigenous language translation in South Africa can be detrimental to the advancement of indigenous language production in the communities concerned. There is no gainsaying the fact that translations from English are contributing enormously to the development of indigenous languages into becoming instruments of knowledge production. This is evidenced in the progress that has been made so far in developing these languages into media of instruction, and especially as media of scientific discourse.

It is however the view of this paper that such a development enhances rather than minimises the hegemony of the English language over indigenous ones. This is because the situation continues to place English in the position of 'source' of academic and scientific knowledge, thereby undermining real advances in indigenous knowledge production. Marais has argued that the development concept is usually dominated by the West, then handed down to the South without taking into consideration the micro realities of the communities at the receiving end of the concepts.<sup>29</sup> Translation from English into indigenous languages becomes a key instrument in the transmission of such knowledge which has been conceived elsewhere and imposed on African communities. It is thus my argument that while translation between English and South African indigenous languages is contributing to the elevation of the status of African languages as languages of administration, education, science and technology, it will take more than this to resist the dominance that English enjoys in the translation field. Translation between indigenous

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<sup>28</sup> Neville Alexander, 'The impact of the hegemony of English on access to and quality of education with special reference to South Africa,' in *Language and Poverty*, Wayne Harbert, Sally McConnell-Ginet, Amanda Miller and John Whitman, Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2009, pp. 53–66.

<sup>29</sup> Kobus Marais, *Translation and development studies: a complexity theory approach*, UK: Routledge, 2014, p. 92.

languages would encourage the conceptualisation of knowledge along indigenous lines, given that by so doing the languages would acquire more visibility and legitimacy in the linguistic field. Such translation activities would also have to by-pass English, thereby reducing its share of the capital it enjoys in the translation field. Such a reduction would only benefit the indigenous languages concerned, as this would mean an increase in their share of cultural and economic capital. In other words, they would gain where English would lose, and it would signal the beginning of eroding the hegemony of English in the South African translation field. The situation would also benefit indigenous languages in that with the enhancement of knowledge production, the languages would gain more symbolic capital and the perceptions that communities have of the languages would change. Kruger has argued that Apartheid ended up creating a general sense of distrust in African languages as media of instruction.<sup>30</sup> There is thus a need to turn the tides to ensure that communities take more pride in the use of indigenous languages, and the development of these languages into real instruments of scientific production is one way to do it. This would gradually erode the habitus of inferiority that tends to make users prefer English as the language of prestige and economic success as opposed to their own languages. Translation between indigenous languages can also serve as a vehicle of social integration. This is because the values of one community would easily be transmitted to other communities through translation. The similarities in the linguistic structures of African languages would in this case undermine lost meaning that would have been inherent in transmitting such knowledge via English. This can in turn contribute to the conceptualisation of an indigenous based knowledge system that would be in harmony with the realities and needs of the communities concerned, as opposed to a knowledge concept which follows the tradition of the English-language-dominated West, and that is handed down to African communities without much consideration as to the realities on the ground. Inter-indigenous language translation can thus spur the development of an authentic knowledge system that would enable African communities to contribute to the global knowledge system.

## Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to analyse the status of indigenous languages in the South African translation field. The paper highlights the progress that has been achieved in promoting indigenous languages and elevating this status for use in administration, education and knowledge production. It has been observed that in spite of this progress, the linguistic space in South Africa is still characterised by inequalities which continue to undermine the status of indigenous languages. Through a sociological perspective, the paper argues that the reasons behind these inequalities are the asymmetrical power relations that exist between the languages. It then recommends that dedicated and consistent efforts need to be made by the stakeholders of indigenous languages in order to shift the perception of inferiority of the languages, and one way of doing this would be to explore an increase in inter-indigenous language translation. Such efforts would gradually increase the capital of indigenous languages and erode the hegemony of English in the translation space.

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<sup>30</sup> Kruger, 'Language-in-education...', p. 37.

## Muhammad Yusuf's *Jihad* in the Light of the Mahdist Tradition of Northern Nigeria

### Abstract

The paper presents the *jihad* of Muhammad Yusuf, a charismatic Muslim preacher and the main ideologue of a movement known as Boko Haram, in the light of Mahdist ideas, which have a long history on the territory of present-day northern Nigeria. In his teachings, Muhammad Yusuf criticised the current condition of Islam in its religious and political dimensions, preaching the necessity to revive Muslim faith, oppose secular government and eradicate western influences in northern Nigeria. He used the discourse of an Islamic eschatological tradition to express the ultimate nature of the current problems faced by Nigerian Muslims.

### Introduction

Muhammad Yusuf (1970–2009) was the main ideologist of the Islamic northern Nigerian movement known as Boko Haram (Arabic: *Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna li'l-Da'wa wa'l-Jihad*, “Association of the People of the Sunna for Preaching and Jihad”).<sup>1</sup> His ideology was based on two main fundamentals i.e., rejection of the secular Nigerian state with the intention to replace it with a caliphate, and condemnation of western influences in northern Nigeria, which he equated with western democracy and a secular type of education. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries he gained noticeable popularity among certain groups of Muslims in north-eastern Nigeria. In his teachings, Muhammad Yusuf widely discussed the concept of *jihad* which he employed to organize an opposition against the incumbent government. He was killed in 2009 by the Nigerian military during heavy clashes between his followers and national armed forces.<sup>2</sup>

Muhammad Yusuf's *jihad* can be interpreted in the context of Mahdist traditions that have been popular in the north-eastern part of the country for several centuries. The term “Mahdism” describes the belief that the Mahdi (Arabic: *al-Mahdi*, “the rightly-guided one”) will appear among other eschatological signs of the hour to convert people to Islam and to prepare them for the end of

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<sup>1</sup> The other version of the movement's name is *Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna li'l-Da'wa wa'l-Jihad 'ala Minhaj al-Salaf*, “Association of the People of the Sunna for Preaching and Jihad According to the Salafi Method”. The term “Boko Haram” is a nickname given to the movement by local journalists as it aptly catches its ideology. In March 2015, after pledging allegiance to the Islamic State, Abubakar Shekau, the present leader of the movement gave it another name, *al-Dawla al-Islamiyya Wilayat Gharb Ifriqiya* (“The Islamic State, West African Province”). See Andrea Brigaglia, ‘The volatility of Salafi political theology, the War on Terror and the genesis of Boko Haram,’ *Dritto e questioni pubbliche*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2015, p. 176. In the present paper I use the name “Boko Haram” as the most recognizable.

<sup>2</sup> For further reading on Muhammad Yusuf and the Boko Haram movement see: Abdalla Uba Adamu, ‘Insurgency in Nigeria: the northern Nigerian experience,’ in *Complex insurgencies in Nigeria*, Olu Obafemi and Habu Galadima (eds), Kuru: National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, 2013, pp. 77–139; Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (ed.), *Boko Haram: Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria*, Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2014; Adam Higazi, ‘Mobilisation into and against Boko Haram in North-East Nigeria,’ in *Collective mobilisations in Africa*, Kadya Tall, Marie-Emmanuelle Pommerolle and Michel Cahen (eds), Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2015, pp. 305–358.

time.<sup>3</sup> Mahdism is particularly popular in Shiism, where it is interpreted as an expectation for one of the Imams to re-appear and to lead descendants of the Prophet to regain power in this world.<sup>4</sup> However, Mahdist ideas are also relevant in some regions of the Sunni world, including West Africa. Sunni Mahdism functions as a belief that one day a great reformer will come to earth to purify religion. In the following research, I limit the understanding of Mahdism to Sunnism, because Islam in north-eastern Nigeria is almost entirely Sunni.<sup>5</sup>

Mahdist ideas in northern Nigeria are peculiar to Hausa culture, which is dominant among Nigerian Muslims. The following research will enable us understand the local depth of Islamic movements that have arisen in this region. The thesis I propose here is that there are many parallels between Muhammad Yusuf's ideology and Mahdist trends in northern Nigerian Islam. These similarities indicate the fact that his teachings derive partly from local traditions. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility that external, global or Middle Eastern factors influence the activity of the Boko Haram movement. However, here I concentrate only on the local dimension of its founder's teachings to prove that this one exists. It is important to define Mahdist inspirations in Muhammad Yusuf's ideas in the framework of the current discussion on the roots and significance of Boko Haram, to answer the question to what extent it was created under local influences.<sup>6</sup>

### Millenarianism in Mahdist tradition

The idea of Mahdism is an Islamic version of a broader, interreligious concept of millenarianism. This could be defined as a conviction that in the end of one era apocalyptic eschatological events will lead to salvation and a new "golden era" or heaven. Millenarianism should not be restricted to any belief system. It takes various forms in many religions across the world, from Islam and Christianity, through Zoroastrianism to the Ras Tafari Caribbean movement and Melanesian cargo cults.<sup>7</sup>

Millenarian perception of the world focuses on the division between good and evil forces. The prophecies include descriptions of an unknown catalyst, e.g. a catastrophe that will lead to the total conversion of the entire world and to the establishment of law and order. A crucial point of these predictions is the belief that a charismatic leader will come to earth, a messiah sent to mankind to destroy all the innovatory rules and restore the old, better but forgotten order. According to the main assumptions of millenarianism, during the reign of the messiah, peace and justice will flourish. An important feature of many different types of millenarianism is the prophetic mode of action that often takes the form of active mobilisation to advance the course of eschatological

<sup>3</sup> Wilferd Madelung, 'Al-Mahdi,' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden: Brill Academic Publisher, 2003 (cd-edition).

<sup>4</sup> Further on Mahdism in Shia Islam see: Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *Islamic messianism. The idea of Mahdi in Twelver Shi'ism*, Albany: Suny Press, 1981.

<sup>5</sup> According to Pew Research on the global Muslim population in 2009 Shia represented under 5 percent of all Muslims in Nigeria. See: Pew Research Center, *Mapping the global Muslim population*, Washington: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, October 2009, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> I would like to thank professor Abdalla Uba Adamu from Abuja Open University for access to the book of Muhammad Yusuf, *Hadhihi aqidatuna wa-manhaj da'watina* [This is our doctrine and our method of proselytization], Maiduguri: no pub., 2009, and professor Ewa Siwierska from University of Warsaw for translation of its parts from Arabic to Polish.

<sup>7</sup> John R. Hall, 'Apocalyptic and millenarian movements,' in *The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of social and political movements*, David A. Snow, Donatella della Porta, Bert Klandermans and Doug McAdam (eds), Oxford: Blackwell, 2013, pp. 1–6.

events so as to meet the awaited messiah. As Michael Barkun indicates, the distinctive feature of a millenarian movement is the totality of its members' commitment.<sup>8</sup>

The idea of millenarianism is almost naturally seen as associated with dissatisfaction with people's worldly status i.e., poor living conditions, restricted political rights or social exclusion. In this context, dramatic visions of the end of time can be regarded as a natural effect of the sense of injustice. Participation in eschatological events is seen as a way to achieve the state of eternal bliss, which will constitute compensation for the detriments in this world. Despite the fact that relative deprivation theory may sound convincing in explanation of millenarianism, some scholars underline the fact that this concept is primarily theological and should be analysed as a mode of religious discourse that can, but does not have to, be used as a method of reacting to relative deprivation.<sup>9</sup>

Mahdism, an Islamic type of millenarianism, is based on the conviction that a messiah called Mahdi will appear at the end of time to reform religion. There is no mention of the Mahdi in Qur'an and in the collections of hadiths by Muhammad al-Bukhari (810–870) and Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj (d. 875), which are the most important traditions in Sunni Islam. The name Mahdi is derived from the Arabic root *h-d-y*, generally used to mean divine guidance.<sup>10</sup> The Mahdi appears in another three hadith collections important for Sunnis that were compiled by Ibn Majah (824–887), Abu Dawud (817/18–889) and al-Tirmidhi (824–892).<sup>11</sup> The concept of Mahdism was further developed in various local traditions. Among Hausa Muslims, it was elaborated by religious poets who developed Islamic verse.<sup>12</sup>

The Mahdi is one of the five significant eschatological figures of Islam, along with Jesus, the Antichrist (Hausa: *Dujjal*), the enormous Beast and collective entities of Yajuj and Majuj (equivalent to Gog and Magog in Hebrew), identified with pagan armies who will contend for *dar al-islam* (Muslim territories).<sup>13</sup> The tradition built on hadiths and the writings of local poets precisely defines the circumstances of the Mahdi's appearance. He will be a descendant of Prophet Muhammad and will come to the world a thousand years before the end of time. Certain legends note that he will be born in Mecca. His coming will be preceded by many end-time events that include earthquakes, catastrophic fires, the appearance of false prophets, an increase in immorality, as well as extraordinary phenomena like speaking animals, the sun rising in the west and the striking of all words from the pages of every copy of the Qur'an in the world.<sup>14</sup> Mankind will be afflicted with wars, hunger, plagues and social disorder, including political dissent, poor governance and *fitna* (contention) among Muslims. Accompanied by these events, an Antichrist will descend to earth in the person of a one-eyed man.<sup>15</sup> He will later be defeated by Jesus and Mahdi, who is anticipated to come to earth for this purpose. His army is expected to appear in the east holding black flags.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Barkun, 'Millenarianism in the modern world,' *Theory and Society*, Vol. 1., No. 2, 1974, p. 133.

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad S. Umar, 'Muslims' eschatological discourses on colonialism in northern Nigeria,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 67, No. 1, March 1999, pp. 59–84.

<sup>10</sup> Madelung, 'Al-Mahdi'.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>12</sup> See e.g. the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hausa poem of Muhammadu Ba'o in Ewa Siwierska, *Hausańska poezja homiletyczna. Wydanie rękopisu Muhammada Ba'ko* [Hausa homiletic verse: edition of manuscript by Muhammadu Ba'ko], Warszawa: Dialog, 2000.

<sup>13</sup> Timothy Furnish, 'Mahdism in the Sunni Arab world today,' *ISIM Newsletter*, No. 4, 1999, p. 22.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>15</sup> See hadith collection by Al-Bukhari, transl. M. Muhsin Khan, Vol. 4, Book 55, No. 648: ".../Ad-Dajjal is blind in the right eye and his eye looks like a bulging out grape".

Mahdi's role will be to restore peace and justice on earth and to prepare mankind for the Last Judgement.

The circumstances of the Mahdi's appearance are described in detail. However, neither hadiths nor local traditions specify when exactly one should expect him. Sometimes the Mahdi is identified with a *mujaddid* (renewer), who, according to hadiths, should appear on earth at the beginning of every century to purify religion.<sup>16</sup> As a result, tendencies to await the Mahdi intensify in certain moments of history, such as the ends of centuries in the Islamic calendar, times of wars and troubles or natural disasters, like the droughts that afflicted West Africa many times in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, triggering economic problems.<sup>17</sup>

As far as most of the signs of the hour go, they have a rather legendary nature, connected with the bad condition of the Muslim community occurring almost constantly, therefore enhancing the belief in the Mahdi's coming. Mahdists voice severe criticism of moral laxity among Muslims, express dissatisfaction with the present socio-economic situation and regard incumbent governments as ineffective, even illegal. The accumulation of various dissatisfactory issues is interpreted as the sign of the hour. Those who are aware of it should react to the problems faced by Muslims and prepare themselves for the coming of the Mahdi. The means of stemming the process of decay is *jihad* regarded as a fight – adopting various methods, including violent and non-violent ones – for the cause of God. Regardless of the presence or absence of violence, *jihad* is an essential component of Mahdist tradition. It can be perceived as a tool to prepare for the end of time and, when connected with *hijra* (emigration from territories inhabited by non-believers), a means to advance on the Mahdi and his army. Moreover, if we consider Mahdism in socio-economic categories, militant *jihad* remains a relevant method for a restless population to express its desire for improvement within a religious framework.<sup>18</sup>

Timothy Furnish,<sup>19</sup> an American scholar in Islamic eschatology, described Mahdist movements through naming their four central features. According to him, Mahdist movements are defined by a charismatic leader who claims to be (or is perceived by his followers to be) an eschatological Mahdi or great reformer of religion. The leader has a group of strongly devoted followers ready to take any necessary action – including military ones – to implement the rules proposed by him. What is more, the leader is absolutely certain that he is preparing the community for the total conversion of the temporary order to establish Islamic government and introduce Islamic Law. He is also convinced that he was chosen by God and does not have to respect the rule of *ijma*

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<sup>16</sup> See hadith collection by Abu Dawud, transl. Nasiruddin al-Khattab, Vol. 4, Book 36, No. 4291: “/.../At the beginning of every century Allah will send to this *Ummah* someone who will renew its religion”.

<sup>17</sup> Ewa Siwierska, ‘Tradycje mahdystyczne w Afryce Zachodniej’ [Mahdist traditions in West Africa], *Afryka*, Vol. 10, 1999, p. 14. For the correlation between millenarianism, natural disasters and their economic implications see also Barkun, ‘Millenarianism...’.

<sup>18</sup> Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria. The crisis of religious politics and secular ideologies*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1998, p. 233.

<sup>19</sup> I would like to notice here that I am fully aware of Furnish's politically engaged, biased views on current Islamic affairs voiced openly in recent times. However I decided to quote his opinions on Mahdism which I consider fully objective, taking into account his academic background.

(scholarly consensus), so he feels free to reinterpret the law and traditions in any way suitable for Muslims now, or useful for him.<sup>20</sup>

### Local depth of the Mahdist tradition

Throughout their long history in West Africa, Mahdist ideas have resounded in many religious reform campaigns in the region. Their significant role in inspiring certain Muslim movements makes a consideration of their influence necessary to understand current Islamic revivalist initiatives in northern Nigeria.

The history of Mahdism in West Africa began in the 15<sup>th</sup> century due to the widespread popularity of the works of Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (849–911), an Egyptian jurist, who wrote extensively on Islamic eschatological events. Al-Suyuti predicted that the Mahdi would emerge after the reign of twelve righteous caliphs, which he calculated for the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup> The ideas were later disseminated by Sufi orders, mainly Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya, which are broadly recognized in this region. Characteristic for the brotherhoods is the veneration for prominent scholars who are regarded as great religious reformers, whereas this concept is close to the idea of *mujaddid* in Mahdist traditions. Many Sufi scholars promote an ascetic life-style, perceiving temporal existence as an interim full of suffering and ordeal. The ideas of Islamic eschatology are recognizable in their teachings.<sup>22</sup>

Mahdist traditions contributed to the inspiration of jihadist movements in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Many followers of Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817), a leader of Fulani *jihad* in present-day northern Nigeria, identified him with an awaited Mahdi. Very knowledgeable and charismatic, he was nearly worshipped. Initially, Usman did not deny these rumours and used them to gain considerable support for the *jihad*. After consolidating his legitimacy, he denied speculation about his personality and stated he was not the Mahdi since he did not meet the criteria i.e., neither was he a descendant of Prophet Muhammad nor was he born in Mecca. Despite this claim, people perceived him at least as a *mujaddid* who would prepare Muslims for Mahdi's appearance.<sup>23</sup>

The idea revived by Usman dan Fodio flourished after his demise. Clear evidence of its importance is the fact that Usman's son, Muhammadu Bello (1781–1837), was so convinced of the imminent emergence of the Mahdi, that he sent spies to seek him out.<sup>24</sup> Fulani *jihad* also served as an inspiration for Muhammad Ahmad of Sudan, who in 1881 proclaimed himself the Mahdi and had been resisting British conquest for several years.<sup>25</sup> Considerable Mahdist commotion was incited in

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<sup>20</sup> Timothy Furnish, 'Dr. Timothy R. Furnish on Mahdism in Africa,' *Research on Islam and Muslims in Africa*, 7 May 2013, <https://muslimsinfrica.wordpress.com/2013/05/07/ask-the-expert-dr-timothy-r-furnish-on-mahdism-in-africa/> (accessed 4 March 2016).

<sup>21</sup> Falola, *Violence...*, p. 232.

<sup>22</sup> Siwierska, 'Tradycje...', pp. 14–15.

<sup>23</sup> Nikki R. Keddie, 'The revolt of Islam, 1700 to 1993: comparative considerations and relations to imperialism,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 36, No. 3, July 1994, pp. 476–481. On Usman dan Fodio and his *jihad* see also Mervyn Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth: the life and times of the Shehu Usman Dan Fodio*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

<sup>24</sup> Falola, *Violence...*, p. 232.

<sup>25</sup> On Mahdiyya in Sudan see: Peter M. Holt, 'The Sudanese Mahdia and the outside world: 1881–9,' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 21, No. 1/3, 1958, pp. 276–290.

the territory of present-day northern Nigeria by Hayatu ibn Sa'id (ca. 1840–1898<sup>26</sup>), a great-grandson of Usman dan Fodio, who in 1883 pledged allegiance to Muhammad Ahmad. Through preaching against the government of the Sokoto caliphate, perceived as corrupt decades after its establishment, Hayatu gathered many followers and migrated with them to the eastern edge of the caliphate in today's Adamawa state, where they rejected the Sokoto authorities and proclaimed a short-lived province of Ahmad's Mahdist state.<sup>27</sup>

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mahdist ideas continued to develop as a result of several anti-colonial initiatives. In 1902, a preacher known as Malam Maizanna proclaimed himself the Mahdi and called Muslims to reject British authority.<sup>28</sup> In 1903, the Sultan of Sokoto Attahiru I fled with his followers from colonial forces. They moved eastwards, to Bima hill, where they expected to meet the Mahdi.<sup>29</sup> In 1906, in Satiru near Sokoto, a Mahdist revolt broke out under the leadership of a village head named Isa and his aide, cleric Dan Makafo (Hausa: 'The Blind One').<sup>30</sup> In the same year, many preachers in Kontagora, Gombe and Bauchi called on Muslims to avoid paying taxes to the British and foretold of the imminent approach of the Mahdi.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, Mahdist ideas flourished on the eastern edge of the Sokoto caliphate territory. In the Mandara mountains on the present-day Cameroon-Nigeria border, where Boko Haram have their last bastion today, a strong Mahdist movement developed. People believed in a forthcoming emergence of the Mahdi in Balda village, a place of many miraculous events, according to local traditions.<sup>32</sup>

The rich Mahdist tradition in the territories of present-day northern Nigeria in general, and in its eastern part in particular, has played a significant role in inciting Islamic revivalist movements. A deep conviction that eschatological time is impending, combined with the opposition to illegitimate rulers identified either with a corrupt traditional Islamic establishment or external influences, or both, have appeared across this region over the centuries. In 1980, two decades after the end of the colonial era, the Maitatsine riots entered this trend and developed an aspect of aversion towards occidentalisation in the cultural sphere. Muhammadu Marwa, a leader of this insurgency, condemned the use of modern technology. He forbade his followers to possess cars, watches, passports, radios and any other invention that could be attributed to the West. Muhammadu Marwa proclaimed himself a prophet, what he expressed by replacing the name of Prophet Muhammad with his own in *shahada* (Islamic credo). In the northern Nigerian city of Kano he initiated an outburst of violent militancy against the authorities that left at least four thousand people dead. According

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<sup>26</sup> In the literature there are different dates for his death, ranging from 1897 to 1900. I rely on the date given by Andrew Walker, *'Eat the heart of the infidel': the harrowing of Nigeria and the rise of Boko Haram*, London: Hurst & Company, 2016, p. 57.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>28</sup> Dirk Kohnert, *Klassenbildung im ländlichen Nigeria: das Beispiel der Savannenbauern in Nupeland*, Hamburg: GIGA, 1982, p. 93.

<sup>29</sup> Walker, *'Eat...*, pp. 47, 58.

<sup>30</sup> See Paul E. Lovejoy and Jan S. Hogendorn, 'Revolutionary Mahdism and resistance to colonial rule in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1905–6,' *Journal of African History*, Vol. 31, 1990, pp. 220–226. Andrew Walker writes about a certain 'dan Mafako', which seems to be a literal error. See his *'Eat...*, pp. 58–59.

<sup>31</sup> Stanisław Piłaszewicz, 'Ruchy mahdystyczne w Afryce Zachodniej XX w.' [Mahdist movements in 20<sup>th</sup> century West Africa], *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, No. 3–4, 1994, p. 133.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 134. On myths about miracles in Balda see e.g. Martin Z. Njeuma, 'Adamawa and Mahdism: the career of Hayatu Ibn Sa'id in Adamawa, 1878–1898,' *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1971, p. 67.

to Abdalla Uba Adamu, Muhammadu Marwa might have been inspired by Mahdist traditions, as in this period Kano was the main base of Hayatu ibn Sa'id's successors.<sup>33</sup>

### Defining Mahdism in Nigerian context

Paul E. Lovejoy and Jan S. Hogendorn, in their notable paper published in 1990,<sup>34</sup> conceptualized the notion of Mahdism in two steps, based on Nigerian experience.<sup>35</sup> Firstly, they identified different political positions that Mahdists can advocate, namely: tolerance of established authority, with the concurrent belief that sooner or later the Mahdi will eventually appear; severe criticism towards existing regimes, including Islamic ones, which is often expressed through *hijra* from territories under illegal – in their opinion – governance, in the hope of meeting the Mahdi; replacement of incumbent officials by Mahdist followers, often through violent means; or revolutionary action with the intention to overthrow the current state and the social structure on which it is based.<sup>36</sup>

The second step of Lovejoy and Hogendorn's conceptualization process aimed at specifying the general description of Mahdist attitudes with three additional features for different types of West African Mahdism in general, and northern Nigerian in particular, namely: the primacy of religious belief, especially faith in the imminent arrival of the expected Mahdi; hostility to colonial rule connected with the conviction that the imposition of colonial administration was a distinct indication that the end of time was fast approaching; and opposition to the government of the Sokoto caliphate (which existed in the north of present-day Nigeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century) and its incumbent officials, both before and after the colonial conquest.<sup>37</sup>

Although Lovejoy and Hogendorn published their paper in 1990, they decided to restrict the definition of the Mahdist movement only to the colonial period. However, the scope of analysis may be broadened to the subsequent era because Mahdist traditions still existed in postcolonial Nigeria. The significant development of a Mahdist thread in post-independence Nigeria is recorded in the form of *wakokin wa'azi* i.e., Hausa religious verse describing eschatological events, which dates back to the early pre-colonial period, but has not perished in the era of independence. Abdulkadir Dangambo registered Mahdist plots in poems dated to the 1960s and 1970s, the first two decades of the post-colonial period.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, John N. Paden mentioned the popularity, although limited, of the Mahdiyya movement inspired by the followers of Sudanese Mahdi Muhammad Ahmad (d. 1885) in post-independence Kano city.<sup>39</sup> This thread was further developed by Asma'u G. Saeed, who published a paper on leaders of the Mahdiyya movement in Kano in the

<sup>33</sup> Adamu, 'Insurgency in Nigeria...', pp. 94–95.

<sup>34</sup> Lovejoy and Hogendorn, 'Revolutionary...', pp. 217–244.

<sup>35</sup> Lovejoy and Hogendorn's conceptualization process is built on three steps with the third one restricted only to revolutionary features of Mahdism. They define Mahdism in general in the first two steps.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>38</sup> He analysed these plots in his two works: *Hausa wa'azi verse from ca 1800 to ca 1970: a critical study of the form, content language, and style*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1979; 'The 'signs of the hour' among the Muslim Hausa, with special reference to their verse,' *Kano Studies*, NS, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1980, pp. 150–161.

<sup>39</sup> John N. Paden, *Religion and political culture in Kano*, Berkley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1973, p. 179.

second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>40</sup> Last but not least, Mahdist theory should not be limited to the colonial era because during independence some riots in Nigeria were incited by self-appointed Mahdis. The most vivid example of these insurgencies was the above-mentioned Maitatsine riot in Nigerian Kano city (1980) and its echoes in Maiduguri in north-eastern Nigeria (1982), Yola in present-day Adamawa state (1984) and Gombe (1985).<sup>41</sup>

Based on a conceptualization of the notion of Mahdism by Lovejoy and Hogendorn I propose a more general definition broadened to the post-colonial era. Thus the main features of Mahdism with special regard to its Nigerian variant should comprise: the primacy of religious belief, especially faith in the imminent arrival of the expected Mahdi (unchanged); hostility to colonial and neo-colonial powers, as well as to a loosely-interpreted category of external (excluding Middle Eastern) influences in cultural, socio-economic and political affairs, connected with the conviction that these influences are distinct indications that the end of time is fast approaching; and opposition to the traditional Muslim elites perceived as collaborators of external powers.

### Muhammad Yusuf's *jihad* vs. Mahdism

Muhammad Yusuf inspired a *jihad* which has been waged by Boko Haram for seven years now. As a Muslim thinker, he constructed an ideology that laid the foundations for the military violence applied by his followers. His direct contribution to provoking horrific war in north-eastern Nigeria is ambiguous. In his teachings, he used the idea of violent and non-violent *jihad*. His position on military *jihad* is clearly given in his *tafsir* (commentary) to Qur'anic 9<sup>th</sup> Surah, "Tauba" (Repentance) or "Baraat" (Immunity).<sup>42</sup> He called his followers not to put their weapons down, as Muslims were in interminable conflict with non-believers. For him, the day of violent *jihad* was imminent. To instruct his followers how to react to inter-religious violence in Nigeria, he quoted the 13<sup>th</sup> verse of the Surah, which reads: "Will ye not fight people/Who violated their oaths,/Plotted to expel the Apostle,/And took the aggressive/By being the first (to assault) you?/Do ye fear them? Nay,/It is God Whom ye should/More justly fear, if ye believe!".<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, in one of his public speeches, he proposed the non-violent interpretation of *jihad*, saying: "*Jihad* will not happen without us. (...) Those who entered Paradise had striven (Hausa: *sun yi jihadi*) for God. They had written literary works, fulfilled their religious obligations, and read books".<sup>44</sup> In this manner, he promoted *jihad* understood as the intellectual development of Muslim society. In the framework of this analysis, I use the notion of *jihad* in the two above-mentioned meanings. When I refer to *jihad* I mean all his activities taken up in the struggle in the name of religion, i.e. preaching, teaching, writing literary works, partaking in theological disputes, leading his followers in religious affairs, and inciting to violence.

In the framework of a non-violent *jihad* Muhammad Yusuf preached regularly, calling his followers to abandon immoral habits to purify religion. He used to meet his followers every Friday

<sup>40</sup> Asma'u G. Saeed, 'Kano and the Mahdiyya: leaders of the Mahdiyya movement, the emirs and the ulama, 1946–2000,' *FAIS Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 2, No. 1, April 2002, pp. 196–219.

<sup>41</sup> Adamu, 'Insurgency...', p. 97.

<sup>42</sup> The *tafsir* available on-line: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y33rL\\_D\\_6pw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y33rL_D_6pw) and next parts (accessed 5 July 2016).

<sup>43</sup> *The Holy Qur'an*, Text, Translation and Commentary by A. Yusuf Ali, Published by Amana Corp. Brentwood, Maryland, 1983, pp. 441–442.

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Yusuf's speech available on-line: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xthVNq9OKD0> (accessed 5.06.2016). Translation from Hausa is mine.

in mosques of Maiduguri, the biggest city in north-eastern Nigeria. Due to his charisma and oratory skills, he gained a considerable group of devoted supporters. During a couple of the last years of Muhammad Yusuf's life, his supporters were those people who had tried to implement his ideology in a violent way. Over time they started attacking representatives of the state administration, government and armed forces. They were so devoted to their master's ideology that they decided to make Muhammad Yusuf's vision of religious conversion really happen. They were ready to use every possible method – including military action – to achieve this goal.

It seems that Muhammad Yusuf was fully aware of his charisma and took advantage of it. Adamu Dibal, who in 2004 was a deputy governor of Borno State, described how Muhammad Yusuf persuaded him to negotiate on his behalf with the government in order to legalize his return to the country after one of many expulsions, telling him that he was non-violent. Remembering how Muhammad Yusuf had taken the opportunity to use Dibal's contacts with intelligence officers, the latter said about the former: "It is true he was brilliant. He had this kind of monopoly in convincing the youth about the Holy Qur'an and Islam".<sup>45</sup>

Muhammad Yusuf was perceived by his followers as a charismatic leader. However, as far as we know his ideology he never claimed to be the expected Mahdi. Mahdism in his teachings was dealt with clearly. In his book he wrote: "We love the family of the Prophet Muhammad (Arabic: *Ahl al-Bayt*), God's messenger. We believe that Jesus, the son of Mariam, will be sent in the end of time to establish the just rules. We believe in the Mahdi and his name will be Muhammad ibn Abd Allah. He will be a descendant of the Prophet like was given in the hadith".<sup>46</sup> He was familiar with Mahdist tradition and did not reject it. His followers identified him with a great reformer of religion. Several years after his demise they still rely on his authority, which is proved by the fact that in periods of Boko Haram's eclipse they use his image in propaganda videos in order to regain its lost respect as a religious revivalist movement.<sup>47</sup>

The next component of the Mahdist tradition, i.e. eschatological ideas, are easily noticeable in Muhammad Yusuf's teachings. We can find references to the Resurrection Day (Hausa: *ranar tashin alkiyama*) in one of his Ramadan *tafsirs*, where he described the way God will treat sinners during the Last Judgement.<sup>48</sup> In his book, he pointed to the Resurrection Day and Last Judgement as the events that would bring an awaited end to the hardship of Islamic struggle, carried out through *jihad* and *hijra*.<sup>49</sup> Besides, in his last recorded public speech, where he explained why, in his opinion, his followers should fight the Nigerian government, Muhammad Yusuf equated the way Muslims were treated by the armed forces with the end-time events: "The Prophet said (...) that this world will collapse (...), earth will be destroyed, the sky will break into pieces, stars will emaciate, the moon will break down, the sun will break down, rivers will dry up, and mountains will melt".<sup>50</sup> Then he

<sup>45</sup> Mike Smith, *Boko Haram: inside Nigeria's unholy war*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2015, pp. 78–79.

<sup>46</sup> Yusuf, *Hadhihi...*, p. 51.

<sup>47</sup> Jacob Zenn, 'A biography of Boko Haram and the bay'a to al-Baghdadi,' *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 8, No. 3, March 2015, p. 21.

<sup>48</sup> Muhammad Yusuf, *Ramadan tafsir*, available on-line: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mxrt07Gl6G0&list=PLbai-O5hJvf63GwhGgd8Pn2\\_mIVwhqe-l&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mxrt07Gl6G0&list=PLbai-O5hJvf63GwhGgd8Pn2_mIVwhqe-l&index=3) (accessed 5 July 2016). The video is dated 1429 of *hijra*, Ramadan month. It equals to September 2008.

<sup>49</sup> Yusuf, *Hadhihi...*, p. 51.

<sup>50</sup> Muhammad Yusuf, *Budaddiyar wasika zuwa ga gwamnatin Tarayyar Najeriya* [Open letter to the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria], 12 June 2009, available on-line: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f89PvcPWSRg> (accessed 5 July 2016). Translation from Hausa is mine.

referred to the recent situation when eighteen of his followers were wounded by the police during a funeral ceremony. For Muhammad Yusuf, the above-mentioned signs of the hour go alongside a state when the blood of innocent Muslims is shed by illegitimate forces.<sup>51</sup>

The eschatological character of Muhammad Yusuf's *jihad* is also visible through the prism of the idea of the world's total conversion through replacing secular government with an Islamic one. In many of his speeches, he equated Nigerian secular government with paganism (Hausa: *kafirci*). "Sharia is true. The constitution is false, it's pagan. Democracy is clearly false. Those who work for the government work for falseness and paganism. The military system, police forces and Nigerian administration of justice under the constitution are false and pagan. (...) The sinners should see the Islamic flag<sup>52</sup> in the place where *taghut*<sup>53</sup> rules".<sup>54</sup>

Muhammad Yusuf strongly condemned western influences in education, politics and culture. Criticism towards external influences was the main point of his ideology. This was presented comprehensively in a paper by Anonymous.<sup>55</sup> The author described Muhammad Yusuf's teachings in two main modules: condemnation of modern secular (equated by Muhammad Yusuf with western) education and criticism towards employment in Nigerian government. Muhammad Yusuf considered them both *haram* i.e., religiously forbidden to Muslims. He regarded those who do not respect this prohibition as non-believers, implementing to his ideology the practice of *takfir* (excommunication). Hostility towards western influences was an important component of his teachings, especially when analysed in the framework of Mahdist traditions.

Muhammad Yusuf also impaired the power of Muslim elites, accusing Islamic scholars of moral corruption and cooperating with the un-Islamic government. The latter was mainly applicable to the members of the 'Yan Izala movement (Arabic: *Jama'at Izalat al-Bid'a wa-Iqamat al-Sunna*, "The Community for the Eradication of un-Islamic Innovations and the Establishment of the Sunna"), which represents the mainstream Salafi trend in Nigeria. Members of the 'Yan Izala popularize the idea of gradual Islamization of Nigerian governmental structures, which was strongly condemned by Muhammad Yusuf. His criticism towards Muslim elites was clearly elaborated in his fierce disputes with the most prominent Islamic scholars of Maiduguri and other Nigerian cities, like Isa Aliyu Ibrahim Pantami<sup>56</sup> and Ja'far Mahmud Adam, a 'Yan Izala member.<sup>57</sup> Taking the disputes into account, the fact that Muhammad Yusuf did not respect the *ijma* is clear. He adopted his own, partly literal, way of Qur'an and hadith interpretation, and drew controversial conclusions

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<sup>51</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>52</sup> Lit. "flag with an image of donkey and bird" (Hausa: *tuta mai jaki da tsuntsu*) which is a reference to one of Islamic symbols, al-Buraq. According to hadiths, it was a creature with a human face, wings and donkey's trunk. It carried Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Jerusalem during a night journey to heaven, where he received parts of Islamic revelation.

<sup>53</sup> The term *taghut* refers to pre-Islamic idols in Mecca. See Toufic Fahd and Frank H. Stewart, 'Taghut,' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden: Brill Academic Publisher, 2003 (cd-edition). It is used in a general context of un-Islamic objects of worship.

<sup>54</sup> Muhammad Yusuf's Hausa translation of his book, available on-line: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWfWa2rfsKw&index=6&list=PLbai-O5hJvf63GwhGgd8Pn2\\_mlVwhqe-l](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWfWa2rfsKw&index=6&list=PLbai-O5hJvf63GwhGgd8Pn2_mlVwhqe-l) (accessed 6 July 2016). Translation from Hausa is mine.

<sup>55</sup> Anonymous, 'The popular discourses of Salafi radicalism and Salafi counter-radicalism in Nigeria: a case study of Boko Haram,' *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 42, 2012, pp. 118–144.

<sup>56</sup> Disputes with Isa Aliyu Ibrahim Pantami were analysed by Adamu, 'Insurgency...', pp. 103–109.

<sup>57</sup> Disputes with Ja'far Mahmud Adam were analysed by Anonymous, 'The popular...'

that were later criticized as ignorant by mainstream Islamic scholars.<sup>58</sup> Muhammad Yusuf's discord with Muslim elites became clear when he rejected several attempts of scholars to convince him to moderate his ideas.<sup>59</sup>

## Conclusion

As we can see from the above characteristics of Muhammad Yusuf's teachings and attitudes, his *jihad* was partly inspired by the concept of Mahdism. He was a charismatic leader and consciously took advantage of his position. He gained a group of numerous devoted followers, who were ready to start military *jihad* despite the fact that he did not participate physically in this form of struggle. Muhammad Yusuf questioned the legitimacy of Nigerian authorities and proposed to replace them with the caliphate structures under Islamic law. He also condemned western influences in local cultural, social and political affairs, sometimes putting them in the eschatological context. He did not respect *ijma* and he did not esteem Muslim scholars, proposing his own interpretation of Qur'anic verses, which were not accepted by Nigerian mainstream Islamic thinkers.

According to the definition of Mahdism developed in this paper, there are three main components of this concept: the ubiquitous presence of eschatological discourse, hostility to external (western) influences and discontent with Muslim elites. Three of them are present in Muhammad Yusuf's ideology and create its core, which indicates that his teachings were influenced by local traditions of Mahdism. What is important, we have no evidence that Muhammad Yusuf was regarded as the Mahdi by his followers. He also never claimed to be one. Although, Mahdist discourse is clearly noticeable in his teachings with sporadic direct references to the person of Mahdi and a much more considerable number of references to end-time events. Moreover, taking into consideration the dominance of clearly eschatological references over those mentioning the Mahdi directly, we can assume that Muhammad Yusuf was not fully aware of this influence. In fact, we can conclude that he unconsciously adopted parts of rich local Mahdist traditions, described briefly in this paper.

One can assume that the concept of Mahdism is not fully applicable to describe the ideas of Muhammad Yusuf and his followers because the main ideologues of the group with their Salafist inspirations may in fact perceive Mahdism as an innovation, propagated mainly by the Sufi orders.<sup>60</sup> Although such an assumption seems relevant, Mahdist plots are becoming a handy tool in the Salafi mode of conduct. Contrary to Shiism, in Sunni Islam, Mahdism is focused rather on charismatic, effective leadership more than mysticism. Central to this tradition is the significance of *mujaddid*, who aims to restore the Golden Age of Islam. In this context, Mahdism can be used by some movements as a means to promote the Salafi ideology of revivalism and purification of religion. Olivier Hanne and Thomas Flichy de La Neuville noticed considerable advocacy of Mahdist rhetoric in Islamic State's propaganda materials.<sup>61</sup>

Of course, the influence of Mahdist traditions on Muhammad Yusuf's ideology by no means determines the overwhelmingly Mahdist character of his followers' movement. The theory of

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<sup>58</sup> Roman Loimeier, 'Boko Haram: the development of a militant religious movement in Nigeria,' *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 47, No. 2–3, 2012, p. 149.

<sup>59</sup> Anonymous, 'The popular...', esp. p. 138.

<sup>60</sup> This view is shared by Andrew Walker, 'Eat...', p. 150.

<sup>61</sup> Olivier Hann, Thomas Flichy de La Neuville, *Państwo Islamskie. Geneza nowego kalifatu* [Islamic State: the genesis of a new caliphate], Warszawa: Dialog, 2015, pp. 83–85.

Mahdism can serve only as a perspective within a broader analysis of the movement's nature. Certainly, Mahdism should be considered as a relevant factor shaping Muhammad Yusuf's idea of *jihad*, taking into account the popularity of Mahdist traditions in northern Nigeria and parallels between them and Yusuf's teachings. However, this factor is only one among many local and external inspirations that can be found in Muhammad Yusuf's teachings.

## The Afropolitanism and Portrayal of Nigerian Women in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Short Story Collection *The Thing Around Your Neck*

### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to provide a comparative analysis of the representations of Nigerian women in a short story collection *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. In a feminist critical reading I will examine two texts: *The Arrangers of Marriage* and *Jumping Monkey Hill*, focusing on the notion of Afropolitanism, a term coined by Taiye Selasi, who posed a question about multiple identity and sense of belonging, as well as challenging the enduring problematics of the hybrid, cross-cultural experiences of Africans living in a different cultural context. Furthermore, the paper identifies the gender issues that have affected Nigerian women within new socio-cultural landscapes, such as female consciousness about gender roles, subversion and Afropolitan practices towards empowerment and self-awareness.

### Introduction

The general insights into a variety of female characters in all the works of the contemporary writer of Nigerian origin, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie<sup>1</sup>, from her debut novel about a patriarchal Igbo family *Purple Hibiscus* (2003),<sup>2</sup> *For Love of Biafra* (1998),<sup>3</sup> *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006),<sup>4</sup> *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009),<sup>5</sup> through *Americanah* (2013)<sup>6</sup> and *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014)<sup>7</sup> gives the impression of a constant redefinition of social and cultural phenomena as well as the author's feminist approach. As one sees in her works, the leading themes are as follows: traditional female social and gender roles, motherhood, family, children's upbringing, patriarchal practices and their tolls on daily relationships.<sup>8</sup>

Likewise, the collection *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009), that consists of twelve stories published earlier in magazines and journals, depicts the recent life of Nigerian women in Nigeria and the United States of America, exploring the recurrent themes of family relations, gender issues, history, diasporic identity, migration, inheritance laws, racism, love, culture conflicts, youthful exuberance, religion, corruption, the Nigerian Civil war and experiences of corporate prostitution.<sup>9</sup> The collections includes: *Cell One*, *Imitation*, *A Private Experience*, *Ghosts*, *On Monday of Last Week*, *Jumping Monkey Hill*, *The Thing Around Your Neck*, *The American Embassy*, *The Shivering*,

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<sup>1</sup> Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born on 15 September 1977 in Abba, Anambra State, Nigeria. She is a writer, academic teacher and activist living in the United States of America.

<sup>2</sup> Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*, Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *For Love of Biafra*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, London: Fourth Estate, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, *The Thing around Your Neck*, London: Fourth Estate, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, *Americanah*, London: Fourth Estate, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Idem, *We Should All Be Feminists*, London: Harper Collins, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Ferdinand Iorbee Asoo, 'The Short Stories of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie,' *AFRREV IJAH. An International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 2012, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 13–27.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Alvin Miller and Gloria Nne Onyeoziri, 'Willful and/or Imposed Alienation in Recent African Emigration Narratives: Chimamanda Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck*, Fatou Diomé's *Le Ventre de L'Atlantique*, and Henry Lopes's *Une enfant de Poto-Poto*,' in *Fears, Doubts and Joys of Not Belonging*, Benjamin Hart Fishkin and Bill F. Ndi (eds.), Bamenda: Langaa Research & Publishing Common Initiative Group, 2014, p.197–214.

*The Arrangers of Marriage*, *Tomorrow is Too Far* and *The Headstrong Historian*. The stories, which are set in Nigeria, for instance in Nsukka, a university town in the south of the country, reveal the narratives of women, who often find themselves at ambiguous and complicated moments of crisis, revealing their exploited and neglected status. As we read in *A Private Experience*, an Igbo Christian student is obligated to find shelter with an older Hausa Muslim woman in an abandoned store, while machete-wielding attackers kill people in the streets during ethnic riots. In *The American Embassy* a woman waits in a queue at the American Embassy to apply for political asylum in the US to follow her husband, an activist and journalist, after the murder of her four-year-old son by government forces in Umuunnachi.

The range of concerns interwoven into the stories is wide, as it is also in those set in the United States. Female characters struggle to reconstruct their identities in a new cultural and political setting, as with the young girl from *The Arrangers of Marriage* who has just entered into an arranged marriage with a Nigerian doctor based in New York. Firstly, several of her stories uncover the cultural, social and racial variety and hybridity by which diasporic women are actively marked. Secondly, they highlight peculiarities of African communities living in the United States and portray the problems faced by first-generation Nigerian migrants, who soon come to be called Afropolitans, as represented in the stories *Imitation* and *The Thing Around your Neck*.<sup>10</sup>

All of the stories have a female narrator or protagonist, focusing on specific diasporic experience with relevance to contemporary gender issues. They are made up of a multiplicity of social forms in Nigerian (Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba) and American cultures and interlaced boundaries that are entangled in myriad ways in public discourse. Adichie, in an interview with Belinda Otas, explains in the issue: "the problem of gender is that it prescribes who we should be instead of recognising who we are. Imagine how much freer we would be if we did not have to live under the weight of gender expectations. Culture does not make people; people make culture. A feminist is a man or a woman who says there's a problem with gender and we must fix it".<sup>11</sup> As a result, in her narration she puts forward the model of femininity derived from Igbo culture, with respective portraits of wives and paternal figures, which suggests the writer's concern with issues of gender and the ongoing process of cultural practices on individual woman and her family also living abroad.

### Methodological framework

The sample for this research is two texts from *The Thing Around Your Neck*, which are respectively *The Arrangers of Marriage* and *Jumping Monkey Hill*. They have been chosen for analysis as they serve as examples of contemporary Nigerian women's narratives contextualized in a postcolonial environment and a hybrid Afropolitan background.

For the purpose of this particular study at least two different analytic approaches have been explored to enhance the credibility and depth and breadth of the findings. Hence, the content analysis process was based on narrative and discourse analysis, as well as three initial coding methods: narrative coding (locating literary techniques e.g. arguments), versus coding (identifying

<sup>10</sup> Fouad Mami, 'Circumventing Cultural Reification: A Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck*,' *Romanian Journal of English Studies*, Vol. 11, Issue 1, p. 215–225.

<sup>11</sup> Belinda Otas, 'Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: Africa needs Feminism,' *New African Woman, Women's Month Special*, February/March 2013, p. 49.

conflicts and tensions between individuals in the text) and values coding (describing values and attitudes held by the characters), which provided the interpreter with indispensable tools for a synthesis of qualitative data for ongoing comparison.<sup>12</sup> Inevitably, I focused on selected female characters' narratives and stories either about themselves or a set of events concerning social practices and relations on a macro- and micro-level, concentrating on the sequential unfolding of the story with an emphasis on the use of repertoire, rhetorical strategies and characters.

Furthermore, the textual analysis and conclusion incorporate the most appropriate theoretical framework for literary and gender studies,<sup>13</sup> revisiting Taiye Selasi's and Achille Mbembe's concept of Afropolitanism, which will be briefly introduced below. I address how short stories respond to theories articulated by critics of the contextualisation regarding divergent definitions of Afropolitan identity. However, a short overview is required into Nigerian female novels, especially their relationship to feminist issues.

### The notion of Afropolitanism

The origin of the term "Afropolitanism" (created out of the words "African" and "cosmopolitanism") is traced to an article titled *Bye-Bye Babar (What is Afropolitanism?)* by Taiye Selasi, published in the *LIP Magazine* in 2005.<sup>14</sup> Selasi, a British-born and American-raised writer of Nigerian and Ghanaian origin, primarily used the phrase to describe Africans who live outside of the continent in a global, urban environment, creating the new-generation of transnational or trans-Atlantic Africans. She states:

like so many African young people working and living in cities around the globe, they belong to no single geography, but feel at home in many. They (read: we) are Afropolitans – the newest generation of African emigrants, coming soon or collected already at a law firm/chem lab/jazz lounge near you. You'll know us by our funny blend of London fashion, New York jargon, African ethics and academic successes. Some of us are ethnic mixes, e.g. Ghanaian and Canadian, Nigerian and Swiss; others merely cultural mutts: American accent, European affect, African ethos. Most of us are multilingual: in addition to English and a Romantic or two, we understand some indigenous tongue and speak a few urban vernaculars. There is at least one place on The African Continent to which we tie our sense of self: be it a nation-state (Ethiopia), a city (Ibadan), or an auntie's kitchen [...] We are Afropolitans: not citizens, but Africans of the world.<sup>15</sup>

As clearly emerges from Selasi's own definition, the neologism refers not only to the generation of upper and middle class Africans, rooted both in Africa and settled elsewhere, but also young Africans, who in their own country share knowledge about global orientation and cosmopolitan lifestyle. The most valued hybridity, dislocation, plurilinguism, movement and syncretism complicate each African identity (Nigerian, Ghanaian or another, respectively), as a Kenyan scholar – Simon Gikandi notes: "Afropolitan is to be connected to knowable African communities, nations, and traditions; but it is also to live a life divided across cultures, languages,

<sup>12</sup> Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2009, p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> Krystyna Kłosińska, *Feministyczna krytyka literacka* [Feminist Literary Criticism], Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2010; Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*, London: Routledge, 2002.

<sup>14</sup> Taiye Selasi, *Bye-Bye Babar (What is Afropolitanism?)*, 3 March 2005, <http://thelip.robertsharp.co.uk/?p=76> (accessed 5 July 2016).

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem.

and states. It is to embrace and celebrate a state of cultural hybridity – to be of Africa and of other worlds at the same time”.<sup>16</sup>

Later on, from a theoretical standpoint Afropolitanism has acquired currency and been popularised within academic discourse by African scholars such as Chielozone Eze<sup>17</sup>, a Nigerian poet and philosopher, and Achille Mbembe<sup>18</sup>, a Cameroonian philosopher and political scientist, who have both presented a different approach to the formulated definition of an Afropolitan. Mbembe, with his 2006 essay *Afropolitanism*, attempts to reterritorialize the concept and emphasizes the shifting and cosmopolitan nature of African peoples' experiences in migration from and within the African continent. He argues that Afropolitanism, as an “aesthetic and a particular poetic to the world” is underlined by a cultural, historical and aesthetic sensitivity, and social phenomena such as “cultural mixing”, “the interweaving of worlds”, an “African way of belonging to the world” have been and still are the spaces of flow, flux, translocation, with multiple nexuses of entry and exit points.<sup>19</sup> As Jean-Luc Nancy poignantly notes, “the world is a multiplicity of worlds, and its unity is the mutual sharing and exposition of all its worlds – within this world”.<sup>20</sup> However, after critical examination of the representations, transgressions of spaces, in contemporary African literature, culture and folklore, researchers from the African intellectual community admit that there is still social, cultural, political and analytical value in the concept, since it applies well to a significant range of people that have fluid connections to Africa, while identifying more as global citizens of the world than any particular nation state, for instance Nigeria.<sup>21</sup>

The concept has become the reference point for many social critics, including Emma Dabiri<sup>22</sup>, Binyavanga Wainaina<sup>23</sup> and Brian Bwesigye.<sup>24</sup> They have taken issue with the broader Afropolitan discourse. In the article *Exorcizing Afropolitanism*, Bosch Santana outlines that Wainaina, a prominent Kenyan writer and founding editor of the literary magazine *Kwani?*, during a conference

<sup>16</sup> Simon Gikandi, 'Foreword: On Afropolitanism,' in *Negotiating Afropolitanism: Essays on borders and spaces in contemporary African literature and folklore*, Jennifer Wawrzinek and J.K.S. Makokha (eds.), Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi 2011, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Chielozone Eze, 'Rethinking African culture and identity: The Afropolitan model,' *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2014, p. 234–247.

<sup>18</sup> Achille Mbembe, 'Afropolitanism,' in *Africa Remix: Contemporary art of a continent*, Simon Njami and Lucy Durán (eds.), Johannesburg: Johannesburg Art Gallery 2007, p. 26–30.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000, p. 185.

<sup>21</sup> J.K.S. Makokha, 'Introduction: In the Spirit of Afropolitanism,' in Wawrzinek, Makokha, *Negotiating Afropolitanism...*, p. 13–22.

<sup>22</sup> Emma Dabiri, 'Why I'm Not An Afropolitan,' *Africa Is A Country*, 21 January 2014, <http://africasacountry.com/why-im-not-an-afropolitan/> (accessed 1 July 2016).

<sup>23</sup> Stephanie Bosch Santana, 'Exorcizing Afropolitanism: Binyavanga Wainaina explains why “I am a Pan-Africanist, not an Afropolitan” at ASAUK 2012,' *Africainwords* (2013), <http://africainwords.com/2013/02/08/exorcizing-afropolitanism-binyavanga-wainainaexplains-why-i-am-a-pan-africanist-not-an-afropolitan-at-asauk-2012> (accessed 3 July 2016).

<sup>24</sup> Brian Bwesigye, 'Is Afropolitanism Africa's New Single Story? Reading Helon Habila's Review of *We Need New Names*,' *A Journal of Literature, Art, Criticism*, 22 November 2013, <http://asterixjournal.com/afropolitanism-african-new-single-story-reading-helon-habilas-review-need-new-names-brian-bwesigye/> (accessed 2 July 2016).

of the African Studies Association UK in 2012, confronting the issue stated: “I am a Pan-Africanist, not an Afropolitan”.<sup>25</sup> According to Wainaina, Afropolitanism has become the marker of a crude, cultural commodification of African culture (through social media, fashion, design, food and the art market) and a phenomenon increasingly product-driven, design-focused, and potentially funded by the West. However, this commodified Afropolitanism might be well spread by literary fiction as a location for the elaboration of African identities, as he explains: “overall, a spirit of Afropolitanism has led to texts that are product, rather than process-focused, a trend that can perhaps be changed as more and more literature goes digital”.<sup>26</sup>

The editor of *Afropolitan* magazine, Brendah Nyakudya, in his interview to CNN agrees that is a highly problematic term, because “it is supposed to combine (the words) African and cosmopolitan [...] What it should mean is an African person in an urban environment, with the outlook and mindset that comes with urbanization – people who live in Lagos, Nairobi, and have this world-facing outlook”.<sup>27</sup> The discourse about African identities continues to evolve and is reconstructed widely through popular culture and literature.<sup>28</sup> It is also a reason for making comparisons to the 20<sup>th</sup> century Pan-Africanist movement. Nonetheless, it is rooted not in the politics, but in a cultural aesthetic calling for a current reinterpretation rather than return to African values. It has moved beyond merely rhetoric or conceptual discourse and into the social identity and practices of Nigerians, who experienced connection to other cultural or political backgrounds and, according to Alpha Abebe, it generally masks class differences and inequities within the African diaspora, however it regularly challenges gender roles and representations.<sup>29</sup> It is used in popular literature as a marker of identity, and as will be presented through the works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, it forms a critical worldview of young Nigerian women. Despite the fact that the concept is intended to overcome Afrocentrism and Afro-pessimism (the belief that African societies are trapped in the past and permanent underdevelopment), it also reveals the occurrence of conventional and discriminatory practices towards women.

### **Afropolitan women’s narratives – Textual analysis of selected works**

Ways of seeing and reading about contemporary Nigerian women up to the beginning of post-colonial discourse were dominated by the metanarrative of the lack of human rights, neglect on one side and over-expressed sexuality on the other.<sup>30</sup> The roots of this stereotyped metanarrative are to be located in the tenets of colonial writings, when the problems facing women were conceived of being less important or omitted completely. However, the changes starting from the 1960s saw

<sup>25</sup> Bosh Santana, *Exorcizing Afropolitanism...*

<sup>26</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>27</sup> Marta Tveit, ‘The Afropolitan Must Go,’ *Africa is A Country*, 28 November 2013, <http://africasacountry.com/2013/11/the-afropolitan-must-go/> (accessed 5 July 2016).

<sup>28</sup> Therefore, terms like Afropolitan, Afro-Optimist, Afro-Klectic, Afro-Phile, Afro-Centric and Afri-Capitalist are being recognised and define a modern movement in creative realms from fashion to literature.

<sup>29</sup> Alpha Abebe, *Afropolitanism: Global Citizenship with African Routes*, 4 April 2014, Debating Development, The Oxford Department of International Development (ODID), <http://blog.qeh.ox.ac.uk/?p=910> (accessed 3 July 2016).

<sup>30</sup> M. Farida Begum, *Feminism in West African novel*, New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2010. See more: Chin Ce, Charles Smith, *Gender issues in African literature*, Enugu: Handel Books, 2010; Stephanie Newell, *Writing African women: gender, popular culture, and literature in West Africa*, London, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books, 1997; Heather Hewett, ‘Rewriting Human Rights: Gender, Violence and Freedom in the Fiction of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie,’ in *The Critical Imagination in African Literature: Essays in Honor of Michael J.C. Echeruo*, Maik Nwosu and Obiwu (eds.), New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015, p. 166–183.

the emergence of several female writers (the vast majority from southern Nigeria, for instance Flora Nwapa or Buchi Emecheta), who were consciously distancing themselves from the project of misrepresentation of women in popular literature. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of those writers, concerned with 'nomadism, exile, displacement and deracination', who emerged from an acclaimed third generation of Nigerian female writers based in parallel formations in three cities: Ibadan, Nsukka and Lagos, that have acquired a strong reputation in Nigeria's literary history (including also writers Teju Cole and Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani).<sup>31</sup> The attention paid to her notable works explores the critical reaction to portraying Nigerian women within fictional narrative forms and broad-based African feminism, which also includes diasporic African women's writing.

As Selasi concludes, "ultimately, the Afropolitan must form an identity along at least three dimensions: national, racial, cultural – with subtle tensions in between".<sup>32</sup> Since the stories are useful to redress the representation of Afropolitan women, I will analyse, how Nigerian women are being portrayed regarding the impact of the strongest, third dimension, which is the context of Nigerian cultures. This section examines two strategies of portrayals that refer to proposed social and cultural deconstructions of femininities and masculinities:

1. *The Arrangers of Marriage* – women's consciousness about resistance and subversion toward oppressive social or gender roles, domestic dictatorship and gender bias.
2. *The Jumping Monkey Hill* – Afropolitan active practices toward agency, female empowerment and self-awareness.

**a) *The Arrangers of Marriage* – women's consciousness about resistance and subversion toward oppressive social or gender roles, domestic dictatorship and gender bias**

Gender bias supports the notion that Nigerian women are weaklings who can be treated violently without concern. Adichie, in her stories full of feminist attitude, identifies and confronts various sources of oppression, such as forced marriage.<sup>33</sup> According to Azuiku, Adichie's works fundamentally indict the patriarchal oppression of women and also encourage women to assert themselves irrespective of cultural norms and archaic traditions which have denied them their human rights and have largely promoted their subordination.<sup>34</sup> The author underlines the importance of this aspect through her writings and in *The Arrangers of Marriage* introduces a distinctive consciousness behind a Nigerian girl's relocation to the US.

This first representation deals with the image of a young Igbo woman named Chinaza Agatha Udenwa who is pressured to marry Ofodile Emeka Udenwa, also a Nigerian, but also an American-based doctor who has been fraudulently married before. The narrative is facilitated by her arrival in the United States from Nigeria prior to which Chinaza had seen her world through the relationship with her newly married husband. At the beginning she says with disappointment and a strong feeling of insecurity: "I had imagined a smooth driveway snaking between cucumber-

<sup>31</sup> Pius Adesanmi and Chris Dunton, 'Nigeria's Third Generation Writing: Historiography and Preliminary Theoretical Considerations,' *English in Africa*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2005, p. 16.

<sup>32</sup> Selasi, *Bye-Bye Babar...*

<sup>33</sup> Emelda Ucham and Jairos Kangira, 'African Hybrids: Exploring Afropolitan identity formation in Taiye Selasi's *Ghana must go* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*,' *Journal for Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 1 & 2, 2015, p. 42–43.

<sup>34</sup> Maureen Amaka Azuiku, 'Women's Struggles and Independence in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*,' *African Research Review*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 2009, p. 80–81.

coloured lawns, a door leading into a hallway, walls with sedate paintings. A house of those of the white newlyweds as in the American films that NTA showed on Saturday nights... [But] the room was hot; old, musty smells hung heavy in the air”.<sup>35</sup> For her new situation she repeatedly blames family members – arrangers of marriage, however, without performing any open revolt. She suffers from the burden of expectations placed upon her by Nigerian relatives in the home country, which she has to fulfil. As the narrative goes on, she laments: “they did not warn you about things like this when they arranged your marriage. No mention of offensive snoring, no mention of houses that turned out to be furniture-challenged flats [...] Another thing the arrangers failed to mention – mouths that told the story of sleep that felt clammy like old chewing gum that smelled like the rubbish dumps at Ogbete market [...] The arrangers of marriage only told you that doctors made a lot of money in America. They did not add that before doctors started to make a lot of money they had to do an internship and a residency program, which my new husband had not completed”.<sup>36</sup>

Ofodile, her husband, tells her how to behave like a new Afropolitan woman and successfully blend into diverse American culture without a sense of loss of traditional customs and practices. She has to adopt Nigerian lifestyle for a deceptive appearance and allusion of America, for instance through a change of the Igbo language and her name into an English version: “You should say ‘Hi’ to people here, not ‘You’re welcome.’ I’m not called Ofodile here, by the way. I go by Dave... The last name I use here is different, too... It’s Bell... If you want to get anywhere you have to be as mainstream as possible... If not, you will be left by the roadside. You have to use your English name here”.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, he forbids her to cook too much (offensive in his opinion) Nigerian food, soon he introduces her into American cuisine, which is a symbolic marker of assimilation. This relates to the practices of Nigerians during their first experience of mobility and adaptation process, who after changing their place of living become represented in terms of their heterogeneous and fluid cultural identifications, continuously (self)reconstructed. The ability to move seamlessly between cultures and places is a precondition that come with the decision of being an Afropolitan citizen.

As we see in the story, Ofodile (now Dave) legitimates the lower status and subaltern role of Chinaza (Agatha) and he is the male source of power, who tries to exert control over his wife’s identity by undermining her Nigerian roots. Hence, apart from the clash of differences and value conflict during the creation of an Afropolitan sense of belonging, we observe specific gender representation.

However, her behaviour clearly expresses disgust towards the attitudes of men in their relationship to women and elucidates feminist tendencies to challenge male dominance. Chinaza shows her anger when she is informed about Ofodile’s paper marriage with an American woman, but what she hears is only a self-righteous voice: “it wouldn’t have made a difference. Your uncle and aunt had decided” and the popular proverb, which states “always guard your husband like a guinea fowl’s eggs”.<sup>38</sup> Her arranged marriage turns out to imitate the oppressive Nigerian context and her low confidence and self-esteem is aggravated by Ofodile.

Nevertheless, she knows from her friend’s counsel, that as soon she receives divorce papers she can leave. Probably she will follow that scheme of a quick divorce, validating the idea

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<sup>35</sup> Adichie, *The Thing around Your...*, p. 167.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 168–174.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

of submission as the only choice for woman and imposed marriage. Chinaza sees the sadistic machinations of the arrangers of marriage in Igbo culture as a violation of women rights, but she trusts that aunty Ada and uncle Ike acted with the best intentions and thus follows the social duty of serving her foster parents, from whom she had hoped to escape. Still, they had introduced this marriage as their ultimate achievement, responsibility and guardianship after the death of her parents. Aunty Ada shows true commitment and an intense excitement over Ofodile, as the narrative points out: "what have we not done for you? We raise as our own and then we find you an *ezigbi di!* It is like we won a lottery for you! A doctor in America!"<sup>39</sup>

However, according to this narrative, Adichie, in a subtle way, is trying to reflect the reality of Nigerian life of certain social groups and explain the process of how a well-educated woman, despite consciousness of the problem, still has to face the lessening of women's sexual freedom and maintain the patriarchal system of cultural and historic values of arranged marriages.

#### **b) *The Jumping Monkey Hill* – the Afropolitan practices toward agency, female empowerment and self-awareness**

The second example constitutes an argument that relies less on the troublesome situation of women and more on their self-identification and self-awareness. To begin addressing concerns, my reference is the main female protagonist of the short novel *Jumping Monkey Hill*, which takes place in a contemporary Cape Town, South Africa. The story is focalised through the third-person narration about Ujunwa Ogundu from Lagos, who participates in a two-week writing residency workshop in *Jumping Monkey Hill* with some other African writers from Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda. The participants are to write stories as a sort of therapy, describing transnational African identity. She redefines her memories and writes about the crisis in her parents' relationship, especially the hurt her father caused to her family with his marital dishonesty and the travails of a female job seeker – Chioma.

During the workshops she has to cope with sexist, superficial attitudes and teasing from the organiser Edward Campbell, who looks at her with superiority, as one notes in the following fragment: "Then he looked at Ujunwa in the way one would look at a child who refused to keep still in church and said that he wasn't speaking as an Oxford-trained Africanist, but as one who was keen on the real Africa and not the imposing of Western ideas on African venues".<sup>40</sup> She represents mixed reactions toward male chauvinism and describes the situation of abuse, for instance visible in the sentence: "Ujunwa tried not to notice that Edward often stared at her body that his eyes were never on her face but always lower".<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, during the complete story we are faced with two narratives. Likewise, Ujunwa in her own fiction parallels emotional struggles from the past. Her main character is a girl from Lagos called Chioma, whose first job interview, just after graduating in economics from Nsukka has to use her body (breasts) as "job pass" for starting work in the banking sector. The narrator says: 'the man says he will hire her and then walks across and stands behinds her and reaches over her shoulders to squeeze her breasts. She hisses, 'Stupid man! You cannot respect yourself!' and leaves".<sup>42</sup> Later,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

Chioma is employed, but soon resigns when one of the important clients of the bank – Alhaji – asks her to be his sexual “personal contact”.<sup>43</sup> She refuses to succumb to Alhaji’s unfair demands, walks out of the job and realises that her dignity as woman will be always threatened or humiliated.

The above critical insight about the reality of Nigeria and exposition of the problematic of gender in her country described by Ujunwa does not meet the expectations of Edward. Her story and also writings about other companions are rejected by the organiser due to the fact that he perceives it as an implausible agenda writing, not about “real Africa”, but about women with no choices. He does not understand the feminist attitude of Ujunwa, who tries to depict hurtful actions such as physical and psychological violations toward her as an Afropolitan woman. The narrator explains: “the white South African said she hated that term, Third World, but had loved the realistic portrayal of what women were going through in Nigeria. Edward leaned back and said ‘It’s never quite like that in real life, is it? Women are never victims in that sort of crude way and certainly not in Nigeria. Nigeria has women in high positions. The most powerful cabinet minister today is a woman’”.<sup>44</sup> Ujunwa after his ridiculous argument and offensive approach exploded with laughter, picked up her papers and left the venue. By revealing that the story of abused woman searching for work was her own traumatic experience, she wants to show that gender issues are paradoxically still the problem for ‘real’ Africa and violence toward women is instrumental in the creation and sustaining of social relations. Still, the story characterises one’s dislocation and anxieties in the midst of unfamiliarity and misunderstanding. This direct example of exploitation and suppression demonstrates that in both places – Lagos and Cape Town – she has been vulnerable and similarly reduced to a sexual object and devalued. But her assertiveness grows and she raises her voice and asks others gathered at the workshop “why do we always say nothing”.<sup>45</sup> This charts some significant aspect of female agency, as suggested by Nfah-Abbenyi that female characters in women’s writing are portrayed not in stereotypically subservient, limiting and unchanging roles, but they come alive as “speaking subjects and agents for change”.<sup>46</sup> This translates into an implicit view of Nigeria as an entity of deconstruction of women’s roles and rights, which are constantly in motion. It presents that Adichie’s attempt is to overturn predominant representations of female characters from certain socio-economic classes, educated in the West, showed without a broader global context, as well as to reconstruct patterns of social behaviours that defamiliarise common sense and media readings of a “typical Nigerian woman”.

## Conclusion

The above considerations explains one aspect from the general scope of the representation of notions of Afropolitanism seen in the context of Nigeria, the United States and global interconnections. Specific conditions affect the life of Chinaza and Ujunwa not only in multi-ethnic Nigeria, but also move beyond geographical and cultural borders creating Afropolitan individuals. These young protagonists share to some extent common experiences, negotiating their everyday lives against anti-feminist attitudes and cultural doctrines, and have bonds with a Nigerian context, hence, they are analysed in terms of gender issues, subjugation, submission, resistance and access

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 113–114.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>46</sup> Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi, *Gender in African Women’s Writing: Identity, Sexuality, and Difference*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 151.

to opportunities for liberation. These elements might be observed in each of Adichie's works and are connected to the title of the whole collection – “thing around neck”, which is the symbol of a female narrator's anxiety caused by the lack of control, loneliness, isolation when living as an Afropolitan abroad.<sup>47</sup>

It reveals, how the discourse of Afropolitanism and women's issue are organised to be persuasive, or to present a particular worldview on gender issues. Women's refusal to recognise the state of discrimination is not often found in novels. However, Adichie does not create a solution to Nigeria's myriad of gender problems as enunciated in the narratives examined here. I suggest that the two stories offer possible mechanisms to be used by women not only to subvert masculine structures by redefinitions of femininity and attempt to transform the ideology behind womanhood or patriarchal views, but also to articulate and harmonise cross-cultural conflict. Through the voices of empowered women, especially anecdotes with an often sensational value considered as a form of cultural expression, the author provokes wide discussions on the widely recognised dilemmas of women who decide to negotiate the complexities of a hybrid identity and engage in cosmopolitan activities.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

## New Audiences, New Perspective: Audiences' Views on the Adaptation of Some Stories in *Magana Jari Ce* from Book to Films

### Abstract

The evolution of information and communication technology brought what McLuhan (1987) described as the “global village” in the contemporary world.<sup>1</sup> The availability of ICT has resulted in the formation of interconnected communities in turn paving the way for the emergence of new audiences' concepts. This paper analyses the receptions and reactions of audiences who watched *Magana Jari Ce* films for television with a view to analysing their perception on the adapted stories. An in-depth interview method was used in data collection using purposive sampling of respondents drawn from Kaduna, Kano and Katsina States, Nigeria.

### Introduction

It is an undisputable fact that modern urban life depends on the media for fast and efficient sharing of information to a large number of audiences within the shortest possible time. As a result, the relationship between the media of mass communication and audiences on the other hand can be said to be a very intimate one. While mass media are the disseminators of information, the audiences are the consumers of such information. Thus, one cannot do without the other.

On the other hand, information and communication technology (ICT) contributes in an unquantifiable way in bringing the different parts of the contemporary world into what McLuhan (1987) described as the “global village”.<sup>2</sup> through the use of technological devices. The applications of these devices, which are portable, digital and sophisticated in the communication process, have paved the way for the rapid disappearance of cultures across communities, nations and continents. At the same time, media productions and reproductions have completely changed from analogue to digital technological devices such as compact discs, video compact discs, MP3 and MP4 among others, which has led to the formation of a systematic and organized interconnected society which simplifies the sharing of cultural and literary products across heterogeneous societies.

However, scholars in media studies have singled out the audio-visual medium, particularly film, as having the strongest consequences for other social institutions – cultural, social, political, and religious. And it is against this backdrop that film receives a series of criticisms and condemnations among other media of communication. This might not be unconnected with the perceived influence of audio and visual on the viewers of films.

In this paper, I argue that communication and information technology contributes in not only the creation of new audiences but, at the same time determines how the audiences receive and react to media content. This paper, therefore, attempts to analyze the receptions and reactions of audiences drawn from Kaduna, Kano and Katsina<sup>3</sup> who have read *Magana Jari Ce* and at the

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<sup>1</sup> Marshal McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>3</sup> These are the states where the adapted films were televised by the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA).

same time watched the adapted *Magana Jari Ce* films. The aim was to discuss the views of the audiences on the adapted films.

### Contextual Background

For a proper understanding of the context within which this paper is situated, this section attempts to provide a brief explanation on *Magana Jari Ce* – the book and the films.

#### (a) *Magana Jari Ce: The book*

The *Magana Jari Ce* was written in three volumes by Alhaji Abubakar Imam in 1938, 1939, and 1940 respectively. The volumes contain a total number of eighty three (83) short and long stories. The eighty one stories in *Magana Jari Ce* are either adapted, appropriated or translated from *Alfu Laylah Wa Laylatun*; *Kalilah Wa Dimnah*; *Bahrul Adab*; *Hans Anderson Fairy Tales*; *Aesop Fables*; the *Brothers Grimm Fairy Tales*; *Tales from Shakespeare*; and *Rauldhal Jinan*.<sup>4</sup>

The Northern Nigerian Publishing Company (NNPC), which is the publisher of the three volumes of the book, explains that fairytales and folktales from different parts of the world particularly from the Middle East, were used in producing the book. It went further to say that the adaptation of the stories in *Magana Jari Ce* was done with the assistance of Abubakar Kagara, who was at the corporation on a part time basis for six months.<sup>5</sup>

The pattern of *Magana Jari Ce* was written in the form of a frame novel (narrative technique) as every volume is bound by its own independent stories. It is commonly believed that the book is constructed in line with the style of the *Thousand and One Nights*, in that a narrator relates story after story. However, in the first volume the stories are told not to delay the execution of a stubborn princess as in the Arabian work, but to delay the imminent departure to war of a stubborn prince.

In all the three volumes the main narrator is a parrot, which tells the stories and fulfils different functions in each particular volume of the book. The parrot secures all the three volumes the continuity of action and unity of message. And at the beginning of the work the parrot appears as a useless pet, hardly worth the high price requested by the owner, but his vast knowledge and keen intuition saves it and it soon becomes an irreplaceable adviser to the king. The parrot warns the King of the impending danger of the troops of the enemy approaching, and also plots as to how to overcome them and the intrigues of the king's vizier.<sup>6</sup>

The setting of volume one is in an unnamed eastern country ruled by King Abdurrahman Dan-Alhaji. Readers are told from the onset that the King has borne no son and it worries him as he would have no successor. And his grandson Mahmud is not entitled to ascend the throne because of the fact that he is a maternal grandson. On the advice of a certain wise man King Abdurrahman convokes forty Malams who pray for forty days and nights. As a result of their prayers one of the King's wives gives birth to a baby boy, which is named Musa. The birth of Musa distracts the plans of the ambitious *Waziri*, who aims at taking over the throne. *Waziri* brews mischief in order

<sup>4</sup> Ibrahim Abdullahi Malumfashi, *Abubakar Imam: Nazarin Tubali da Ginuwar Ayyukansa Na Adabi*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, submitted to the Department of Nigerian Languages, Faculty of Arts and Islamic Studies, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> NAK/AND/1029/KADEDU: Translation Bureau, Zaria, Annual Report (1936).

<sup>6</sup> Stanislaw Pilaszewicz, 'Literature in the Hausa Language,' in *Literature in African Languages: Theoretical Issues and Sample Surveys*, Bogumil W. Andrzejewski, Stanislaw Pilaszewicz, Witold Tyloch (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 222.

to separate Musa from Mahmud, who have been very intimate friends, and then to kill Musa. He deceitfully offers his services to the King of Sinari on condition that the latter will place him upon the throne. When King Abdurrahman with the two boys – Mahmud and Musa, goes on a stroll they meet the Arab with the parrot. Musa wants to have the bird, but the Arab asks a high price of a hundred pounds for him. This enrages King Abdurrahman who orders the capture and punishment of the impertinent Arab. The parrot hastens to save its master: it praises itself for its eloquence and boasts of itself having the ability to foretell the future. The parrot unfolds a plan for King Abdurrahman that would take the enemy by surprise and overcome the King of Sinari and it proves to be successful. King Abdurrahman is very satisfied with the bird. He buys it immediately and gets it a companion, a she-parrot. The King and Mahmud set out for war, while the parrots are charged with the care of Musa. Whenever Musa makes a move to join his friend at the war, the she-parrot attempts to deter him and soon loses its life at the hands of the hot-tempered Musa. The Parrot is wiser and for twenty eight nights tells Musa interesting stories and keeps him from leaving. On returning from battle, the king appoints the parrot to the exalted position of his vizier in place of his treacherous vizier, who is condemned, bound up and thrown into the river to die.

In the second volume, the parrot becomes involved in a story-telling competition with the parrot Hazik, which belongs to King Jama'an, who rules over a western country known as Sirika. The competition takes place in the palace of King Abdurrahman in the presence of large audiences and judges who everyday listen to the stories and offer their verdicts. The stories are separated from one other by discussions between the judges and the parrots on the themes raised by them. Thrice Abubakar Imam introduces the person of a messenger from the Sirika country who informs King Jama'an about the fulfilled prophecies of *Aku*. On the very last day of the competition a sort of the end-play takes place: the two birds ask each other some riddles. The victory of *Waziri Aku* is glaring and convincing, given its ability to foretell the future.

In the third and final volume, the parrot is teaching his son *Fasih* (the art of story-telling). When *Waziri Aku* witnesses how parents go to great lengths to teach their children a particular craft, he decides to teach his son the skill of speaking as *Magana Jari Ce* – “wisdom is an asset”. *Fasih* is not a complete novice as he used to overhear a certain Malam Iro, who is a teacher in a Qur'anic school. *Waziri Aku* hands down to his son some twenty stories, each charged with lessons.

#### **(b) *Magana Jari Ce*: The films**

The *Magana Jari Ce* film was a Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) drama series which was televised around 1985–1986.<sup>7</sup> The films were a classic production of 43 weekly episodes from direct adaptation of Abubakar Imam's book of tales – *Magana Jari Ce*. The production of *Magana Jari Ce* films was sponsored by NTA Headquarters, Lagos, under the Federal Ministry of Information in conjunction with the Defense Headquarters, Daily Times and New Nigerian Newspapers.

The transmission of the films on television gathered momentum especially in northern Nigeria because apart from the fact that it was the first Hausa films to be produced in the English language, the characters are people who have created a niche for themselves in both radio and television drama. They are people who bear household names because they had been acting for a long time and had specialized in different dramatic roles.

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Kasimu Yero in November, 2012. Yero is the principal character in the adapted film version of *Magana Jari Ce* film and also one of the famous television drama series in northern Nigeria.

It is important to note that Nollywood<sup>8</sup> as well as Kanywood<sup>9</sup> film industries were not in existence at the time the films were produced. The only option for viewers in northern Nigerian in the 1980s was Bollywood.<sup>10</sup> Though the majority of the audiences could not understand the Hindi language, they took a serious interest in the films, perhaps because of the singing and dancing which are the main features of Indian films. The *Magana Jari Ce* film series ran for over a year on a weekly basis with a repeat broadcast twice weekly.

Arguably, it can be said that the acceptance of *Magana Jari Ce* adapted films motivated yet another adaptation of the story of *Sarki Jatau* in the Kanywood films industry. Though the film is yet to be released, the producer *Alhaji Bashir Abdullahi Rijau* states that the film is a direct adaptation of the story of *Sarki Jatau* in *Magana Jari Ce* (vol. 3). Likewise, the inspiration of this adaptation comes from the realization that there is an abundant Hausa literature in Northern Nigeria and some of the ways to preserve the literature is through productions and reproductions, particularly from books to films with a view to update and preserve the literature for the benefit of the contemporary generation and those yet unborn.

### The concept of New Audiences

The emergence of audiences as a concept is in fact older than the mass media itself. Audiences, all over the world, have been sending and receiving information for a very long time. But, as a result of the emergence of mass media, audiences have become very active in shaping the programme output of both print and broadcast media.

However, the evolution of the new media, which has the potential of marginalizing the conventional media, has drastically changed the nature of the audiences which are now taking a driving seat in the production of media content. "As the emerging information age begins its re-organizations of everyday life, the study of media audiences has taken on renewed importance. This is not just because more information is mediated, it is also because of people integrating both old and new media technologies into their lives in more complex ways. Today being audiences are even more complicated. The media 'environment' is much more challenging. Where once there was one television set and one radio in the average home, there are now several of each. Where once listening and viewing were group activities in the home, now individual listening and viewing is the domestic norm, with people sometimes using several different media simultaneously".<sup>11</sup>

In view of the above, it seems correct to say that the role of audiences in the contemporary world cannot be over-emphasised. From this, the significance of the audiences who might have read the book of *Magana Jari Ce* and at the same time watched the film adaptations for television are vital because they form the basis for this paper. The views and individual experiences of the audiences form the data of analysis here. The aim is to compare and contrast the similarities and differences in the selected stories in the book as well as in the films.

<sup>8</sup> Nollywood are films produced in the southern part of Nigeria and are mostly produced in English.

<sup>9</sup> Kanywood Film Industry is situated in Kano, northern Nigeria. It produces films in Hausa. Kaduna, Jos and Katsina town also produce similar films.

<sup>10</sup> The term 'Bollywood' refers to Indian film industry.

<sup>11</sup> Ross Karen & Virginia Nightingale, *Media and Audiences: New Perspective*, Open University Press: England, 2003, p. 1.

## Methodology

Basically, research in media studies can be carried out from two perspectives: *one*, at the level of media output, and *two*, at the level of the audience. Since this paper is primarily concerned with investigating audiences' views on adaptations of selected stories in *Magana Jari Ce*, the in-depth interview method was used in data gathering. The idea for studying the media at the level of the audiences is to enable discussion on views of the adapted films. In other words, the paper aims at finding out how audiences read the selected stories in *Magana Jari Ce* and at the same time their views on the adapted stories into film.

The in-depth interview method is regarded as one of the key methods of qualitative research, and in this approach there is no uniform reality. Each observer creates reality as part of the research process. The qualitative researcher therefore, examines the production process with the understanding that reality is holistic and cannot be sub-divided. Unlike quantitative research, which sees all human beings as basically similar and look for general categories to summarize their behavior or feelings, qualitative research believes that human beings are all fundamentally different and cannot be pigeon holed.<sup>12</sup>

The main concern of in-depth interviews is that it generates immeasurable data concerning respondents' opinions, values, motivations, re-collections, experiences and feelings. Though the method uses smaller samples in which generalization is sometimes not necessary, the approach paves the way for lengthy observations by the respondents of the study.<sup>13</sup> To buttress the above point, though, interviews vary in terms of depth, focus, scope and degree of structure, but there is a common underlying idea that they produce in-depth and vast knowledge of the human world.<sup>14</sup>

Historically, the rise of interviews and other qualitative methods in the social sciences is associated with the breaking of the dominance of the positivistic approach, as well as the development of alternative conceptions of social knowledge as inter-relational and defined by meaning rather than quantifications.<sup>15</sup> In this regard, research participants are seen as active meaning makers and interpreters rather than passive information providers, and interviews offer a unique opportunity to study processes of meaning production directly. The shared premise of the importance of meaning generates a particular affinity between qualitative methods and cultural studies.<sup>16</sup>

The population is defined as the 'group or class of subjects, variables, concepts or phenomena'<sup>17</sup> and within the context of this study are all people who read *Magana Jari Ce* and at the same time have watched the adapted *Magana Jari Ce* films. Purposive sampling was applied in selecting 15 respondents for the interview drawn from Kaduna, Kano and Katsina. Five respondents were chosen from each of the three towns mentioned above. The use of purposive

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<sup>12</sup> Tayie Sammy, *Research Methods and Writing Research Proposals*, Cairo: Cairo University Press, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Campbell, Christopher R. Martin and Bettina Fabos, *Media and culture: an introduction to mass communication*, Bedford: Lahish Press, 2006, p. 535.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Pickering, *Research Method for Cultural Studies*, Edinburgh: University Press Edinburgh, 2008, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Steinar Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, London: Sage Publication, 1996, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> Pickering, *Research Method...*, p. 68.

<sup>17</sup> Rogers D. Wimmer and Joseph R. Dominic, *Mass Media Research. An Introduction*, USA: Belmont Press, 2003, p. 84.

sampling was done with a view to: first, ensure that the respondents have prior knowledge of *Magana Jari Ce* and the adapted films; and *second*, the adapted films were televised on NTA Kaduna, Kano and Katsina.

It is important to note that qualitative studies of this type based on in-depth interviews usually do not fulfill the criteria of statistical generalization because the sample size tends to be small and not informed by the systematic random rule.<sup>18</sup> This is to say that the sample is not in any way regarded as representative of the whole population. However, the most important advantage of in-depth interviews is the wealth of detail that it provides. When compared to more traditional survey methods, in-depth interviews provide more accurate responses on sensitive issues under investigations.<sup>19</sup>

### Data presentation and analysis

As I mentioned earlier, this paper uses an in-depth interview method in investigating the audiences' views on the adaptation of some selected stories in *Magana Jari Ce* to films. The idea was to find out at the level of the audiences who are viewers of the films their perception as regard the films they watched. In view of this, 10 set of questions were asked among the respondents of the study and the analysis was done based on the said questions raised.

1. *Have you ever read Magana Jari Ce written by Abubakar Imam and watch the adapted films sponsored by the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)?*

The study discovered that all the 15 respondents interviewed confirmed that they had read the stories in *Magana Jari Ce* and also watched the films sponsored by Nigerian Television Authority. Their affirmative answers warrant the continuation of the interview.

2. *How do you know about Magana Jari Ce and the adapted films for television?*

Most of the respondents stated that they came to know about *Magana Jari Ce* during their primary and secondary school days. For instance, Adamu<sup>20</sup> one of the respondents says:

Well, *Magana Jari Ce* was a book that was always there. I read it when I was in primary and secondary schools. In fact, we have copies of *Magana Jari Ce* in our primary school and we read it from book 1 to 3 each time we had a free period. Somebody would read it up till we reached all the three volumes and then at that time there was NTV Kaduna. And at that time, there was no option because there was only one TV station which everybody watched and that was how we came to know about it.

Likewise, Aminu<sup>21</sup> confirms knowing *Magana Jari Ce* when he was in primary school. In his words:

I read the book several times because in primary school it was made compulsory reading as part of the topics in Hausa literature subject. And concerning the film, I watched it during my Industrial

<sup>18</sup> Michael Bloor, *Introduction to Qualitative Methods*, London: Sage Publications, 2001, p. 62.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>20</sup> Yusuf Muhammed Adamu, an academic with the Department of Geography, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, is one of the fifteen respondents I interviewed in Kano on 14.08.2013.

<sup>21</sup> Abubakar Aminu is also one of the respondents. He works at Kaduna State University and was interviewed on 12.02.2013.

Attachment (IT) with NTA Kaduna, and sometimes I attended courses on shooting drama. And I also watched the weekly presentation of the film on NTA Kaduna.

From the responses of the respondents interviewed, it was clear that all the respondents had read the book either during their primary or secondary schools. On the adapted films, the study finds that the respondents had contact with the films on NTA stations in their respective towns. For instance, Mandawari<sup>22</sup> says: “Naturally, I liked watching Hausa drama since childhood, so when the films for *Magana Jari Ce* were televised, I used to watch them especially the Hausa versions and some years after, the English version came on NTA Kaduna and I also watched almost all of them”. The adapted films were shown on NTA Kaduna, Kano and other states that have NTA stations in Northern Nigeria. It is important to note that the only films that were available before the audiences prior to 1980s were Indian films:

The biggest boom for Hindi cinema in Northern Nigeria was in the 1970s when state television houses (as distinct from Federal broadcasting networks) started operating and became the outlet for readily available Hindi films on video tapes targeted at home viewers. For instance, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Kano alone screened 1,176 Hindi films on its television network from 2nd October 1977 when the first Hindi film was shown.<sup>23</sup>

This shows that audiences had only the choice of watching Indian films at NTA stations or at cinemas. This problem of unavailability of a variety of films to watch might be one of the reasons why when the *Magana Jari Ce* adapted films were shown on television stations, audiences were amazed taking into consideration that the films were locally produced and acted by famous indigenous characters particular in Northern Nigeria.

3. *Did you read all the eighty three (83) stories contained in the three volumes of Magana Jari Ce?*

All the respondents interviewed admitted that they had read all the eighty three (83) stories in the three volumes of *Magana Jari Ce*. And this indicates that the audiences are familiar with the six selected stories that have been adapted into films. For instance, Baso,<sup>24</sup> one of the respondents said, yes, he had read all the stories but he could not remember the specific volumes where the six stories are because the book has three volumes, but, he remembers that the main idea of the book is about King Abdurrahman and his son (Musa) as well as grandson (Mahmud). The stories represent typical Hausa culture and tradition. They also portray the style of leadership in royal palaces and how their subjects obey, as well as the relationship between the Kings in the stories and their subjects in which they try their best to ensure they do not hurt the feelings of their people. He went further to say that another prominent figure he could remember in the stories was *Waziri Aku*, who engages King Abdurrahman with a series of stories regarding leadership, the benefits of being patient and hard work, among others. Baso says with regards to the story of *Telu Fari* and *Telu Baki*, it is about a disagreement between two friends, which turns out to be competition. For instance, if *Telu Fari* does something positive, *Telu Baki* will go against it. And this attitude brought them to deceive one another in a dubious manner. For Suleiman, another respondent,

<sup>22</sup> Ibrahim Muhammed Mandawari, another interviewee. He is one of the famous Kanywood film producer, director and actor. He was interviewed on 10.08.2013.

<sup>23</sup> Abdallah Uba Adamu, *Transglobal Media Flows and African Popular Culture: Revolution and Reaction in Muslim Hausa Popular Culture*, Kano: Visually Ethnographic Productions Limited, 2007, pp. 20–21.

<sup>24</sup> Salisu Baso is another respondent. He is a journalist based in Katsina. Interviewed on 19.10.2013.

he is of the view that: "Yes, in fact, not only the six stories you mentioned, I read almost all the stories in *Magana Jari Ce* over and over again."

4. *What is your impression on the following stories: Telu Fari and Telu Baki; Wowo – the Malam's son; Bawa- the hunchback; Kowa Ya Daka Rawar Wani... (Auta – the ungrateful husband); Zakaran Da Allah Ya Nufa Da Cara (Grass to Grace); and Prince Kamaruzzaman, the son of King Shahrizzaman?*

This question tries to find out the impression of audiences on the six selected stories they read and watched. The findings of this question reveal that the stories are quite inspiring and interesting. For instance, Mandawari, one of the respondents, has this to say:

They were quite interesting especially the story of *Telu Fari* and *Telu Baki*. I remember that apart from the educational aspect of it, there is also entertainment which I like most. I like the entertaining aspect because like I told you I was very young then and God so kind, the producers of these films were able to make the entertainment aspect in the films successful. The actors did very well to the best of their abilities by entertaining the viewers and they were able to reflect what was written in the book.

Also responding to the same question, Bala<sup>25</sup> states that like rest of the stories in *Magana Jari Ce*, the six stories mentioned above are interesting, and the interesting thing about the stories according to him is the way in which the writer contrasts them with values and puts them on a different scale, which in literature is called binary opposition between what is good and what is bad, between light and darkness, and between what is aspired to and what is disliked. He cited the example of the story of *Telu Fari* and *Telu Baki* saying that it is about "the way in which although two friends are in the same profession but, one harbours bad thoughts, the other is morally upright, so I think this for me is the basis for my liking of the stories."

From the above responses, it can be concluded that the audiences perceived these stories as interesting, as maintained by both Mandawari and Bala. For Mandawari, he attributes his likeness for the stories – particularly the adapted films – to their educational and entertainment aspects. But, Bala admits that what interests him was the way the adapted stories contrast values and locate them in a different scale.

5. *Are the six adapted stories in conformity with Hausa cultural norms and traditions?*

In an attempt to answer this question, some of the respondents disclosed that the six stories are in conformity with Hausa culture and traditions. While, some maintain that there is a relationship to some extent. For instance, Mandawari says:

You know culture, like if we keep on saying that it is very dynamic. It changes from time to time. For instance, you are wearing this kind of cloth I am sure a Hausa man of 100 years back, did not know it entirely but, you may describe it as a Hausa dress these days, so it is very dynamic but the dynamism limits our attitudes, so I can describe these stories as 1980s to 1990s in conformity with our culture. So, I want to believe the films are within the context of Hausa culture.

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<sup>25</sup> Ismaila Garba Bala is an academic at the Department of English and Foreign Languages, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria. He was interviewed on 31.08.2013.

Fatuhu,<sup>26</sup> another respondent, states that the six adapted films are in conformity with Hausa culture, norms and values. But, he argues the only problem advanced by many critics is that this kind of adaptation kills the culture of originality. However, when it comes to cultural studies, the adapted *Magana Jari Ce* films are certainly in conformity with Hausa culture particularly the mode of dressing and the architectural designs used as the palaces of the Kings.

Also responding to the same question, Bala admits that it was much later on that he came to realize that almost all the stories in *Magana Jari Ce* right from volume one up to the third volume were in one way or another adapted from a different culture, mostly European fairy tales and/or folktales as well as Arabian folktales. He went further to say that though he is not an expert in this area, there is no way one could transfer, transform, or transmute or adapt a story from a different context culturally, linguistically, religiously or socially to another context without in any way modifying the main elements in the story to conform with the culture one is adapting it to. He concludes that Abubakar Imam has done reasonably well in that regard, though he would not say the same about the films, adding that that is not to imply that the stories in the films are not in conformity with Hausa culture because film as a medium has certain limitations when adapting a written story that limitation alone would mean you cannot have the story as it is word-for-word as it is in the book.

6. *Are there similarities in the themes of the six selected stories in the book and in the films?*

This question seeks to find out the similarities among the six selected stories as contained in the three volumes of the book and in the films. The study discovered that there were many similarities, as indicated by most of the respondents interviewed. For instance, Mandawari states that:

There are because those who produced the films, when you look at Malam Abubakar Imam who partially came from Zaria where he did his education, and made his working career. Likewise some of the principal characters such as Kasimu Yero are also from Zaria. They tried to reflect what Imam did in his book. Secondly, when you look at their age also, they are close to Imam age-wise, if somebody who is around 30 years tried to emulate what Imam did in the book, it may not even be possible because the setting, the costumes, the wordings and so on may be entirely different with the time Imam wrote the book. There have to be some modifications. Therefore, the producers of *Magana Jari Ce* films both the Hausa and the English versions made lots of effort and achieved their objectives. There are also differences with the adding of some scenes to suit film production because film is different from book. When you are reading a book you are simply imagining what is happening but when you are watching a film you want to see reality. So, in an effort to make it real they created some scenes and some actions which were not in the book. Perhaps, it would be preferably if you cast somebody entirely different based on specialization in assigning roles. For instance, a comedian should go for comedy.

Also responding on this question, Umar<sup>27</sup> says there are similarities and differences to some extent, but identifying the similarities seems difficult because the book has already been written and

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<sup>26</sup> Muhammad Fatuhu is a former staff of the National Assembly, Abuja, Nigeria. He was interviewed in Kano on 08.12.2013.

<sup>27</sup> Umar Yahaya Malumfashi works with the Nigeria Custom Service. He was interviewed in Katsina on 18.10.2013.

it is difficult for one to identify the terms and locations used. Regarding the films, Umar is of the view that looking at the environment in which these films were produced, he believes it is in an “eroded area of high temperature” but in some way they have tried to do a lot in the films. One particular example he cited to justify his answer is where King Shahruzzaman launches an assault and the arena becomes so clouded with dust, because of the horses he used. Now if one wants to portray this kind of atmosphere, how many horses would he use? So, for a producer to depict this type of scene with hundreds of people and houses involve a great deal.

For Aminu, another respondent, there are similarities. In his words:

Of course, there are similarities between the stories in the book and those in the film. In fact, the film tried to copy the book exactly but, perhaps, due to some constraints in terms of equipment, funds and technology affected the production. But, despite these problems the film is interesting though there are problems here and there particularly in the quality of the pictures.

7. *Are there differences in the themes of the six stories in Magana Jari Ce book and in the films?*

Apart from the similarities, this question seeks to find out the differences between the six stories in the book and in the films. The study finds that the majority of the respondents are of the view that there are differences, though, they admit that these differences are minor. For Muktar, for instance, he says:

You know, one has to consider the time. In those days there was nothing to watch because there were very few movies on the market. Television sets were few as well. It was therefore more interesting to read books in those days but, with the introduction of new communication devices, I think the movie is more interesting. It therefore depends on the time. These days, if you adapt an interesting book to film, it would be more interesting.

But, Suleiman<sup>28</sup> says, he could not remember noticing any difference in the six stories as contained in the book and in the films. Suleiman's reason might not be unconnected with the way and manner in which the films were produced using indigenous characters, Hausa traditional costumes and locations, which portray typical Hausa culture and traditions. It is evident that the six stories in the films have similar themes with the same stories in *Magana Jari Ce* but, with minor changes. Suleiman went further to say that these changes might not be unconnected with the fact that film as an audio-visual medium stands a better chance than book in the eyes of viewers. Another issue according to Suleiman has to do with technical limitations in film production. In his words, “it is not everything that can be featured in a film.”

A critical analysis of these films reveals that the themes of the six selected stories are the same but with minor changes, as pointed out by some of the respondents. For instance, there was no background music in the book because it is a written text, but there is background music in all the six films. To this end, it could be concluded that anything that was not in conformity with Hausa culture was changed by the producers of the films. On the other hand, the producers introduced scenes regarding issues that would be accepted and appreciated in Hausa communities because the whole idea according to the producers was to project Hausa culture the way it was then. On the

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<sup>28</sup> Mu'azu Suleiman is a secondary school teacher in Kaduna, Kaduna State, Nigeria. He was interviewed on 13.02.2013.

choice of characters, it was discovered that with the view to make the films interesting and acceptable, the characters that featured were carefully selected. These were people who excelled in the production of television drama particularly in northern Nigeria.

8. *Can you identify some changes in the stories of the films compared to those in the book?*

This question seeks to go beyond admitting that there are similarities and differences between the stories in the book and in the films but, to specifically point out those similarities and differences with a view to understanding them clearly. In this regard therefore, some of the people interviewed were able to identify specific changes in some of the stories. For instance, Adamu points out that:

Well, the stories are more detailed and they give you the opportunity to use your imagination to visualize them. On the other hand, the films try to visualize for you. So, the difference is that in the book you use your imagination to see how *Telu Fari* and *Telu Baki* or how Bawa looks with a hunchback on him and so on. But in the film, you are restricted to what was presented to you as a representation of the stories. That was the sharp and specific difference.

Also responding, Aliyu,<sup>29</sup> another respondent, said that the differences may not be so big to the extent of identifying specific instances, and probably not very expensive differences but certainly there are differences between the stories in the book and those in the adapted films. He maintained that the limitation in the book from which the story has been adapted means that you cannot have the stories as they are written down, that's *one* consideration; *two*, the person who is adapting the stories from the book to films must also like what Abubakar Imam did by deciding on things that will go into the films. So, it all comes down to the person who is adapting the film.

Also responding, Fatuhu is of the view that:

Well, they tried in the area of costumes in the six films but, what I understand is that there are some modes of dressing I was expected to see but, they were not there. For example, like in the case of the story of Prince Kamarruzaman, I expected to see pure Hausa fashion but, what I saw was a light Hausa fashion. And another thing is on the screenplay particularly on the voice is somehow different from what is contained in the book but, the language and the dialogue among others, we expected to see a colonial or ancient dialogue because the stories in the book came at the eve of the period of colonialism.

9. *Which between the book and the films as medium of mass communication interest you most?*

The aim of this question was to try to measure the effectiveness or otherwise of one medium over the other as Marshall McLuhan argued that the medium is the message. In the context of this paper, the question is to find out which among the medium – book or film – is more interesting in terms of entertainment from the perspectives of the respondents who read the stories in the book as well as watched the films on television.

The responses of the respondents vary. Some are of the view that reading the book was more inspiring while some say watching the films. For instance, Adamu argues that the choice of medium

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<sup>29</sup> Mohammed Aliyu is a branch Manager of Oceanic Bank, Katsina branch. I interviewed him on 19.10.2013.

depends entirely on the time when a particular content was produced. He says, *first*, when the book of *Magana Jari Ce* was written in the 1930s, the book inspired its readers not only because of its interesting contents but because of the fact that there were no available books to read at that time. *Secondly*, he argues that in book the reader uses his imagination to visualize what is happening in the stories and this to him is quite interesting. He concludes that both the book and the films are quite interesting.

While answering this question Garba states, thus:

No doubt about it, the book is more interesting than the films without taking anything away from the films, the book is more interesting. Well, as someone who is used to reading written stories the written medium offers so much more possibility than the visual medium. There are so many inhibitions regarding the visual television medium which you cannot say are there in the visual medium, the writer has his imagination and he can allowed it to take him anywhere, which probably cannot be said about television not just on *Magana Jari Ce* films but, about television as a whole.

According to Garba, the reason for choosing book as the most prepared medium is perhaps, given the developments in technology as well the information we know now about Abubakar Imam which people who have adapted from the book to films at that time did not have. Garba laments that he wishes someone could take up the challenge to re-adapt those stories in the light of the present dispensation where there is so much advancement in technology and even in the culture of adaptation. This, according to him, would pave way for new perspective on how literature could be adapted and how we could see what has already been adapted with fresh eyes given inputs we now have.

On the other hand, Fatuhu says he chooses book as the most interesting medium of communication particularly on the entertainment front because he felt the book contains the original idea and without the book, the stories in the films would not have been adapted. His simple reason is that there is no originality in the stories in *Magana Jari Ce*, according to scholars with the exception of one or two. In his words “we are not talking about the originality of those stories and their roots but, the originality of the concept that somebody said yes, I can adapt it or Hausanize it and that is where the originality comes from.” Fatuhu suggests that there is the need to dig deep into the book of *Magana Jari Ce*, perhaps a conference can be organized on *Magana Jari Ce* to discuss more about it.

## Conclusion

This paper discussed the medialization of some stories in *Magana Jari Ce* from book to films and analyzed the views of audiences, particularly those who had read the stories in *Magana Jari Ce* as well as watched the adapted films. From the data gathered through in-depth interviews, it appears that the producers of the adapted films were faithful to the stories because the adapted films have almost everything the stories in the book have. The theme, the plot, the characters, the setting and the conflict are all in conformity with the stories in *Magana Jari Ce*. Perhaps this might be the reason why most of the audiences interviewed could not identify specific scenes where the films differ with the stories in terms of story elements enumerated above. The majority of the audiences are of the view that book as a medium of communication is more interesting than the film medium. Their reasons are: *one*, in book the reader uses his imagination to draw conclusions; *two*, book serves as a reference material.

## North Korean Intellectuals and Artists: From Antagonism to Forced Cooperation with the Workers' Party of Korea

### Abstract

Starting from 1946 the position of intellectuals in North Korea has been threatened. Intellectuals were placed quickly under the control of the Workers' Party of Korea. Purges in the 1950s and 1960s showed that a large number of North Korea intellectuals had serious reservations about the Kim Il Sung regime. Starting from the 1960s, North Korean intellectuals began to be instruments of the WPK. In the 1990s, some intellectuals defected and became activists abroad working either for the collapse of the Kim regime, or for the unification of the two Koreas.

### Introduction

Looking at the Chinese or Soviet flag, there is no pen or writing instrument on their symbols. Instead there is a hammer, which signifies priority for the working class. Thus the intellectual class is totally excluded. However, on the North Korean flag, there is a writing brush on the emblem of the Workers' Party of Korea (*choson rodongdang*), which represents artists and intellectuals. When the Workers Party of Korea was inaugurated on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 1946, preferential treatment for intellectuals was initially expressed, but this was largely because the Party wanted to bring the intellectuals on side. Nevertheless, starting from the 1950s, in the years immediately following Kim Il Sung's accession to power, the North Korean leader took measures to prevent challenges to his new regime, beginning with eliminating political opposition. There are not many research articles devoted to intellectuals in North Korea in non-Korean languages.<sup>1</sup> The most famous paper related to this topic, which was written in Korean, is entitled *Kimjongilsidae Pukhanui Jisikinjeongchaek 김정일시대 북한의 지식인정책* – The policy of Kim Jong-il towards intellectuals. It was published by the Sogang University and prepared by researchers of the *사회과학연구소 Sahoekwahakyonguso* – Institute of Social Sciences) and published in the vol. 16, no. 2 in 2009. Before the 1970s, anyone with a secondary school-education could be considered an intellectual in North Korea. The objective of the article is to place the role of intellectuals within contemporary North Korean society. The first part of the article is related to a theoretical- definitions framework. The second part, third and fourth parts are respectively related to the place and role of intellectuals during the Kim Il Sung (1945–1994), Kim Jong-il (1997–2010), and Kim Jong-un's eras (2010–...). The purpose of the article is twofold. Firstly, to redefine the status and role of intellectuals in North Korean political life. Secondly, to define the relationship between North Korean intellectuals and the WPK. The article focused on the hypothesis that North Korean intellectuals were forced by the WPK to create a logical worldview based on the Juche ideology.

### Methodology

I used archival research and interviews for the purpose of the preparation of this article. I utilized materials available at European and South Korean research centers. I also considered propaganda materials distributed by various North Korean embassies, however the scientific

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<sup>1</sup> Kim Sung-chull, 'Dynamism of Politics and Status of Intellectuals in North Korea,' *Development and Society*, 31, No. 1, June 2002, pp. 79–106; Jeon Mi-yeong, *North Korean policy on intellectuals in the Kim Jong-il era*, Seoul: Korean Institute for National Unification, 2015.

approach of these documents is limited. I split my research into different historical periods, the Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un eras. The Kim Jong-il era crosses over with the Kim Il Sung era as Kim Jong-il was the leader of North Korea starting from 1967.

### The concept of the intellectual

Intellectuals represent a social class of people engaged in mental labour aimed at guiding or critiquing, or otherwise playing a leadership role in shaping a society's culture and politics. For the purpose of this article, we will classify intellectuals as people who are connected to the arts, literature, medicine and technologies.

There are two main contemporary contributions to a theory of intellectuals. The first contribution is derived from the Italian sociologist Antonio Gramsci, who distinguished two categories of intellectuals: organic and traditional. The latter is related to intellectuals who are disinterested and bound to the former regime. The organic one is defending the interests of a specific class, and is related to political organizations ruling over any given entity. In the North Korean case, we may consider intellectuals with a Japanese background as traditional, and “organic intellectuals” as those who were educated and totally reformed by the ruling organization (the Workers' Party of Korea). A second theory was developed by the French sociologist Michel Foucault. He identified intellectuals as experts in specific areas, who reveal truth. More contemporary than Gramsci, Foucault views intellectuals as an interested voice of reason. As we will see, the Gramsci theory works better in relation to North Korean political history.

The South Korea researcher Jeon Mi-yeong defined North Korean intellectuals as people who have a central role in pro-government economic reforms. They are ideologues who defend the only one ideology accepted and propagated in North Korea: The Juche Philosophy.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Noam Chomsky has argued that intellectuals should speak the truth and expose lies: “Intellectuals are in a position to expose the lies of governments, to analyze actions according to their causes and motives and often hidden intentions. In the Western world, at least, they have the power that comes from political liberty, from access to information and freedom of expression”.<sup>3</sup> This framework doesn't fit with North Korean reality, as intellectuals have no political liberty.

### Intellectuals during the Kim Il Sung era

According to North Korean propaganda, intellectuals are defined as those “who have steadily followed our Party (the WKP) in the difficult years of our revolution, dedicating their wisdom and talents to the struggle for the Party and revolution, for the country and the people”.<sup>4</sup> In 1983, Kim Il Sung dared even to say that there are around 1.2 million intellectuals in North Korea.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Jeon Mi-yeong, *사회변혁기 북한지식인의 역할과 정치의식* [Sahuihyeonghyeokki pukhanjisikinui yokhalkwa jeongjiuisik – The role and the political consciousness of North Korean intellectuals], *통일과 평화*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2011, p. 302.

<sup>3</sup> Noam Chomsky, ‘The Responsibility of Intellectuals,’ *The New York Review of Books*, 23 February 1967, <https://chomsky.info/19670223/> (accessed 24 June 2016).

<sup>4</sup> *On Correcting Deviations in Implementing The Policy on Intellectuals*, A talk to Senior Officials of the Science and Education Department of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, 29 May 1969, <http://library.uoregon.edu/ec/e-asia/read/merde15.pdf> (accessed 24 June 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Kim Il Sung, *De la lutte du peuple coréen pour la matérialisation des idées du Djoutche*, Pyongyang: Éditions en Langues Étrangères, 1983, p. 6.

In reality, the number of intellectuals is much lower. According to the North Korean class system (Songbun), established in 1957 on a decree entitled “On the transformation of the Struggle with Counterrevolutionary Elements into an All-People All-Party Movement” – which was passed by the Politburo of the WPK – there are three major classes (*kyechung*) according to the degree of loyalty toward the WPK and the parental background of the population. The core class (*haksim kyechung*) is composed of bereaved families of the Korean War. The second class is called the antagonist one (*chokdae kyechung*) considered as antagonist to the regime, such as landlords and capitalists. Intellectuals are classified in the second class (*tongyo kyechung*),<sup>6</sup> which also grouped religious leaders, some merchants, and others who could act against the regime.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless the members of the second class (*tongyo kyechung uie saramteul*) may move to the first class. In 1969, during a meeting devoted to the field of education, intellectuals were presented as people with problematic family backgrounds and socio-political careers. Most of them were born into rich families.<sup>8</sup> Only those who came from loyal families from the *haksim* class have seen their places in the system maintained. North Korean ideologists also consider that the majority of intellectuals in North Korea come from South Korean families or from families that served Japanese institutions. Therefore, intellectuals cannot be considered as members of the *haksim* category. As in the Soviet Union, intellectuals were considered as serving bourgeois interests. The Songbun was the ideological explanation for reorganizing, and purging North Korean intellectuals.

Although Kim Il Sung highly regarded the intellectuals at first, it was not because he considered them an important class in the revolution, but because intellectuals had played important roles during the formation of the nation and Kim Il Sung was simply using them, especially in the construction and propagation of the Juche (self-reliance or master of destiny) ideology. Kim Jon-il argued that the Juche used themes from life (*Saenghwal sojae*). North Korea formed the nation under the slogan of mobilization to build a new nation after liberation from Japan until just before the Korean War.

Right before and after the August 15<sup>th</sup> Liberation from the Japanese colonial government, one can denominate three categories of intellectuals. The first were those who were based in North Korea. The second were people who were educated in Japan (such as Kim Nam-cheon – 1911–1953) and had come back to the Korean Peninsula. The third was people who left for the North from the South. There were not that many intellectuals originally in the North. According to Kim Sung-chull, North Korea had only 1,500 intellectuals.<sup>9</sup> Kim Il Sung effort to bring intellectuals from the South can be seen in North Korea historical propaganda movie “The National Sun is Rising”. And again, after the Korean War, intellectuals were needed in order to rebuild the nation. After this, intellectuals played an important part in stabilizing the nation. Intellectuals then began praising themselves due to the work they had done once society had begun to stabilize after the war. From Kim Il Sung’s point of view, the intellectuals’ growing influence was becoming a headache. As in the Khmer regime in Cambodia, almost everyone with an education, or who understood a foreign

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<sup>6</sup> Each class is split into sub-classes. The *haksim kyechung* has 12 subclasses, the *tongyo kyechung*, 18, and the *chokdae kyechung*, 21. The first class represents 25% of the population. Tongyo and Chokdae 55% and 20% respectively.

<sup>7</sup> Mitsuhiro Kimura, Makoto Okamura, Koji Futagami, ‘An Interpretation of the North Korean Regime,’ *The Journal of the Korean Economy*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 2001, p. 185.

<sup>8</sup> *On Correcting Deviations...*

<sup>9</sup> Kim Sung-chull, ‘Dynamism of Politics and Status...,’ p. 79.

language, was considered as enemies. A foreign education and arts were considered as lower in comparison to the Juche one.<sup>10</sup> Many artists and intellectuals were executed.

Kim Il Sung was especially afraid that events similar to the Sinuiju Incident may occur. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1945, in the border city of Sinuiju, there was an uprising led by scholars and intellectuals against the communists. This uprising is known as the 신의주 학생사건 (Sinuiju haksaeung sageon), which literally means the uprising of educated people of Sinuiju. As Adam Cathcart and Charles Krause have mentioned, the incident in Sinuiju was also due to misunderstandings between the Red Army and the Korean population. In this period, there was a food shortage, the Korean population was frustrated that the Soviets took the food, and this led to exacerbated tensions between both groups.<sup>11</sup> This was an additional argument for purging the intellectual class of North Korea. I consider this incident essential to an understanding of the global fear of Kim Il Sung toward intellectuals.

Meanwhile, the WPK Central Committee established the right of the party to exercise guidance over literature; and starting from 1945, literary and artistic organizations were restructured to promote a specified style called socialist realism. Writers were regrouped in the Choson Writers' Alliance (*Choson Jakka Tonghaeng* – 조선 작가 동맹). Later, there would be no other intellectuals standing against Kim Il Sung. Between 1945 and 1955, contacts between North Korean and Russian intellectuals were frequent. According to Tatiana Gabbroussenko, North Korean intellectuals such as Yi Puk-myong and Yi Tae-jun exchanged views on a regular basis with Soviet authors such as Gribachev, Leonov and Simonov among others.<sup>12</sup> North Korean intellectuals were partially educated in the communist way of writing texts. Kim Chang-man authorised the system of the obligatory dispatch of North Korean writers to exemplary plants, factories and farms in order to extol these 'real life' experiences in their works (a task which in its turn was also compulsory). The roots of this system can be traced to the rhetoric of the Soviet Writers' Union which, as we have just seen, promoted it to their North Korean guests. In practice, however, the visits of the Soviet writers to plants and factories were encouraged but never deemed obligatory. Intellectuals and artists were forced to obtain a revolutionary education.<sup>13</sup>

After the first purges in the WPK, the North Korean Academy of Science (*Kwahakja Choson Minjujuui Inmin Konghwakuk Inmin Akadaemi* – 과학자 조선 민주주의 인민 공화국 인민아카데미) was established. This institution includes 10 full and 15 candidate members and was responsible for 9 "research institutes" and 43 smaller "research laboratories". Hong Myng-hi was elected as the first President of the Academy, but this aged man was hardly a good administrator. In all probability, Hong was chosen for his background and longstanding reputation as a leftist intellectual of high integrity. In 1956 he was replaced by Paek Nam-un, a prominent historian and another defector from the South (such defectors were very prominent in the North Korean intellectual circles of the 1950s). Unlike his predecessor, Paek was willing to become a real administrator. Paek Nam-un was forced by Kim Chang-nam, the director of the Propaganda and

<sup>10</sup> Kim Il Sung, *De la lutte du peuple coréen...*, p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> Adam Cathcart, Charles Kraus, 'Peripheral Influence: The Sinuiju Student Incident of 1945 and the Impact of Soviet Occupation in North Korea,' *The Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Fall 2008, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> Tatiana Gabroussenko, *The implantation of socialist realism in the DPRK and North Korean literary politics 1945-1960*, thesis defended at the Australian National University, May 2004, p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> Kim Jong-il got officially a revolutionary education from his first years. *Kim Djeung Il en son âge tendre*, Pyongyang: Éditions de la Jeunesse Keum Seung, 1990, p. 1.

Agitation Department, to settle “production plans” for intellectuals and writers. These production plans were defined by the number of texts North Korean authors were to produce.<sup>14</sup>

The end of the Korean War in 1953 sealed the fate of the North Korean intellectuals. The North Korean leadership was convinced of the dangers intellectuals posed. On the other hand, Kim Il Sung knew that these people formed only a very minor part of the North Korean population and consequently could not form a political organization. In any cases, intellectual skills were sacrificed for the sake of political stability. As in the Soviet Union, campaigns were launched to diminish the social role of intellectuals. The first purges which occurred in the 1950s led not only to the exclusion of North Korean politicians, but also to the exclusion of intellectuals considered as “old lecturers”, representatives of the vestiges of Japanese intellectual traditions.<sup>15</sup> There are some exceptions such as Paek Nam-un (1894–1979). He was a Japanese trained intellectual, who worked in the WPK. However, in spite of his Japanese education, he was maintained in the WPK system and even became a foreign member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1958. Some of these intellectuals were also members of the Yenan fraction of the WPK or the New Democratic Party led by Kim Tu-bong.<sup>16</sup> They were often persecuted in the 1950s and 1960s and sent to the first North Korean labour camps (the most infamous of which were called *Kwanliso* – translated as Control Centers<sup>17</sup>). Kim Il Sung aimed at creating a new class of intellectuals with no Japanese background and totally obedient to the WPK and not intellectuals in other fractions of the WPK. Kim Il Sung classified them as those who were supporters of the Juche system and others who were marring the Marxist-Leninist ideology of working class superiority, as intellectuals gathered together to cooperate, and through that cooperation to criticize Party policies. From the perspective of Kim Il Sung himself, he may have felt inferior to them, since he only graduated from middle school and hence realized why China also had had issues with its intellectuals. This is when Kim Il Sung began persecuting the leading intellectuals, during the process of building the Juche Ideology. One of the persecuted was Kim Nam-seon, a former writer and literature theoretician who was executed either in 1953 or in 1955.<sup>18</sup>

Another intellectual to be dismissed was Choi Sam-yeo, deputy director of the Academy of Science.<sup>19</sup> Another important figure is Han Sol-ya (1900–1970 – 한설야), a famous North Korean intellectual who belonged to the KWP CC who had had a classical intellectual career in North Korea and was regarded as one of the most important fiction writers in North Korean history. Even if he had attended the Nippon University, Han Sol-ya also ran the entire North Korean literary scene as the head of the Korean Writers' Union and minister of education. He was at the head of this structure starting from 1948, being a very close confidant to Kim Il Sung (Han Sol-ya invented the expression “Sun of the Nation” for calling Kim Il Sung) and widely considered a “bootlicker”.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Gabroussenko, *The implantation of socialist...*, p. 40.

<sup>15</sup> *On Correcting Deviations...*

<sup>16</sup> Gong Jin-sung, Lee Kwang-seo, ‘The Foundation of the North Korean Workers’ Party: Analyzing Russian Archival Materials,’ *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 16, 2016, p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> Hazel Smith, *North Korea: Markets and Military Rule*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 172.

<sup>18</sup> Some sources considered that he lived until 1977. Interview with Waldemar Dziak, a prominent scholar on North Korean issues.

<sup>19</sup> Kim So-Yeol, ‘North Korean Intellectuals Oppressed and Watched,’ *DailyNK*, 22 October 2008, <http://www.dailynk.com/english/read.php?num=4198&catId=nk02500> (accessed 18 June 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Andrei Lankov, *Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization, 1956*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, p. 47.

We may consider him one of the first propaganda officers of the WPK. In spite of his connections to Kim Yong-ju, the younger brother of Kim Il Sung, in 1962 he was deprived of his property and lost all his money after an express trial.<sup>21</sup> His name disappeared then from all North Korean publications. Criticism meetings targeting intellectuals from South Korea were conducted among lower citizens units. It became a discussion topic for each citizens unit, workplace and social organization to establish the one-ideology system for Kim Il Sung.

In 1968, Kim Il Sung mentioned that the education of intellectuals must be done according to the monolithic ideology of the Party. This means that intellectuals should be educated in accordance with The Ten Principles for the Establishment of a Monolithic Ideological System<sup>22</sup> enunciated by Kim Il Sung in 1967. These principles are a set of issues “which establish standards for governance and guide the behaviour of the people of North Korea”.<sup>23</sup> Intellectuals were supposed to have a revolutionary attitude regarding the leader.<sup>24</sup>

Starting from the mid-1970s, Kim Jong-il tried to utilize the intellectual class by saying that even the intellectuals were one of the main pillars of the revolution, alongside workers and farmers. After completing the massive purge in August 1956, political prison camps sprouted up in 1958 and were built across the country in the 1960s. In the 1960s and 1970s, the intellectuals were sent to the camps even for slips of the tongue, as so called reactionary elements. In 1956, after the speech “On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences” by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev at the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the 25<sup>th</sup> February 1956, Kim Il Sung was apparently scared by what he had heard from his envoy. The content of the speech was critical of the reign of Joseph Stalin, so Kim Il Sung had to take some quick decisions after this congress. Intellectuals who were in interactions with Soviet writers were finally purged. All intellectuals who were in interactions with Soviet writers were finally purged, and foreign cultural links also abandoned. All books written by foreign authors and related to foreign philosophy were incinerated.<sup>25</sup> All critical texts were banned. Furthermore, dancers with a *yangban* background (such as Choi Seung-hee) and the traditional ruling class were also banned. Ideologically speaking, workers were made intellectuals.<sup>26</sup>

Facing these developments, the North Korean government decided also to recall the North Korean students who were studying in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. By that time, the Soviet Union's new ideological trends were being described as “revisionist,” and so the students were sent to re-education camps to spend a few months memorizing the speeches of the Great Leader and delivering mutual denunciations. Those who were found guilty of revisionist transgressions were sent for further re-education in mines or rice paddies, while others were allowed to work. Another casualty was Yi Sang-jo, the former North Korean ambassador to the Soviet Union, who after being sent to Minsk never came back to North Korea.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Scalapino, Yi Chong-sik, *Communism in Korea. Part 2 The society*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972, p. 886.

<sup>22</sup> Kim Il Sung, *On the achievements of Our Party Policy Toward Intellectuals*, Pyongyang: Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 14 June 1968.

<sup>23</sup> Kim Jong Il, *On Some Problems of Education in the Juche Idea – Talk to the Senior Officials of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea*, Pyongyang: Workers' Party of Korea Publishing House, 1987, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>25</sup> John H. Cha and K. J. Sohn (eds.), *Exit Emperor Kim Jong Il – Notes from His Former Mentor*, Bloomington: Abbott Press, 2012, p. 28.

<sup>26</sup> Kim Jong Il, *The Songun-based Revolutionary Line is a Great Revolutionary Line of our Era and an Ever-Victorious Banner of Our Revolution*, Juche 96, Pyongyang, 2007, p. 6.

From then until the late 1970s no North Korean students were permitted to attend Soviet colleges. Soviet scholars and students were also not welcome in North Korea anymore (there were some exceptions though and a handful of students did manage to study in Pyongyang in the 1970s). North Koreans partially copied books written by Soviet authors. For example, Yi Ki-yong wrote *Ttang* (Land), which, as the author himself admitted, was an emulation of Mihail Sholokhov's *Virgin Land Under the Plough*.<sup>27</sup>

### **Kim Jong-il, Kim Jong-un and intellectuals**

The Kim Il Sung era is characterized by the purge of intellectuals who were considered as being against the Kim system. The Kim Jong-il era is characterized by the utilization of intellectuals for political needs.

As Koen de Ceuster remarks, the fusion of arts and ideology was repeatedly theoretized by Kim Jong-il.<sup>28</sup> As his father, the author of the translated in French, *Pour la Création d'Une Littérature et D'un Art Révolutionnaires*, he prepared many theoretical documents, such as *Treatise on Art*. It is said that Kim Jong-il considered artists as people with 70 percent talent and 30 percent training or education.<sup>29</sup>

When Kim Jong-il became the chief of Information he concentrated on projects related to the idolization of Kim Il Sung. Intellectuals, among others, were especially focused on the propagation of the Juche ideology in urban and provincial areas.<sup>30</sup>

Kim Jong-il gathered artists and intellectuals and held various events on ideological struggles. After self-criticism sessions, Kim Jong-il warned them that they must be loyal if they wanted to maintain their position. Therefore, and also due to his cinematographic interests, Kim Jong-il rehabilitated some intellectuals. These intellectuals were used for the reinforcement of the Juche ideology in North Korean society. Intellectuals were no more focused on science and related areas, but were forced to convey the Juche message to the North's population. In 1974, any semblance of independent scholarly inquiry collapsed at Kim Il Sung University. Three years later, in 1977, Marxism-Leninism was officially superseded by Juche (self-reliance), intellectuals whose main area of studies had been Marxism-Leninism were partially purged or removed to the Juche Institute. However, some minor references to Marxism-Leninism remained.

In 1984 a better period opened up for intellectuals. The Juche ideology remained the only one tolerated, but foreign literature became available, such as Cervantes' *Don Quixote* or Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless in the 1990s, Kim Jong-il delivered a statement to the WPK CC where he underlined that the control over intellectuals should be

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<sup>27</sup> Gabroussenko, *The implantation of socialist...*, p. 33.

<sup>28</sup> Koen de Ceuster, 'To be an artist in North Korea: Talent and something more,' in *Exploring North Korean arts*, Rüdiger Frank (ed.), Vienna: Verlag für Moderne Kunst, 2010, p. 58.

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>30</sup> John H. Cha and K. J. Sohn (eds.), *Exit Emperor Kim Jong Il...*, pp. 28–30.

<sup>31</sup> De Ceuster, 'To be an artist in North Korea...', p. 58.

tightened.<sup>32</sup> Intellectuals started also to work on the biographies of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong-il.<sup>33</sup> The most loyal intellectuals were even chosen as delegates of the Supreme People's Assembly.<sup>34</sup>

In the early 1990s there were diverse criticisms of the country's economic failure by scholars. At the time many were also rounded up and put into political prison camps. Many experts were imprisoned because they had said the North needed a contract work system in order to solve the food crisis. Some of these intellectuals fled, such as Lee Min-bok, a former researcher at the Academy of Science for Agriculture in North Korea. In 1992, the DPRK revised its constitution to exclude any reference to Marxism-Leninism. Intellectuals lost any foreign inspiration in the defence of the Juche ideology, although they published research papers defending the North Korean ideology.<sup>35</sup>

The most famous intellectual who fled from North Korea is Hwang Jang-yop (1923–2010). In spite of an education at the Law School of Chuo University in Tokyo, in the 1960s Hwang got a position at the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the CC WPK. There, he was named responsible for the propagation of the Juche ideology. After being nominated as the head of the Kim Il Sung University in 1965, he started to be the head of the Juche Ideology Research Institute from October 1979. Considered an intellectual, he also took advantage of a good family background. In spite of being the deputy director of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the CC WPK, he appeared for the first time on the Central Committee at the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of the WPK in November 1970. From December 1995 he was the director of the International Juche Ideology Foundation. Due to political conflict with Kim Jong-il he fled (with Kim Dok-hong, the deputy director of The International Juche Ideology Foundation<sup>36</sup>) in 1997 to South Korea and passed away at the age of 87 in Seoul in unknown circumstances in 2010. In South Korea he becomes a critic of the North Korean regime. Hwang Jang-yop was for a long time the personal secretary of Kim Il Sung.

During the era of Kim Jong-un, the position of intellectuals barely changed. They were still considered a working force serving the Workers' Party of Korea. Intellectuals tend to view their position as having being altered within North Korean society but that they continue to be considered as a working force: "Kim Il Sung called on all the people including workers, farmers and intellectuals to further reenergize all the economic sectors of the country and positively contribute to implementing the national economy plan by fully implementing the WPK's line on simultaneously pushing forward economic construction and the building of nuclear force".<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Kim Jong-il, 'Let Us Uphold the Role of Intellectuals for the Continuation of the Revolution and Construction,' 20 September 1990, in *Collected Works of the Dear leader Kim Jong-il*, Kim Jong-il, Pyongyang: Publishing House of the WPK, 1992, p. 275.

<sup>33</sup> Bradley K. Martin, *Under the loving care of the fatherly leader, North Korea and the Kim dynasty*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004, p. 134.

<sup>34</sup> Kongdan Oh and Ralph C. Hassig (eds.), *North Korean Policy Elites*, Alexandria: Center for Strategic Studies of the CNA Corporation – Institute for Defense Analyses, 2004, p. 34.

<sup>35</sup> Figures may be found here. Jeon Mi-yeong, *사회/변혁기 북한지식인의 역할과 정치의식* [Sahuipeonghyeokki pukhanjisikinui yokhalkwa jeongjiuisik – The role and the political consciousness of North Korean intellectuals], *통일과 평화*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2011, p. 308.

<sup>36</sup> Using the Yogyang General Trading Company as a front, the International Juche Ideology Foundation solicited contributions from ethnic Koreans overseas, brokered trade, and arranged family reunions of North Korea-born South Korean businessmen.

<sup>37</sup> 'Kim Jong-un Sends Appeal to All Service Personnel, People,' KCNA, 5 June 2013. Interestingly, the word "intellectuals" is very often (or even always) mentioned at the end of those who are mentioned in North Korean propaganda texts.

On the full report delivered by Kim Jong-un during the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea [WPK], which took place in May 2016, Kim Jong-un referred to the "talents of the Korean intellectuals who have grown up under the care of the Party." This confirmed the confinement of intellectuals to the care of the Party. Later, this opinion was confirmed by "the order and Party principles that are already established must be strictly observed in increasing Party membership, so that the Party ranks of service personnel, workers, farmers and intellectuals, who are faithful to the Party's leadership and play the core, vanguard, role in national defense and socialist construction, can be improved in terms of quality."

## Conclusion

The western theoretical framework (Chomsky) does not fit with North Korean reality, given that North Korean intellectuals cannot expose the truth, being as they are wholly dependent on the WPK. Over the Three Kims' era the role of intellectuals has remained the same: to defend the WPK. After the purges of the 1950s and 1960s, intellectuals started to work in the affiliated Juche Institute, propagating the official North Korean ideology. Starting from the 1970s these same intellectuals were forced to generate foreign currencies for the North Korean leadership through foreign trade companies such as the Yodwang General Trading Company. After the 1990s North Korean intellectuals who had defected came back to their original function: to speak the truth and to expose lies. The majority of them are now based in South Korea working for Unification organizations.

I suggest that in North Korea intellectuals are treated not as they are, but as they should be. Some intellectuals may have been saved from purges, but are being purged at a certain moment of their history. Some of them, in spite of their background related either to the Yangban class or Japan may have been protected for a while (such as Han Sol-ya or Choi Seung-hee), but they were all eventually surpassed by history. In the late 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s, intellectuals were purged. Later, those remaining were forced to work on projects related to the idolization of Kim Il Sung and propagation of the Juche ideology. Their engagement and commitment became totally determined by the needs and requirement of the WPK. As Glyn Ford remarks, intellectuals had to be loyal to the WPK.<sup>38</sup> Secondly, North Korean intellectuals based in North Korea could not affect any type of major change in North Korea as they were not independent. Thirdly, regarding North Korean intellectuals who fled abroad (such as members of South Korean organization founded by North Korean defectors – North Korea Intellectuals Solidarity, an organization founded by Kim Heung-kwang in October 2008.), they may play a role in the future in case of any breakdown of the North Korean system. One of them is Ju Seong-ha, a former journalist at Donga Ilbo. They already provide some to date unavailable information about North Korea.<sup>39</sup> Finally the North Korean intelligentsia is emerging, but what is extraordinary is that this phenomena is spreading abroad, beyond the borders of North Korea.

<sup>38</sup> Glyn Ford, *North Korea on the Brink – Struggle for Survival*, London: Pluto Press, 2008, pp. 64–65.

<sup>39</sup> For example organizing seminars on Korean Unification. Yun Chong-sik, 북한 출속 지식인들의 통일 로드맵 나온다 온누리교회 다음 달 9일 햇볼트리니티 순재성전서 세미나 개최, *Kukmin Ilbo*, 27 June 2016 (accessed 17 July 2016).

## Internal Determinants of Authoritarianism in the Arab Middle East. Egypt before the Arab Spring

### Abstract

This paper aims at analysis of selected approaches to the explanation of the durability of authoritarianism in the Arab Middle East. The main assumption of the study is the assertion that research on authoritarianism in the Arab World and its dynamics requires an analysis of both structural and cultural factors, since both types of determinants affect the persistence of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa. Therefore it is not proper to use one set of factors to explain such a complex phenomenon. Our case study is the Egyptian authoritarian regime before the Arab Spring.

### Introduction

The big question is why Arab political regimes are so resistant to democratization? There have been many efforts to explain the problem of authoritarianism in the Arab Middle East, as well as define the preconditions of democracy and authoritarianism in the modern world. One might divide them into structural and cultural. The most prominent theories, crafted and used to explain this phenomenon are economic and cultural, as Samuel P. Huntington argues in his *The Third Wave*.<sup>1</sup> The first is related to the Seymour M. Lipset's classic conception predicating that a proper level of economic development is one of the crucial conditions of successful democratization.<sup>2</sup> This "modernity view of democracy" stresses the role of national income, industrialization, education and the middle class. The second – according to Huntington and other scholars dealing with the so called "Islamic exceptionalism" – claims, that Judaeo-Christian religious tradition fits to democracy better than other religions. Huntington concluded that "a strong correlation exists between Western Christianity and democracy. Modern democracy developed first and most vigorously in Christian countries".<sup>3</sup>

In accordance with the first approach, Ibrahim El Badawi and Samir Makdisi concluded that "the Lipset 'modernity' hypothesis may not be adequate for explaining the 'democratic deficit' in the Arab world".<sup>4</sup> Regarding the second approach, many scholars criticised Huntington's cultural thesis, although others supported it. Below I have presented two examples of this unfinished debate (which will not be developed in this paper). On the one hand, there are scholars like M. Steven Fish, who concluded as follows: "At the present time, however, the evidence shows that Muslim countries are markedly more authoritarian than non-Muslim societies, even when one controls

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Seymour M. Lipset, 'Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,' *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, Issue 01, March 1959, pp. 69–105.

<sup>3</sup> Huntington, *The Third Wave*..., p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Ibrahim El Badawi and Samir Makdisi, 'Explaining the Democracy Deficit in the Arab World,' *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance*, No. 46, 2007, p. 822.

for other potentially influential factors; and the station of women, more than other factors that predominate in Western thinking about religious systems and politics, links Islam and the democratic deficit”.<sup>5</sup> On the opposite, one might find such political scientists as Mark Tessler, who pointed out that “the evidence presently available from Palestine, Morocco, Algeria, and Egypt suggests that Islam is not the obstacle to democratization that some western and other scholars allege it to be”.<sup>6</sup>

The main aim of this paper is to contribute to this ongoing debate – by analysing two other types of structural factors (economic liberalization and rentierism, as well as the political status of the army and an internal security apparatus), and one – although crucial – cultural determinant of the durability of authoritarianism in the Arab Middle East, that is particularism or – more precisely – clientelism. Our case study is pre-revolutionary Egypt (until 2011), that has “produced” a very stable – although dynamic – authoritarian regime.

### **Authoritarianisms: old and new**

At first, it is appropriate to distinguish “old” and “new” types of authoritarian regimes. The main pillars of “old” authoritarianism are: a bureaucratic apparatus, an army, an internal security apparatus and a single political party. Amos Perlmutter pointed out some additional features of “old” authoritarian regimes, such as the state dominance over society, the primacy of an executive over other state institutions, as well as the expanded internal coercive apparatus. To these structural features one can add an extensive scope of regime control over society – isolated from the central political structures of power. These structures are out of bottom-up control, so the rulers do not bear responsibility before citizens. They rather “occupy” state resources. Controlled and limited participation imply the integration of some organized groups with the state (inclusion by co-option), while the others are excluded. The main weaknesses of authoritarian regimes are: the issue of legitimacy, as well as the problems of fragmentation within the ruling elite and the lack of power alternation institutions.<sup>7</sup>

During and after the Third Wave the total number of “old” authoritarian regimes declined. Some of them plunged into transition towards democratic systems, whereas others remained nondemocratic, although in diverse forms. A majority of these newly transformed systems started to be commonly called “hybrid” or “semi-authoritarian” regimes – where these two notions usually are understood as synonyms. In other words, these newly created systems turned partly neither democratic, nor fully dictatorial along the political spectrum, and – as a part of so called “foggy zone” – started to be considered as “new” authoritarianism by numerous of academics dealing with non-democratic regimes. So – as the Third Wave of democratization did not signify the global triumph of democracy – many political scholars were urged to find other methods of explaining the problem of sustainability of authoritarianism, especially regarding the states, which did not go through the process of transition to democracy. When it comes to Arab Middle Eastern states (representing Islamic civilization) and Far Eastern states (based on Confucianism), Huntington attempted to explain the persistence of authoritarianism by not only structural determinants, but also

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<sup>5</sup> M. Steven Fish, ‘Islam and Authoritarianism,’ *World Politics*, No. 55, October 2002, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Tessler, ‘Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes Toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries,’ *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 34, No. 3, April 2002, p. 350.

<sup>7</sup> Amos Perlmutter, *Modern Authoritarianism. A Comparative Institutional Analysis*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981, pp. 24–26.

cultural factors. He explained the success of democratization by previous experience with a pluralistic political system, an appropriate level of economic development, as well as identification with Christianity (or rather lack of ties with Islamic or Confucian civilizations). But Huntington's explanations appeared to be insufficient, because various political transformations have proven to be much more complex. Nevertheless, numerous political transformations have remained superficial. In such cases, the states did not achieve a satisfactory stage of a democratic consolidation.<sup>8</sup> Many of them finished their short "democratic honeymoon" and returned to a sort of authoritarian regime that was often reconfigured – different than the 'old' one, but still nondemocratic.

Key proponents of transition paradigm apparently did not take into consideration that not every political liberalization necessarily leads to democracy, or that a breakdown of one form of authoritarianism may lead to another form of nondemocratic regime.<sup>9</sup> In many cases we have witnessed the emergence of co called "hybrid regimes" – semi-authoritarianisms or electoral authoritarianisms<sup>10</sup>, that also include competitive authoritarianisms<sup>11</sup>, new authoritarianisms<sup>12</sup> or neo-authoritarianisms<sup>13</sup>. These regimes should be located between liberal democracies and "old" authoritarian regimes. To face this problem, some scholars started to develop the theory of hybrid or semi-authoritarian regimes. Marina Ottaway characterizes these regimes as:

political hybrids, which are ambiguous systems that combine rhetorical acceptance of liberal democracy, the existence of some formal democratic institutions, and respect for a limited sphere of civil and political liberties with essentially illiberal or even authoritarian traits. This ambiguous character, furthermore, is deliberate. Semi-authoritarian systems are not imperfect democracies struggling toward improvement and consolidation but regimes determined to maintain the appearance of democracy without exposing themselves to the political risks that free competition entails [...]. They allow little real competition for power, thus reducing government accountability. However, they leave enough political space for political parties and organizations of civil society to form, for an independent press to function to some extent, and for some political debate to take place.<sup>14</sup>

The "hybridization" of authoritarian regimes proceeded parallel to the Third Wave of democratization and it was accompanied by the process of liberalization of national economic systems – in accordance with a neoliberal agenda. This process – according to Huntington – should facilitate the evolution of an autonomous middle class, forcing democratization. However this scenario did not occur everywhere – especially in the Arab Middle East, where the middle class is

<sup>8</sup> Larry Diamond, 'Thinking about Hybrid Regimes,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2002, pp. 21–35.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Carothers, 'The end of Transition Paradigm,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2002, pp. 5–21.

<sup>10</sup> Andreas Schedler, 'Elections Without Democracy: The Menu of Manipulation,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2002, pp. 36–50.

<sup>11</sup> Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, 'The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2002, pp. 5–66

<sup>12</sup> Stephen J. King, *The New Authoritarianism In the Middle East and North Africa*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Laura Guazzone and Daniela Pioppi, 'Interpreting Change in the Arab world,' in *The Arab State and Neo-Liberal Globalization. The Restructuring of State Power in the Middle East*, Laura Guazzone and Daniela Pioppi (eds), Cairo: AUC Press, 2009, pp. 1–15.

<sup>14</sup> Marina Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged. The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism*, Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003, pp. 3–11.

often dependent from the state. Commonly, when the governments have initiated economic reforms (towards a free-market economy), authoritarian regimes have persisted as hybrid or semi-authoritarian. This observation has led other researchers – like Laura Guazzone, Daniela Pioppi and Stephen J. King – to discuss an alternative hypothesis, based on the analysis of political changes in the Arab states. According to them, economic reforms associated with the neoliberal agenda imply the restructuration of authoritarian regimes that remain nondemocratic. Neoliberal “political and economic reforms do not necessarily result in loosening of the state’s control over society and, hence, the emergence of independent actors. In countries like Morocco and Egypt /.../ privatization processes have represented a chance for ruling elites to recognize or /.../ shift patronage networks towards the private sector without undermining the power as the ultimate source of rent. On the contrary, they provided the state with new sources of wealth and new opportunities for accumulation and distribution”.<sup>15</sup> To boost this assumption it is appropriate to mention King’s words, namely that:

a state-led economic liberalization and experiments in multiparty politics led not to a full opening but actually were crafted to support the new authoritarianism. Economic reform policies created and favoured a rent-seeking urban and rural elite supportive of authoritarian rule and took resources away from the workers and peasants who increasingly had the most to gain from democratization. Thus, the privatization of state assets provided rulers with the patronage resources to form a new ruling coalition from groups that would be pivotal in any capitalist economy: private-sector capitalists, landed elites, the military officer corps, and top state officials, many of whom moved into the private sector and took substantial state assets with them. At the same time, ruling parties maintained elite consensus and contained the disaffection of the lower strata in the new multiparty arena by offering them a dwindling share of state resources.<sup>16</sup>

All of the features mentioned above characterises the “old” authoritarian regimes in the Arab World, and – simultaneously to the Third Wave – most of the Arab authoritarian regimes – like our case study (Egyptian authoritarian regime until 2011) – started to transform/reconfigure (many political scholars believed that they are democratizing), although – as we can see today – they have remained nondemocratic (hybrid/semi-authoritarian).

## **Structural factors of authoritarianism**

### **a) Economic liberalization and rentierism**

As mentioned above, economic liberalization in the Arab Middle East did not lead to the formation of an autonomous middle class. It was rather a prelude to the establishment of hybrid/semi-authoritarian regimes. In other words it has triggered a sort of nondemocratic transformation/reconfiguration of “old” authoritarian regimes. The main reason for this was the fact that the process of economic reforms took place in two different structural contexts, although none of them favoured the creation of an independent/autonomous middle class.

The first context, concerning oil and gas producing countries (i.e. Gulf Arab states), is “rentierism”, which means that the authoritarian regimes do not need democratic legitimacy, since their main revenues do not come from taxes and other productive sources of income. Because of huge rentier revenues, authoritarian governments are able to keep the so called “social contract”

<sup>15</sup> Guazzone and Pioppi, ‘Interpreting...’, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> King, *The New Authoritarianism...*, pp. 5–6.

alive, guaranteeing their citizens a relatively high standard of living – without granting them political freedoms and democratic rights. On the other hand, they expect from them not to demand political participation. “Rentierism has given Middle Eastern states extractive autonomy from society”.<sup>17</sup> It is a kind of a rational exchange between society and authoritarian elites of rentier or semi-rentier states – at least at the time of high prices of natural resources and systematic flow of other non-productive revenues (i.e. foreign aid). Due to the rentier revenues, they are able to introduce neoliberal or other unpopular reforms and mitigate their negative social effects (that occur in the short run), triggering so called “bread riots” (like in Egypt in 1977), which – as a consequence – helps to endure nondemocratic rule.

The second context is the fact that economic liberalization resulted in the creation of so called “crony capitalism”, that is a “system in which those close to the political authorities who make and enforce policies receive favours that have large economic value. These favours allow politically connected economic agents to earn returns above those that would prevail in an economy in which the factors of production were priced by the market”.<sup>18</sup> Crony capitalism also does not promote middle class independence and autonomy *vis a vis* the state. In this scenario, the beneficiaries of neoliberal reforms owe their privileged economic status and wealth to the close relationship with the ruling elite. In Egypt it was the Mubarak family. Therefore, business groups are not interested in democratization, since their position is guaranteed by the members of the political establishment.

Egypt – our case study – is not a rentier, but rather a semi-rentier state.<sup>19</sup> When the Egyptian government started to transform its economic policy in the 1970s, it was also the beginning of establishment of a mixed model that can be categorized as “crony-rentier”. It is not so resistant to economic crises as typical rentierism, although more stable than pure cronyism. While Egypt has some energy resources (oil and gas), their extraction and sale do not cover most budget expenditures. On the other hand, as the result of a peace treaty with Israel (signed in 1979), Egypt retook strategic access to the Suez Canal, which guarantees a constant supply of transit fees, an important source of income. Going further – Egypt was also a recipient of foreign aid, especially from the United States. The scale of American aid to Egypt increased significantly after the peace treaty was signed. Other states – especially the Arab Gulf countries – also provided Egypt with substantial financial and material support. Therefore Egyptian authorities were able to lessen any negative social outcomes – especially in a time of high oil and gas prices. Regarding the political system and relations between state and society, they needed to make changes at the level of the social coalition supporting the authoritarian regime (previously it had had a popular character). The main socio-structural basis of the regime was now the new class of businessmen

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<sup>17</sup> Mehran Kamrava, ‘The Middle East’s Democracy Deficit in Comparative Perspective,’ *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, No. 6, 2007, p. 203.

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Haber, ‘Introduction: The Political Economy of Crony Capitalism,’ in *Crony Capitalism and Economic Growth in Latin America: Theory and Evidence*, Stephen Haber (ed.), Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2002, p. xii.

<sup>19</sup> Bradley L. Glasser, *Economic Development and Political Reform: The Impact of External Capital on the Middle East*, Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2001, p. 13.

(“new Egyptians”)<sup>20</sup> – beneficiaries of neoliberal reforms that modified the structure of relations between the ruling regime and Egyptian society.<sup>21</sup>

The specific nature of the economic liberalization, especially its second wave (from the early 1990s onwards) – carried out by nondemocratic government – had a significant impact on the transformation of authoritarianism towards its “hybridization”, but not democratization as many expected. *Egypt’s Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program*, that was implemented in 1991, contributed to the decline of government expenditures and affected – in the short run – an improvement in macroeconomic indicators. However later – especially in the first decade of the twenty-first century – the budget deficit began to grow again and reached approximately 9% of GDP in 2010.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, structural reforms were socially costly, so their political consequence was growing resistance towards the ruling regime, that had no choice but to use its coercive apparatus and emergency law to neutralize opposition. Apart from a ‘stick’, there was also a sort of ‘carrot’. As economic liberalization contributed to the decline of its social base or constituency, the ruling regime – facing legitimization concerns – was forced to develop quasi-democratic “façade institutions” as the main components of semi-authoritarianism (hybrid regime), which did not change the non-democratic character of the political regime.<sup>23</sup>

Regarding macroeconomic issues, government expenditures declined in the years 1982–2002 from 70% GDP to 30% GDP. But – at the same time – rentier revenues declined as well, which implies a further increase in the budget deficit. The decrease in rentier revenues contributed to growth of the social and political costs of economic reforms, so the government needed to spend more to keep opponents in check. In fact, the maintenance of political stability was not possible without keeping public expenditure at a high level – especially because GDP growth was not as impressive as in the 1990s and amounted to less than 2% GDP in 2011. In sum, economic liberalization in Egypt – implemented in a *de facto* authoritarian context – did not enable the formation of an autonomous middle class and independent free market. It rather led to the emergence of crony capitalism, favoring private businessmen interlinked with members of the political establishment – especially president Mubarak, his wife, as well as their two sons, who began to develop their political influence.<sup>24</sup>

As a result of internal changes within the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), its role in transforming the Egyptian economy grew in the twenty-first century. This was mainly caused by attracting the biggest businessmen as members of the party, accompanied by a change in the ruling elite’s attitude towards private capital. When, at the turn of the century, the NDP suffered growing internal divisions, Mubarak used this situation to initiate a process of internal

<sup>20</sup> Jerzy Zdanowski, *Bliski Wschód 2011: Bunt czy Rewolucja?* [Middle East 2011: Rebellion or Revolution?], Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza AFM, pp. 96–102.

<sup>21</sup> Samer Soliman, *The Autumn of Dictatorship. Fiscal Crisis and Political Change in Egypt under Mubarak*, Stanford: Stanford university Press, 2011, s. 1–44; King, *The New Authoritarianism...*, pp. 6–24.

<sup>22</sup> Soliman, *The Autumn of Dictatorship...*, p. 50.

<sup>23</sup> More on this issue in: Maye Kassem, *Egyptian Politics. The Dynamics of Authoritarian Rule*, Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004; Eberhard Kienle, *A Grand Delusion. Democracy and Economic Reform in Egypt*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000; Marina Ottaway, Julia Choucair-Vizoso (eds.), *Beyond the Façade. Political Reform in the Arab World*, Cairo: AUC Press, 2008; Larbi Sadiki, *Rethinking Arab Democratization: Elections without Democracy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Soliman, *The Autumn of Dictatorship...*, pp. 40–53; Leila S. Talani, *The Arab Spring in the Global Political Economy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, p. 180.

reorganization, designed to empower his younger son – Gamal – who became head of the party's influential political committee. This was essential for the Egyptian economic system and its evolution, because the reorganization of the party allowed big businessmen to sit on crucial bodies of the ruling party, which resulted in recognition of economic development as the priority objective of the Egyptian government. Thus neoliberalism became the new doctrine of the NDP and was presented as a remedy for all economic problems. This strategy stressed the need of the private sector's expansion in the areas formerly occupied by the state. Neoliberal doctrine was confirmed in the appointment of Ahmed Nazif as the prime minister. He was considered a proponent of privatization and reduction of the state's role in the economy. Nazif was also responsible for the sales of around sixty companies – worth 2.6 billion USD – in the first few years of his cadency.<sup>25</sup>

### **b) The army and a coercive apparatus**

As Eva Bellin points out: “Democratic transition can be carried out successfully only when the state's coercive apparatus lacks the will or capacity to crush it. Where that coercive apparatus remains intact and opposed to political reform, democratic transition will not occur”.<sup>26</sup> Eric Chaney, thinking about the deep roots of democratic deficit in the Arab World, also claims that it might be determined by “the long-run influence of control structures developed under Islamic empires in the pre-modern era”.<sup>27</sup> By “control structures” Chaney understands particularly the army (and the coercive apparatus in general), but also religious institutions.

The historical division of power between the military (the sovereign backed by his army of slaves) and religious leaders did not produce democratic institutions. Instead, both religious and military elites worked together to develop [...] a ‘classical’ institutional equilibrium [...]. Comparison with the historical evolution of Western Europe suggests that the widespread use of slave armies was a key innovation that hindered the development of civil society (that is, the emergence of a plurality of groups with both political power and conflicting interests) in the regions conquered by Arab armies [...]. By the 19th century the political equilibrium in the Arab conquest regions had begun to undergo substantial transformations, but from a base of both weak institutions and weak civil societies [...]. Over the next century, European colonizers and native rulers seem to have worked to perpetuate the historical concentration of political power by keeping civil societies weak and blocking the emergence of rival groups [...]. Consequently, when many of the Arab conquest areas gained independence after World War II, the new states inherited both weak institutions and weak civil societies [...]. Thus, the distribution of political power in some areas today bears a striking resemblance to its historical distribution.<sup>28</sup>

Regarding the Egyptian army, both presidents Anwar as-Sadat and then Mubarak tried to curtail the political influence the military elite (“modern Mamluks”, as Jean Pierre Filiu calls

<sup>25</sup> Bruce K. Rutherford, *Egypt After Mubarak: Liberalism, Islam, and Democracy in the Arab World*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, pp. 218–224.

<sup>26</sup> Eva Bellin, ‘The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective,’ *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Jan., 2004), p. 143.

<sup>27</sup> Eric Chaney, ‘Democratic Change in the Arab World, Past and Present,’ *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, No. 2012/42(1), p. 363.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 385–385.

them)<sup>29</sup>, although both were the direct “products” of this institution. Therefore they gradually developed the internal security apparatus (police forces and internal intelligence service). However, the army remained the most dominant centre of political power in Egypt, so another method of keeping this institution under presidential control was filling prominent positions with loyal officers – i.e. Abd al-Halim Abu Gazala, who was Sadat’s protégée (and defence minister under Mubarak from 1981 until 1989). Abu Gazala was then replaced by Yusuf Sabri Abu Taleb, who was followed by Muhammad Hussain Tantawy – a prominent defence minister from 1991. Abu Gazala was regarded as a competent officer, seeking to modernize the Egyptian military, although his political ambitions and growing popularity concerned Mubarak, who dismissed him as part of a process of depoliticization of the armed forces and some scandals related to him. His successor – Tantawy – remained loyal to Mubarak, so he stayed in office for two decades. To prove that Mubarak kept the most influential officers away from the highest governmental posts, one must note that the percentage of military men in the Egyptian cabinet declined from 33% during Nasser’s presidency to 10% throughout Mubarak’s tenure.<sup>30</sup>

Limited depoliticization of the military structures allowed president Mubarak to loosen control over the army and a greater use of incentives as a method to keep prominent officers in check. The main means of maintaining loyalty among the military elite was taking care of the private interests and privileged economic status of the highest representatives of the armed forces. One might say that Mubarak’s aim was to provide them with economic benefits instead of political power, what is only partly possible – as economic power determines political status. Going further, this method could not be used – at least to that extent – towards the junior officers, since presidential patronage possibilities were limited (by comparison to the growing number of officers). Young officers could only hope to be rewarded – for their loyalty – in the future. This does not change the fact that the senior officers – especially after they retired – were given priority in filling lucrative positions in state enterprises or in administrative and bureaucratic sectors, as evidenced by the fact that – in the years 1981–1989 – approximately 30% of provincial governors were former officers of the armed forces (9/30). In subsequent years this number increased. Between 1990 and 1999 it was an estimated 42%, and in the years 2000–2011 it grew to 44%. In total, during the tenure of Mubarak (1981–2011), as much as 40% of Egyptian governors originated from the military structures (63/156), while 22% represented internal security apparatus (34/156). Around 38% of them were civilians (59/156).<sup>31</sup>

An important factor – cementing the persistence of nondemocratic political relations in Egypt – was the issue of national security, specifically the fight against so called ‘Islamic terrorism’, which became a major challenge for the Egyptian state (mainly in the 1990s). The growing problem of terrorism favoured the expansion of state’s structures of coercion and control, namely the army and the internal security apparatus (most of all their elites), which competed with each other for political influence and economic status. Therefore Egypt kept on standby

<sup>29</sup> Jean Pierre Filiu, *From Deep State to Islamic State: The Arab Counter-Revolution and its Jihadi Legacy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 45–82.

<sup>30</sup> Ahmed S. Hashim, ‘The Egyptian Military. Part One: From the Ottomans Through Sadat,’ *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, 2011, pp. 74–76; Hisham Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies, and the Statesman. Egypt’s Road to Revolt*, London and New York: Verso, 2014, pp. 176–181; Kassem, *Egyptian Politics...*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>31</sup> Hicham Bou Nassif, ‘Wedded to Mubarak: The Second Careers and Financial Rewards of Egypt’s Military Elite, 1981–2011,’ *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 67, No. 4, 2013, pp. 509–530.

approximately 460,000 soldiers and 450,000 Central Security Force conscripts and officers, as well as around 1 million policemen. In the last decade of Mubarak's tenure, there were up to 2 million people employed within the military and police structures. Taking into consideration the fact that the Egyptian population was estimated 83-million in that time, it meant that for every thousand residents there were 25 employees of state structures of coercion and control.<sup>32</sup> Although the armed forces were better salaried, the disparities in spending on military and the internal security apparatus started to converge in the first decade of the twenty-first century. This means that the latter have being developed as a counterweight to the army. One might say, that the officers of the Egyptian armed forces were losing their privileged status with comparison to both groups – the “new Egyptians”, as evidenced by the great fortunes of people associated with Gamal, as well as senior officers of the internal security sector. This is evidenced by the fact that from the early 1990s the internal security sector's budget increased from 3.5 billion Egyptian pounds (LE) to 22 billion LE in the fiscal year 2011/2012. There is no doubt that the military officers have noticed the link between the growing political power of Gamal and the increasing spending on the internal ministry – led by Habib al-Adly, who were generously rewarded for his loyalty to the Mubarak family.<sup>33</sup>

### Clientelism as a cultural determinant

Guillermo A. O'Donnell claimed, that many new democracies are characterized by the existence of two different types of institutions – elections (that meet the criteria of formal institution), and – as he called it – particularism, which is regarded as the main informal institution.<sup>34</sup> Regarding authoritarian regimes, elections may be held or not (sometimes they occur, but do not fulfil their standard functions), but it is the informal institution of particularism that often plays a fundamental role in shaping the political relations within nondemocratic political systems. Particularism is strong when formal political institutions are weak, something which characterizes Arab authoritarian regimes. It might be said that – instead of formal political institutions – a key role in the functioning of authoritarianism is played by informal “rules of a game” such as clientelism. On the field of Arab culture it is called *wastah*. According to Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Luis Roniger, *wastah*

is sought in order to obtain such instrumental benefits and services as not to be cheated in the market place, location or securing a job, resolving conflict and legal litigations, winning a lawsuit, speeding up administrative decisions and bureaucratic procedures [...], etc. A *wastah* act by a mayor can aim at gaining gratitude which, eventually, will be translated into votes during the [...] elections. *Wastah* activities can be motivated by a sense of obligation to repay favours or to meet a moral commitment, as well as by the desire to create a sense of obligation in the receivers of the benefits. Mostly, *wastahs* do not have control over primary resources but have connections and knowledge of the relational and procedural rules for dealing with the administration or other institutional framework.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesman...*, pp. 193–194.

<sup>33</sup> International Crisis Group, ‘Lost in Transition: The World According to the Egypt's SCAF,’ *Middle East Report*, No. 121, 24 April 2012, p. 10; Kandil, *Soldiers, Spies, and Statesman...*, pp. 195–220.

<sup>34</sup> Guillermo O'Donnell, *Another Institutionalization: Latin America and Elsewhere*, Kellogg Institute, Working Paper no. 222, Kellogg Institute for International Studies, Notre Dame, March 1996, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Shmuel N. Eisenstadt and Luis Roniger, *Patrons, Clients and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 87–88.

In Egypt, an economic crisis and structural reforms limited a formal control of the state institutions over a substantial group of people and organizations involved in political relations, which makes the patron-client relations not only a lot more informal, but also endemic. They appeared to be the norm, which means that clientelism became the main informal institution of the Egyptian political system. This was enhanced by deregulation, that reduced the number possibilities that previously gave the officials a formal control of economic and political processes. Therefore, they were forced to develop the informal networks of patronage.

According to Eisenstadt and Roniger, clientelism in Egypt has deep cultural and historical roots, so it is nothing unusual that it is still a vital informal institution, shaping political and economic relations. As they stated: “In Ottoman Cairo, some members of the ‘ulama seem to have been sheikhs who dominated patron-client networks among specific groups of the population. They had material wealth and, what was more important, strong social ties both with the rulers and with specific portions of the population [...]. Similar ties were also maintained by more secular leaders of Cairo neighbourhoods, who became known as *futuwwat*. The *futuwwat* were leaders, arbitrators and patrons in the different *hitta* (quarters) of Cairo. They flourished when the state controls over market conditions or working services were weak [...]. Under the bureaucratic authoritarian political system of modern Egypt (as also in Tunisia), government offices were valuable sources of personal security and steady income. Capability alone did not ensure access to office, nor bureaucratic seniority; this created a need to rely on powerful protectors and personal connections ‘to beat the seniority system’. However, once these objectives were reached, the employees kept their ranks and salaries even if they were eventually dismissed or prevented from working in their offices. Thus, tenured offices were converted into some kind of private domain”.<sup>36</sup>

On the political level, NDP played an extremely important role in the creation of informal networks (especially in the last decade of Mubarak’s rule). Therefore, the ruling party was generously sponsored by the Egyptian entrepreneurs, hoping that – by funding campaigns of its candidates for parliament – they would “repay” their donors in the near future. So the deputy of NDP acted as an intermediary link between the centre of power (at the top was the president Mubarak) – that is the patron – as well as clients and their interests. It is obvious that if the elections could be won by the presidential party only, its candidates were the main beneficiaries of the generosity of clients. There were even such situations, when a businessman ran for elections in one constituency, and simultaneously financed the campaign of a candidate from other districts. This “electoral strategy” enhanced his political influence after the elections, thus increasing the opportunities for supporting his interests – by increasing his chances to influence the people who had a real impact on decision-making process at the state level. If we imagine the complexity and multidimensionality of such a network, it turns out that the amount of rational clients – including members of families of people directly involved in this informal mechanism – could be quite substantial, which generated the real support for the NDP.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 89–91.

<sup>37</sup> Mohamed F. Menza, *Patronage Politics in Egypt. The National-Democratic Party and Muslim Brotherhood in Cairo*, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 107–146.

## Conclusion

The durability of the Egyptian authoritarian regime (before 2011) was related to: its ability to adapt to the economic changes (economic liberalization in the context of a semi-rentier state); the privileged status and domination of the army and the internal security apparatus (instead of some tensions between members of these two structures); as well as the vitality of a deeply rooted informal institution of clientelism. As mentioned above – *wastah* has deep cultural and historical roots, and contributed to the weakness of formal political institutions. In Egypt, the ruling elites tried to adapt themselves to the structural changes that they introduced, but also were adapting these developments to their own needs – by using co-option and exclusion, coercive measures, patron-client networks, façade institutions (ostensibly democratic) and other opportunities brought by neoliberal reforms. Equally important – in addition to the specific nature of economic liberalization in Egypt and the significance of clientelistic relationships – was the fact that the main pillar of the ruling regime was the army. Military officers were the first beneficiaries of economic liberalization in Egypt, but the emergence of Gamal Mubarak as a potential successor to his father, who surrounded himself with businessmen of non-military roots, implied a gradual decrease in the political and economic influence of the army – in favour of a new political and business elite, which took control of the NDP and the internal security apparatus. Due to this, the military did not support the president during the outbreak of social discontent in 2011 (January 25 Revolution), and then took control of the transitional process (as the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces – SCAF), that – again – did not result in a democratization of the political system, but rather in another authoritarian reconfiguration. This allowed the army to regain its influence and neutralize the intra-regime enemies and pro-democratic opponents, including the Muslim Brotherhood. As it turned out, it was the military officers (like Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi) – not members of opposition groups (i.e. moderate Islamists or pro-democracy activists) – who have become the beneficiaries of the January 25 Revolution, which has opened the next chapter of nondemocratic rule in Egypt.

## Who is a Political Newcomer? The Taiwanese Voters' Perspective: 2016

### Abstract

The 2016 legislative elections in Taiwan brought about the spectacular success of candidates who had neither been seasoned by experience in the legislature itself nor in any other elected office of local government in Taiwan. Moreover, 27% of the members of the 9<sup>th</sup> Legislative Yuan (LY) are such newcomers. Taking into account that little attention has been given to this topic, this study presents an understanding of political newcomers in Taiwanese society in 2016.

### Introduction

The 2016 legislative elections in Taiwan saw a spectacular success for candidates who had neither been seasoned by experience in legislature itself nor in any other elected office of local government in Taiwan. One notable example was rock star Freddy Lim, whose appeal helped to elevate the New Power Party (*Shidai Liliang*, NPP), created only in 2015, into the LY as the third largest political party after the two giants – the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party, KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (*Minzhu Jinbudang*, DPP), which have reigned over the island for the last several decades. Moreover, 27% of the members of the 9<sup>th</sup> LY had not been elected to any office prior to the ballot of 2016, and 40% were newcomers to the LY.<sup>1</sup> Given the fact that the candidates elected for the first time constitute almost one-third of the LY, and some of them are very successful on the political stage, it is surprising that they have not received greater attention in the literature. While studies focusing on the United States, the United Kingdom, and countries across Latin America<sup>2</sup> have greatly contributed to the understanding of debutants in politics, topic of political newcomers or novices in Taiwan studies, whilst not absent, has not

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This paper is the result of a research project supported by a grant from the Department of Political Science, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). The authors thank the members of the Election Study Centre at the National Chengchi University in Taiwan and Prof. Cheng-Hao Pao and Ying-Long Chou of Tamkang University for their advice and constructive comments.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the compilation of information from the LY website, 31 out of 113 members elected to the 9<sup>th</sup> LY have neither been seasoned by experience in legislature nor at any other elected office of local government (27%) and 45 members of the 9<sup>th</sup> LY were elected for the first time (40%). See: *Di 9 Jie Lifa Weiyuan Mingdan* [List of Members of the 9<sup>th</sup> Legislative Yuan Term], Legislative Yuan of the Republic of China (Taiwan), 2016, [http://www.ly.gov.tw/03\\_leg/0301\\_main/legList.action](http://www.ly.gov.tw/03_leg/0301_main/legList.action) (accessed 4 August 2016).

<sup>2</sup> As the examples may serve: David T. Canon, *Actors, Athletes, and Astronauts. Political Amateurs in the United States Congress*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990; Anthony King, 'The Outsider as Political Leader: The Case of Margaret Thatcher,' *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 32, No. 3, July 2002, pp. 435–454; Kenneth Bunker and Patricio Navia, 'Latin American Political Outsiders, Revisited: The Case of Marco Enríquez-Ominami in Chile, 2009,' *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2013, pp. 3–35. The literature on celebrity politicians is particularly abundant and instead of indicating a representative study, the authors will refer readers to John Street, *Mass Media, Politics & Democracy*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011 – a concise analysis of the attitudes towards celebrity politicians in literature, as it provides numerous references to works on the issue of newcomers to politics.

comprised the foci of any research.<sup>3</sup> For example, Liao in the analysis of the LY from its second to seventh terms (1993–2010), rather than focusing on the newcomers, discusses the relationship between the changes in legislative career types and democratic systems of government.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the vast literature on the choices of Taiwanese voters may be of great help in analyzing the phenomenon of novices in the island's politics when it, for example, provides information on the relative weight of party or camp votes to personal votes, yet it fails to analyze newcomers in depth. For instance, Batto, who compares the role of incumbency with voters' attitudes towards the newcomers, treats incumbency vs. the status of newcomers as one of the multiple characteristics of candidates considered by voters, but not as the focal point of analysis.<sup>5</sup>

Taking into account the number of novices in the LY, the spectacular victory of several of them in 2016 legislative elections in Taiwan, and the little attention given to the topic in literature, this study turns to the phenomenon of novices in politics. It looks at understanding of notion of the political novice in Taiwanese society in 2016, analyzing information gathered through the survey.

The structure of the paper is threefold. Firstly, it takes stock of the literature on political newcomers, in search of a definition. Secondly, following the presentation of survey methodology, it turns to the answers of respondents in order to recount and discuss understanding of the concept of the political newcomer by Taiwanese voters. Finally, it aims at generalizing survey results.

### Political newcomers in the literature

Academic labels for the debutants in politics vary from the newcomer, the novice to the amateur. These names refer to different political phenomena and their application is not necessarily consistent with the accepted dictionary meaning. Authors usually derive the status of the *newcomer* from the politician's background, contrasting with the most common in a given political culture. Van der Bloom, for instance, addresses Cicero as a newcomer as he did not achieve political office through his ancestry, while Roman political culture "favored men descended from famous consuls and generals".<sup>6</sup> Schmidt et al. label as newcomers immigrants to the United States from countries other than Europe who gain a presence in American politics and society.<sup>7</sup> The term *novice* is most often applied to underscore new candidates' lack of political experience. Yet, their inexperience is defined in the literature rather loosely. When Canon speaks about lack of political experience, he refers to politicians who had never held any political post,<sup>8</sup> while Cowley sees novices

<sup>3</sup> Nathan F. Batto, 'Partisan and Personal Voting in SNTV: A Mixed Logit Model,' *Xuanju Yanjiu* [Journal of Electoral Studies], Vol. 12, No. 1, 2003, pp. 121–153; Dafydd Fell, 'Small Parties in Taiwan's 2016 National Elections: A Limited Breakthrough?,' *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2016, pp. 41–58.

<sup>4</sup> Da-chi Liao, 'Changes in Legislative Career Types and the Development Orientation of Democracy: A Study of Taiwan's Legislative Yuan from the Second Term to the Seventh Term (in Chinese),' *Soochow Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2010, pp. 49–96.

<sup>5</sup> Batto, 'Partisan and...'

<sup>6</sup> Henriette van der Blom, *Cicero's Role Models. The Political Strategy of a Newcomer*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. xi.

<sup>7</sup> Ronald Schmidt, Yvette M. Alex-Assensoh, Andrew L. Aoki and Rodney E. Hero, *Newcomers, Outsiders, and Insiders. Immigrants and American Racial Politics in the Early Twenty-first Century*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Canon, *Actors, Athletes...*, p. xi.

in Ed Millband and David Cameron, even though they became leaders of their parties having had one year of experience each in the House of Commons.<sup>9</sup>

Canon, in turn, calls a person without prior political experience an *amateur*. In a study of amateurism within the United States Congress, he sees inexperience as amateurs' defining characteristic and claims that it is consequential for their political careers, as it affects "their chances of winning office and may influence their effectiveness in Congress when they do win".<sup>10</sup> He discerns several subcategories of amateurs when he differentiates celebrities, such as businesspeople, anchor people, actors, athletes and astronauts, from other amateurs by their recognized names and successful careers, which are advantageous, resourceful and valuable.<sup>11</sup>

Canon is not the first to apply the term *amateur* in research on political careers. One of the earliest academic inquiries into the phenomenon of political amateurism, interested in various types of party activism, introduced a very different definition of an amateur from the one proposed by Canon. Wilson, in his study of the motives and tactics within the United States' Democratic Party, coined the term political amateur for a "new kind of politician" who: "finds politics intrinsically interesting because it expresses a conception of the public interest"; views politics "in terms of ideas and principles"; fulfills the obligation to participate within intraparty democratic procedures with natural satisfaction and behaves valorously.<sup>12</sup> In doing so, Wilson distinguishes amateur from professional, conventional or machine politicians, terms also mentioned by the other authors.<sup>13</sup> The professional politician, in turn, is motivated by material incentives. His goal in winning elections is primary to party ideology and procedures.<sup>14</sup>

Another term applied in the literature with reference to various types of newcomers to politics is the *outsider*. Barr draws a distinction between three types of political candidates: outsiders, insiders and mavericks. He defines the outsider as "someone who gains political prominence not through or in association with an established, competitive party, but as a political independent or in association with new or newly competitive parties". This is in opposition to *insiders*, described as "those politicians who rise through or within the established competitive parties of the nation's party system and who preserve that system". Turning to the *maverick*, Barr interprets him or her as a "politician who rises to prominence within an established, competitive party but then either abandons his affiliation to compete as an independent or in association with an outsider party, or radically reshapes his own party".<sup>15</sup> Bunker and Navie, in turn, see outsiders in third-party and independent candidates; therefore, similarly to Barr, they define outsider status

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<sup>9</sup> Philip P. Cowley, 'Arise, novice leader! The continuing rise of the career politician in Britain,' *Politics*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2012, pp. 31–38.

<sup>10</sup> Canon, *Actors, Athletes...*, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88–89.

<sup>12</sup> James Q. Wilson, *The Amateur Democrat: Club Politics in Three Cities*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, p. 4–5.

<sup>13</sup> John W. Soule and James W. Clarke, 'Amateurs and Professionals: A Study of Delegates to the 1968 Democratic National Convention,' *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 3, September 1970, pp. 888–898; Robert A. Hitlin and John S. Jackson III, 'On Amateur and Professional Politicians,' *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 39, No. 3, August 1977, pp. 786–793.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas H. Roback, 'Amateurs and Professionals: Delegates to the 1972 Republican National Convention,' *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 37, No. 2, May, 1975, p. 437.

<sup>15</sup> Robert R. Barr, 'Populists, Outsiders and Anti-Establishment Politics,' *Party Politics*, 2009, Vol. 15, No.1, p. 33.

with respect to the candidate's location vis-à-vis the political establishment.<sup>16</sup> Other studies conflate various definitions. For instance, Fell's *political novices*, described in his study of the small parties' performance in Taiwan's 2016 elections as candidates "without electoral experience or mainstream partisan ties", share the characteristics of Canon's amateurs, without experience, as well as Barr's outsiders with respect to the ruling parties.<sup>17</sup>

Objectivity in defining outsider status is only one part of the picture. According to King, the outsider status may also be subjectively applied by politicians themselves as a part of their rhetoric.<sup>18</sup> He suggests here three types of outsiders: social or demographic, psychological, and tactical. The first one is socially or demographically defined; therefore an "individual's membership or non-membership of it usually becomes – not always, but usually – a matter of objective fact".<sup>19</sup> The second type of outsider is psychologically defined by a candidate who "just *feels* to be an outsider" regardless of the objective situation. The tactical outsider is "the person who consciously or subconsciously chooses to play the role of the outsider" to achieve certain ends and, in order to achieve them, is prepared to "flout or ignore convention".<sup>20</sup>

Newcomers, novices, amateurs, mavericks and outsiders are particularly well positioned to underscore their extraneousness with respect to the elites wielding power, the political system as a whole or the incumbent government to achieve political ends.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, they may be easily perceived as outsiders or populists among the public, even against their own will. One can attribute outsider status to the newcomers, such as Cicero or immigrant-politicians in the US, as they are coming to politics from a social group different from mainstream politicians. Wilson assesses amateurs' extraneousness on the basis of certain behavior, distinct from that which is most common within the particular political party. Canon proposes a definition of the amateur and Cowley of the novice whose extraneousness results from a lack of experience, but this lack experience is interpreted in different ways by each researcher. Barr as well as Bunker and Navie look at outsiders from the perspective of their location with respect to parties in power.

Summarizing, the criteria for conceptualizing political newcomers are not clear-cut. Numerous definitions refer to politicians without political experience, but focus on their various characteristics. While they all point to the outsider status of certain politicians, they nevertheless take different points of reference, such as the (differently understood) politician's experience, location within the party system or with respect to those who wield power, political rhetoric, or a combination of these factors. Lumping together various political phenomena blurs the differences between the component parts; as a result, the politicians who are new on the political stage constitute an understudied topic. This study, following the Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online definition of a "newcomer" as a person "who has recently started a new activity", applies this generic term to new politicians and uses it interchangeably with "novice", which is defined as "a person who has just started learning or doing something".<sup>22</sup> It will search for a detailed

<sup>16</sup> Bunker and Navia, 'Latin American ...,' p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Fell, 'Small Parties...', p. 43.

<sup>18</sup> King, 'The Outsider...', p. 436.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 438.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>21</sup> Barr, 'Populists, Outsiders...', p. 32 and 36.

<sup>22</sup> "Newcomer" and "Novice," in Merriam-Webster.com, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com> (accessed 20 July 2016).

understanding of newcomers among Taiwanese voters with particular attention to the factors that determine their outsider status.

## Methodology

The study examines the phenomenon of political newcomers from the perspective of Taiwanese voters. It is based on a survey conducted by the Election Study Centre at the National Chengchi University. The interviews were held between 10 and 17 March 2016 as a telephone survey. The target population was 20 years and older in the Taiwan Area. Interviewers asked 36 substantive questions as well as partial characteristics for sex, age, education, and geographic location. The survey resulted in 1,722 valid samples. At a 95% level of confidence, the survey has a margin of error  $\pm 2.36\%$ . The construction of questions and their sequence in the survey are justified by the research problems the study aims to solve. The authors of the research extract a definition of political newcomers from respondents, assuming two distinctive opinions and attitudes towards them, positive and negative, and provide four (Questions: 19, 20a, 20b and 21 out of 36) survey questions:

1. Do you think that participation of newcomers in politics has a positive or negative impact on Taiwanese society (later referred to as Q1)? Response options: a) positive, b) negative, c) no response (including: depends on situation, no opinion, don't know, respondent refused to answer).
2. If positive, why? Explain your answer (Q2, open question).
3. If negative, why? Explain your answer (Q3, open question).
4. In recent years, numerous political newcomers have taken part in elections. Who do you think is a political newcomer (Q4, open question)?

## Political newcomers in the eyes of Taiwanese voters

The survey provided the main source of information about Taiwanese popular understanding of political newcomers. The majority (60.2%, 1,036 out of 1,722) of respondents stated that their opinion on the impact of the participation of newcomers in politics on Taiwanese society was positive: 19.3% – negative (332); and 20.6% of interviewees decided not to give a response to this question (354 persons selected “no response” in answer to Q1). The next two questions of the survey (Q2 and Q3) asked respondents for an explanation of their attitude towards political newcomers. The first one was directed at those who saw their impact positively (1,036; 75.7% of all the respondents who expressed their positive or negative opinion in Q1), the second – negatively (332; 24.3%). In total, they provided 1,223 descriptive answers: 928 and 295 to Q2 and Q3 respectively.

The answers to these questions demonstrated that Taiwanese voters primarily understand novices as inexperienced (62%; 758 out of 1,223 answers). Answers pointed to more positive connotations associated with this characteristic. Only one-fifth (20%; 244 out of 1,223) of answers associated newcomers with incompetence, ineffectiveness, and incapable politicians, while a twofold bigger share (42%; 514 out of 1,223) appreciated their novelty and inexperience and vested hope in them for constructive change. Most of the respondents who explained their negative attitude towards the novices criticized them for lack of experience and understanding (82.7%; 244 out of 295). They depicted newcomers simply as those who “do not have experience” and also as being “not professional enough”, “not knowing about things”, “not understanding politics”, “can be led by the nose”, “should start at the bottom and work up”, and some even underlined that

“politicians should do politics”. Additionally, they were seen not as representing themselves but rather as puppets in the hands of powerful political actors: “they are supported by the powerful”, “they serve some political parties”, and “they are the product of the media”. The Taiwanese who regarded lack of experience as a kind of advantage tended to associate the inexperience of newcomers with the possibility of constructive change. They described this change in general terms as freshness and novelty, stating that “they have new ideas how to change this country”, “they may introduce people to various new issues”, “they do not follow old ways”, “they bring fresh air/new atmosphere to the government”, “they can have different opinions”, and “their thinking cannot be influenced by the political party”. Supporters of the newcomers also pointed to the more specific changes, such as “generational change”, “diversification”, “pluralism” or “elimination of corruption”. Therefore, the novices were perceived as advocates of progressive ideas, able to transform the old structures and policies, and as responsible for the emergence of new issues on the legislative agenda. Only a few answers (6 out of 1,223; 0.5%) directly pointed to their inability to introduce changes (“newcomers will not do a good job”, “they are unable to change things”, “they lack foresight”). Besides these isolated critical comments, trust in the effectiveness of political newcomers prevailed among most respondents, who pointed to their inexperience as a discerning characteristic.

Secondly, the respondents’ explanations of their positive attitudes towards newcomers indicated the overwhelming conviction that newcomers represent the interests of ordinary people. The most popular justification for their support was related to the division between politicians (“they” or “elites”) and citizens (“us” or “average citizens”), which is a key characteristic for populist appeal (224 out of 1,223; 18.3%). The newcomers were described as those who “understand the needs of citizens” (139 answers) and “represent the average Taiwanese, people like me” (85 responses). Only a small group of responses (24 out of 1,223; 2%) pointed out that voters see political novices in a negative light, as alienated from society, and representing “them”, not “us” (“they are too idealistic”, “they are rather extreme”, “they are subjective”, “they believe that they are infallible”, “they easily neglect public opinion”, etc.).

This perception of newcomers as representatives of the people is undoubtedly reinforced by candidates’ anti-establishment rhetoric and demonstrates that the voters are likely to accept such rhetoric articulated by the newcomers as authentic. The respondents who vested hope for change in newcomers were not necessarily critical towards any particular party but rather denigrated the establishment in general. They valued novices for “being unburdened”, “not being bureaucrats”, “being tabula rasa”, in opposition to the current political elites who were described as “treacherous”, “too politicized” or whose performance “was not good enough”. While respondents may be the most receptive to the newcomers’ anti-establishment rhetoric, we cannot draw the same conclusions with respect to popular acceptance of the newcomers’ narratives challenging the political system as a whole (anti-system rhetoric), or the incumbent government (anti-party rhetoric). Instead, the interviewees expressed a slight recognition of the amateurs’ positive contribution to the democratic system in 43 answers (3.5%), claiming that political novices are good for “democracy”, “diversification”, “pluralism”, and “balance of power” and that “everyone can participate in politics”. The newcomers were not necessarily associated with opposition to the incumbent government either, since only 2.6% of descriptions of newcomers (32 out of 1,223) can be read as a reference to the current political situation in Taiwan, particularly to the confrontation between the two main parties, including the hope that the amateurs would be

able to “break the deadlock” or the “bipartisan deadlock”, “force current parties into reflection”, “end political struggle”, “are able to prevent a second generation of government officials from ruling”, and “can solve corruption”, as well as the statement that the “KMT’s performance was not good enough”.

Thirdly, almost 10% of answers (118 out of 1,223) indicated that respondents highly value political outsiders’ moral standards, such as trustworthiness and honesty (“they do no wrong”, “they are relatively good people”, “they are trustworthy”, “they speak clearly and to the point” and “it is easy to understand what they are going to do”, “they do not act for money or profit”), as well as political determination and an unshakeable commitment to the right cause (“they get involved in politics to improve the lives of people, not for fame, power or money”, “they do their job with conscience and are very serious about what they do”). Explanations pointing to the opposite characteristics of the newcomers, indicating that they do not enjoy trust in society and are seen as dishonest, such as political outsiders getting into politics “for the sake of their own interest”, and “for money, power or fame”, and that they “are demagogues”, “love to criticize”, as well as that they take only politics just to “give vent to anger and hatred” and are “playing to the gallery”, were scarce (2%).

### Who is a political newcomer?

The survey also asked respondents to mark political newcomers with whom they were familiar (Q4). The answers revealed that even though almost one-third of the members of the 9<sup>th</sup> LY in 2016 hold political office for their first time, the Taiwanese recognize only a few of them as newcomers. The most popular political novice in the survey was Hung Tzu-yung (*Hong Ciyong*),<sup>23</sup> mentioned in 57% of all the responses, which recall particular newcomers (589 out of 1,031). The second most oft-mentioned political novice was Ko Wen-je (*Ke Wenzhe*) (503 out of 1,031; 48.8%), the third was Freddy Lim (*Lin Changzuo*) (321 out of 1,031; 31.13%), and the fourth was Huang Kuo-chang (*Huang Guochang*), who came to the mind of at least 169 interviewees (16.4%). The respondents who indicated one to three novices pointed to the following four public personae – Hung Tzu-yung, Ko Wen-je, Freddy Lim and Huang Kuo-chang (later referred to as Hung, Ko, Lim, and Huang), 1,582 out of 1,767 times (89.5%). This result places them far ahead of any other politician recalled in the survey as a novice. As the other political newcomers evoked in the answers do not surpass the 1% threshold, this article will focus on the four most mentioned novices (referred to as the top four political newcomers or the Top Four).

The political party that is most associated with novices is the NPP. Sixty-six respondents pointed to this party as an example of a novice (6.4%).<sup>24</sup> It should not be surprising that society associates the NPP with novelty, as it was established at the very beginning of 2015, only one year before the parliamentary elections. Additionally, the NPP has been commonly labeled as the “third

<sup>23</sup> The romanization of Chinese names of the Taiwanese people cited in this paper follows the transcription accepted and popularly applied in Taiwan. Due to the fact it often differs from the *Hanyu Pinyin* romanization, the latter was given in brackets for better recognition of particular person. All other Chinese words are romanized in the *Hanyu Pinyin* system, unless other romanization is popularly accepted in literature (such as *Kuomintang*).

<sup>24</sup> The NPP was given as an answer 63 times, “NPP’s legislator” twice, and the “NPP chairman” once. Besides, one answer evoked a “new third party for which many people voted” as an example of the political novice. This answer can be interpreted as a description of the NPP, since it is often called in media as the “third party”, it is relatively new and it received a relatively high percentage of votes in the elections of 2016. Yet, this answer was not included into the results of the NPP, since it is possible that the respondents had another party in mind.

force”, which underscores its perceived role as a competitor or outsider with respect to the KMT and the DPP – the two parties dominating the Taiwanese political stage. The strong association of the NPP with novices does not only stem from the party’s short history on the political stage of Taiwan, but also from its membership. If one adds up the responses associating the NPP with newcomers and all party members who were recalled as newcomers and represented this party in the 2016 elections, the percentage of answers indicating the novelty of the NPP grows to 65%.<sup>25</sup>

From the perspective of the perpetual struggle on the Taiwanese political stage between the Pan-Green and the Pan-Blue coalitions, the former is much more associated with political newcomers than the latter. All political amateurs in the Top Four are linked with the Pan-Green camp: the NPP belongs to the Pan-Green camp, and although Ko ran in 2014 Taipei Mayoral Election as an independent candidate, he gained support from the DPP and the TSU to represent the Pan-Green camp.<sup>26</sup>

The survey results revealed several similarities and differences between political newcomers in terms of age, experience in politics, personal career, political activity outside of the party structures and visibility in the media prior to the elections. The only common characteristic for all in the Top Four was their high visibility in the media prior to the elections; they had hit the headlines to become public figures in Taiwanese society some time before taking part in political elections. They became widely recognizable for various reasons, but what they all have in common is that this popularity contributed to their electoral success.

In terms of age, Hung, Lim and Huang were younger than the average Taiwanese legislator at the time of the elections (33, 39 and 42 years respectively), while Ko was older in comparison to this average. The average age of the winning candidates in 2016 was 50; in 2012 it was 52,<sup>27</sup> while during the 1995 legislative elections it was 47.<sup>28</sup>

Turning to experience in politics, all the Top Four except Ko ran in the legislative elections of January 2016. Moreover, they contested as candidates for the first time. The NPP was the first political party joined by all the three contestants. Moreover, it came into being less than one year before the elections as a result of a split in the civic group the Taiwan Citizen Union (CSU).<sup>29</sup> Ko stands out in this group when it comes to political affiliation, experience, novelty, and participation in elections. He did not stand for election in January 2016 but competed for the seat of the mayor of Taipei in 2014. Moreover, despite his status as an independent, Ko has been

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<sup>25</sup> The New Power Party was mentioned 66 times. Party members, who were recalled as newcomers and represented this party in 2016 elections, included three out of Top Four novices – Hung, Lim and Huang (mentioned 589, 321 and 169 times respectively) and three other members of the party (recalled each one time). This gives altogether 1,148 answers related to the NPP out of the total 1,767 answers pointing to a particular political amateur (65%).

<sup>26</sup> Chris Wang, ‘DPP tells Ko Wen-je it will support him in poll,’ *Taipei Times*, 17 June 2014, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2014/06/17/2003592952> (accessed 21 April 2016).

<sup>27</sup> ‘Taiwan’s new legislature to have more female lawmakers, become younger,’ Ministry of the Interior, Republic of China (Taiwan), 30 January 2016, [http://www.moi.gov.tw/english/english\\_news/news\\_detail.aspx?sn=14693&type=taiwan&pages=9](http://www.moi.gov.tw/english/english_news/news_detail.aspx?sn=14693&type=taiwan&pages=9) (accessed 21 April 2016).

<sup>28</sup> John F. Copper, *Taiwan’s Mid-1990s Elections: Taking the Final Steps to Democracy*, Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998, p. 83.

<sup>29</sup> The New Power Party came to life in a result of the split in the civic group the Taiwan Citizen Union (CSU) after a disagreement among its members regarding the mechanisms ruling the legislative nominations, in: ‘“Taiwan Citizens Union” Splits, Battle-Ready for 2016 Legislative Elections,’ *Kuomintang Official Website*, 25 February 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=15846> (accessed 25 April 2016).

associated with the DPP since he has been active in politics as a supporter of the former Taiwan president, the DPP's Chen Shui-bian. Another characteristic that differentiates Ko from the Top Four was that at the time of the survey he was not new in his elected position, as he had served as a mayor of Taipei for more than one year.

With respect to professional careers before making political headlines, the top three, Ko, Lim and Huang, before taking on their political careers stood out in their respective professions with impressive achievements and had made a conscious decision to terminate their previously successful careers for politics. Before running for the office of Taipei City Mayor, Ko, who holds a PhD in Clinical Medicine from the National Taiwan University (NTU), chaired the Department of Traumatology at the NTU Hospital, held a professorship at the College of Medicine, NTU, and became a well-recognized surgeon.<sup>30</sup> Lim became recognizable as the front-man of the heavy metal group Chthonic. Huang had a successful academic career as a researcher in Academia Sinica – the most prominent and highest academic institution in Taiwan.

From the perspective of political activity outside party structures prior to the election, three out of four top amateurs had decided at some point to become involved in one form or another of political activity, participating in protests, social movements, contributing to the work of non-governmental organizations, or voicing support for certain political ideas, parties, or decisions. Ko, Lim and Huang's involvement in politics had started long before they ran for elections. As a long-time active supporter of Chen Shui-bian, Ko established the National Taiwan University Hospital Friends of A-bian Club; aside from aiding Chen's campaign for the 1994 Taipei City Mayor elections, Ko took a half-month work leave to mobilize the medical community and support fundraising efforts for Chen's 2000 presidential campaign.<sup>31</sup> Lim's political ideas came to the fore in his music as well as in his activism beyond his musical career. A Chthonic performance frequently drew on Taiwanese tradition and symbolism. The band sang in Taiwanese, incorporated elements of traditional Taiwanese music, such as playing classical instruments, and sang lyrics about the oppression of native Taiwanese people. It performed at a pro-Taiwan rally, was labeled as "pro-independent", and was even prevented from performing in China. Lim himself combined his musical career with chairmanship of Amnesty International Taiwan between 2010 and 2014. Huang, before entering the legislative elections in 2016, was a political activist involved in civil society movements, such as the anti-media monopoly movement and the "September Political Struggle" and the 2014 Sunflower Movement.<sup>32</sup> The only exception in this group is Hung. Hung admits that before taking on a political career path, she was not interested in politics.<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusion

The Taiwanese conceptualized novices mainly in terms of two interrelated characteristics –

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<sup>30</sup> 'Biography: Wen-je Ko,' Taipei City Government, 22 February 2016, <http://english.gov.taipei/ct.asp?xItem=93397293&CtNode=8509&mp=100002> (accessed 2 April 2016).

<sup>31</sup> 'Ko Wen-je Ting Bian Zheng Qingjia Fu Xuan' [Ko Wen-je Takes Leave to Support A-bian's Campaign], *Pingguo Ribao* [Apple Daily], 2 December 2010, <http://www.appledaily.com.tw/appledaily/article/headline/20101202/33005848/> (assessed 4 May 2016).

<sup>32</sup> Brian Hioe, 'Interview: Huang Kuo-chang,' *New Bloom*, 10 October 2015, <https://newbloommag.net/2015/10/14/huang-kuo-chang-en/> (accessed 12 May 2016).

<sup>33</sup> Hu Yung-Ching, 'A Young Woman's March Towards the Legislative Yuan: Interview with Hung Tzu-Yung (Hong Ci-yong),' *New Bloom*, 23 November 2015, <https://newbloommag.net/2015/11/23/hung-tzu-yung-eng/> (accessed 3 May 2016).

inexperience and location within the party system. The lack of experience marked out newcomers in the eyes of their supporters as well as critics and constituted the primary factor determining the perception of novices as outsiders in a system dominated by the experienced politicians. While the respondents who shared positive views of the newcomers saw inexperience as an asset, those with negative perceptions of their role and impact placed responsibility on inexperience. The number of the former was twice as big as the latter and according to the prevalent group, inexperience predisposes novices to constructive change, including the transformation of existing structures and policies, introduction of new issues on the legislative agenda, and advocacy of progressive ideas.

The second factor responsible for newcomers' status as the outsider was conviction, in that they represented the interests of ordinary people in opposition to the average politician, who is often discredited for keeping a distance from the masses. Therefore, anti-establishment rhetoric should be seen as a particularly effective tool for newcomers in their political career. At the same time, an unexpectedly small number of respondents pointed to the novices' perceived positive contribution to the democratic system. Additionally, Taiwanese people highly valued novices for their trustworthiness and honesty as well as political determination and unshakeable commitment to the right cause.

Experience and location within the party system of three out of four public figures most often referred to as political novices – Hung Tzu-yung, Freddy Lim, and Huang Kuo-chang – closely matched but was not identical with Barr's definition of the outsider. Taiwanese people recognized novices in those who compete in elections without prior experience in the political parties of the nation's party system and rose to political prominence as political independents or in association with a new party. However, the respondents did not point to the novices who have gained in prominence through newly competitive parties but belong to Barr's category of outsiders. Instead, they focused rather on the newcomers whose nationwide recognition was instrumental in their electoral success. The fourth most often mentioned novice Ko Wen-je parallels Barr's definition with one qualification. Although he competed in elections without prior experience in the political parties of the nation's party system and claimed his independent status, he was still backed by the DPP – one of the two most competitive parties in Taiwan. The high number of mentions of Ko also demonstrated that the novelty of newcomers was rather relative, as Ko after more than a year in office was still labeled as a newcomer in the same way as Hung, Lim and Huang, who were elected two months before the survey took place. The only personal characteristic common to political novices was that they all gained national recognition some time before taking part in political elections and capitalized on their popularity during the elections. Yet, they became popular for different reasons, which in various ways contributed to their electoral success. When it comes to other characteristics, such as age, professional career before making political headlines and political activity outside of the party structures, in each case they were shared only by the three out of the Top Four, so therefore such factors are not defining. The party most associated with the newcomers was the New Power Party. This perception of the NPP should be attributed to its "novelty" and its "third force" or "outsider" status that stems from its placement next to the two dominant parties – the KMT and the DPP. From the perspective of the perpetual political struggle between the Pan-Green and the Pan-Blue coalition, the former is much more associated with political outsiders than the latter. Each of the Top Four political outsiders belonged to the Pan-Green camp.

The number of newcomers in the legislature was significantly larger than the number

of those most often indicated by the respondents. It is possible that the success of the Top Four resulted from their personal stories and personalities, shaping their distinctiveness. The authors became conscious that people's popular opinions about political newcomers might be formed by only a few and recent spectacular careers, which on one hand limits the study, but on the other opens up the topic of the significance of candidates' personal stories to further investigation.

## The Post Arab Spring Jihadism. A Phenomenon of Transition or Durability?

### Abstract

The beginnings of the Arab Spring brought a lot of optimism for true change. They brought hope that the autocratic and jihadi forces that were competing against one another in the region would lose their significance in the face of the waves of democratic reforms. If the post Arab Spring countries manage to work out internally accepted political systems based on reform, inclusion and reconciliation this would open the door to political stability and predictability which are necessary factors to eradicate the threat from jihadism. However, it is difficult to state in which directions the phenomenon of jihadism will evolve in the Arab world.

### Introduction

The political and security developments in Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and to a lesser degree Tunisia are with little doubt an illustration of the rise of jihadism in its different forms of violence, political alliances and agendas. Jihadism not only appears in situations of political chaos such as the absence of a central authority and decay of state institutions, but it immediately spreads on a regional scale, as chaos is the prime condition for further development of unrest into institutional jihadism. The exemplification of such a scenario is the situation in the Sahel region, which has been troubled by organized crime groups and terrorist organizations since at least 2008. The circumstances there worsened immediately as the developments in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia began to result in security vacuums.<sup>1</sup>

### The Iraq experience

From the time perspective of more than ten years it is possible to responsibly state that the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 was a failure in its political, security and social dimensions. Politically it did not achieve stability, neither did it manage to promote and install democracy. The epitome of fiasco in this particular field was the dismantling of the Iraqi Ba'ath party together with the dissolving of the state army and Republican Guard.<sup>2</sup> Moreover the disassembling of those structures was beyond any doubt crucial for the rise of Islamic State terror structures in Iraq.<sup>3</sup> Socially it merely caused a massive growth of anti-American and anti-Western sentiments, which is basically synonymous with the increase of the popularity of various radical thoughts and, consequently, terrorist organizations. It is probably in the security sphere that the consequences are the most serious and long lasting. The lack of stability and security for more than ten years has made Iraq one of the most important locations for the rise of anti-Western fundamentalist rhetoric, which has automatically translated itself into the growth of violent jihadi and Salafi movements and

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<sup>1</sup> Further information in: 'France-Mali: enjeux et limites,' *Afrique Asie*, February 2013, pp. 16–23.

<sup>2</sup> Decision taken in May 2003 by the Coalition Provisional Authority with the aim to remove influence of the Ba'ath party in the new Iraqi political scene. It is estimated that around 500 thousand soldiers and officers were fired from the army based upon this decision. More available in: Miranda Sissons and Abdulrazzaq Al-Saiedi, *Iraq – a bitter legacy – lessons of De-Baathification in Iraq*, International Center for Transitional Justice, New York: ICTJ, March 2013.

<sup>3</sup> More about this issue available in: Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger, *ISIS The state of terror*, New York: Harpers Collins Publishers, 2015, pp. 33–53.

organizations. Iraq became the strategic foundation for al-Qaeda and post-al-Qaeda global jihad.<sup>4</sup> Wanting to make a historical comparison one could state that Iraq was, and to a large degree still is, a country as significant and central for global terrorism as Afghanistan, Sudan or Yemen once were for the al-Qaeda structures. All of these locations can be labeled as terror “headquarters”. The above mentioned political, social and security factors must be considered as a powerful helping hand to radical movements and the further destabilization of Iraq, which still threaten to become a failed state.<sup>5</sup>

Iraq was a country that only to a lesser degree was affected by social protests. Yet it is highly probable that the Arab Spring wave would have reached it and in consequence maybe itself swept away Saddam Hussein’s regime. This is because the Iraqi *nidham* (Arab: system) was similar in its foundations to the ones in Syria and Yemen, and there are no reasons to believe that Hussein’s rule would have been immune to the Arab Spring. But when demonstrations took place in late 2011 in numerous cities across Iraq they were set against the marginalization of the Sunni community by the then government and not against a certain political system, as this particular system had already been dismantled. By 2011 Iraq was already facing a major surge of internal Sunni-Shi’a struggles, which led to a situation in 2014 when the central authorities in Bagdad lost control over the Mosul province, which fell into the hands of the Islamic State.<sup>6</sup> To better understand the scale of the multi-layered violence in Iraq that was developing from 2003 it is enough to remember and underscore that in 2013 alone – itself considered the most horrific and deadly moment since the beginning of the American invasion – there were 8,296 casualties resulting from terrorist attacks.<sup>7</sup>

## Defining jihadism

*Jihadism* became a term widely used to describe the ascent of the so-called Islamic State in the Syrian and Iraqi territories. The majority of terrorist organizations ceased to use for their actions notions other than that of *jihadism*. Why did *Jihadism* become the fundamental concept of violence in the name of Islam? It is because it links to Islam through the notion of jihad, which is a legal concept in the Quranic and Islamic tradition. The propagandists of terror knew exactly that through *jihadism* they would achieve at least two important goals. The first being the demonization of Islam and Muslims portraying the militants as holy warriors in the name of their religion. This slowly brought the rise of a new phenomenon of Islamophobia in the West. This was exactly the assumption of the jihadists. The second objective seems to be of greater significance as they managed to build a new sectarian reality, a new philosophy of hatred all based on the reference to Islam through jihad. This process is reflected in such jihadi publications as *Dabiq*, which is a sophisticated and institutionalized version of media communiques that were earlier released by al-Qaeda. *Dabiq* is not only a tool of information but fore-mostly for cementing and strengthening relations and promoting certain manners and attitudes within the Islamic State social environment. *Jihadism*, as mentioned above, feeds off *jihad*, but in order to persist in the longer term also needs

<sup>4</sup> More on the phenomenon of jihadism in Iraq in: *al-salafiya al-jihadiya – dar al-islam wa dar al-kufr*, Al-Mesbar Studies & Research Center, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Further reading available in: Michael M. O’Brien, *America’s Failure in Iraq*, Bloomington: Author House, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> More on the Sunni-Shi’a rivalry available in: Nathan Gonzalez, *The Sunni-Shia conflict: Understanding Sectarian Violence in the Middle East*, Mission Viejo: Nortia Press, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> More available on: <http://iraq2013.rt.com/en.ht-ml#> (accessed 11 February 2016).

political and social frameworks. That is why the public proclamation of the Islamic State was so important.

In other words, *jihadism* could not exist if jihad were a notion or concept nonexistent in Islam itself. Furthermore, it would not be attractive if the terrorist could not immediately and easily refer to it and use it – or, rather, abuse it. *Jihadism* is of course synonymous with terrorism and violence, but it has one distinctive feature. It is the religious, social and political association to Islam that makes it so unique. This is an in-depth strategy developed by terrorism propagandists not to call their actions “terrorism” but “jihadism”. The main aim of such a policy is to trademark *jihadism* as an integral and legitimate strategy of violence that is reserved for Muslims and the Islamic culture only, as something distinctive for this religion. It is also possible that in a longer perspective the aim of *jihadists* is to lead to a situation when Western societies will be branding and associating Muslims with jihadists.

An attempt at distinguishing *jihadists* from terrorists could bring forth the following aspects: *jihadists* tend to dehumanize the enemy by depriving him of the most basic human rights; politics is only perceived through force and violence accepting as its foundation only a relation based on the friend-enemy conflict; morality and religion are considered exclusively as the basis for destructive fundamentalism.

*Jihadism* cannot exist without violent terrorist activity that exposes brutality. It reduces Islam only to a few Quranic verses that discuss legal issues related to corporal punishments and exploits it instrumentally for its own needs. Thus, Jihad is presented by the militants to the West exclusively in its repressive and belligerent dimensions.<sup>8</sup> The authors of *Le jihadisme – le comprendre pour mieux le combattre* make a very important comment on this phenomenon, especially when taking the growing threat in the West, as they underline that “jihadism is accentuating the fundamental incompatibility of its ideology and of its action with European culture”.<sup>9</sup>

### Jihadism and political instability

ISIS is an hereditary organization to al-Qaeda and it shares with the latter some fundamental ideas. The most important of them is preparing and conducting terrorist attacks. Yet ISIS developed al-Qaeda’s strategy by offering a clear political agenda for its terror threat. Firstly, it shifted the weight of attacks away from the United States and the West in general and concentrated its activities against Shi’a Muslims and Shi’a political organizations in Sunni Arab countries. The best example of such a strategy are the assaults on Shi’a mosques in Iraq and Yemen and the al-Houthi movement in Yemen. The aim of this is to create an inter-Islamic Sunni-Shi’a religious conflict which would further destabilize the Middle East. Additionally, ISIS – contrary to al-Qaeda strategy – began to build a caliphate, which means that it focused on the necessity of determining its own territory and boundaries to become a state in the legal meaning of the word. There is also an additional notion that was not alien to al-Qaeda but it seems to have been further developed and of more significance to ISIS. It is a question of allegiance. For al-Qaeda structures, as the examples of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) demonstrate, allegiance was largely reduced to the level of branding and naming. Al-Qaeda could

<sup>8</sup> Further readings on Jihadism available in: Liess Boukra, *Le djihadisme, l’islam a l’épreuve de l’histoire*, Alger: Apic, 2009; Jarret Brachman, *Global Jihadism theory and practice*, London-New York: Routledge, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> David Benichou, Farhad Khosrokhavar, Philippe Migaux, *Le jihadisme – le comprendre pour mieux le combattre*, Paris: Plon, 2015, p. 8. The quote is the author’s translation.

not pay much attention to, or maybe it did not believe in, the concept of a sacred terror state. Looking back on the history of the core of this organization shows that it was always a model of living and operating in safe havens or remote areas of certain states with limited government control over its own territories, vivid examples of such a situation being Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen.<sup>10</sup>

Yet both terror groups feed upon political instability and power vacuum. Both need to either instigate internal antagonisms or exploit existing internal conflicts. Both tend to fill the vacuums and in this context the post-Arab Spring situation came as a golden opportunity to revive the idea of global *jihad* and spread the idea of *jihadism* beyond the borders of the Arab and Muslim world. The model examples of a situation in which terrorism invited itself to exploit a power vacuum are the developments in Libya and Syria. On the other hand, Tunisia is a case where terror structures are trying to undermine a certain fragile political process to bring about destabilization. Iraq, Yemen and Egypt have much more complicated and complex political backgrounds which make them incomparable even among themselves.

### Libya – ‘l’État c’est moi’

Libya under the authority of Mu’ammar al-Kaddafi was the most explicit example of an Arab state solely owned and governed by an absolute ruler with the clear intention of creating a hereditary reign. Yet for more than four decades it was unimaginable to think of a different Libya. Thus it comes as no surprise that once without the leader in charge different forces would be unleashed and begin their quest for supremacy. The fall of the leader was synonymous with the immediate deconstruction of the state built and managed by him. This only proves how weak was this organism constructed by Kaddafi as it had neither strong enough state institutions nor an army able to balance the revolutionary wave or create within itself a new source of authority capable of imposing its influence. The post-Kaddafi Libya can be seen as almost a failed state, as after five years of revolutionary struggle there seems to be no tangible hope for stabilizing the country. The situation in Libya, although having similarities with Yemen, is more complex and thus more difficult to solve. The reason for this is mainly the fact that the local political and military forces are still unable or not willing to cooperate with one another. The distinctive and at the same time destructive feature of the Libyan post-revolutionary scene is a number of the armed militias estimated to be over one hundred.<sup>11</sup>

These are various affiliations supporting such radical movements as The Libya Shield or the 17 February Martyrs Brigade, to quasi-secular organizations such as the National Army under the command of gen. Halifa Haftar. It is estimated that militias can have in their ranks more than two hundred thousand armed men, which in itself is already a factor that can contribute heavily to further destabilization. Militias are strong because the internal political situation is extremely volatile, which immediately results in the rise of insecurity. Libya’s parliamentary elections held in 2012 and 2014 did not solve the problem. Facts seem to indicate the opposite; for example, the number of voters that actually declared their will to participate in elections in 2012 and in 2014

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<sup>10</sup> More about this phenomenon is available in: John Rollins, ‘Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical perspective, Global presence, and implications for U.S. policy,’ *Congressional Research Service*, February 5, 2010; Gregory D. Johnsen, *The last refuge: Yemen, Al-Qaeda and the battle for Arabia*, London: Oneworld Publications, 2015; Jason Burke, *The New Threat from Islamic Militancy*, London: Penguin Books, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> More available in: Saïd Haddad, ‘Ordre et désordre milicien en Libye,’ *Moyent-Orient*, No. 25, Janvier–Mars 2015, pp. 24–30.

halved, which for a country that abolished – in late 2011 – a four-decade old dictatorship and theoretically was willing to build a new state must be considered as a fiasco of any pro-democratic changes.<sup>12</sup> The international community, except NATO's military engagement in Libya in March 2011,<sup>13</sup> was and still is unable to play an active role in bringing together the parties of the conflict. On top of these problems comes the growing threat and presence of the Islamic State's structures, which evidently surfaced in mid-2014. By October of that year the Libyan Ansar al-Sharia militia pledged allegiance to ISIS. The Islamic State "invasion" of Libya started from the East, from Benghazi and Derna, the latter being one of the strongholds of Islamic radicalism in Libya since the 1980s.<sup>14</sup> Again the terror group appeared on Libyan territory at the moment the fierce military fighting on the ground reached its climax. Again the lack of security and political struggle resulting in the absence of state authority and state security apparatus enabled the terrorists to penetrate Libyan cities. ISIS structures now seem to be controlling Benghazi, Derna, Sirte in central coastal Libya and some areas in the vicinity of the Tunisian border.<sup>15</sup>

The most contemporary developments in Libya are evidence of the complexity of finding a widely accepted solution. An example of this can be seen in the strong resistance to the government of National Accord headed by Fayeze al-Sarraj. It even reached the level that its arrival to Tripoli was under question because of security concerns. The fundamental problem for this and any other government remains a question of what will be the actual acceptance and readiness of militias to cooperate with it. It seems that the key to stabilizing Libya in the longer term lies in the ability to engage the strongest militias in political dialogue and, if necessary, in military operations as well. It is rather unrealistic to expect that a new Libya will be possible without a form of representation of the Misratah militias, the Zintan militias or the National Army headed by general Haftar. Libya's current inability to address its own problems which deepens the political chaos rules out for the moment any form of international help except a UN-backed mission.<sup>16</sup>

This lack of internal cooperation as well as unceasing rivalries are a factor helping Islamic State structures grow in Libya. These are currently the biggest threat to have found in the Libyan situation fertile terrain to expand and conduct terror attacks. Due to the chaotic situation resulting in the lack of a state presence over the country's territory the terrorists are granted the opportunity to take root in Libya for a longer period. IS militants can and most probably are exploiting the antagonisms between militias in the Libyan cities but can also concentrate on taking advantage of the black tribes of the Libyan Sahara – the Tubus people. Control of Southern Libya is of crucial importance for the Islamic State as it gives direct access to the territories of neighboring countries, such as Algeria, Egypt and Niger.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, Libya can become another safe haven for ISIS in the middle of North Africa once the group faces more military pressure and losses in Syria and Iraq.

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<sup>12</sup> More available at: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/libyas-islamists-who-they-are-and-what-they-want> (accessed 31 March 2016).

<sup>13</sup> NATO agreed to take command of the operation in Libya on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2011.

<sup>14</sup> More about this phenomenon is available in *Libya – Al-din wa al-kabila wa al-sijasa*, Al-Mesbar Studies & Research Center, 2014, collective work.

<sup>15</sup> More about ISIS presence in Libya available in: <http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=59268> (accessed 15 May 2016); <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/02/isis-libya/470820/> (accessed 23 May 2016).

<sup>16</sup> More on Kh. Haftar available in: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27492354> (accessed 5 May 2016).

<sup>17</sup> More about those available in: <http://gulfnnews.com/news/mena/libya/southern-libya-could-be-new-frontier-for-daesh-1.1694367> (accessed 4 June 2016).

Paradoxically, five years into the revolution which has brought dubious results, it seems necessary to recall al-Kaddafi's words from the Fall of 2011 in which he was – in a prophetic way – forecasting developments after his elimination, underlining the growing threat of terror groups to Europe and the exodus of illegal migrants towards the continent.<sup>18</sup> His speech was undoubtedly about defending himself and his regime against the rebels and their upcoming demise, but the objective truth is that there was no exaggeration in his words. Libya was an important partner in maintaining a certain political and security stability in North Africa and the Sahel region. Judging by subsequent developments in Libya it can be stated that insecurity and instability prove that jihadism in the Libyan case might be a durable phenomenon. The conflict is now becoming increasingly complex as on the one hand we have the growing threat from ISIS while on the other there is a risk of a civil war, given the seeming lack of mutual will to cooperate between forces loyal to Fayeze al Sarraj in Western Libya and those standing by gen. Haftar in the east part of the country.<sup>19</sup>

### **Yemen – the saving tribal factor and strong neighborhood**

Yemen historically and contemporarily is a land that has known little stability and possesses all the components to become the worst case scenario of a post-Arab Spring state. Yet because of its deeply rooted tribal factor it manages to avoid slipping into becoming a failed state. The irreplaceable role of the Yemen tribal system in a conflict or revolutionary situation is of dual nature. Firstly, it is able to replace or itself play the role of the central state on its territory. When Sanaa, understood as the central authority, fell into the hands of the al-Houthi movement and Ansar Allah militants in September 2014 which resulted in the collapse of the government and the fleeing of the president to Aden and later to al-Riyadh, the state as such ceased to exist. It is exactly in this moment that the tribes formed their own quasi-states, territories under their control.<sup>20</sup> This means that the tribes in Yemen are periphery to the state, but when the state is weak or nonexistent this periphery can take over regional control. This can be both a curse and a blessing, but in the period between late 2011 and 2016 it turned out to be a saving factor. The second fundamental role of the tribes is that they can provide and maintain the continuity of the state in its political, military and social strata. This is of crucial importance as tribes can create a political background for stability, be an essential element in the army and security apparatus and, last but not least, create conditions for negotiations and forming alliances that can change the situation on the ground. The appointment of general Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar as the deputy supreme commander of the army<sup>21</sup> is the exact proof of how important the tribes are and who they would be willing to follow as a leader. The official presence of gen. al-Ahmar might be of crucial importance in order to gain the support of the tribal groups in and around Sana'a.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The quote is available at: <http://www.radixjournal.com/blog/2015/9/5/gaddafis-revenge> (accessed 3 April 2016).

<sup>19</sup> Further readings on the Libyan revolution available in: Lindsey Hilsum, *Sandstorm: Libya from Gaddafi to revolution*, London: Faber and Faber, 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Further readings on the al-Houthi movement is available in: A. al-Darshi, *Al-Husiyun wa mustakbalahum al-askari wa al-siyasi wa al-tarbau*, Muntada al-alaqat al-Arabiya wa al-Duwaliya, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar was appointed on February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Further readings on the Yemen tribal system available in: Paul Dresch, *Tribes, Government and History in Yemen*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994; Shelagh Weir, *A tribal order – Politics and Law in the mountains of Yemen*, Austin: Center for Middle Eastern Studies University of Texas, 2006.

It must be also underlined that before the situation in Yemen drifted towards the annexation of the state by the al-Houthi movement, which eventually led to the Saudi-led military campaign, Yemeni political and social actors had managed to agree on very substantial recommendations within the framework of the National Dialogue Conference.<sup>23</sup> At that moment Yemen was at a stage when the foundations for transition were actually in place. One of the most important reasons for the then fiasco of a peaceful endorsing of the National Dialogue Conference was the fact that the belligerent scenario for Yemen was written outside Yemen itself and was carefully orchestrated by Tehran. Iran's main aim and plan for Yemen was never really revealed and can be only an object of speculation. But undoubtedly this situation is a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Yet it can be stated that what was in preparation was instability and the maintaining of continuous tensions which would guarantee a persistent and durable state of conflict in the key country for Saudi Arabia's and the GCC's security and stability. Such a threat triggered the region's mobilization and decision to intervene militarily.<sup>24</sup> It is almost impossible to justify whether the coalition's intervention was or was not necessary or to claim whether it was victorious or, perhaps, failed. What it surely brought about was blocking an unknown foreign political scenario. For Saudi Arabia and the GCC states it also meant halting the Iranian and Shi'a expansion in the region, which is of fundamental importance for those countries. The military operation did not solve Yemen's political transition process, which was never seen as the aim of an intervention, but it symbolically re-established the legitimate authorities.<sup>25</sup>

The present situation in Yemen is extremely complex and the challenges that need an urgent response are numerous. The most important political issues to be solved are: regaining governmental control over the state's territory, the ongoing siege of the capital by rebel forces, the future status of the al-Houthi stronghold Saada and the question of a – still possible – Southern secession. From a security point of view, the critical concerns are those related to the growing threat of AQAP structures and the yet to be determined factual presence of the Islamic State. Both organizations can pose a serious threat to the government's efforts to fully control its territory. AQAP in 2011 had already managed to create an Islamic emirate in the Abyan province that lasted more than six months.<sup>26</sup> The majority of political issues need a solution that can only be reached through consent and mutual concessions. Previous attempts of negotiations and ending hostilities failed but a new round of talks scheduled in Kuwait for mid-April 2016 brought new positive developments.<sup>27</sup>

As of May 2016 the situation on the ground was without a major breakthrough. The Kuwait-based negotiations between the Yemeni government and the al-Houthi are endangered as both parties keep each other in check with the threat of withdrawing from talks. Yet, legally speaking, the al-Houthi side, in order to be considered as a legitimate partner, must adhere to the UN Security Council resolution 2215 from 2016 which reiterates the necessity of implementing the Gulf

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<sup>23</sup> The National Dialogue Conference came as a result of the GCC peace initiative and the UN Security Council resolution 2051. It was held in Sana'a between March 2013 and January 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Operation "Decisive Storm" begun on March 26<sup>th</sup> 2015 and was followed by operation "Restoring Hope".

<sup>25</sup> Further readings on the military operation available in: <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2015/04/2015412115549719521.html> (accessed 15 November 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Available at: <http://warontherocks.com/2015/04/what-aqaps-operations-reveal-about-its-strategy-in-yemen/> (accessed 8 April 2016).

<sup>27</sup> The ceasefire came into effect on April 11<sup>th</sup> 2016 and the peace talks are scheduled for April 18<sup>th</sup> 2016. More available at: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2016/04/05/Yemen-panel-of-advisors-arrive-in-Kuwait-to-prepare-for-talks-.html> (accessed 6 April 2016).

Cooperation Council Initiative for Yemen.<sup>28</sup> The most problematic condition to be met by the rebels is the withdrawal from seized towns, including Sanaa, and the handing over of arms.

The situation in Yemen remains ambiguous and extremely fragile. Nevertheless, it is the tribal system with its affiliations that still tries to prevent the country from slipping into complete chaos. Thus this system seems to be saving hopes for stability.

### **Syria – the threat of a failed state in the heart of the Middle East**

It is highly possible that the international community is approaching the boundary or, perhaps it has already crossed it, beyond which the Syrian conflict should be considered as unsolvable through diplomatic and political methods, and this despite all the efforts that have been proposed throughout the past years. After more than five years into the war it seems that the Syrian war now is only getting more complex and impossible to disentangle. Moreover, it looks as if the situation in Syria is getting out of control. In May 2016 the character of the Syrian conflict did not have much or even does not have anything in common with the situation from spring 2011. In May 2016 the war in Syria was not between the so-called opposition and president Bashar al-Assad. The so-called Syrian Arab Spring and democratic aspirations, if ever existent, are now long forgotten. The antagonisms are much deeper and more complex. The ongoing chaos and the deterioration of the security situation which led to a quasi-collapse of the Syrian state resulted in the unprecedented emergence of numerous terrorist organizations with ISIS being the epitome.<sup>29</sup>

If we consider that the Syrian conflict erupted for similar reasons as the ones in Tunisia and Egypt – that is as a manifestation of society's dissatisfaction with the overall condition and performance of the state and its apparatus – then theoretically it can be stated that the range of the conflict could have been avoided. Undoubtedly, the brutal and inadequate (to the situation) reaction of the Syrian security apparatus to the peaceful protests that flared up in Southern Syria in spring 2011 remains the fundamental reason for the ongoing crisis. The firm refusal and unwillingness of president Assad to conduct any negotiations with the opposition which might at that time have been relatively united was also a serious mistake. At the same time, it remains unclear whether any other decision was within political reach, and we can only speculate on the factual influence of the president and his political entourage. The reluctance and ineptitude of the regime to engage in any form of dialogue dragged Syria into an internal conflict that evolved into a war, which then went out of control.<sup>30</sup> The emanation of its brutality is the August 2013 use of chemical warfare against civilians in the suburbs of Damascus, performed most probably by the government army or with its silent blessing. The fact that weapons of mass destruction were used only proves that there are no limits to the conflict's brutality, and that the stakes are extremely high. Moreover the absence of any reaction to the use of chemical warfare, despite America's earlier warning that it would be considered a crossing of the red line,<sup>31</sup> might have only encouraged both government forces and rebels to continue or even increase the level of violence.

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<sup>28</sup> Available at: [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96F99%7D/s\\_res\\_2266.pdf](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96F99%7D/s_res_2266.pdf) (accessed 10 May 2016).

<sup>29</sup> More in-depth information on ISIS penetration in Syria available in: Charles Glass, *Syria burning: ISIS and the death of the Arab Spring*, New York: OR Books, 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Further readings on the Syrian conflict available in: Emile Hokayem, *Syria's uprising and the fracturing of the Levant*, Abingdon: Routledge for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Available at: <http://www.businessinsider.com/robert-gates-syria-red-line-obama-2016-1> (accessed 20 May 2016).

After half a decade into the conflict the international community seems to be refusing to accept the *Realpolitik* on the ground in Syria. Very quickly it became evident that the Syrian war is going to be fought along two major, yet very challenging, lines. The first being the military struggle with ISIS structures both in Syria and in Iraq, which is to a large extent not causing major disagreements among the Western community and Arab states although only a limited number of countries are directly engaged in military operations against the Islamic State. The air-campaign most probably will not eradicate the threat from ISIS forces and since the chances for a ground offensive are almost nonexistent this rather allows one to think that the ultimate destruction of this terror organization will be a long-drawn out process.<sup>32</sup> The second line is far more intricate as it represents the struggle between international interests, alliances and animosities that all twist together in this conflict. To mention only the least of these complications, it is enough to point out that in Syria we have an indirect regional conflict between Shi'a Iran, evidently backed militarily by Hezbollah from one side, and Sunni Saudi Arabia with the assistance of GCC states and Turkey from the other.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Syria became a battleground for supremacy and future long-lasting influence between Russia and the United States and its Western NATO allies.

Moreover, another important factor must be taken into consideration when analyzing proposals concerning solving the Syrian conflict. Regardless of the international community's different stances and positions on president al-Assad and its role in post-conflict Syria, the harsh and difficult reality is that his position on the ground remains stable and relatively strong. During the past five years, despite numerous high level defections from the army, the security apparatus and considerable military losses, al-Assad has remained in control both politically and militarily as the Syrian president. This has of course been possible because of substantial support from Russia and Iran, both of these countries politically and militarily assisting president al-Assad. This however does not mean that Moscow and Tehran share common visions and interests in Syria. It is also worth underlining that since the beginning of the Syrian conflict there has been no internal force or circles within the system that would enable either the president's stepping down or create an internal mutiny against him.<sup>34</sup> In this context H. Kissinger in his book *World Order* seems to be very clear as he argues that if the world order cannot be achieved by consensus or by force then it must be worked out in chaos, which involves paying an inhuman and frightful price.

### Outlook for the post Arab Spring Middle East

The revolutions that have swept through many Arab states since 2011 have proved that in the contemporary Arab world there are few oases of relative stability and political predictability. The best examples of such a situation are the Gulf states, other Arab monarchies, and Algeria which is a separate case I cannot discuss at length here. It is worth emphasizing that all of those Arab monarchies were affected by social unrest only to a limited degree. Yet the strength of the Arab Spring message reached even those countries, causing them to suggest and implement a range of reforms and investments for the benefit of their societies. First of all, it turned out that the political systems of those monarchies guarantee a large degree of stability and prosperity.

<sup>32</sup> Further readings on ISIS in Syria available in: Charles Lister, *The Syrian Jihad: Al Qaeda, the Islamic State and the evolution of an insurgency*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> Further readings on the Syrian-Iranian relations available in: Jubin Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic alliance and power politics in the Middle East*, London - New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2009.

<sup>34</sup> More about the specificity of the Assad regime and Syria's political system available in: David Lesch, *Syria – the fall of the house of Assad*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013; Nikolaos Van Dam, *The Struggle for Power in Syria: Politics and Society under Asad and the Ba'th Party*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2011.

Secondly, and what might be of most significant importance, the security apparatuses of these countries were not concentrating their efforts on controlling and fighting their own citizens and thus there was no reason to demand the abolishment of the system. This is not synonymous with the nonexistence of challenges and threats to these states. With the uncertainty of the future of oil prices these fears are only becoming more serious and worrying but, firstly, these are not of utmost importance, and, secondly, they do not pose a direct threat to the stability and political predictability of those states.

In the case of Yemen, reaching an agreement between the al-Houthi rebels and the government is of crucial importance for the process of national reconciliation and building stability. It is even more significant than the fight against AQAP, at least in the short term. The immediate threat is that the parties will not reach an agreement which will result in additional military operations conducted by the coalition, which in turn will further diminish the rebels' firepower but will not advance their political agenda. Another fear is that the rebels are following direct political orders from Tehran, which might mean that any final agreement with Saudi Arabia and the international community is out of the question. The longer it takes to reach such an arrangement, the more difficult it will be to base the talks on the foundation of the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and on the 2216 UNSC resolution. There is still much hope for Yemen's reconciliation as the country has legitimate authorities and strong regional and international support.

In Syria it is unfortunately imaginable that this conflict will continue for a long time. This is the case because first of all after five years it has only become more complex due to the multiplicity of actors engaged in the conflict and their goals on the ground. Secondly, during this time it has been impossible for the international community to propose any solutions, be they of political or military nature, that could hold or make a visible change on the ground in Syria, except for episodic ceasefires. What makes the Syrian conflict even more difficult to address is the inability, at least for the moment, to clearly set priorities. It became obvious that parties engaged in the conflict do not share them. Fighting the Islamic State might be a priority for the Western coalition and Saudi Arabia but not necessarily for Russia and the Kurds. Analogously, Iran gives priority to maintaining president Assad in office, while the international community and Arab states endorse a completely opposite proposition. As of May 2016 there was enormous military and political importance and at the same time huge symbolic meaning attached the capture of al-Raqqah – the capital of the self-proclaimed caliphate. Yet the question arises who would be able to achieve it and what would it mean for al-Assad's future. The available information seems to be showing that there are preparations for such an operation by Syrian Democratic Forces with the assistance of the United States.

The situation in Iraq in 2016 has basically narrowed to a single issue of whether or not it will maintain its territorial integrity. Saddam Hussein, who was the embodiment of Iraq's Baath party, was willing to create national identity based on loyalty to the charismatic leader. This process was accompanied by a large dose of violence and internal terror. This attempt failed completely. Iraq, in order to remain a united country, must put forward a power sharing mechanism. This is synonymous with the necessity to concede substantial political concessions. The fundamental question is whether the creation of an acceptable long-lasting political mechanism of power equilibrium between Shi'as, Sunnis and Kurds is possible at all. Looking at the present situation it seems unlikely in the short term. First of all, the state would have to prove its capability to reinstate order and security by regaining control over cities and territories taken by ISIS. This is not impossible when taking into consideration the recapture of Fallujah and ongoing preparations

to retake Mosul. Secondly, it would require a lot of political good will from Iran, which would have to prove that it aims at a stable and independent Iraq. This is also not completely out of the question, but for the moment Tehran seems to be building its policy towards its Arab regional neighbors on the principle of “creating enemies” and having “problematic relations”.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

The main problem related to the stabilization of this North African state is the lack of a strong foundation to build on and to begin from. Post-Kaddafi Libya is suffering from an acute power vacuum. This only proves how deconstructed were state institutions during his reign and how nonexistent were any other forms of parallel or opposition political activity, which was a result of the strictly controlled and repressive activities conducted by the Libyan security apparatus. This is also among the reasons for which the ISIS structures have relatively easier ground on which to spread its presence and influence. Another source of problems is that there are numerous centers of influence, power and authority that must be taken into consideration when discussing the future of Libya. Among those are structures loyal to gen. Khalifa Haftar in the east, Fayez al-Serraj in Tripoli, the Misratah militias, the Zintan militias (mostly Berber people), the Bani Walid tribes that were closely related to Kaddafi and the people of the South, mostly Tubous and Tuaregs. It is also unlikely that the international community would come with a proposal or solution that would be widely accepted. Libya suffers from internal chaos and the path towards a future peace must be prepared and paved by the Libyan themselves.

Perhaps the reason of such chaos and instability in the post-Arab Spring countries is the fact that the uprisings and social revolts did in fact manage to bring down regimes and systems that for decades seemed to be unshakeable and irremovable. It must be emphasized that before the demonstrations took place, the rulers in Egypt, Libya and Yemen had prepared the political ground for a kind of hereditary reign by promoting their sons to the role of the new leader. This only made the notion of the persistence of these regimes stronger. The only possibility for those Arab countries is to accept the necessity of conceding concessions and accepting consensus. Thus the notion of the winner and loser must be gradually put aside and be replaced by a general acceptance of political, social and sectarian inclusiveness. An important key to achieving this is through gaining the trust of citizens and lifting up their level of life. On the other hand, the West must cease to just blindly promote democracy as it has not brought any positive results since 2003. To conclude, it is worth quoting Tariq Ramadan's words on the post-Arab Spring situation. He writes that “the Arab world and Muslim-majority societies need not only political uprisings; they need a thoroughgoing intellectual revolution that will open the door to economic change, and to spiritual, religious, cultural and artistic liberation – and the empowerment of women”.<sup>36</sup>

This intellectual revolution will be only possible if relative stability and security will be guaranteed in a longer term perspective.

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<sup>35</sup> Both citations are the author's translations from Arabic available in: ‘Brutukulat al- murshid,’ *al-Majallat al-Khalij*, October 2012, p. 24–26.

<sup>36</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *The Arab Awakening – Islam and the New Middle East*, London: Allen Lane, 2012, p. 160.

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1. Ivor Wilks, *Wa and Wala. Islam and Polity in North-Western Ghana*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 70.
2. John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 23.
3. Giacomo Luciani (ed.), *The Arab State*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 124.
4. Raymond Hinnebusch, 'Syria under Bashar: Between Economic Reform and Nationalist Realpolitik,' in *Syrian Foreign Policy and the United States: from Bush to Obama*, Raymond Hinnebusch, Marwan J. Kabalan, Bassma Kodmani and David Lesch (eds), St. Andrews: University of St. Andrews Centre for Syrian Studies, 2010, p. 20.
5. Zygmunt Komorowski, *Kultury Afryki Czarnej* [Cultures of Black Africa], Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1994, pp. 89–90.
6. Larry J. Dimond, 'Rethinking of Civil Society,' *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July 1994, p. 4.
7. 'Tunisia's al-Nahda to Form Party,' *Aljazeera*, 1 March 2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/%20middleeast/2011/03/201131132812266381.html> (accessed 10 November 2011).
8. *Sudan Peace Act Report: 21 April 2003*, Washington DC: Department of State, 2003, [www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rpt/2003/19790.htm](http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rpt/2003/19790.htm) (accessed 23 August 2013).

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9. Hinnebusch, 'Syria under Bashar...', pp. 20, 22.
10. Ibid., p. 186.
11. Ibidem.

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