



Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures
Polish Academy of Sciences

Hemispheres
Studies on Cultures and Societies
Vol. 36

Warsaw 2021

Editor-in-Chief

MAHNAZ ZAHIRINEJAD

Subject Editor

MARIUSZ KRAŚNIEWSKI

Proof-reading in English

JO B. HARPER

Secretary

AGATA WÓJCIK

Editorial Assistant

PATRYCJA KOZIEL

Board of Advisory Editors

ABDALLA UBA ADAMU – Professor

BERNARD HOURCADE – Professor

HEINZ GÄRTNER – Professor

HOOSHANG AMIRAHMADI – Professor

JERZY ZDANOWSKI – Professor

MATTEO LUIGI NAPOLITANO – Professor

REZA KHALILI – Assistant Professor

Reviewers

EMMY IROBI – Assistant Professor, LCC University of Klaipeda,
Lithuania.

OMOYE M. AKHAGBA – PhD, Lecturer, Collegium Civitas, Poland.
JIBRIL SHU’AIBU ADAMU – PhD, Senior Lecturer, Bayero University
Kano, Nigeria.

IGOR DOBRZENIECKI – PhD, Independent Researcher, Poland.
SHAILENDRA KUMAR – Associate Professor, Assam University, India.
SURENDER BHUTANI – Jawaharlal Nehru University, India.

© Copyright by Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures,
Polish Academy of Sciences and the Authors, Warsaw 2021

eISSN 2449–8645

ISBN 978–83–7452–087–4

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

Contents

- **Professor Anna Mrozek-Dumanowska – Obituary by Professor Jerzy Zdanowski** 5
- **Kennedy Gitu WAGURA: ‘Wildlife for Livestock’:**
COVID-19, Tourism and Community Conservancies
in Northern Kenya 9
- **Afolasade A. ADEWUMI: Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism**
Industry in Oyo State, Southwest Nigeria 19
- **Patryk ZAJĄC: Functions of Hausa Proverbs in Political**
Discourse 35
- **Rabiatu LAWAL: Tashen Corona: A Recasting of Hausa**
Traditional Pantomime by the COVID-19 Pandemic 57
- **Patrycja KOZIEŁ: From Afrofuturism to Africanfuturism:**
Contemporary Expressions within Popular Culture 69
- **Linda Jummai MUSTAFA: The Use of Comic Musical**
Skits to Overcome Fear and Anxiety during the Outbreak
of Covid-19 in Nigeria 85
- **Muhammad Ibrahim DANJA, Nura IBRAHIM:**
Infotainment During Pandemic: An Analysis of Gidan
Badamasi Television Drama of Arewa 24 99

- **Mariusz KRAŚNIEWSKI:** Oral Literature and Comic Books as a Form of Promotion and Social Commentary: the Response of Kugali to the Global Lockdown 109

- **Percyslage CHIGORA, Adele MCILO:** Youth Unemployment in Urban Zimbabwe in the 21st Century: Analysing the Drivers, Impacts and Cultural Implications 135

- **Priya Ranjan KUMAR, Mahnaz ZAHIRINEJAD, Laxmi KALUNDIA:** Gandhi, Non-violence and Culture of Peace: Reflection on Africa 147

- Editorial Principles** 158

Professor Anna Mrozek-Dumanowska – Obituary by Professor Jerzy Zdanowski



On February 2, 2021, Professor Anna Mrozek-Dumanowska died.

The Professor was associated with our institution from 1965, that is for over fifty years – first at the Section for Social and Cultural Issues of Contemporary Africa, then, from 1976 at the Department of Non-European Countries, and 2011 at the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures at the Polish Academy of Sciences. Undoubtedly, Professor Mrozek-Dumanowska co-created our institution and shaped its research profile. She was a philosopher and orientalist (Arabic studies) by education. She studied both faculties at the University of Warsaw. She researched the field of sociology and religious studies. The Professor's scientific achievements include monographs, editorial teams, articles, book chapters, papers at national and international conferences, research projects, reviews of dissertations and publications, and editorial issues of our journals. Her many-sided interests were particularly worthy of attention: initially, they included Arab philosophy, relations between Islam and Christianity, and nation-building processes in Africa; later contemporary Islam and its social functions, and subsequently phenomena on the border of religion and magic and movements of religious renewal. What united these studies was the desire to understand the essence of social change in the so-called "Third World" countries, which our research team worked on. The reality of the "Third World" changed more than the reality of the first or the second worlds, and applying the matrices of our development to local reality gave rise to numerous paradoxes. For Professor Mrozek-Dumanowska, religion and its social functions were the reference points for research on social change, and the main research field was Islam and the Muslim world. In the 1970s, exposing the social functions of religion was not popular, and among researchers of the "Third World," the

dominant theory was modernization, which assumed gradual secularisation and westernization of this world. The Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 showed the social and political potential of religion, confirming the correctness of the Professor's predictions.

During this period, there were discussions about basic terms and concepts. What should the research areas be called: the Orient, the "Third World," developing countries, countries on the way of development, and maybe countries of non-European cultures or countries of the South? I had the impression that Professor Mrozek-Dumanowska did not agree to such a strict delimitation of research areas; she believed that the Muslim world she dealt with was not only in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa but wherever there were Muslims. This position later became commonplace, and it is so today in the context of mass migrations. The works of the Professor indicated that their worlds migrated with people and that they interpenetrated one another. It was the starting point for studies by the entire team led by the Professor at the Department of Non-European Countries. Under her scientific guidance, several talented scientists – later professors – and several interesting research directions developed: religious syncretism (Afro-Christianity), the perception of the Orient in the West (subcultures), the phenomenon of cultural synthesis on the border of various religions (sects), the specificity of the nation in the non-European reality and the phenomenon of the revitalization of religion on the grounds of returning to its sources, i.e., *au rebours* reform. Some of these topics are still being addressed, which gives hope that the research from those years will not be forgotten.

In retrospect, several issues related to the Professor's scientific activity are significant. The first is the importance of direct contact with the examined object. In the 1960s and 1980s, trips to the "Third World" were not frequent. Studies were conducted based on texts and theoretical assumptions, and contact with people from that world was rare. The Professor had the opportunity to spend several years in Tanzania (1972–1974) and Libya (1985–1986), where her spouse, Professor Bolesław Dumanowski, taught geography at local universities. Getting to know the reality of these countries opened the way for a kind of empowerment of the studied subject. This time the basis for reflecting on the reality was the experience of meeting people of other cultures and learning about their behavior, views, and opinions about themselves and us. From these meetings and participating observations, the belief that religion, Islam, is a faith and a social system and plays an important political role, was born. It was a new way of thinking about Islam against the traditional approach of Oriental studies and the transition from getting to know the Orient to study it. In Tanzania, the Professor established contacts with other researchers from

Europe, particularly from Finland. These resulted in a research project with the Institute of Developing Countries in Helsinki and many years of cooperation between the Department and Finnish colleagues, culminating in an expedition of almost the entire research team to a conference in Helsinki by ferry. This confrontation was essential to our scientific work.

As the head of the Department of Non-European Countries in 1994–2010, I could always rely on the support and advice of the Professor. It was very important in the face of the permanent shortage of research funds and the need to argue that research in Asia and Africa is socially needed. Her substantive position in the discussions conducted in the team – very diverse in terms of research methods, worldview, and political differences – effectively alleviated tensions and avoided more severe conflicts, which can be considered a great value.

Just as it is difficult to imagine the history of research on the world of non-European cultures at the Polish Academy of Sciences without Professor Anna Mrozek-Dumanowska, it is so difficult to come to terms with the thought that she is no more. Over fifty years of scientific work will undoubtedly remain in her publication achievements and she herself – in the memory of her students and colleagues.

Jerzy Zdanowski
Professor at Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University

‘Wildlife for Livestock’: COVID-19, Tourism and Community Conservancies in Northern Kenya

Abstract

The existence of pastoralism as it has been organised for hundreds of years is dependent on constant adaptation to ever-changing situations. Such adaptation includes crop agriculture, wage labour, and community conservancies. In northern Kenya, conservancies are epicentres of wildlife, nature tourism, and commercial ventures. This study incorporates methods and perspectives from history, anthropology, and development studies. The study shows that the shift to community conservancies has exposed pastoral communities to a fluctuating international economic system that has collapsed due to COVID-19 pandemic. The instability caused by the pandemic exposed the vulnerability of community conservancy as a livelihood system.

Keywords: COVID-19, Tourism, Community Conservancy, Kenya, Pastoralism.

Introduction

Pastoral communities in northern Kenya, as is the case with livestock keepers worldwide, are under threat from climate change, demographic pressure, urbanisation, unfavourable public policies, and global pandemics including COVID-19. The prevailing pressure has led to various adaptation strategies at the individual and community levels. In Kenya, some of the adaptations include improved livestock production methods, species diversification, crop agriculture, wage labour, and in recent times the establishment of community conservancies. A conservancy is a geographical space that is protected for the conservation of nature encompassing but not limited to wildlife, plant and cultural heritage. Conservancies depend on domestic and foreign tourists to partake in the wildlife, nature, and hospitality facilities. The outbreak of COVID-19 in late 2019 and the subsequent closure of borders in an effort to stem its spread led to a total collapse of leisure tourism. The study shows that the shift to community conservancies and the abandonment of the traditional pastoral production system has exposed the communities to the fluctuating international economic system, which has been totally incapacitated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1 PhD, Lecturer, Department of History, Archaeology and Political Studies, Kenyatta University, Nairobi Kenya, e-mail: gitu.kennedy@ku.ac.ke.

Community Conservancies and Pastoralism

In the last twenty years or so, community conservancies in Kenya have seen exponential growth to offer alternative livelihoods to members as well as provide wildlife corridors and tourism opportunities. According to the Northern Rangeland Trust (NRT), a member organisation, there are 39 community conservancies that occupy around 42,000 square kilometers in northern and coastal Kenya.² The conservancies are established on communal spaces where livestock and wildlife roam freely side-by-side.³ The logic behind community conservancies is that such commons can be used for wildlife and nature conservation, which in return can attract tourist dollars and other commercial ventures including luxury lodges and hotels. The proceeds of this enterprise benefit the community through provision of social services as well as direct employment for members. However, the socio-economic benefits of conservancies is dependent on individual management and objectives of the organisations. As a result therefore, some of the conservancies have in their period of existence undertaken various welfare improvement undertakings that have had positive outcomes for members.

As of October 2021, there were 25 registered community conservancies within the northern Kenya Counties of Isiolo, Laikipia and Samburu. The conservancies depend on domestic and foreign tourists to maintain wildlife, nature and hospitality facilities. Apart from the conservation tourism, conservancies with the tutorage of NRT have also taken over security, livestock marketing and conflict resolution.⁴ The NRT with financial and material support from multilateral and bilateral donors and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), undertake the non-conservation activities to member conservancies in the effort of ‘stabilising’ security in an otherwise marginalised zone.⁵ The invasive role of the NRT, individuals and organisations in the conservation business has in-effect relegated the actual owners of the resources, in this case pastoralists, to the periphery. The centrality and power that the conservation fraternity has on resource allocation

2 The Northern Rangeland Trust, *Bi-Annual Report 2021*, January to June 2021, Isiolo, Kenya: NRT, 2021.

3 Laurence G. Frank, Rosie Woodroffe and Mordecai O. Ogada, ‘People and Predators in Laikipia District, Kenya,’ in *People and Wildlife, Conflict or Co-existence?*, Rosie Woodroffe, Simon Thirgood and Alan Rabinowitz (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 286–304.

4 Gitau Mbaria, ‘The Laikipia Crisis and the Disenfranchisement of Kenyans in the North,’ *The Elephant – Speaking Truth to Power*, <https://www.theelephant.info/features/2017/05/18/the-laikipia-crisis-and-the-disenfranchisement-of-kenyans-in-the-north/> (accessed 5 October 2021).

5 USAID, *Financial Audit of USAID Resources Managed by Northern Rangelands Trust in Kenya under Multiple Awards*, January 1 to December 31, 2020, Report No. 4-615-21-095-R, 2021.

and accessibility has resulted in loss of sovereignty on the resources. In the long-run the model leads to impractical conservation reproduction and has the possibility of collapse, as has been experienced with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The establishment of the community conservancies model is meant to supplement or in some cases replace traditional pastoralism. The thinking is around diversification of the economic system from predominant livestock production to mixed livelihoods. In many of the conservancies, livestock are kept within the communal spaces but with regulations as far as access to pasture is concerned. To begin with, some form of ecological controls are instituted with managed exploitation being enforced within the commons. In other words, a control mechanism is instituted whereby some areas are set aside for wildlife consumption, while access for livestock is regulated. This consequently has resulted into situations whereby some members within the conservancies are forced to move their livestock into communal spaces belonging to other groups, or as has been observed in the recent past, move their livestock into spaces such as Laikipia and Isiolo, thus increasing conflict.⁶

It is valid to argue that community conservancies have influenced traditional pastoralism in many ways: both positive and negative. The positive benefits, including creation of jobs, provision of social services such as health and wildlife conservation, are offset by the threat the model poses to traditional pastoralism. The controlled access to pasture as employed particularly during periods of stress such as droughts, in effect forces herders to venture beyond conservancy boundaries. This is a threat to pastoralism as it affects the balance in range management between livestock and wildlife which has historically evolved into a sustainable equilibrium. The overemphasis on wildlife and tourism products although halted by COVID-19 disruptions had the possibility of leading to a loss of the livestock production knowledge that has been practiced for generations.

Methodology

In view of the interest in questions around the COVID-19 pandemic and the viability of the tourism-based conservancy model, a qualitative methodology was developed based on economic publications, government reports, and field observation and interviews in Archers Post and Leratain Samburu County. Reports by the Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics, the National Treasury were heavily relied on. Ten oral interviews were undertaken in December, and March 2021 at Archers Post and Lerata, with individuals affected by the collapse of travel tourism within the Kalama Conservancy, two tour operators,

6 Kennedy Gitu Wagura, *Samburu Demographic Dynamics 1984–2018*, PhD Thesis, Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, 2019.

and a hotel manager provided insights on the devastating effect that the complete lock-down of Nairobi and Mombasa at the onset of the pandemic had on their businesses. Several telephone conversations were held in 2020 and 2021 by the author with people at the Archers Post and Lerata mainly on the general situation on the ground, the restriction on movement and the effect on the economy within the region. The field data collection was undertaken by the author.

A review of government documents, media reports, and other secondary data relevant to this study was analysed through content and discourse analyses. This approach sought to critically understand how COVID-19 and the conservancy model of conservation were impacted by the pandemic. The approach was undertaken with the understanding that most conservancies are dependent on travel tourism, which was impossible post-March 2020 when the pandemic was declared a national concern, resulting in lockdowns in Nairobi and Mombasa at the start and then closure of international borders and the subsequent national lockdown as the disease increased its grip on the country, region and the world.

COVID-19 and Tourism Kenya

The global outbreak of COVID-19 has had a devastating effect on the Kenyan tourism industry. Kenya's economic growth pre-COVID was at 6.3% in 2018 and 5.4% in 2019. It was projected to grow by about 6.2% in 2020/2021 in the absence of COVID-19.⁷ The first confirmed case of the pandemic in the country was on 13th March 2020. After about two weeks from the first confirmed case, there were over 100,000 cases in the country.⁸ The outbreak was followed by strict containment measures meant to curb the spread of the virus. The measures taken included movement restrictions into and out of the country, restrictions on inter-county movement, imposition of curfew hours, suspension of in-person learning in all learning institutions, and work-from-home directives.

The initial measures were followed by further directives on April 6th, 2020 which introduced cessation of movement by road, rail, and air within the Nairobi Metropolitan area and the worst-hit counties of Mombasa, Kilifi, and Kwale.⁹ As a result of the measures, all sectors of the economy including

7 Eldah Onsomu, Boaz Munga and Violet Nyabaro, 'The Impact of COVID-19 on Industries without Smokestacks in Kenya: the Case of Horticulture, ICT, and Tourism Sector,' *African Growth Initiative at Brookings and KIPPRA*, Working Paper No. 35, 2021.

8 Joshua Laichena, Evelyn Kihui, Daniel Omany, Rogers Musamali, Benson Kiriga, Victor Nechifor and Emanuele Ferrari, *Short-term Effects of COVID-19 and Containment Measures on Kenya's Economy*, KIPPRA Policy Brief No. 1, 2021.

9 Government of Kenya, *The National Treasury and Planning, Budget Policy Statement*, Nairobi: National Treasury and Planning, 2021.

the supply chains, hospitality, transport, and educational sectors were severely affected. The dire economic situation is evident in economy growth of – 0.1% in 2020 relative to a growth of 5.4% in 2019.¹⁰ The effects of COVID-19 on tourism and by extension the Kenyan economy cannot be over-emphasised: the sector contributes on average 10% of the country's GDP.¹¹ The travel restrictions imposed within Kenya and other countries all over the world have had devastating effects on the sector, and other related tourism value chains such as transport. The tourism products that conservancies offer target both local and foreign travellers. The closure of international travel denied the sector its major source market. The containment measures instituted against Nairobi and Mombasa which are the main economic centres in the country also meant that domestic tourists were also affected.

Kenya's tourism industry is dependent on international and domestic travellers. The numbers of international visitors had prior to COVID-19 been on an upward growth path after the aftershocks of the 2008 post-election violence and terrorist attacks associated with the *al Shabab* attacks.¹² It is evident from international tourist arrivals that the industry was on an upward trajectory right before the pandemic struck: with more than 2 million international tourist arrivals to Kenya.¹³ These figures dropped significantly by more than 70% during the period between January and December 2020, due to grounded flights and travel aversion witnessed all over the world.¹⁴ From these grim figures, it is valid to argue that the hospitality industry all over the country was devastated. The crash in the tourism-based economy affected conservancies and other hospitality industries leading to massive job losses, loss of incomes, and other associated losses.

Conservancies have many income generation activities which sustain the concept, make money for members and sustain running expenses. The most popular of the undertakings is the running of lodges. The lodges, many of which are high-end, depend mostly on foreign travellers. The lodges, whose prices vary depending on the establishment, are out of reach for many budget travellers, read Kenyans. To illustrate their exclusive nature, the Ol Lentille lodge in Ol Lentille Conservancy in Isiolo County charges between USD 680

10 International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook: Managing Divergent Recoveries*, Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2021.

11 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, *Leading Economic Indicators, February*, Nairobi: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2021.

12 David Anderson, 'Kenya's War in Somalia,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Kenyan Politics*, Nic Cheeseman, Karuti Kanyinga and Gabrielle Lynch (eds), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, pp. 576–89.

13 Government of Kenya, *The National Treasury...*

14 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, *Leading Economic...*

and USD 1,250 per night depending on the season.¹⁵ At the other end, Saruni Samburu lodge in Kalama Conservancy charges between USD 500, USD 700, and USD 860 per person per night during the low, middle, and high seasons respectively.¹⁶

The strict measures put in place to control the spread of COVID-19 also had direct effects on livestock trade and marketing. As measures were instituted, all public events including livestock markets were affected. This had a direct effect on the economic wellbeing of pastoralists as herders could not convert their livestock into cash in order to sustain other social-economic activities including the provision of food, health, and other primary necessities. The closure of the markets particularly hit the community hard as other job opportunities in tourism and logistics collapsed. The controls placed on markets and its associated lack of income in effect made an already vulnerable population more desperate and economically ruined.

Conservancies and COVID-19: the Implications

The COVID-19 pandemic has had serious implications for the concept of conservancies and the business model that supports them. The pandemic has transformed and changed globalisation and any business that depends on international movement. The collapse of tourism in 2020 and into 2021 has resulted in the need to rethink the idea of conservancies, particularly the over-reliance on travel tourism. Tourism contributes 80–90% of conservancy management costs particularly staff salaries and community programmes.¹⁷ As a result of the drastic changes, programmes dependent on income generated from tourism and hospitality projects have led to the collapse of dependent activities and other undertakings.

Conservancy tourism has been on an upward trajectory in the last few years. During 2017/2018, tourism growth and associated incomes in conservancies grew by 18% and the momentum was expected to continue into 2020 by more than 20%.¹⁸ The growth trajectory would not only have translated into jobs directly and indirectly to thousands of pastoralists in the north, but also increased support for social programmes such as health providers to members. This momentum of growth can be attributed to a rise in marketing campaigns by conservancies and also by the conservation industry under the tutorage

15 Ol Lentille, *2021 Rates*, 2021, <https://www.ol-lentille.com/rates/> (accessed 5 October 2021).

16 Saruni Samburu 2021 Brochure indicative of rates for 2021 in lodges located within conservancies in Samburu and Maasai Mara (Narok County).

17 Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, 'Amidst COVID-19 Situation, Community Conservation Must Continue,' 6 April 2020, <https://kwcakenya.com/amidst-covid-19-situation-community-conservation-must-continue>, (accessed 5 October 2021).

18 Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, 'Amidst COVID-19...'

of the NRT and other nature and conservation organisations. It is also valid to argue that conservancies have invested in products offered, including lodges and hotels, and also activities undertaken within the conservancies, as evidenced by the Reteti Elephant Sanctuary.¹⁹

Individually, conservancies that have initiated income generation projects that are dependent on tourism have been affected adversely. The collapse of the industry has in essence left conservation projects, conservancies and associated dependents including tour guides, game scouts, and drivers among others jobless. The beneficiaries of direct jobs, some of whom left other economic activities, are particularly more destabilised. The dire economic situation is exacerbated by the fact that the northern tourism circuit is not popular with low budget local travellers who prefer and have been sustaining Mombasa and other beach destinations on the coast due to their relatively cheap prices.²⁰ The COVID-19 disruptions have stripped funding for resources necessary for land management, for compensating private and community landowners who have forfeited use of their land to coexist with wildlife.

The provision of health services to communities within the conservancy is one of the direct social services that benefit from tourism. The collapse of tourism has affected the provision of the same in the conservancies. Health provision in the north by County Governments and historically by the national government is inadequate. The failure by the two levels of government has in effect led to non-governmental organisations and conservancies to fill the role of provision of services. In the case of conservancies, some have taken up the provision of health as a benefit from the income accrued from tourism activities.²¹ The provision of health services although important has, like other services dependent on tourism income, been affected by lack of income attributable to the COVID -19 pandemic.

Conservancies and Pastoralism: the Implications

Community conservancies in northern Kenya have resulted in a “mixed-bag” of results. The effect that they have had on pastoralism is particularly of paramount concern. To begin with, pastoralism has for millennia been the main economic activity for communities in the northern region, with cultural and

19 Reteti Wildlife Sanctuary within Namunyak Community Conservancy in Samburu County is an elephant rescue and release center for orphaned elephants while creating benefits for local people. It has the potential of attracting visitors with an interest of elephant conservation among other nature related products: <https://www.retetielephants.org/who-we-are/> (accessed 5 October 2021).

20 Government of Kenya, *Domestic Tourism Recovery Strategies for Kenya*, Nairobi: Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 2021.

21 The Northern Rangeland Trust, *Bi-Annual Report...*

social activities built around livestock activities and production. Community conservancies whose origin can be traced to the conservation model that sought to make a profit out of wildlife that is outside protected areas started-off with private ranchers converting their properties into conservation areas. Thus, a model that advocated a mixed livestock and wildlife coexistence was born, but seem to favour private ranchers as compared to pastoralists whose land access and ownership are communal.

The practicality of the community conservancy's model as compared to private conservancies is complicated as there are issues that make its applicability difficult. To begin with, in a community conservancy, for members who may still keep livestock it becomes impossible to control the number of livestock that a household can keep. This is unlike in private conservancies where the owner/s can regulate both the number of livestock and wildlife in their properties. For the community commons, regulation of a number of livestock may lead to conflict with community members, as has been historically witnessed.²² The model which actively advocates for setting aside some of the areas in the landscape for wildlife has in-effect reduced grazing grounds for livestock. This has led to two scenarios: the first one is that members of the conservancy are forced to move their herds outside the conservancy boundaries into either neighbouring group ranches or other commons within the community's boundaries, increasing conflict. The second scenario is where they move their herds into contested regions either occupied by other communities or into zones that are contested.²³ The second scenario has been played out by Samburu herders, who move their livestock into Laikipia and Isiolo Counties, and in the process increase conflict within the two counties.²⁴

Pastoralism is built around mobility: that ecological variations are mitigated through movement through the landscape particularly from locations of scarcity to areas of abundance in pasture, water, minerals and away from diseases. Thus, with pastoralism as has been practiced in northern Kenya, access to pasture and other livestock resources is paramount. The community conservancy model is however destabilising this traditional balance by controlling access. It is observed that non-members of a conservancy are denied access to conservancies particularly during periods of stress. The control of access is meant to reduce competition for resources between livestock and wildlife, through the use of community wildlife scouts/rangers who are employed by conservancies. This in itself is a serious threat to pastoralism because it curtails access, which in the long-run can lead to collapse of pastoralism as has been practiced for millennia.

22 Wagura, *Samburu Demographic...*, p. 136.

23 Wagura, *Samburu Demographic...*, p. 323.

24 John Maina and Mordecai Ogada, *The Big Conservation Lie*, Seattle, WA: Lens & Pens Publishing, 2016.

The control of access to pasture by conservancies to its members as opposed to free access by the entire community has the potential of silently killing pastoralism. As has been mentioned, the Samburu, Maasai, and Borana who are the main communities in the area of study have built adaptations that ensured pastoralism is the most viable economic activity. The most prominent of the adaptations is mobility and access to pastures, among other important resources. The conservancy model that emphasises the coexistence of wildlife and livestock, has, on the other hand, emphasised membership into the community conservancies, which in essence locks out non-members to spaces that were otherwise open commons to all members of the community. It is important to note that the argument here is not that access was 'free for all, no, rather that every Samburu, Maasai or Boran could utilise resources within their 'homeland.' The only requirement was negotiated user access with the family or clan. This important paradigm is what has sustained pastoral production particularly during periods of scarcity.

Controlled access advocated by conservancies can and will only be accepted if the accrue or the perceived benefits exceed grazing their pasture. The moment the benefits from conservancies are lower than livestock or unfettered communal access, then the model will be a source of conflict between members. With the failure by conservancies to satisfy promises or expectations, then it is likely that some members will weigh the cost-benefit analysis and the idea of conservancies may be under serious threat. The point at which members may start questioning the viability of the concept may be due to unavoidable circumstances such the COVID- 19 pandemic, which has drastically reduced incomes to the conservancies. The second scenario would be through failure by management committees to effectively run the conservancies. Conflicts over revenue sharing, project identification and decision-making have the potential for conflict. The possibility of disagreements in the running of the conservancies has been evidenced in the running of group ranches particularly in Kajiado and Narok where conflicts have been witnessed in some cases leading to the total dissolution of the organisations.²⁵

Community conservancies have introduced 'new' diversifications away from the traditional pastoral production, which has been proven by the COVID-19 pandemic, may not be sustainable long-term. Community conservancies and the hospitality business has proven to be dependent on international travel, which is dependent on many factors including open borders. This diversification for pastoralists offered benefits but they have been

25 Ben R. Koissaba, *A Critical Analysis of Factors that Contribute to Maasai Land Appropriation: The Case of Maasai Land Appropriation in Kajiado and Narok Counties in Kenya*, unpublished PhD Thesis, Clemson University, 2016, pp. 105, 157.

disrupted in a major way due to the pandemic. Apart from the pandemic, the tourism and travel business is also usually prone to insecurity and conflicts. Kenya was just recovering from the effects of insecurity brought about by *al Shabab* terrorist attacks on hospitality and education institutions. The attacks meant travel advisories almost completely shut down the tourism sector in the country. Thus the pandemic and previous travel advisories are evidence of the fragility of this form of pastoral diversification.

The instability caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to tourism and related livelihoods may in the long-term lead to social and political instability in northern Kenya. The lost job opportunities, most of which are performed by youth, could lead to insecurity through organised crime such as banditry, poaching, and cattle raiding which can lead to instability within the region. Previous experiences have shown that idle youth and unemployment have led to a rise in particular in cattle raiding, which in the region ignites cycles of violence between the various ethnicities in the region. The proximity of the region to the South Central Somalia region makes the youth susceptible to being recruited to the *al Shabab* militia, which preys on young unemployed people. Although this is speculative, this possibility is plausible considering that youth in the region have limited job opportunities. Thus, when the available limited opportunities collapse, then the right environment for recruitment is created with the accompanying instabilities.

Conclusions

Pastoralism is dynamic: its survival this far is due to changes and adaptations that have been undertaken over time. The community conservancy model is one of the many adaptations that are currently being promoted, to mitigate challenges. This approach, as proven by COVID-19, has its shortcomings, challenging reliability and sustainability. The dependence of the model on the travel industry and open borders makes it unpredictable and unsustainable over the long term. The lockdowns instituted as containment measures all over the world reduced spending on cross-country and border spending for leisure. As a consequence, industries dependent on leisure travel experienced a major slump. The model used in resource management has the potential of being the source of resource conflict within pastoralist communities. The controlled access to pasture leaves some zones inaccessible to livestock during times of stress, which can lead to socio-political instability. The model, although providing an alternative livelihood, may over time lead to change or even death of pastoralism as we know it today through the gradual loss of the cultural know-how on livestock production practices.

Impact of Covid-19 on Tourism Industry in Oyo State, Southwest Nigeria

Abstract

Globalisation and regional development have, over the years, been aided through the tourism industry. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused a public health emergency leading to huge loss of lives across the globe and at the same time, greatly affecting the global economy, the tourism industry has been the most affected. This impact is because tourism usually involves travel from one geographical area to another. Cultural tourism is an aspect of tourism through which individuals express their right to cultural life as they move to cultural attractions away from their place of residence, to gather new information and experiences in a bid to satisfy their cultural needs. To combat the outbreak of Covid-19, a prominent measure that has been utilised by states is the imposition of either a partial or full lockdown measure while restricting international travel. This research analyses the impact of Covid-19 on development in the tourism industry in Oyo State in southwest Nigeria. Its findings revealed that the tourism industry was negatively affected by COVID-19. The right to benefit from new inventions has not been adequately explored. Though heritage practitioners are aware of the need to ensure the tourism industry stays innovative to meet the challenges of the times, the government has not taken any steps in this regard. It needs to give priority to the heritage industry as tourism development has a huge role to play in achieving human rights.

Keywords: Pandemic, Cultural Institutions, Tourism, Development, Nigeria.

Introduction

The right to development can be referred to as the vector of all rights.² Donnelly sees it as the conflation of all existing rights.³ Development cannot be separated from man's culture⁴ and the Declaration on the Right to Development places man at the centre of development.⁵ Development is a comprehensive

1 Senior Lecturer, Department of Jurisprudence and International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, e-mail: sade_abidemi@yahoo.com.

2 Arjun Sengupta, 'The Human Right to Development,' in *Development as a Human Right: Legal, Political and Economic Dimension*, (2nd Ed.), Bård A. Andreassen and Stephen Marks (eds), Antwerp: Intersentia, 2008, pp.13–44.

3 Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, New York: Cornell University Press, 2013.

4 Afolasade A. Adewumi. 'Protecting Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Era of Rapid Technological Advancement,' *International Review of Law, Computers and Technology*, 2021 (accepted for publication).

5 The right to development was proposed in 1970 by a Senegalese Jurist Keba M'baye,

process that is multidimensional, surpassing economic growth and embracing political, cultural and social elements.⁶ The right to cultural life⁷ and the right to education are assumed in the right to development. The right to cultural life has three components, namely the right to choose one's identity and participate in cultural practices, the right to access one's culture through education and information and the right to benefit from cultural heritage and the creations of others.⁸ In the same vein, cultural heritage – being the foundation for cultural and social identity – is linked to the right to human dignity.⁹

Civilisation hinges on education and one of the keys to heritage lies in its educative value.¹⁰ Education can be formal or informal. The purpose of education is found in every human activity undertaken consciously in every environment.¹¹ Tourism entails movement from one place to another for the education of the tourist while adding to the revenue of the territory visited, generating foreign currency for the local economy. Picard claims that “tourism cannot be conceived of outside of culture at all: it is bound up in an ongoing process of cultural invention.”¹² As a country develops to the level that the people can afford leisure services, tourism services will be demanded, achieving high level of economic growth for the country with low level of human specialisation.¹³

recognised in law in 1981 through the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and incorporated into the Human Rights framework in 1986 when the declaration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

- 6 See: The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights), *Declaration of the Right to Development*, Articles 2(1), 4(2) and 8 (1), 1986.
- 7 International instruments such as Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and regional instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 17(2) among other instruments affirm this right.
- 8 The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights), *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, Section 15(1)(a), 1976.
- 9 Afolasade A. Adewumi and Adeniyi I. Olatunbosun, 'Child's Rights without Cultural Identity: A Mirage,' *Justice Journal*, Vol. 7, 2015, pp. 116–137.
- 10 Afolasade A. Adewumi, 'Curbing the Illicit Traffic in African Antiquities through Legislation,' *Art, Antiquity and Law*, Vol. XXI, Issue I, 2016, pp. 43–56.
- 11 Afolasade A. Adewumi and Olujemisi A. Bamgbose, 'Attitude of Staff and Students to Clinical Legal Education: A Case Study of Faculty of Law, University of Ibadan,' *Asian Journal of Legal Education*, Vol. 3, 2016, pp. 106–116.
- 12 Michel Picard, 'Cultural Heritage and Tourist Capital: Cultural Tourism in Bali,' in *International Tourism: Identity and Change*, Marie-Françoise Lanfant, John B. Alcock and Edward M. Bruner (eds), London: Sage, 1995, pp. 44–83.
- 13 Adamos Adamoua and Sofronis Clerides, 'Tourism, Development and Growth: International Evidence and Lessons for Cyprus,' *Cyprus Economic Policy Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2009, pp. 3–22.

Tourism is the third largest export sector of the global economy.¹⁴ It encompasses a high level of activities and services which cut across regional to global mutual relationships spreading into other economic and social areas.¹⁵ While tourists move from one place to another, services such as food, transportation, accommodation, and entertainment will also be in demand. These services provide job opportunities for those who are low skilled, thus helping to overcome poverty.¹⁶ The tourism industry therefore facilitates the enjoyment of several rights accruing to an individual. Tourists exercise different rights in the singular act of moving around. As the right to freedom of movement¹⁷ is enjoyed, the right to cultural life is also.¹⁸ The right to education¹⁹ is enjoyed by the knowledge gained from the environment while the right to development²⁰ is equally guaranteed. All these rights end up finding a balance in the right to human dignity, as cultural identity is the basis of other rights.²¹

In sub-Saharan Africa, the development of tourism has been a key driver in closing the gap between poor and rich countries.²² Travel and Tourism accounted for 10% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and more than 320 million jobs worldwide before the outbreak of COVID-19.²³ UNESCO²⁴ noted that in 2019, 1.9 billion people crossed international borders to experience other cultures and creativity and noticed the decline in tourism which has weakened access to culture. The COVID-19 outbreak has affected the enjoyment of the right to cultural life which is guaranteed by Article 27 of

14 United Nations, *Policy Brief: Covid-19 and Transforming Tourism*, United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2020, <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/policy-brief-covid-19-and-transforming-tourism> (accessed 8 October 2021).

15 Birgit Steck, *Sustainable Tourism as a Development Option. Practical Guide for Local Planners, Developers and Decision Makers*, Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, 1999.

16 Asif Khan, Sughra Bibi, Ardito Lorenzo, Jiaying Lyu and Zaheer Udden Babar, 'Tourism and Development,' *Developing Economies: A Policy Implication Perspective. Sustainability*, Vol. 12, 2020, p. 1618.

17 This right is guaranteed under the *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 1999, Section 41.

18 This right comes under Chapter II of the *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 1999 that deals with Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy; see also Article 17 of the *African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights* adopted in 1981.

19 See: *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 1999.

20 See: *African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights* adopted in 1981, Article 22.

21 Afolasade A. Adewumi and Adeniyi I. Olatunbosun, 'Child's Rights...'

22 Adam Behsudi, 'Tourism-dependent Economies are Among Those Harmed the Most by the Pandemic,' *IMF*, 2020, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2020/12/impact-of-the-pandemic-on-tourism-behsudi.htm> (accessed 8 October 2021).

23 Behsudi, 'Tourism-dependent...'

24 'UN Warns of the Pandemic's Lasting Impact on Tourism,' UNESCO, 2 September 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/news/warns-pandemics-lasting-impacts-tourism> (accessed 8 October 2021).

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.²⁵ This right is enjoyed through cultural tourism, an aspect of Tourism. The lockdown and travel restrictions imposed by countries all over the world to restrict the spread of the infection has in turn greatly affected the tourism industry, especially communities that depend on cultural tourism for their livelihood. This paper focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry in Oyo State, Nigeria, a state that has several landmarks in the history of Nigeria.

Therefore a question arise what impact has COVID-19 had on the tourism industry in Oyo State? The research aims to determine how COVID-19 affected development in the tourism sector of Oyo State during the lockdown.

This research seeks to:

1. examine the types of domestic tourism outlets in Oyo State.
2. determine the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on tourist flows in 2020.
3. examine the various ways COVID-19 impacted tourist outlets (economic, personnel, technology etc).
4. determine the level of preparedness to avert negative impact from any future pandemic.

This paper is divided into five parts, the first being this introductory one. The second part is a brief overview of Oyo State. The third part is the methodology. The fourth showcases the findings and carries out a discussion on them. The fifth part is recommendations and conclusions.

1. Oyo State, Southwest Nigeria

The capital of Oyo State is the historic city of Ibadan,²⁶ which came into existence in 1829 during a period of turmoil that characterised Yorubaland at that time. Ibadan is the largest city in West Africa in terms of geographical area and the third largest city by population in Nigeria. Oyo state is known to be a state with landmarks and ‘firsts.’ In 1893, Ibadan area of Oyo State became a British protectorate. The chief administrative building was Mapo Hall situated on top of a hill known as Oke Mapo. It was commissioned during the colonial era by Captain Ross in 1929.²⁷ Mapo hall is one of the oldest historic buildings in Nigeria and has played host to major political and

25 Afolasade A. Adewumi, ‘COVID-19 Pandemic and the Right to Enjoyment of Cultural Life in Nigeria,’ *Art, Antiquity and Law*, Vol. XXVI, Issue 1, 2021, pp. 71–82.

26 The name ‘Ibadan’ was coined from the Yoruba expression *eba odan*, which in English language means “edge of the meadow.”

27 ‘Mapo Hall – One of The Oldest Historical Buildings in Nigeria,’ *Travel Waka*, 8 August 2020 <https://www.travelwaka.com/mapo-hall-one-of-the-oldest-historical-buildings-in-nigeria/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

social events in Ibadan city, shaping the socio-political direction of Nigeria in general. For example, the Presidential Address of Nnamdi Azikiwe, the first President of Nigeria (1 Oct. 1963–16 Jan. 1966) was delivered in Mapo Hall. The Neoclassical architecture of the hall is a constant reminder of early British influence in the administration of Ibadan as part of the Oyo Province. In 1936, Bowers Towers²⁸ was erected to the east on Oke Aare (Aare means commander in chief) in honour of Captain Ross L. Bower (1893–1897) who was the first Resident and Travelling Commissioner of ‘Interior Yorubaland.’ Bowers Towers served as a vantage point of the whole city of Ibadan and can be seen from any point in the city.

Oyo state has the first skyscraper in Africa, Cocoa House, which was completed in 1965, with 26 storeys at a height of 105 metres and is the tallest building in tropical Africa.²⁹ It was built from the proceeds from commodities such as cocoa, rubber and timber. It is the property of Odu’a Investment Company Limited, Ibadan formerly known as *Ile awon Agbe* meaning “the house of farmers.” Oyo state houses the Nigerian Television Authority formerly known as Nigerian Television (NTV). It is the first television station in Africa inaugurated in 1977.³⁰ It is partly Nigerian government owned and partly a commercial broadcaster. It has the sculpture of *ori olokun* head on its wall. The *ori olokun* is referred to as the head dug up in the late 19th century from the *olokun* groove and used in annual rites to honour *olokun olokun* the goddess of the sea.

The first radio station in Nigeria started in Oyo State as the Radio Diffusion Service. It was founded in 1933 by the British colonial government to allow the public to hear the British broadcasting Corporation’s (BBC) foreign radio service broadcast in certain public locations over loudspeakers. In April 1950, the Radio Diffusion Service became Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) which was reorganised into the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) on April 1, 1957, by an Act of Parliament. In 1962, the NBC expanded its stations into the North, where it was called the Broadcasting Corporation of Northern Nigeria (BCNN). In 1978, NBC and BCNN merged to become The

28 ‘Bowers Memorial Tower,’ Nigeria Galleria, 2021, https://www.nigeriagalleria.com/Nigeria/States_Nigeria/Oyo/Bower-Memorial-Tower-Oke-Aare.html (accessed 8 October 2021).

29 Adom Tabbey-Botchwey, ‘The History of Nigeria’s Cocoa House, the First Skyscraper in West Africa,’ *Face 2 Face Africa*, 14 August 2019, <https://face2faceafrica.com/article/explore-the-history-of-nigerias-cocoa-house-the-first-skyscraper-in-west-africa> (accessed 8 October 2021).

30 ‘History of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA),’ *Media Nigeria*, 26 April 2018, <https://www.medianigeria.com/history-of-nigerian-television-authority-nta/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN).³¹ The FRCN's southwest zonal headquarters is in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Liberty stadium Oyo State was opened in 1960 and named liberty stadium in honour of Nigeria's Independence. It was the central location of sports in the old western region of Nigeria.³² Oyo State is host to Nigeria's premier higher institution of learning, the University of Ibadan.³³ Established as a college of the University of London in 1948 and was later converted into an autonomous university in 1962.

The National Archives of Nigeria started in Oyo State. The colonial period of Nigerian history (1849–1899) ushered in Nigerian archive-keeping of the British administration, some of which were salvaged from decay by Kenneth Dike and kept in the record rooms provided for the purpose at the University of Ibadan.³⁴ The Public Archives Act was enacted in 1957 and ushered in the post-colonial period. The national archives moved to its own building within the University of Ibadan in 1958. The National Archives now has branches in Kaduna, Enugu, Benin and Sokoto states.

Oyo state is also home to the only suspended lake in Africa and second in the world known as Ado Awaye Suspended Lake.³⁵ Other major tourist attractions located in the state include Agodi Botanical Gardens created in 1967 as the foremost recreational and tourist attraction in the Western region,³⁶ Ido Cenotaph,³⁷ Iyamapo and Agbele Hill in Igbeti, the Cultural Centre Mokola, Zoological Garden University of Ibadan, Botanical Gardens University of Ibadan, University of Ibadan Museums, ODU'A Hall of Fame and Museum, Oke-Ogun National Park in Old Oyo-Ile, the Cultural Centre Mokola among others. Aside from these tangible heritage sites, Oyo state has several intangible

31 'Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria – History,' *Liquisearch*, 2021, https://www.liquisearch.com/federal_radio_corporation_of_nigeria/history (accessed 8 October 2021).

32 'Liberty Stadium: An African Pride "Abandoned" For Reptiles,' *Oyo Insight*, 18 October 2019, <https://oyoinsight.com/liberty-stadium-an-african-pride-abandoned-for-reptiles/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

33 'University of Ibadan – History,' University of Ibadan, 2021, <https://www.ui.edu.ng/History> (accessed 8 October 2021).

34 Afolasade A. Adewumi, 'Historical Treasures in Ruins: Salvaging Archives in Nigeria,' *Art, Antiquity and Law*, Vol. XXIV, Issue 2, 2019, pp. 151–160.

35 'Ado Awaye Mountains and Suspended Lakes,' *Trip Advisor*, https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g317071-d9792396-Reviews-Ado_Awaye_Mountains_and_Suspended_Lakes-Ibadan_Oyo_State.html (accessed 8 October 2021).

36 'Agodi Gardens Ibadan – A State of the Art Botanical Garden,' *Travel Waka*, 17 September 2019, <https://www.travelwaka.com/agodi-gardens-ibadan-a-state-of-the-art-botanical-garden/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

37 'The State,' *Oyo State, the Peacesetter State*, 2021, <https://oyostate.gov.ng/about-oyo-state/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

heritage domains within her territory, some of which are showcased during festivals and at other social events and gatherings.

2. The Research Methodology

The study was conducted using a questionnaire administered at tourism outlets. At the beginning of the survey, there was an informed consent section that described the voluntary nature of participation and confidentiality of responses for all organisations and places visited. There was no incentive or coercion of any participant.

The study was conducted in Oyo State, which is ‘a state with many firsts’ in Nigeria. Moreover, the study population consists of some types of domestic tourism outlets found within Oyo State which enjoy a high level of patronage. Percentages were used to describe the data collected.

3. Results and Discussion

Objective 1: Examine the types of domestic tourism outlets in Oyo State.

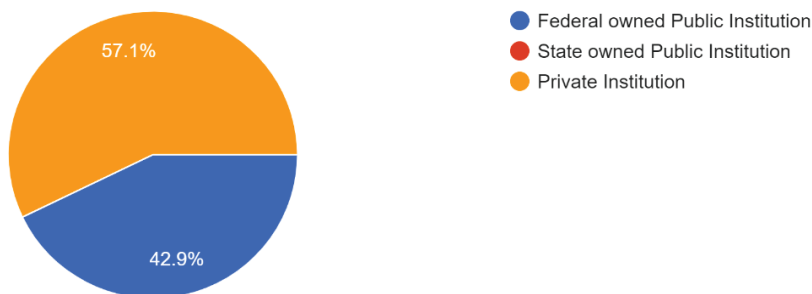


Figure 1: Type of Domestic Tourism Outlet

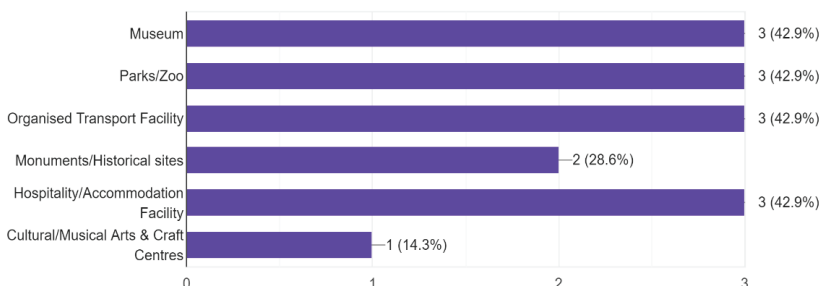


Figure 2: Type of Institution

Figures 1 and 2 show that tourism outlets in Oyo State are either owned by the Federal government, the State Government or private institutions/organisations.³⁸ This is so because Antiquities, Monuments and Archives are on the legislative list which contains items that both the National and State Houses of Assemblies can legislate upon.³⁹ It is unfortunate that none of the institutions owned by the state government volunteered information to be used for this survey.

Objective 2: Determine the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the traffic/tourists flow during the year 2020.

Table 1. Impact of COVID 19 on tourist flow

Question	Yes	No
Was there a reduction in the number of tourists that came around?	100%	-
Did COVID-19 negatively affect daily activities	100%	-
Did the pandemic stall social interaction at your facility?	100%	-

Table 1 depicts that COVID-19 affected tourism flows during the lockdown in 2020. Social activities were reduced. Cultural development was limited by social distancing, which put limitation to social gatherings to avoid spreading of the virus. This is in line with the position in Italy where Ing. Paolo Iannelli,⁴⁰ stated that “The lockdown imposed since March 9, 2020, providing for the closure of all cultural institutions and sites, as well as all churches, led for the first time in the history of the country in times of peace, to a state of almost total inaccessibility to cultural heritage.”

Objective 3: To examine the various ways COVID-19 impacted tourist outlets (economic, personnel, technology etc).

38 *National Commission for Museums and Monuments Act*, 1979 Section 12(c) and 14 shows that individuals can own cultural property.

39 *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 1999 Part II, Concurrent Legislative List. Extent of Federal and State Legislative Powers. Items B and C.

40 Paolo Iannelli, ‘The Initiatives of the Italian Ministry of Culture and Tourism for the Management of Cultural Sites in Relation to Covid-19 Emergency,’ *ProCultHer*, 24 June 2020, <https://www.proculther.eu/the-initiatives-of-the-italian-ministry-of-culture-and-tourism-for-the-management-of-the-cultural-sites-in-relation-to-covid-19-emergency/> (accessed 8 October 2021).

Economic impact: Economic development has to do with the creation of wealth. This covers the creation of wealth by the nation state, private industries and individuals via the production of economic goods and services⁴¹ and these goods and services yield returns which improve the standard of living of a person, increase wealth, create jobs and also support innovation and new ideas. Economic development can be associated with or measured by the unemployment rate (job creation and retention), increase in income, government projects which improve the quality of living of people in the area, etc.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to the Nigerian economy and many other nations' economies a state of economic shock in that it brought to a standstill to many economic activities and projects in the country; demand and supply chains were broken, factories and borders closed during the period, poor health facilities in the nation also dragged down economic development at the time as Nigeria has inadequate health infrastructure and as such had to rely on supply from other nations for support during the pandemic thereby losing money to other economies but with no domestic revenue.⁴²

Both domestic tourism and international tourism⁴³ have been discovered to aid economic growth by generating employment and income. The economic impact can be direct, indirect or induced. Hotels, restaurants, tourism organisations all enjoy increased revenue when tourism is undertaken. When the hotels and restaurants make purchases to meet the needs of tourists, the indirect impact is felt by the organisations that make supplies to the hotels and restaurants. The multiplier effect of tourism made both developed and developing nations feel the impact of COVID-19 on sustainability in the tourism industry.⁴⁴

Aside those working in the tourist centres, there are a lot of vendors who sell or hawk food items and drinks around the tourist sites. These vendors were seriously affected by the lockdown as they had no customers to sell their wares to. They generated no income and some of them have gone out of business due to the economic hardship experienced during the lockdown.

41 Carol M. Kopp, 'Development Economics,' *Investopedia*, 25 November 2020, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/d/development-economics.asp> (accessed 8 October 2021).

42 Abdullahi A. Ahmad, M. Mohammed and Yusuf Nakaduna, 'Economic and Political Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case of Nigeria,' *Asian People Journal (APJ)*, Vol. 4, 2021, pp. 34–49.

43 Isabel Cortés-Jiménez, 'Which Type of Tourism Matters to the Regional Economic Growth? The Cases of Spain and Italy,' *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 10, 2008, pp. 127–139.

44 United Nations, *Policy Brief...*, p. 8

This finding tallies with the United Nations Policy Brief that stated that ‘the economic and social disruption brought by COVID-19 threatens the long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of millions.’⁴⁵ The cultural and social framework of the communities and ethnic groups have been affected by the pandemic⁴⁶ including indigenous women’s revenues.⁴⁷ The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) also stated that the pandemic has put 100 million jobs at risk.⁴⁸

During the research, unofficial information gathered around the zoo revealed that the lockdown seriously affected internally generated revenue to the extent that there were no funds to purchase food for the lion. Some heritage sites however did not suffer any economic impact because they are not profit making. No fee is paid for admission into the sites as they belong to the Federal government. However, locals that depend on selling wares and food items to the tourists that visit such sites suffered loss of income because of the pandemic. Loss of income increases poverty and can translate to low self-esteem and depression.⁴⁹

Impact on Personnel: The prospects of job creation offered by tourism constitute an important instrument in poverty reduction strategies.⁵⁰ From the research at some private offices we found out that salaries were slashed. At some other private offices, the staff were not laid off but received no salary during the period of the lockdown when there was no interstate movement. Some offices downsized or slashed salaries of workers by half, which in turn led to economic hardship in some homes.

The findings support the position of the United Nations that unemployment could rise because of the pandemic.⁵¹ Unlike some tourism-dependent economies that focused support on vulnerable informal workers in the tourism sector with cash transfers, grants, tax relief, payroll support, and loan guarantees,⁵² no such support was allocated by heritage practitioners in Oyo state.

45 United Nations, *Policy Brief...*, p. 11.

46 United Nations, *Policy Brief...*, p. 14.

47 See also: ‘On International Day, UN Chief Spotlights Indigenous Peoples’ Resilience in Face of COVID-19 Pandemic,’ *United Nations*, 9 August 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1069822> (accessed 8 October 2021).

48 Behsudi, ‘Tourism-dependent...’

49 Jen Wilson, ‘The Relationship Between Self-esteem and Depression,’ *Good Therapy*, 5 July 2012, <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/self-esteem-depression-anxiety-effects-0705123> (accessed 8 October 2021).

50 SNV Netherlands Development Organization, *Tourism and Development, Agendas for Action*, 2007.

51 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *COVID-19 and Tourism: Assessing the Economic Consequences*, 2020.

52 Behsudi, ‘Tourism-dependent...’

Impact on social interactions: Mansouri has stated that the ideal phrase should be physical distancing and not social distancing, as social interactions can continue through other channels while social distancing connotes disconnectedness.⁵³ He however noted that not everyone has access to the internet, which is because of social inequalities and economic marginalisation. The lack of access to the internet limited cultural interactions even in some areas of the developed countries. The digital education is necessary at all levels to enhance the digitisation of culture while preventing the exclusion of any member of society.

In Oyo State, the lockdown limited social interactions. Schools were closed so students and pupils, who form the greater proportion of tourists in Oyo State, were at home and had no access to the education received at the heritage sites, thus hampering their enjoyment of the cultural rights and right to education.

Periods of uncertainty affect the flow of tourists. The pandemic put a halt to many physical forms of cultural promotion and development as it resulted in the cancellation of planned trips, gatherings and excursions to museums and heritage sites. Festivals were cancelled, tourist attraction centres were not patronised due to the lockdown. The Awujale of Ijebuland, a traditional ruler, announced the cancellation of the *Ojude Oba festival* due to the pandemic and the onset of the delta variant of the virus.⁵⁴

This situation support the findings of the UNWTO that “Physical distancing and lockdown measures led to the cancellation or postponement of many festive events and rituals around the world, which has raised major social and economic consequences on communities that rely on cultural tourism associated with these intangible cultural heritage practices.”⁵⁵

A recent UNESCO report on the impact of COVID-19 on museums found that 90% of the world’s museums were forced to close at the height of the pandemic, and that more than 10% may never reopen.⁵⁶ An ongoing IMF research on tourism in a post-pandemic world has also stated that globally in the first half of the year 2020, tourist arrivals fell by over 65% and reduced

53 Fethi Mansouri, ‘The Socio-cultural Implications of COVID-19,’ *UNESCO*, 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/news/socio-cultural-implications-covid-19> (accessed 8 October 2021).

54 Bertram Nwannekanma, ‘Palace Cancels 2021 Ojude Oba Festival over Covid,’ *Guardian*, 16 July 2021, <https://m.guardian.ng/news/palace-cancels-2021-ojude-oba-festival-over-covid/>(accessed 8 October 2021).

55 UNWTO, *UNWTO Inclusive Recovery Guide – Sociocultural Impacts of Covid-19, Issue 2: Cultural Tourism*, 2021, <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284422579>: 10 (accessed 8 October 2021).

56 UNESCO, *Museums around the World in the Face of Covid 19*, 2021, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373530> (accessed 8 October 2021).

to a near standstill by April 2020, compared to an 8% reduction after the period of the global financial crisis and 17% during the 2003 SARS epidemic.⁵⁷

Impact on Technology: Technology can be said to be one aspect that benefited greatly from the pandemic. Since the natural order of things had to change, the world turned to technology. The educational sector, commerce, health, work life and even entertainment all benefited from technological development during the pandemic. Distance learning was pushed to the fore as educational institutions at all levels moved online to teach, examine and even graduate students. The pandemic forced educational institutions to consider alternatives such as the use of Google Meets or Zoom for lectures and some institutions developed e-learning platforms of their own⁵⁸ to cater for their students' educational needs.⁵⁹

In the tourism industry in Nigeria, the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications was exercised by those who had access and had been empowered to use technological gadgets for work before the outbreak of the pandemic.

Table 2. Impact of COVID-19 on technology

Question	Yes	No
Is your line of business such that is technologically driven?	71.4%	28.6%
Was there an option to move your activities online to be able to reach your audience that could not physically visit during the pandemic?	71.4%	28.6%
Did your institution have online presence before the pandemic?	71.4%	28.6%
Did your institution create online presence during the pandemic?	42.9%	57.1%
Was your institution able to explore the technological platform in reaching your audience?	28.6%	71.4%

57 Behsudi, 'Tourism-dependent...'

58 Afolasade A. Adewumi, 'Students' Perspective on Globalisation of Legal Education: A Case study of Bowen University Law Students.' A paper presented in the International Conference on Globalisation of Professional Legal Education: Constitutional Conspectus organised by School of Law Bennett University India on April 3, 2021.

59 Priya Seetharaman, 'Business Models Shifts: Impact of Covid-19,' *The International Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 54, 2020, pp. 102–173.

From the responses in Table 2 above, 28.6% of respondents were able to explore the technological platform in reaching their audience. This percentage represents the travel agencies that were able to move all their activities online immediately the lockdown was partially eased. However, institutions like museums, archives, hotel accommodations only use technology to create awareness of their existence, their services being solely rendered physically and so could not make use of technology to achieve the performance of their services during the lockdown.

Though many of the tourism outlets have an online presence and are aware that there is the option of reaching out to their audience using technological platform, they however did not explore this option. The right to benefit from invention was therefore neither explored nor enjoyed in this regard.

This is very unlike the situation in Italy, where MiBACT initiatives made use of digital means to reach the community and give a virtual visit of museums and cultural sites during the lockdown.⁶⁰

However, for hotels that offer home delivery catering services, technology offered an avenue to reach out to some of their customers. However there seems to be no income for them in respect of housing tourists that lodge for business purposes as business meetings have gone virtual. The World Tourism and Travel Council⁶¹ has stated that the rebound of the tourism sector will depend on the personal decision of leisure travellers as they weigh the necessity of travel against falling ill. While business travellers may suffer a permanent shift or return in phases as many business transactions have gone virtual.⁶²

Generally, COVID-19 impacted the activities of the tourism outlets in Oyo State, Nigeria negatively. Over the years, it has been noticed that low levels of technology and basic labour skills are needed for operation in the tourism industry. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it obvious that this trend is due for change.

60 The Digital Initiatives of Museums, Archaeological Sites, Libraries, Archives, Theaters, Cinema and Music, '#Iorestoacasa,' *Storico*, https://storico.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sito-MiBAC/Contenuti/MibacUnif/Comunicati/visualizza_asset.html_422536076.html (accessed 8 October 2021).

61 World Travel & Tourism Council, *To Recovery and Beyond: The Future of Travel and Tourism in the Wake of COVID-19*, September 2020, <https://wtcc.org/Initiatives/To-Recovery-Beyond> (accessed 8 October 2021).

62 Andrew Curley, Rachel Garber, Vik Krishnan and Jillian Tellez, 'For Corporate Travel, a Long Recovery Ahead,' *McKinsey and Company*, 13 August 2020, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/travel-logistics-and-infrastructure/our-insights/for-corporate-travel-a-long-recovery-ahead> (accessed 8 October 2021).

Objective 4: To determine the level of preparedness to avert negative impacts from any future pandemic.

Has your institution deliberated on new ways of operating your line of activities in preparation for future pandemics?

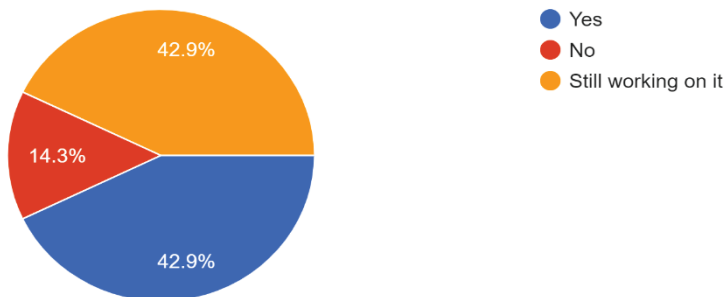


Figure 3. The preparedness to avert negative impacts from any future pandemic

The responses in Figure 3 show that the staff in institutions are aware that steps need to be taken to embrace technology in the tourism industry but no active measures have been concluded on the way forward. A heritage practitioner at one of the federal-government owned tourism outlets, who preferred to stay anonymous said:

“From the pandemic I suppose we should have learnt lessons, but I don’t think the govt has learnt anything from it. Our boss has written proposals to the Federal govt but no response yet. Digitisation is not something you just come and do because acquisition of records is continuous. Digitisation has started but not all materials can be placed online. Some are sensitive materials that cannot be placed in open access.”⁶³

UNESCO has noted that the future of tourism is tied to the creativeness and innovativeness displayed in responding to challenges in the face of pandemics to ensure sustainability of the tourism industry. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has drafted a guide to assist countries in recovering from the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.⁶⁴ The recommendations to countries range from adopting measures that promote synergies between the

63 Anonymous.

64 UNWTO, *UNWTO Inclusive Recovery...*

tourism sector and the culture sector in observing COVID-19 protocols and gaining the confidence of tourists; adopting measures to strengthen the revival of urban and rural experiences by creativity and cultural diversity that boost entrepreneurship and innovation in urban destinations; building up of resilient tourism and culture workforce through digital literacy to ensure digital access to heritage sites and using technology to make the experience competitive while promoting the rights of cultural creators; fostering community-based tourism through living heritage.

It is sad to note that no concrete steps have been taken towards recovering from the impacts of COVID-19 on heritage, nor are there any policy in place presently to avert negative impact of any future pandemic on the tourism sector in Nigeria despite the awareness among heritage practitioners that steps need to be taken to ensure resilience is not lost in the heritage and tourism industry.

Conclusions

COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the world is at a turning point concerning the sustainability of the tourism industry as tourism models and structures needs to be readily responsive to changing circumstances and situations. The Nigerian government, both at the federal and state levels, needs to give priority to the heritage industry and ensure that records are documented and preserved in such a way that they can be accessed remotely in the absence of physical access. Digital education is necessary at all levels to enhance the digitisation of culture while preventing the exclusion of any member of society. The focus of Nigerians should be directed at reconnecting its citizens with Nigerian cultures, by creating digital platforms for showcasing local cultures and local ways of life. This should be done with regard to the rights of the cultural creators. Policymakers in Nigeria are urged to formulate appropriate policies geared towards investing in infrastructures that would enable the tourism industry to remain relevant as a tool for sustainable development and the enjoyment of the right to access technological advancement unhindered. The well-being of the people should be at the heart of tourism development as the human rights of the people is realised through the development process.

Functions of Hausa Proverbs in Political Discourse²

Abstract

Karìn màgàná is a form of traditional cultural expression which has the status of a genre in Hausa oral literature. It is equivalent to a *proverb*. This paper presents examples of Hausa proverb usage in political discourse. The data were extracted from press articles published during the period of the Nigerian general election (February 2019). The research focuses on analysing discursive features of *karìn màgàná* and aspects of its contextual understanding and translation. In contemporary Hausa discourses proverbs perform textual and pragmatic functions. Each function in which a proverb is used changes its interpretation (representational meaning).

Keywords: Hausa Proverbs, Cultural Expressions, Political Discourse, Written Media, Hausa Press.

Introduction

Hausa proverbs (*karìn màgàná*, pl. *karìn màgàngànū*³) are cultural expressions in the form of short linguistic devices that have their origin in oral tradition. They are highly valued in Hausa culture and play an important role in the society due to their communicative and didactic properties.⁴ *Karìn màgàná*

-
- 1 Lecturer and PhD candidate in the Department of African Languages and Cultures, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw in Poland, e-mail: patryk.zajac@uw.edu.pl.
 - 2 This article presents the results of the field research task “Hausa Proverbs in Political Discourse” conducted by the author in February 2019 in Abuja, Nigeria. The task was co-financed by Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw. The preliminary version of this article was published as ‘Analiza użycia przysłów w dyskursie polityki na przykładzie tekstów prasowych w języku hausa opublikowanych w okresie wyborów powszechnych w Nigerii w 2019 r.’ [Hausa Proverbs in Press Language during Nigeria 2019 General Elections], *Afryka*, No. 49, 2019, pp. 61–79.
 - 3 I use Standard Hausa Latin script orthography (*bōkō*) when quoting the samples of articles extracted from newspapers. When referring to a particular term, word or proverb I use scientific notation (marking length of vowels, tones and two “r” variants). From now on I use terms *karìn màgàná* and (Hausa) proverb interchangeably.
 - 4 Sergio Baldi, ‘Proverbs as an Educational Factor in Hausa Society,’ in *Selected Proceedings of the Symposium on West African Languages*, Gian Claudio Batic and Sergio Baldi (eds), Napoli: Università Degli Studi Di Napoli “L’Orientale” Dipartimento Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo, 2015, pp. 249–250; Sergio Baldi, ‘Body Parts in Hausa Proverbs,’ *Studies of the Department of African Languages and Cultures*, No. 46, 2012, pp. 7–8; Tae-Sang Jang, ‘A Poetic Structure in Hausa Proverbs,’ *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 1999, pp. 83–115.

is an open collection of durable set sayings which cover various sub-types of folk texts with fixed meanings. *Karìn màgànà* is considered the equivalent of the English term *proverb* and its counterparts in other languages⁵.

“What we generally call proverbs are recurrent, pithy, often formulaic and/or figurative, fairly stable and generally recognisable units used to form a complete utterance, make a complete conversational contribution and/or to perform a speech act in a speech event.”⁶

A quite enigmatic, and thus semantically broad expression, *karìn màgànà* literary meaning of ‘folded speech,’ in contrast to the notion of a *proverb*, covers several types of sayings known to the Western paremiographic and folkloristic tradition, differences between which are only nuances in definition such as, i.a. maxims, aphorisms, wellerisms. For balance, Hausa tradition is rich in short oral forms specific to the Hausa culture and not having direct functional equivalents in European languages, i.a. *kirārì*, *tākē*, *habaicī*, *zàmbō*.⁷ Despite the aforementioned regional differences in dicta classification, *karìn màgànà* is a *proverb* in the universal sense of this notion, which is foregrounded in paremiological studies. It has the same features⁸ while their stylistic and pragmatic aspects predominantly overlap as well.⁹

1. *Karìn Màgànà* as a Genre

From the point of view of discourse research, all *karìn màgànà* combined can be interpreted as a macro-speech act (global speech act), i.e. the general structure of communicative interaction realised by uttering a sequence of various micro-speech acts.¹⁰ On the formal level, *karìn màgànà* – as with

5 See definitions of Hausa *karìn màgànà* (Graham Furniss, *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture in Hausa*, London: Edinburgh University Press, 1996, pp. 70–71; Stanisław Piłaszewicz, *Historia literatur afrykańskich w językach rodzimych. Literatura hausa* [The History of African Literatures in Indigenous Languages. Hausa Literature], Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1983, p. 13.) and culture-neutral but European-coined literary term *proverb* (Neal R. Norrick, ‘Subject Area, Terminology, Proverb Definitions, Proverb Features,’ *Introduction to Paremiology: A Comprehensive Guide to Proverb Studies*, H. Hrisztova-Gotthardt and M. A. Varga (eds), Warsaw and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015, pp. 6–27.; Paweł Zakrzewski, ‘Definicja przysłowia w wybranych opracowaniach francuskich, niemieckich i polskich oraz próba konfrontatywnej analizy problemu’ [Definition of proverb in selected French, German and Polish papers and an attempt of contrastive analysis of the issue], *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Linguistica*, No. 42, 2002, pp. 3–18.

6 Norrick, ‘Subject Area, Terminology...’, p. 14.

7 Furniss, *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture...*, p. 70.

8 Norrick, ‘Subject Area, Terminology...’, pp. 6–27.

9 Vida Jesenšek, ‘Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects of Proverbs,’ in *Introduction to Paremiology: A Comprehensive Guide to Proverb Studies*, Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Varga (eds)..., pp. 137–161.

10 Teun Adrianus van Dijk, *Text and Context; Explorations in the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse*, London – New York: Longman, 1992 [1977], pp. 232–233.

proverbs in other languages – is a textual unit, a minimal text complete in itself (a text that can form a complete utterance on its own)¹¹ often incorporated into a longer text as a ready-made set phrase, a quotation.¹² Proverbs in many aspects resemble a literary (poetic) mini-text that carries context-independent meaning.¹³ *Karìn m̀aganã* has an artistic and poetic dimension which is realised by the means of rhythm, rhyme, words play,¹⁴ e.g.

- (1) *Dũtsẽ cikin ruwã bâ ruwa-nsà dà rãnã*¹⁵
stone.M in water PTCL.NEG issue-3SG.M.POSS PTCL sun

lit. '[The heat of] the sun is not an issue for a stone in the water'
'The one whose situation is good does not care about anyone else'

and alliteration, e.g.

- (2) *Bakì-n bũnũ ɓātà bàibayã*
black-GEN thatch spoil thatched_cover

lit. 'Old thatch destroys the roof'
'A black sheep can destroy the family.'¹⁶

Usually a proverb has the form of a single sentence or an equivalent syntactic formation with an internally balanced bipartite structure (elements of which are sometimes labelled as "topic" and "comment"),¹⁷ e.g.

- (3) *Kõmẽ nĩsa-n dãjĩ | dà gārĩ gãba-nsà*
any distance-GEN bush.M | there_is city in_front_of-3SG.M.POSS

lit. 'No matter how extensive the forest | there is a town at the end of it.'¹⁸

11 Norrick, 'Subject Area, Terminology...', pp. 7–8.

12 Anna Konstantinova, 'Proverbs in Mass Media,' in *Introduction to Paremiology: A Comprehensive Guide to Proverb Studies*, Hrisztova-Gotthardt, Varga (eds)..., p. 278.

13 Grzegorz Szpila, 'Przysłowie – semantyka tekstu jednozdaniowego' [The proverb – semantics of a single-sentence text], *Język polski*, Vol. 79, No. 5, 1999, p. 371.

14 Furniss, *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture...*, pp. 71–72; Anthony Hamilton Millard Kirk-Greene, *Hausa ba dabo ba ne* [Hausa is not Black Magic], Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1966, pp. xi–xiii; Piłaszewicz, *Historia literatur...*, pp. 34–36.

15 Each underlined token of *ruwã* has a different denotation. First carries a meaning of 'water,' the second one 'issue.'

16 Cf. Paul Newman, *A Hausa-English Dictionary*, Newhaven and London: Yale University Press, 2007, p. 24.

17 Alan Dundes, 'On the Structure of the Proverb,' *Proverbium*, No. 25, 1975, pp. 963–965; Katarzyna Kłosińska, *Słownik przysłów. Przysłownik* [Dictionary of Proverbs. Proverbary], Poznań: Publicat, 2011, pp. 10–11; Tae-Sang Jang, 'Aspects of Poetic Balance and Cohesion in Hausa Proverbs,' *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2, 2002, pp. 215–236; Jang, 'A Poetic Structure...', pp. 83–115.

18 Furniss, *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture...*, p. 72.

Some proverbs are elliptic (in most of the cases *nē/cē* copula is omitted), e.g.

- (4) *Kwàdāyī mabūdi-n wàhalà [nē]*¹⁹
 greed.M key -GEN trouble [COP.M]

‘Greed [is] a key to trouble’.

Karìn màganà can also have form of a complex sentence, e.g.

- (5) *Kōwā ya yi sàmmakō*
yà hūtà dà- rānā
 everybody.M 3SG.M.CPL.REL do to_start_early_in_the_morning
 3SG.M.SBJV relax during_sunny_time

‘He who starts [work] early will relax during the day [away from the sun that will be severely heating]’

or have form of a rhetorical question, e.g.

- (6) *Ìnā àmfàni-n kyāu-n dākì bā kōfà?*
 where usefulness-GEN beauty-GEN hut without entrance

‘What is the benefit of a hut’s beauty [if it does] not have an entrance?’

They might as well be quoted in the form of a question and the answer to it, e.g.

- (7) *Mè kumā akè jirā? Bāgwārī yà yi tōshī.*
 what PTCL IMPRS.CONT.REL wait Gwari_man 2SG.M.SBJV do present

‘Thus, what are you waiting for? For a Gwari man to bring a present [for a girl].’

Karìn màganà just like its counterparts in other languages is constructed using function expressions that in Hausa cover, e.g. *abin dà* ‘the thing which,’ *ìdan* ‘if,’ *in ji* ‘he said’ and explicit universal quantifiers²⁰ such as *kōwā* ‘everybody,’ *kōmē* ‘everything’ to name but a few.²¹

It is reported that “[s]peakers generally set proverbs off from the surrounding discourse in various ways.”²² Hausa proverbs for that matter (similarly to their counterparts in other languages²³) are often bracketed by the means of framing devices such as: *Hàusàwā dai nà cēwā...* ‘Hausas, they are saying...,’ *Hàusàwā sun cē...* ‘Hausas say...,’ *hàkīkà...* ‘truly...’.²⁴

19 The omitted element is given in square brackets.

20 Jesenšek, ‘Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects...,’ p. 145.

21 Kirk-Greene, *Hausa ba dabo ba ne*, p. xii; Piłaszewicz, *Historia literatur...*, p. 34.

22 Norrick, ‘Subject Area, Terminology...,’ p. 24.

23 Norrick, ‘Subject Area, Terminology...,’ pp. 23–24.

24 These examples were extracted from articles published in Hausa newspapers (Aliyu Umar,

Karɪn m̀agaǹa is a traditional cultural expression that links together a concise content and an expressive message. It has didactic and educational potential.²⁵ Proverbs encapsulate Hausa folk philosophy and moral code.²⁶ Similarly to proverbs in other languages, Hausa paremias “encode social knowledge in its popular variant”²⁷ and consist of “a medium for the expression of commonly held views and wisdom.”²⁸ The main property of their semantics is a two-grade meaning²⁹ which requires the receiver to interpret the proverb. Clever use of this property is reckoned in Hausa culture as a sign of intelligence and knowledge of rhetorical figures use. This skill is called *azancɪ* ‘eloquence’.³⁰

Particular proverbs can refer to folk tales, stories, fables and intentionally recall their contents and plots in discourse.³¹ Proverbs have their own context-neutral meanings but their interpretation can differ depending on the context of usage (linguistic and non-linguistic). Only the account of all contexts could be considered a finite comprehensive explanation of the meaning of a proverb.³² Some Hausa proverbs convey a universal message that can be found also in proverbs of other languages and thus, it is possible to identify semantic and pragmatic equivalents of such Hausa proverbs in other languages,³³ e.g.

- (8) *Rig̀akafi t̄a fi m̀agaǹi*
prevention.F 3SG.F.CPL exceed cure

The above ought to be translated almost word by word into English as a proverb ‘prevention is better than cure,’ and consequently into Polish as:

- (9) *Lepiej zapobiegać niż leczyć.*
better to_prevent than to_cure

“Yan kinibibin siyasa kun yi sake, ɗan zaki ya girma’ [Political barrators, you have changed, a lion’s cub has grown], *Albishir*, No. 29, 25–31 January 2019, p. 16.; Sharafaddeen S. Umar, ‘Aski ya zo gaban goshi’ [It’s within an ace of completion], *Leadership A Yau*, 15 February 2019, p. 5.; Mohammed Yaba, ‘Zaɓen 2019: Ya kamata mu dage da addu’a – Sheikh Bala Lau’ [Elections 2019: We have to pray more – Sheikh Bala Lau], *Aminiya*, 1–7 February 2019, p. 9).

25 Baldi, ‘Proverbs as an Educational Factor...,’ pp. 249–265; Jang, ‘A Poetic Structure...,’ p. 83.

26 Piłaszewicz, *Historia literatur...*, p. 29.

27 Jerzy Barmiński, *Językowe podstawy obrazu świata* [Linguistic foundations of the View of the World], Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 1977 [2012], p. 160.

28 Jang, ‘A Poetic Structure...,’ p. 83.

29 Kłosińska, *Słownik przysłów...*, p. 10.

30 Furniss, *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture...*, p. 70.

31 Piłaszewicz, *Historia literatur...*, pp. 33–34.

32 Szpila, ‘Przysłowie...,’ pp. 371–372.

33 Patryk Zając, ‘O przekazie uniwersalnym tekstów kultury na podstawie przysłów w języku hausa i polskim’ [Universal message of culture texts. Example of Hausa and Polish proverbs], *Afryka*, No. 47, 2018, pp. 11–27.

On the other hand, Hausa proverbs have their own unique imagery and represent the values of a specific culture, thus operating within its own Linguistic View of the World.³⁴ Due to this, it is often not possible to translate them literally into other languages in a sufficiently understandable way. That is to say, transferring all semantic content into the target language without adding comments (in the footnote) by the translator.³⁵

In contrast to the situation of many European nations the usage of proverbs is still embedded in Hausa society.³⁶ Proverbs are part of contemporary Hausa popular culture and are commonly appreciated when uttered by poets, writers, singers, and also politicians. Moreover, proverbs used in literature are a canonical part of Hausa literary tradition. It is an indicator of its value and signals the erudition of the author.³⁷ Therefore, *karin màgana* as a socio-linguistic phenomena is not only the subject of discussion among the linguists, folklorists and other scholars.

“It would not be an overestimation to say that newspaper journalists are keen on applying proverbs in their writings.”³⁸ Hausa journalists in particular specialise in using proverbs. Below I present a reflection on *karin màgana*'s usage found in a regular Hausa newspaper *Albishir*³⁹:

*Masu nazari kan adabin Hausa sun bayyana cewa, karin magana na nufin takaita labari, ma'ana idan labari ya yi tsawo kuma zai amfani jama'a, sai a kawo karin magana domin a takaita shi kowa ya amfana.*⁴⁰

“Researchers in Hausa literature explain that the purpose of a proverb is to shorten a message. It means [that] if a message is long but the society could benefit from it, [it is ought to] just use a proverb [so it is] shortened. And then everybody will benefit from it.”

34 Barmiński, *Językowe podstawy...*, p. 160.

35 Various techniques of Hausa proverbs translation into English and their challenges can be found in: Auwal Amba Ibrahim, *An assessment of the Problems and Prospects of Translating Hausa Proverbs into English*, unpublished MA Thesis, Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University, 2011. The techniques he proposed correspond to idioms translation methods that can be found in general translational works such as a study referring mainly to examples from English and Polish by Krzysztof Hejwowski (ed.), ‘Tłumaczenie idiomów’ [Translating Idioms], in *Iluzja przekładu. Przekładoznawstwo w ujęciu konstruktywnym*, K. Hejwowski (ed.), Katowice: Śląsk, 2015, pp. 245–274.

36 Baldi, ‘Body parts...’, pp. 7–8; Jang, ‘A Poetic Structure...’, pp. 83–84.

37 Piłaszewicz, *Historia literatur...*, pp. 28–29.

38 Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...’, p. 290.

39 Not only Nigerian journalists are willing to share their views on the role of proverbs. Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...’, pp. 291–292 provided similar examples from English-language newspapers.

40 Umar, ‘Yan kinibibin siyasa...’, p. 16.

The usage of proverbs is a prominent feature of written media discourse and press language in particular.⁴¹ This phenomenon was spotted by researchers in Hausa at least 20 years ago.⁴² Hausa press is a written medium which shapes political discourse. A written record of the public political debate in Nigeria consists of salient data for Political Discourse Analysis⁴³ – an independent offspring of Critical Discourse Analysis⁴⁴ – that covers interactions and confrontations among participants in a political event.

Discourse is a “vague” term defined in various ways. To put it in a nutshell, *discourse* is “a message that comes into being in a context.”⁴⁵ “Discourse covers [...] the whole act of communication therefore, both a specified verbalisation (a text) as well as non-linguistic factors that accompany it, i.e. most importantly, a specified situation of use and its participants.”⁴⁶

According to Fairclough, there are at least three common ways of understanding *discourse*.⁴⁷ In the current article I will use the term *discourse* mostly in the sense of *political discourse*. Therefore, I will define it as “the language associated with a particular social field or practice” due to the fact that the texts that are analysed share a topic (the socio-semantic domain of *politics*). However, my data consist of samples of press articles that contribute also to *written media discourse*. *Media discourse* in turn, is “public, manufactured, on-record” and consists of “interactions that take place through a broadcast platform, whether spoken or written, in which the discourse is oriented to a non-present reader, listener or viewer.”⁴⁸ This allows us to understand *media discourse* in accordance with the second definition of *discourse* given by Fairclough: “meaning-making as an element of the social process.”⁴⁹

Almost every analysis of *media discourse* must deal in fact with many overlapping discourses at the same time.⁵⁰ Proverbs are traditional expressions

41 Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...,’ pp. 277, 291.

42 Jang, ‘A Poetic Structure...,’ p. 84.

43 Teun Adrianus van Dijk, ‘What is Political Discourse Analysis,’ *Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, No.11, 1997, pp. 11–52.

44 Norman Fairclough, *Critical discourse analysis* (Second Edition), London: Longman, 2010.

45 All translations of non-English texts are done by the author. Maciej Czerwiński, ‘Semiotyczna analiza dyskursu’ [Semiotic discourse analysis], in *Jak analizować dyskurs? Perspektywy dydaktyczne*, W. Czachur, A. Kulczyńska and Ł. Kumięga (eds), Kraków: Universitas, 2016, p. 43.

46 Anna Duszak, *Tekst, dyskurs, komunikacja międzykulturowa* [Text, Discourse, Intercultural Communication], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1998, p. 19.

47 Norman Fairclough, ‘Critical Discourse Analysis,’ in *The Rutledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, J. P. Gee and M. Handford (eds), London and New York: Routledge, 2012, p. 11.

48 Anne O’Keeffe, ‘Media and discourse analysis,’ in *The Rutledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Gee, Handford (eds)..., p. 441.

49 Fairclough, ‘Critical discourse...,’ p. 11.

50 Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...,’ p. 276.

which contribute to contemporary Hausa popular culture. “In modern mass media the proverb proves to be a tool of choice for conveying different attitudes and views.”⁵¹ I will demonstrate that Hausa proverbs in the press relate to non-linguistic events and discourse participants use them to comment on and influence political reality. Referring to van Dijk’s view, I state that what makes such opinions a part of political discourse is their public nature.⁵² Therefore, they are contributing to both *media* and *political discourse* interpreted as “a way of constructing aspects of the world associated with a particular social perspective.”⁵³

1.1. Aim and Goals

The aim of the current article is to demonstrate various ways of using Hausa proverbs in political discourse. The analysis takes into account both linguistic and non-linguistic factors such as context, intentions of the speaker and intended interpretation of the recipient. A particular goal is to approach the question of how traditional cultural expressions such as proverbs are used to construct a given narration in press articles, i.e. I attempt to say what propositions do proverbs express by the means of updating their meanings in the discourse. Another goal is to indicate which textual and pragmatic functions do these proverbs serve.

1.2. Source Data and Methodology

The research main focus is on functions of Hausa proverbs in political discourse or in other words on how these cultural expressions are used in current popular debate. The qualitative analysis of Hausa proverbs used in political discourse will be conducted by the means of interpretation consisting of analysis of the linguistic data. The scope of the research covers contemporary Hausa popular culture, that is written political discourse in the sense of texts related to each other thematically. The analysis will focus on traditional cultural expressions of proverbs, which are structures considered to be relevant because of the frequency of their appearance and because they are different from standard forms.⁵⁴ Proverbs are “highly noticeable, because they are salient in context, frequently foregrounded, easily remembered, and

51 Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...,’ p. 276.

52 Van Dijk, ‘What is political...,’ p. 26.

53 Fairclough, ‘Critical discourse...,’ p. 11.

54 See methods of discourse interpretation in: Urszula Topczewska, ‘Interpretacja jako metoda analizy dyskursu’ [Interpretation as a method of discourse analysis], in *Wybrane zagadnienia lingwistyki tekstu, analizy dyskursu i komunikacji międzykulturowej – In memoriam Profesor Anny Duszak (1950–2015)*, U. Okulska, U. Topczewska and A. Jopek-Bosiacka (eds), Warszawa: Instytut Lingwistyki Stosowanej UW, 2018, pp. 181–184, 184.

so they can be varied and serve as templates but still remain recognisable.⁵⁵ They can be distinguished on the basis of formal properties such as, e.g. fixed recognisable syntactic structures⁵⁶ covered in Hausa by, e.g. *yā fi...* ‘it is better...’; *indā...nan...* ‘where...there...’ et al.⁵⁷ On top of this, the proverbs’ lexis is full of words encoding culture-specific notions (known also as culture key words or culturems), e.g. *ruwā* ‘water, rain,’ *Allāh* ‘God,’ *kūrā* ‘hyena.’⁵⁸

The source data is limited but representative and covers selected press articles published within a period of one month (February 2019) in popular Hausa-language Nigerian newspapers commenting on politics. February 2019 was the time of a boisterous general election campaign in Nigeria⁵⁹ and thus the main topic in political debate. The collection of newspapers used in the research covers such titles as: *Leadership A Yau* (5 issues were analysed), *Aminya* (4 issues), *Albishir* (4 issues), *al-Mizan* (2 issues) and *al-Fiḡi*⁶⁰ (4 issues). The last one is a newspaper published only in *àjàmi* script in which

55 Norrick, ‘Subject Area, Terminology...,’ p. 24.

56 Norrick, ‘Subject Area, Terminology...,’ pp. 21–22.

57 Furniss, *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture...*, p. 71; Piłaszewicz, *Historia literatur...*, p. 34.

58 Zajac, ‘O przekazie uniwersalnym...,’ p. 15; Patryk Zajac, ‘Słowa-klucze kultury w przysłowiaach hausa’ [Culture key words in Hausa proverbs], *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, Vols. 265–266, No. 1–2, 2018, pp. 155–181.

59 There were 73 candidates running for president. Gen. Muhamadu Buhari representing the ruling party *All People’s Congress* was re-elected with 56% of votes. His main opponent, a candidate of opposing *People’s Democratic Party*, Abubakar Atiku got 41% of the votes (Independent National Electoral Commission, *Presidential Election 23rd February 2019. Declaration Of Results*, February 2019, <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-GE-PRESIDENTIAL-ELECTION-RESULTS.pdf> (accessed 6 May 2020); ‘Presidential Election Results,’ *Stears*, 2019, <https://nigeriaelections.stearsng.com> (accessed 6 May 2020). The elections were in general evaluated “positive” and called “democratic” by foreign observation missions. However some critical remarks were included in the reports (i.a. African Union Election Observation Mission (Aueom) to The Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Presidential and National Assembly Elections*, 23 February 2019, <https://www.eisa.org.za/pdf/nig2019au.pdf> (accessed 26 April 2019); Ecowas Commission Nigeria 2019, *General Elections. Preliminary Declaration*, <https://www.eisa.org.za/pdf/nig2019ecowas.pdf> (accessed 26 April 2019). The elections were postponed last minute due to numerous technical and logistical obstacles which occurred during their organisation (Rotimi Oyekanmi, ‘Decision To Re-Schedule General Elections Painful But Necessary, Says INEC Chairman,’ *INEC News*, 17 February 2019, <https://inecnews.com/decision-to-re-schedule-general-elections-painful-but-necessary-says-inec-chairman/> (accessed 6 May 2020). Moreover, extending time for voting was needed in some places. Media reported local outbreaks of violence (relatively small for Nigeria) that were related to the election (Abiose Adelaja Adams, ‘Situation Room: 16 were killed on election day violence,’ *The Cable*, 24 February 2019, <https://www.thecable.ng/situation-room-16-were-killed-on-election-day-violence> (accessed 27 April 2019).

60 For Arabic I use scientific transcription.

I did not spot the proverbs used.⁶¹ I performed identification and recognition of proverbs in texts using observant reading methods with an intention to find proverbs. Paremias spotted by the use of my knowledge of Hausa proverbs and their semantic and syntactic properties were verified as such in Hausa proverb collections written by native speakers,⁶² those providing English translations⁶³ and dictionaries.⁶⁴

“Proverbs are text units – we do not construct sentences using them because they are already sentences themselves, minimal texts. They appear in utterances in the form of quotations, ready-made texts in a text...”⁶⁵ In this article the Hausa proverbs are interpreted as speech acts within another speech act, that is a press text. They are an example of the “circulation of the utterance in communication” which is a salient phenomena in respect to discourse analysis.⁶⁶ Hence, proverbs in media discourse can be considered quotations of *folk speech*.⁶⁷ This type of speech is vigorous and commonly understandable in African societies. For this reason in Hausa political discourse the aforementioned phenomena occurs frequently and political affairs are often commented on by the means of the traditional, mainly pre-industrial imagery encoded in proverbs.

As stated earlier, while analysing linguistic data we are almost never dealing with one discourse but rather with many overlapping discourses. A very frequent “companion” of political discourse is media discourse in which proverbs “help to focus the attention of the audience on the information necessary to interpret the meaning of the events and, thus, deduce the message.”⁶⁸ The “message” here is roughly the same as the non-propositional part of a proverb’s meaning

61 I suppose the lack of proverbs in these particular issues is accidental or results from the fact I simply did not spot them (because of my insufficient search and recognition skills).

62 Aliyu Muhammad ‘Danhausa, *Hausa mai dubun hikima* [One thousand Hausa wisdoms], Malumfashi, Katsina State: Century Research and Publishing Ltd., 2012; Bello Muhammad ‘Danyaya, *Karin maganar Hausa* [Hausa proverbs], Sokoto: Makarantar Hausa, 2007; *Karin magana. ‘Iya magana ma da ranarsa!’* [Hausa proverbs. Knowing how to speak out brings luck!], (no author), Zaria: Northern Nigerian Publishing Company, 1950; Yusufu Yunusa, *Hausa a dunkule na daya* [Hausa in a nutshell. Vol I], Kano: Government Printer, 1977.

63 Among many works I used the most Kirk-Greene’s *Hausa ba dabo ba ne*.

64 Roy Clive Abraham, *Dictionary of the Hausa Language*, London: University of London Press, 1962; George Percy Bargery, *A Hausa-English Dictionary and English-Hausa Vocabulary*, London: Oxford University Press, 1934.

65 Kłosińska, *Słownik przysłów...*, pp. 10–11.

66 Anna Dutka-Mańkowska, ‘Mowa przytoczona w analizie dyskursu – propozycje dydaktyczne dla II etapu studiów’ [Quoted speech in discourse analysis – didactic proposals for the 2nd stage of studies], in *Jak analizować dyskurs? Perspektywy dydaktyczne*, Waldemar Czachur, Agnieszka Kulczyńska and Łukasz Kumięga (eds), Kraków: Universitas, 2016, p. 62.

67 Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...’, p. 278.

68 Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...’, p. 288.

which can be analysed as a type of signal called a Pragmatic Marker.⁶⁹ In this approach proverbs are *pragmatic idioms*, markers that convey basic message with “no plausible inferential path leading from literal, direct meaning to the accepted basic pragmatic signal.”⁷⁰

Proverbs while serving as Pragmatic Markers carry representational meaning, i.e. “they contribute conceptual information over and above that of the propositional meaning [of the utterance]”⁷¹ in contrast to Discourse Markers which carry only procedural meaning that provides cues on how the utterance should be interpreted.⁷² When analysing *karin m̀aganà* in political discourse I will refer to its propositional (literal) and representational (pragmatic) meaning (i.e. the message).

2. The Analysis of Hausa Proverbs Use in Political Discourse

The following analysis will demonstrate the variety of Hausa proverbs functioning in political discourse. The interpretative methodological approach applied in this paper allows us to observe that a proverb usually serves multiple functions at the same time, however some of them dominate over others.⁷³ For clarity of elaboration I will demonstrate the examples in two groups: in section 2.1. I will discuss proverbs with a dominant textual function and in the next section 2.2. I will deal with those with a dominant pragmatic function.

2.1. Textual Functions of Hausa Proverbs

According to Norrick, “proverbs occur in prominent discourse positions”⁷⁴ in which they serve evaluation functions. Proverbs play a salient role in structuring and organising the text, especially in journalistic opinion-based texts. This process is related to the manner in which proverbs are positioned. They can be used at the beginning, at the end of a text or its segment or as an element of their frame. They can serve as titles, subtitles, headlines and summaries.⁷⁵

Until recently there were no works devoted to African proverbs’ use in discourse. This has changed due to a Nigerian language example. Ehineni presented “A discourse-structural analysis of Yorùbá proverbs in interaction.”⁷⁶

69 Bruce Fraser, ‘Pragmatic Markers,’ *Pragmatics*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1996, pp. 167–168.

70 Fraser, ‘Pragmatic...,’ p. 174.

71 Fraser, ‘Pragmatic...,’ p. 171.

72 Fraser, ‘Pragmatic...,’ p. 186.

73 Jesenšek, ‘Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects...,’ p. 152.

74 Norrick, ‘Subject Area, Terminology...,’ p. 23.

75 Jesenšek, ‘Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects...,’ pp. 153–156; Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...,’ p. 286.

76 Taiwo Oluwaseun Ehineni, ‘A Discourse-Structural Analysis of Yorùbá Proverbs in Interaction,’ *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2016, pp. 71–83.

Jang conducted the first (although very brief) Critical Discourse Analysis of Hausa proverb use in a newspaper text (as a digression in a paper on other issues). His main conclusions were that *karin maganã* serves to convey hidden messages and how journalists frame described events to be interpreted by the reader in a certain way or ways. When it comes to textual functions, he demonstrated that in journalistic texts, paremias usually appear at the beginning or as a part of the closing remarks.⁷⁷

2.1.1. Proverbial Titles

The title (headline) is “a type of magnet for the receiver, a guide that brings the main idea of the text to the daylight.”⁷⁸ The usage of proverbs as titles and headlines of media texts is a common practice with a long tradition as they are efficient tools to fulfill the main tasks of attention grabbing, conveying a meaning, or summarising the subsequent text.⁷⁹ Moreover, proverbs as headlines of media texts perform attention-directing pragmatic-stylistic functions.⁸⁰ Formal features of Hausa proverbs (such as shortness, rhythm and rhyme, bi-partial structure, fixed figurative (hidden) meaning that might be interpreted differently depending on linguistic and non-linguistic context) make them good material for press titles (headlines), which also perform symbolic functions and due to this fact require the reader to possess a set of cultural competences to decode them.⁸¹ Proverbs as press titles perform an endoforic function when they refer to the content of the same text. However, proverbs have their foundations in experience and thus are anchored in extra-linguistic reality. Thus, proverbial titles are often egzoforic i.e. refer to other texts, typically folkloristic such as fables (*tãtsũniyõyĩ*) and stories (*lãbãřai*)⁸² and to the situations known to the reader from extra-linguistic reality. Titles moderate the way a text is received (they have contextualisational and macrotextual functions).⁸³

In *Leadership A Yau* a standard form of proverb was used as a title of the article about general elections that were about to be held the next day⁸⁴:

77 Jang, ‘A Poetic Structure...’, pp. 84–86.

78 Marta Wójcicka, ‘O tytule tekstu z perspektywy semiotyki’ [Text title in the semiotic perspective], in *Wybrane zagadnienia lingwistyki tekstu, analizy dyskursu i komunikacji międzykulturowej – In memoriam Profesor Anny Duszak (1950-2015)*, Okulska, Topczewska and Jopek-Bosiacka (eds)..., pp. 152.

79 Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...’, pp. 286–287.

80 Jesenšek, ‘Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects...’, p. 154.

81 Wójcicka, ‘O tytule tekstu...’, p. 170.

82 Piłaszewicz, *Historia literatur...*, pp. 33–34.

83 Wójcicka, ‘O tytule tekstu...’, pp. 150–151, pp. 165–168.

84 Umar, ‘Aski ya zo...’, p. 1.

makes the author of the letter “feel safe” as he relies on the common knowledge that is shared with its recipients.⁹³ Dictum (11) consists of a symbol used as a hint that there is a hidden reason for suspending judge Walter Onnoghen as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria by the president Muhammadu Buhari just before the general elections. It was termed a political act by a part of public opinion due to the fact that the Chief Justice was the official in the position to state the validity of elections.

2.1.2. Proverbial Summaries

An important function of proverbs in press articles is summarising the text contents and thesis. Usually such proverbs are used at the end of a text. It is not uncommon to see even two paremias in a row used to express the main points of the media text. Such a phenomenon is known in paremiology as *proverb clustering*, e.g. in article “Aski ya zo gaban goshi” [It’s within an ace of completion]:

Hausawa dai na cewa (12) rana ba ta karya sai dai uwar dīya ta jī kunya, haka ma (13) ba a san maci tuwo ba sai miya ta kare, zaben 2019 ya riga ya zo, makomar shugabancin kasar nan tana a hannun ‘yan Nijeriya wadanda za su yi alkalanɓi a akwatunan zabe kan ‘yan siyasar da suke muradin su shugabance su...⁹⁴

“As for Hausas, they say: (12) **occasions arrive but people are dilatory** and also: (13) **it takes a long time to know a person’s character**. The 2019 elections have already come and the future of the country’s leadership is in the hands of Nigerians who will chose the politicians they want to govern them.”

(12) *Rānā bā- tā̄ karyā sai dai uwa-ř̄ dīyā tā̄ jī kunyā̄*
 day 3SG.F.CONT.NEG lie PTCL PTCL mother-GEN girl 3SG.F.CPL feel
 sense_of_propriety

lit. ‘Day [of the wedding] is not a lie as long as the girl’s mother feels appropriate [about it]’

‘Occasions arrive but people are dilatory.’⁹⁵

(13) *Bā- à̄ san macī tuwō̄ ba sai miyā̄ tā̄ kārē̄*
 IMPERS.CPL.NEG know-DO eater tuwō̄ PTCL.NEG PTCL miyā̄.F 3SG.F.CPL
 be_finished

93 Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...’, p. 280.

94 Umar, ‘Aski ya zo...’, p. 5.

95 Abraham, *Dictionary...*, p. 721; Yunusa, *Hausa a dunkule...*, p. 41.

lit. 'One does not [truly] know a *tuwō* eater until [all] the *miyā* is finished'⁹⁶

'It takes a long time to know a person's character.'⁹⁷

The thesis of the exemplary article is encoded in the proverbs and can be defined as follows: it is not possible to say whether the candidates who are going to be elected will serve the country as they had promised. This is yet to be found out.

2.2. Pragmatic Functions of Hausa Proverbs

Hausa proverbs have multiple pragmatic functions that vary depending on the situational context of their use. First of all, like proverbs in other languages of the world, they serve to make one's speech (spoken or written) more attractive for the receivers. Secondly, proverbs are speech acts that have the illocutionary force of an argument. By the virtue of this force, Hausa proverbs shape certain dimensions of the extralinguistic reality such as politics.

2.2.1. Proverb as an Element of Political Rhetoric

In classical rhetoric, proverbs are part of *ornatus*, i.e. an 'ornament' of speech as their properties make them suitable to be used as rhetorical figures.⁹⁸ The next two samples consider the person of Olusegun Obasanjo.⁹⁹ From 1999 to 2007 he served as a president of Nigeria on behalf of the *People's Democratic Party*. He failed to get elected for a third term. He still tries to be a figure in Nigerian politics but has been pushed to the margins. Below I provide two examples of creating his negative public image in written political discourse. The negativity is direct and expressed even in press headlines.

The first sample is taken from the article titled '*Yan Nijeriya ku yi watsi da Obasanjo, shi ba komai ba ne* [Nigerians, get rid of Obasanjo, he is nothing]' in which the author points out that the effort of the politician to get elected did not pay off:

*Wai wannan shi [Obasanjo] ne mutumin da yanzu zargin wasu da shirya magudin zabe. Ya manta cewa, (14) abin da ya shuka a zaben 2007 shi ya girba a lokacin da ya sake neman tazarce a karo na uku...*¹⁰⁰

96 *Tuwō* and *miyā* are the most popular meals of Hausa cuisine. They are a symbol of food in general along with a whole set of related cultural norms and beliefs. *Tuwō* is a kind of compact mass made of various types of overcooked cereals, e.g. rice, millet, semolina, sorghum, etc., which can be torn off by hands and formed into balls that are eaten with a thick (often spicy) *miyā* sauce containing vegetables and usually also meat (mutton, goat or beef).

97 Abraham, *Dictionary...*, p. 907; Yunusa, *Hausa a dunkule...*, p. 171.

98 Jesenšek, 'Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects...', p. 138.

99 Here I use standardised Yoruba orthography.

100 Sani Anwar, 'Yan Nijeriya ku yi watsi da Obasanjo, shi ba komai ba ne' [Nigerians, get rid of Obasanjo, he is nothing], *Leadership A Yau*, 1 February 2019, p. 3.

“It happened that he [Obasanjo] is the man who accuses some people of organising rigged elections. He forgot that (14) **what he sowed during 2007 elections, he later reaped** when he was running for a third-term re-election...”

In mass media the creative usage of proverbs (modifying proverbs) is a more frequent phenomenon than the use of standard forms, as newly coined expressions grab the attention of the audience. In the sample above (14) we see a pseudo-proverb. It is an example of modification of a proverb (15) that creates a stylistic effect as well as expresses the journalist’s evaluation of reported events.¹⁰¹

(14) *Ābī-n* *dà* *yā shūkà (à zāben 2007)* *shī*
yā gīrbā
 thing.M-DEF that 3SG.M.CPL SOW (in election-GEN 2007) it.M3SG.M.CPL
 reap

‘What he sowed (in the 2007 elections), this he reaped’

And its unmodified version (standard form):

(15) *Ābī-n* *dà mùtùm* *yā shūkà shī* *zāi gīrbā*
 thing.M-DEF that man 3SG.M.CPL SOW it.M3SG.M.FUT reap

lit. ‘What a man sow, that he will reap’

‘As you sow, so shall you reap.’¹⁰²

Modifications of this proverb were found particularly often in Hausa press articles (see examples (17) and (18)).

The second sample was drawn from the article entitled *Obasanjo dan adawa da Nijeriya* [Obasanjo, the enemy of Nigeria]:¹⁰³

*Aika-aikar da Obasanjo ya tabka, kuma yake ganin ya yi bajinta wadda zai faranta wa Yarabawa da ita, (16) **kwaliya ba ta biya kudīn sabulu ba**, har kwanan gobe ba shi da karbuwa a kasar Yarabawa, domin ya riga ya yi masu laifi babba...*

“Obasanjo did many things as well as he showed his impressive qualities, all to make Yorubas happy, but (16) **It was not worth the effort**. Even in the future he will not be received [well] in Yorubaland because of his earlier wrongdoings against them...”

101 Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...’, pp. 281, 283.

102 Yunusa, *Hausa a dunkule...*, p. 2.

103 Lawal S. Ibrahim, ‘Obasanjo dan adawa da Nijeriya’ [Obasanjo, the enemy of Nigeria], *Albahir*, Nos. 29, 25–31 January 2019, p. 16.

- (16) *Kwalliyā* *bà- tà biyā kudī-n sàbulū ba*
 bathing.F 3SG.F.CPL.NEG pay price-GEN soap PTCL.NEG
 lit. '[The effect of] bathing was not worth the price of soap'
 'It was not worth the effort'.

This proverb is a rhetorical figure with an evaluative pragmatic function, namely to show that Qbasanjo's failure in elections is a consequence of his own acts. In other words: he deserved not to be elected for the third term.

2.2.2. Proverb as an Argument in Political Discourse

Proverbs play a role in forming argumentative structures. This property of paremias was known to classical rhetoric and is still vividly exploited in contemporary media texts. Proverbs express generalising statements, generalised advice, justifications and explanations of actions. Lack of concrete formulating of thought in favour of ambiguous imagery gives them a persuasive power of argument in relevant context.¹⁰⁴

In the following example a proverb is used in written media discourse as a counter-argument to accusations of poor governance against Kano State Governor Abdullahi Ganduje (affiliated to the ruling *All Progressives Congress* party). The article in question was published in *Albishir* – a newspaper with an apparent pro-government orientation:

*...ana so a yi Ganduje adalci, maimakon a rinka sauraron gaza-gani, masu soki-burutsu a cikin gidajen redio tamkar gaskiya suke fada wa jama'a. Hakika, (16) gani ya kori ji gwamna Ganduje ya bai wa marada kunya game da takun tafiyar da mulkinsa, inda ya yi taka-tsantsan wajen aiwatar da aikace-aikacen da ya tsara yin wa jama'ar Kano...*¹⁰⁵

"...they wanted to bring Ganduje to justice but instead they keep listening to meddling people who talk about irrelevant things on the radio as if they were speaking the truth to society. Honestly, (16) **seeing is believing**. Ganduje humiliated those who spread lies about his way of governing when he thoughtfully took actions such as ordering numerous works on behalf of Kano people..."

- (17) *Ganī* *yā kōri jī*
 seeing.M 3SG.M.CPL drive_out hearing
 lit. 'Seeing drives out hearing'
 'Seeing is believing.'¹⁰⁶

104 Jesenšek, 'Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects...', p. 145.

105 Umar, 'Yan kinibibin siyasa...', p. 16.

106 Newman, *A Hausa-English...*, p. 69.

2.2.3. Proverbs as an Element of Political Appeal

In a traditional stylistic approach, proverbs are stylistic devices which serve, i.a. for stylistic colouring (humorous, euphemistic, pejorative etc.)¹⁰⁷ In the following two samples of texts, the proverb (15) *Abin dà mùtùm yā shūkà shī zāi girbā* ‘As you sow, so shall you reap’ and its modifications serve as rhetorical figures in political appeal with a pragmatic function of creating a stylistic effect to strengthen the message and direct it to common people (who are considered to be familiar with folk texts and traditional cultural expressions such as proverbs). In the first article we can see an appeal to citizens of Nigeria to be engaged in the electoral process and pay attention to its fair conduct:

Ashe ke nan abin lamarin ya zama na hannun karba hannun mayarwa ke nan kuma (17) *abin da ka shuka shi za ka girba, domin idan har talaka bai sayar da nasa ikon da kundin tsarin mulki ya ba shi ba, to babu yadda za a yi duk wanda ka za ba bai kulla masa abin a zo a gani ba ya sake zarcewa.*¹⁰⁸

“So that which the situation has become, what goes around comes around and also (17) **as ye sow, so shall ye reap**, because only if the average citizen does not sell his legally enforced strength, which is given to him in the constitution, it will not happen [again] that any of those you have elected have not done anything tangible will not be seeking re-election.”

(18) *Abi-n dà kà shūkà shī zā- kà girbā*
thing.M-DEF that 2SG.M.CPL SOW IT.M 2SG.M.FUT reap

‘As you sow, so shall you reap.’

The journalist used a modified proverb (using second person singular masculine pronouns *kā* and *zā kà*) to achieve intimacy with the audience. He expressed his attitude to the wisdom encoded in the proverb, reinforcing it¹⁰⁹ by the means of the expression *zama na hannun karba hannun mayarwa* ‘what goes around comes around’ and argumentation introduced by the marker *domin* ‘because’ (underlined in the text above).

The second sample is taken from a short report on the Civic Forum 2019 that took place in Lagos.¹¹⁰ Fragments of the speech of Nigerian Nobel Prize

107 Jesenšek, ‘Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects...’, pp. 138, 141, 142.

108 ‘2019: Sai a yanzu ne ikon alkalanci zai dawo hannun talakan Nijeriya!’ [2019: Now the power to judge will be passed to the hands of Nigerian commoners!], *Leadership A Yau*, 12 February 2019, p. 3.

109 Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...’, p. 280.

110 Hunkuyi, Umar A., ‘APC da PDP ba su cancanci sake hawa mulki ba – Soyinka’ [APC and PDP are not suitable for ruling again – Soyinka], *Leadership A Yau*, 1 February 2019, p. 4.

winner, the writer Professor Wole Soyinka, were cited in Hausa translation. We find an emotional appeal for a fair and democratic election process. In his speech, Soyinka used a rhetorical device. He referred to the universal message¹¹¹ of the above mentioned proverb (15) *Ábîn dà mùtùm yā shūkà shī zāi gīrbā* ‘As you sow, so shall you reap’ by applying proverb imagery and allusion to create a pseudo-proverb:¹¹²

Ban yarda da abin da ake kira bata kuri'a ba, wanda hakan ke nufin jefar da kuri'a a cikin kwandon shara, amma ni na yarda da (18) shuka kuri'a, ba zubar da kuri'a ba, shuka kuri'a! Shuka kuri'a yana nufin, hanyar shuka irin da zai nuna ya fito a girba ta hanyar kuri'a, sannu a hankali.

“I do not agree to what is called ‘spoiling the votes’. This would mean to throw the votes into a dust bin. As for me, I agree on (18) **sowing the votes** – not throwing them away – **sowing votes! Sowing votes** is aimed at **sowing** them in a way that will show how to **reap** the votes in calm and peace.”

The standard form of the proverb (15) in this fragment was modified as follows:

(19) *shūkà kùrī' à... à gīrbā*
sowing vote... IMPERS.SBJV reap
‘sowing votes... in order to reap.’

By the means of evoking constituent lexical elements of the proverb Soyinka referred to the topoi (argumentative resource) of *consequence*. Such reference contributes to the argumentative function of proverbs.¹¹³

In political press texts related to the topic of elections, a frequently used proverb is (15) *Ábîn dà mùtùm yā shūkà shī zāi gīrbā* ‘As you sow, so shall you reap’ and its modifications. This paremia includes a conceptual metaphor SUCCESS DEPENDS ON ACTION, which is an extension of the LIFE IS SUCCESS metaphor in Hausa.¹¹⁴ This indicates that in the Hausa View of the World the notion of ELECTIONS (and POLITICS in general) is interpreted in categories of consequence of human actions or in other words it is located in the topoi of *consequence*.¹¹⁵

111 Zajac, ‘O przekazie uniwersalnym...’, p. 15; Zajac, ‘O przekazie uniwersalnym...’, p. 22. Compare also discussion on the examples (8) and (9) in this article.

112 Konstantinova, ‘Proverbs...’, pp. 283, 287.

113 Vide Jesenšek, ‘Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects...’, p. 148.

114 Patryk Zajac, ‘Metaphorical Mapping of LIFE in the Hausa Proverbs with Regard to their Cross-Linguistic Equivalents,’ in *Linguistic evidence of cultural distance. Hausa in cross-cultural Communications*, Nina Pawlak (ed.), Warszawa: Elipsa, 2019, pp. 181–193.

115 Jesenšek, ‘Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects...’, p. 190.

2.2.4. Proverb as a Element of Political Satire

The Shi'a organisation *Hakar Muslumi (Islamic Movement of Nigeria)* publishes a critically oriented newspaper with a significant title *Al-Mizan* (Arabic: 'a weight'). Shi'a Muslims' at times difficult relations with the central Nigerian authorities (among other things, resulting from alleged police mass killings of Shi'a demonstrators as well as imprisonment of their leader Shaikh el-Zakzaky) are reflected in political discourse to which the press saliently contributes, i.a. by posting political satire drawings like this one below:¹¹⁶



The man's whole body is inside a big plastic shopping bag. Only his head is visible. Nevertheless, a characteristic hat and glasses as well as realistic face features allow one to identify the person depicted. It is Nasir El-Rufa'i, the governor of Kaduna State on behalf of the *All Progressives Congress* ruling party. The drawing is a biting commentary to Rufa'i's threat: "all who will meddle in our elections will go home in body bags." His words are cited in Hausa in the right upper corner¹¹⁷ of the illustration and signed as *Gwamnã*

116 'Satire drawing,' *Al-Mizan*, No. 1380, p. 3.

117 In the left upper corner of the satirical drawing we can read a mixed Hausa-Arabic phrase which can be translated as follows: 'May God have mercy on a wise man of backward opinions.' It includes a word play on the Arabic: *hakeem (hakīm)* 'a wise man' and Hausa: *hākimi* 'the head of a town or district' (Newman, *A Hausa-English...*, p. 83), originally a loanword from Arabic.

‘governor.’ The caricaturist’s drawing is explained to the readers by the means of a proverb that was used as a caption to add humorous and ironic stylistic colouring. At the same time, the drawing illustrates its particular context and this leads to accurate interpretation.¹¹⁸ See the example:

(20) *Kōwā ya dēbō dà- zafi, bàki-nsà*
 everybody.M3 SG.M.CPL.REL scoop_out hot.ADV mouth-his

lit. ‘All who scoop [food] hot, [will feel it on] their lips’

‘As you sow, so shall you reap’¹¹⁹ = ‘What you do to the others, will be done to you.’

3. Conclusions

Karìn màganā is a traditional cultural expression, a speech act and a mini-text complete in itself, which can be a part of longer texts. Hausa proverbs have particular formal properties that allow them to be incorporated into other texts in various ways. The propositional contents of proverbs are fixed and can be interpreted without context. In political discourse they are updated and lead to instantiated interpretation (particular ways of understanding them by the readers). Thus, in written media texts belonging to political discourse, proverbs give signals that can be interpreted as Pragmatic Markers. In addition to their propositional (literal) meaning they carry representational meaning which contributes to the conceptual dimension of the utterance. The analysis demonstrated that Hausa proverbs in the press by the virtue of their representational meanings have textual and pragmatic functions. They appear as titles, headlines and summaries, and serve as rhetoric devices, arguments and stylistic figures.

Hausa proverbs are a part of Hausa popular culture. In media texts they are often used creatively and can appear in clusters. They are anchored in extra-linguistic situations and events in the political arena. They are arguments in political discourse, elements of political appeal and political satire. They can also serve to call for electoral honesty (this is a specific manifestation of their didactic function in political discourse).

118 Jesenšek, ‘Pragmatic and Stylistic Aspects...’, pp. 142, 155.

119 Abraham, *Dictionary...*, p. 960.

Tashen Corona: A Recasting of Hausa Traditional Pantomime by the COVID-19 Pandemic

*The artist...responds with total personality to a social environment, which changes all the time. Being a kind of a sensible needle, he records with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions in his changing society.*²

Abstract

In 2020, the global pandemic impacted all areas of life, with the age long Hausa culture of *tashe* performance no exception. This culture is practiced during the Ramadan period and entails young men and women as well as children dressing up in comical costumes and going into houses to entertain inhabitants with melodies and drama and getting a token or grains in return. This cultural performance goes in tandem with contemporary issues in society; therefore modern day *tashe* is full of dramatic content reflecting contemporary events. Thus its coincidence with the COVID 19 pandemic was a recasting of the traditional pantomime to reflect the pandemic.

Keywords: *Tashe*, COVID-19 Pandemic, Hausa Culture, Performance, Ramadan.

Introduction

Tashe is an age-long Hausa culture practiced during the month of Ramadan. It derives its name from the necessity to rouse the Muslim faithful (*tashi* – “to wake up”) before dawn so that food can be taken before the fast begins each day. Even though Ramadan is one of the holiest months of the Islamic calendar, young men and women as well as children find a way to make it fun by wearing colourful comical costumes, fake beards and sometimes rags, moving in groups from house to house to perform drama, dances and songs, all the while soliciting for gifts or money. The performance of *tashe* traditional pantomime starts from the 10th day of Ramadan and runs through to the 20th day of the month, mostly taking place in the evenings after the breaking of the fast. While children (both male and female) carry out their performances in the evenings, moving from house to house, the young men and women most times perform during the day in the market places, which fetches them a lot of money, grains and sometimes goats.

1 Lecturer, Department of English and Linguistics, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State, Nigeria, e-mail: rabiatulawal2006@gmail.com.

2 Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Homecoming*, Lagos: Heinemann, 1982, p. 74.

Definition of Key Concepts:

Tashe: *Tashe* consists of some series of short performances which run through the second ten days of the month of Ramadan. The performance is normally carried out in the evenings and sometimes performed during the day in market places. According to Graham Furniss “*tashe* is the name not for one event but a whole series of mini performances performed mostly by young people moving from house to house enacting a particular scene and very often being rewarded by being given ‘alms’ by the householders so entertained.”³ Considering the fact that *tashe* is a Hausa traditional culture and specifically performed during the period of Ramadan, it can be said it is only in Hausa society and culture that one can witness the existence and practice of such a cultural tradition.

Performance: Performance according to Akporoboro is “a speech act accentuated and rendered alive by various gestures, social convention and the unique occasion in which it is performed.”⁴ Adebayo views performance as a process “in which the artist or work of art is performed to a particular audience to gradually steal their attention into his artistic work, which may go a long way to make open inner emotions and feelings he intends to pass across to the audience.”⁵ Thus, it is a process that focuses on the utilisation of conventional artistic techniques to stage actions for others for the purpose of communication. It is an important form of communication that may have a diversity of cultural manifestation in different societies.

With cognisance of the above definitions of performance, *tashe* is a performance-oriented traditional cultural practise with divergent categories of performers and audience. For the performers, it includes youth and children (both male and female), and for the category of the audience, it includes all people in the community, both the young and the old. Through the enactment of these performances, audiences are entertained as well as the actors making comments on contemporary issues of the community/society. Thus; *tashe* is a traditional oral performance which deploys artistic techniques for the purpose of communication. Another key component of *tashe* is the use of costumes and music accompaniments to enhance the aesthetics of the performance. Some of the costumes used by the performers include but are not limited to using white cotton wool as make-believe beards, the use of oversized gowns,

3 Graham Furniss, *Poetry, Prose and Popular Culture in Hausa*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996, p.122.

4 F.B.O Akporoboro, *Introduction to African Oral Literature*, Lagos: Princeton Publishing Co., 2012, p. 3.

5 Habib Adebayo, *Communication as a Channel of Communication*, Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, 2002, p. 4.

turbans, kettles, walking sticks, over-sized eye glasses, makeup, traditional animal skin praying mats and sacks of clothing or rags. All costumes used by the performers are of importance and significance. Each performer simulates and dresses as the character he/she depicts.

Culture: Culture is seen as a complex whole which includes, knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of the society. Thus, a process by which man builds society and civilisation. According to Nigerian Cultural Policy, culture is defined as “a way of life evolved by a people in their attempts to meet the challenges of living in their environment, which gives order and meaning to their social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and modes of organisation thus distinguishing a people from their neighbours.”⁶

Therefore, the patterns of behaviour and thinking that people living in social groups learn create and share. According to Awuawuer, a peoples’ culture includes their beliefs, rules of behaviour, rituals, language, art, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion and political and economic systems.⁷ From the above definition, *tashe* is a cultural tradition shared by the Hausa people (Muslims) which expresses some of their norms and values. The various arrays of *tashe* performances from different Hausa communities reflect such values and traditions with slight variations.

Ramadan: The month of Ramadan is a month in which Muslims devote themselves to their faith and come closer to Allah by fasting as it is one of the five Pillars of Islam, and also, it forms one of the bases of how Muslims live their lives. It is pertinent to note that during this religious rite, one is expected to rouse before dawn so that food can be taken before the fast begins each day, thus the word “*tashi*” – “to rise” – “*tashe*,” the name of the yearly performed Hausa cultural tradition

COVID-19 Pandemic

According to Ferrer, in December 2019 a series of cases of the diseases were reported, describing patients admitted to hospital with a new disease characterised by pneumonia and respiratory failure caused by a novel corona virus (SARS-COV-2), in the province of Hubei (China). On 11th March, COVID-19 was declared a pandemic at a world press conference. COVID-19

6 *Cultural Policy for Nigeria*, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1988, p. 5.

7 Justin Tijime Awuawuer, ‘Cultural Revitalism For National Peace and Unity: A Critique of Ziky Kofoworola’s *Fatunje: Our Love*,’ in *Book of Proceedings: International Conference on African Literature and Theatre-Cultural Construction and Re-invention for Global Peace Agenda, 1st to 4th April 2010*, E.O. Sunday and C. Bodunde (eds), Abuja: National Commission For Museums and Monuments, 2010, p. 354.

has rapidly affected every facet of human lives⁸. It lead to loss of human life, businesses, disrupted world trade, public health, employment etc. The cultural and creative sectors were also affected, venue based creative sectors were closed (live performances, cinema, festivals etc) due to distancing measures and the cultural content being modified to reflect the economic, social and political changes caused by the devastating effects of the pandemic. Even though the *tashe* tradition is not a venue-based performance, it restricted the movement of the performers.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical concept adopted for this study is the contextual theory of folklore. The theory posits that oral traditions and traditional performances are not conceived as a material but rather a rich convergence of performance, situation, setting, people and the society. The proponents of this theory (Alan Dundes and Dan Ben Amos et al) believe that the concept does not apply only to the text but to an event in time which is a cultural tradition being performed or communicated, hence the text is only part of the event. In the case of this study, *tashe* performances performed during the COVID-19 pandemic were carried out during the month of Ramadan (in its context, cultural, sociological, behavioural and linguistic environment) with the exception that all performance reflected the socio-economic and political changes caused by the devastating effects of the pandemic.

Historical Background of the Hausa People and the Emergence of *Tashe* as Performance

There are many traditions that trace the origin of the Hausa people. According to Daba, “some historians and geographers claimed that the main streams of tribal migration into present-day Nigeria,”⁹ started from the eleventh century, either from eastern or north-eastern directions. Moreover, the peoples are of hermitic and Negro origin. Daba further asserts that famous and powerful Berber empires of Western Sudan are responsible for the cultural, political and religious revolution in the present Northern States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.¹⁰ As Borno state is noted as the route of entry to Nigeria by the Sudan Berber empiresin about 1000 A.D., there were invasions by Berber races into Hausaland, and they sometimes had to pay tribute to the powerful empires of Songhai and Borno, until the Fulani Conquest of Hausaland. The old Ghana

8 Ricard Ferrer, ‘Covid19 Pandemic: The Greatest Challenge of Critical Care,’ *Med Intensiva*, Vol. 44, No. 6, p. 323.

9 Habib A.Daba, *Danmaraya Jos in Folkloric Perspective*,Kano: Benchmark Publishers Limited, 2006, p. 1.

10 Daba, *Danmaraya Jos in...*,p. 1.

Empire is one of the oldest states in Western Sudan and a representative of Borno, the Hausa states, Ashanti Kingdoms and Dahomey. Also Madingo or Wangara are considered one of the principal tribes in Ghana. Meek further asserts that the Wangara (*Wangarawa*) played an important role in the early political set-up in Katsina, Kano and Zazzau.¹¹

Meek further asserts that, during the rule of Mansa Musa of Mali (1308–31), many Wangara traders and scholars found their way eastwards into the Hausa States. This is thus the reason why different communities in the Northern States of Nigeria trace their origin to Mali missionaries. A group of these Wangara people settled within the wall city of Kano towards the end of the fourteenth century. In about the year 1500 A.D, the then ruler of Zaria was appointed, a Wangara scholar as chief of the Maguzawa district.¹² The tenth century A.D. is the period which many historians consider the starting point of the Hausa community, comprising of various ethnic origins with a common language, Hausa. The materialisation of this community is a result of the mass tribal migration of Arab-Berber tribes from the east and north into the western Sudan. Some of them made their way into a province known as Nigeria today, specifically its northern states. As a result of this migration, the Arab-Berber tribes co-existed with pagan inhabitants who were hunters and gatherers. After a while, these immigrants established themselves as rulers of the indigenous people. With time, the Hausas organised their walled towns into city-states. Hiskett added that it was not until the sixteenth century that that the Hausa reached the level of being an homogenous people.¹³ The story of the Berber hero; Bayajidda, the Queen of Daura; Daurama and their son, Bawo, is a famous Daura tradition often cited as a source of explaining the original formation of the 14 Hausa states, known as *Hausa Bakwai* and *Banza Bakwai* (seven legitimate Hausa states and the seven illegitimate Hausa states).

The exact date of the first emergence of Islam in Hausaland is subject to speculation, according to Daba.¹⁴ But it is apparent that Muslims came to Hausaland from the west relatively more so than from the north, before the middle of fourteenth century. The coming of Islam to the Hausaland has always been associated with Wangara scholars from Mali who penetrated the lands, particularly Kano and Katsina. History has it that the Wangara (*Wangarawa*) came to Kano during the reign of Sarki Yaji, son of Tsamiya (1349–1385), who was said to be a Muslim by the second half of the fourteenth century.

11 Charles K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, London: London Frank Cass and Co, 1971 [1925], p. 64.

12 Meek, *The Northern...*, p. 64.

13 Mervyn Hiskett, *The Sword of the Truth: The Life and Times of Shehu Usman Danfodio*, London: Oxford Press, 1973, p. 4.

14 Daba, *Danmaraya Jos in...*, p. 2.

Sarkin Kano, MMuhammadu Runfa was said to have invited a renowned Muslim cleric, Muhammad Bin Abd al-Karim Al-Maghili, who lived in the late fifteenth century. Crowder posits that Al-Maghili came to Kano with a group of North African Muslims and wrote numerous books on Islamic law for Kano people.¹⁵ Hiskett notes that the coming of Islam affected all Hausa culture and traditions.¹⁶ Therefore, this made it possible for the introduction of *tashe* performance during the holy month of Ramadan by the Hausa people in order to relax and gain pleasure after hours of abstinence from eating and drinking.

According to Umar, *tashe* began as a result of waking people up to eat the pre-dawn food before the commencement of fasting.¹⁷ Because of individual differences as regards slumber, some in the community were assigned to wake others up so as not to miss their pre-dawn food. With time, the *almajirai* amongst them began to solicit for food in loud tones to avoid the pangs of hunger during the day. Subsequently, drummers and singers who are of age (eighteen and above) got involved by singing in order to wake the community up and a token was given to them. But for the young ones, especially the girls, it was not ideal for them to partake in such a tradition because of the time frame. Thus, the young boys and girls began imitating the elder ones after the breaking of fast; consequently, they named the performance *tashe*. Umar further adds that, with time even the older *tashe* performers began performing in the evening, moving from house to house to entertain and educate the community.¹⁸

Karaye adds that, *tashe* started during the reign of Sarkin Kano Bello (1882–1893).¹⁹ The performance began by soliciting money and material wealth by secular singers, moving from house to house of the wealthy in the Hausa community. Another scholar, Alhamdu postulates that *tashe* is a tradition practiced by the Muslim Hausa community and also a tradition that has a relationship with the religion of Islam.²⁰ Besides, the performance of *tashe* differs from one community to the other.

15 J. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder (eds), *History of West Africa*, London: Longman Group, 1976, pp. 191–192.

16 Mervyn Hiskett, *A History of Islamic Verse*, London: University of London Press, 1975, p. 1.

17 M. Umar, *Wassannin Tashe*, Zaria: N.N.P.C, 1981, p. 4.

18 Umar, *Wassannin...*, p. 5.

19 M. Karaye, *Tashe By Male People*, Report on Summer Project, Kano: ABC, A.B.U, 1970, p. 2.

20 Ibrahim D. Alhamdu, *Tashe Mussamman Na Kassar Kano*, Report on Summer Project, Kano: ABC, A.B.U.

Tashen Corona

All cultural, traditional and oral performances are functional in nature, thus some of the functional nature of *tashe* is its socio-economic, political and cultural benefits. First and foremost *tashe* performances entertain their audiences. Young children and young adults are dressed in caricatural costumes, drumming, singing and dancing for the pleasure of their audiences. Furthermore, the practice makes it possible for the performers to earn savings from the proceeds of their performances in preparations for Eid-al-Adha Sallah celebrations. It also makes political and social commentary on societal problems. For instance, most of the performances cited in this study address issues reflecting the socio-political and economic realities of its society. Another major function of the *tashe* is it distracts the community from political and social problems, for instance after the Nigerian civil war, a new performance called *Ngozi Uwar Ojukwu* (Ngozi Mother of Ojukwu) was introduced to make people forget the difficulties they faced during the civil war. Examples of *tashe* which evolved as a commentary on contemporary societal issues include, *Yan Mata a Daina Bilicin* (“Girls Stop Bleaching”) to create awareness to women on the hazardous effect of bleaching the skin, or *Tashen Student Ta Rasa Aikin Yi* (“The Unemployed Student”), to comment on the many jobless youths in society after graduating from school. Other examples of *tashe* include *Jatau Mai Magani* (“Jatau with Medicines”), *Kayi Rawa Malam* (“But you danced, *malam*”), *Dan Dukununu* (“The Unkempt Fellow”), *Mai Kiriniya* (“The Naughty Boy”), *Zan Buge* (“Allow me to Knock/Hit”), *Tashen Zuciyar Maitumma* (“The Fellow with a Heart Made of Rags”), *Tashen Ga Mairama Ga Dauda* (“This is Mairama and Dauda”), *Tsoho da Gemu* (“The Old Man with a Beard”).

On the other hand, *tashe* performances by girls include: *Samodara* (“The Foolish Girl”), *Mai Ciki* (“The Pregnant Woman”), *Matar Malam* (“Mallam’s Wife”), *Iya Duba Duba* (“Iya Look at Me”), *Dalibar Makarantar Boko Tayi Ciki* (“The School Girl is Pregnant”), *Iya Talgen ki Zai Zabai* (“Iya Your Pudding is about to Spill”) and scores of others.

The year of corona pandemic witnessed the emergence of new *tashe* performances to reflect the socio-economic and political situation in Nigeria. For instance, *Kudin Corona* (“Grant for Corona”). During the pandemic, the Nigerian government disbursed a sum of N10 billion naira to Lagos State in order to combat the novel corona virus after other State governors had accused the Federal Government of Nigeria of “abandoning” other States of the federation. One of the State governors proceed to solicit for funding to combat COVID 19 from the Federal government and the federal government tactfully refused the grant but responded with clinical equipment. The governor in

question is accused of misappropriation of funds. The *Kudin Corona* emerged to satirise the governor for entertainment purposes as well as an indictment of corrupt administrators. The central character of “Grant for Corona” is adorned with a *babban riga* (traditional Hausa dress worn by men), cap, a fake beard and lies down on a mat. Other performers flash lights on his face and sing: *Ganduje tashi gari yawaye* (“Ganduje, wake up, its morning”) and he responds *Bana tashi sai an bani kudin/dollar corona* (“I am not waking up until am given my corona grant”). The performers continue singing until a token is given to them.

From another perspective, this performance is an indictment on corrupt government officials in Nigeria, as the character satirised in the performance above is accused of bribery and corruption. The Nigerian image reflected in this performance is that of social decadence and continuing degeneration, which is evident in the political terrain of the nation. Within this performance one foresees the advocacy for immediate revolutionary change in Nigeria in order to stop the vicious circle in which national resources are recklessly appropriated by government officials, who then tax the poor for amenities that are always promised and never provided.



Ganduje tashi gari ya waye
 (“Ganduje, wake up, it’s morning”)

The global pandemic impacted all areas of life, including religion. All religious centres were closed so as to encourage social distancing to reduce the spread of the corona virus. For instance, Muslim congregational prayers were banned and all conventional and religious schools were shut down. For this reason, another performance emerged to reflect this policy, namely *Liman ina zaka ne?* (“Imam, where are you going?”). The central character is adorned with *babban riga*, a turban, eye glasses, fake white beard, sack of clothing and a walking stick. The drummers together with other performers ask the Imam, thus:

‘Yan amshi – Liman ina zaka ne?

Liman – Gari zan bari su Buhari sunci zanbe sun hana sallar Juma’ a.

English translation:

Chorus – Imam, where are you going?

Imam – I am leaving town, because Buhari has won the election and has banned Jummu’at at congregational prayers.

The performers keep singing and dancing until they are given a gift or money. Even though *Liman ina zaka ne?* is short and precise, it is laden with a number of connotations.

One of such connotation is satirising and lampooning the character implied in the performance. The character in question ascended to the presidential seat of Nigeria in 2015 after three failed attempts. Even though the corona pandemic necessitated social distancing and the ban on Muslims from attending congregational prayers, many were aggrieved. They believed that banning the five daily congregational prayers was valid, excluding that of Jummuat

congregational prayers observed once a week. Additionally, it is considered as the most religious day of the week. Hence the statement, *Su Buhari sunci zabe sun hana sallar Jumma’ a*. Therefore, the Imam who leads Jummuat prayers wants to leave town because the Friday congregational prayers have been banned.



Liman ina zaka ne?

(“Imam, where are you going?”)

Another *tashe* performance is *Iya ina zaki da kaya?* (“Iya, where are you going with all your belongings?”). The central character in this case is a small girl dressed in over-flowing gown, with her is her bundle of cloths, mat and a kettle which signifies she is going for an impromptu journey. The performance goes:

Yan amshi – Iya ina zaki da kaya?
Iya – Ganduje ne ya ishe mu!

English translation

Chorus: Iya, where are you going with all your belongings?
Iya: I am leaving because Ganduje is harassing us.

In most Northern States in Nigeria, there is the practice of *almajiri*, an Islamic system of education which is being bastardised. The system entails a child taken to an Islamic scholar to be taught using religious books until he graduates and goes back home to his parents. But with the increase in the poverty level, parents take their wards to *almajiranci* without providing them with all they need. The norm is for the children to roam about (begging) after studies and fending for themselves. Thus, during the corona pandemic, The Kano State government and some few other state governments announced the ban on street begging to curtail the spread of corona virus. Furthermore, the decision was taken to discourage and address the lingering problems of street begging and also an effort to fully consolidate free and compulsory primary and secondary school education in the States. The policy puts in place measures for rounding up any *almajiri* on the street and repatriating them back to his/her State, parents and guardians or face the law. As oral traditions serve the purpose of social commentary, this performed *tashe* satirises the above policy because the *almajiri* system is seen as sacred because it deals with religion.

From another perspective, the performance of *Iya ina zaki da kaya* reflects the policy of selling public properties and land by the State in question, justifying this by saying it is trying to rejuvenate the state’s economy and infrastructural deficit. To the general public, and opposition parties, this is selling public properties to private entities. The State in question is also accused of destabilising small-scale businesses, which use public spaces to operate, and this action meant a lot of street side vendors lost their means of earning a livelihood in the quest to ensure social distancing and decongestion in public spaces to contain the corona virus. Therefore, *Iya* (“Iya”) is tired and is packed into a place where she can be accommodated.



Iya ina zaki da kaya

(“Iya, where are you going with all your belongings?”)

This study will not be complete without discussing modern technology and its influence on *tashe* during the corona pandemic. Generally, modern technology has had a tremendous effect on all traditional oral performances. Modern technology through the print media is able to transform all oral and traditional performances into text, thus being

documentable. Accordingly, there are numerous scholarly works on *tashe* performances in text, hence serving as reference material. Modern technology also provided a means of learning and retaining oral traditions, therefore, one comes across works on *tashe* performance recordings. Examples are the documentaries on *tashe* as aired by Arewa 24 during the month of Ramadan for the pleasure of people who live in Government Reserved Areas where one rarely witnesses live performances of *tashe*.²¹ This also gives the performance a wide audience, rather than confining it to the community. As a result giving it a global popular cultural focus and gaining international fame. All live performances are ephemeral in nature, but with modern technology i.e. videos and recordings, one can watch the performance whenever one wishes, for instance performances during the pandemic were recorded, as a result many were able to witness it in the confines of their homes. Lastly, technology affords new audiences within the globalised world to witness oral traditions of different peoples.

Conclusions

As discussed earlier on, the tradition of *tashe* performance moves from house to house in order to amuse and entertain audiences. The question is: how then was it possible for young children and adults to perform for their audience during the corona pandemic? Most of these children performed in the comfort zone of their homes surrounded by families. Performances were recorded via

21 Satellite Television Station, Kano, Nigeria.

phones and forwarded to the general public for consumption. The tradition of giving out the token was carried out by families and friends. An example of a *tashe* performance which went viral in Kano is the one performed to former Emir of Kano, Khalifa Sanusi Lamido Sanusi by his son. Without technology, *tashe* performances would not have been possible and witnessed by the general public during the corona pandemic, only a few would have witnessed the pantomime in the confines of their homes as performed by their children.

In conclusion, *tashe* performances showcase the talents and potentialities of the key actors performing in this particular Hausa oral performance and at the same time made commentaries on contemporary issues. In 2020, the global pandemic impacted all areas of life with the old age Hausa traditional performance of *tashe* no exception. All performances mirrored issues raised by the pandemic as depicted by *tashe* performers in this study, thus, they were able to recreate and reinvent their art to reflect the scenario. In fact, the pandemic spurred innovation and creativity for the performers. As for the presentation of the performances, all were conducted within the context of its setting, situation and time. Furthermore, all performances were witnessed by many audiences with the aid of technology, as though one had witnessed them live.

From Afrofuturism to Africanfuturism²: Contemporary Expressions within Popular Culture

Abstract

The futuristic representation of the world is an important aspect of understanding contemporary cultural processes, literary and musical trends, and artistic activities, both in Africa and in the African Diaspora. In order to examine effectively the development of the futurist path, I will briefly trace two categories: 'Afrofuturism' and 'Africanfuturism' (as proposed by Nnedi Okorafor), containing elements of science-fiction, speculative fiction, non-Western history, technology, and fantasy. In this article I will discuss how the concept of Afrofuturism has evolved, how techno-utopian visions of the future are created, illustrating terrestrial and cosmic existence, while extracting knowledge about ancestors, mythology and cosmology. Is it a kind of cultural script – based on ephemerality, temporality and imagination – that has been adapted to the conditions of modern popular culture in Sub-Saharan Africa? Or is it an accurate form of crossing time-space boundaries and discourses?

Keywords: African Cultures, Popular Culture, Futurism, Afrofuturism, Nigeria.

Introduction

Afrofuturism, as an intellectual, aesthetic, and philosophical movement, is a genre that includes speculative fiction imagining life and technology, both mystical, metaphorical, and innovative. While primarily critiquing the past and presenting dilemmas and societal issues faced by Africans living in the Diaspora in the context of post-colonialism, racism, and feelings of otherness, the paper turns to technology and science fiction to speculate on possibilities projected into the future. The article serves as an outline of futuristic activity and creativity from the first uncertainly formulated theses in the African Diaspora, to the conscious and in-depth ideas of writers, artists, and musicians, slowly gaining the status of a cultural manifesto, such as the literary works of Nnedi Okorafor, whose achievements will be presented here. The substantive goal of the paper is an attempt to answer the following research questions: how has the concept changed, namely from Afrofuturism to Africanfuturism?; what are the manifestations of both concepts?; what unites this debate on futurism?; does futurism revise or re-examine historical events of the past?; can futurism

1 Assistant Professor in the Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences, e-mail: patrycjakoziel.edu@gmail.com.

2 The term 'Africanfuturism' has an original spelling proposed by Nnedi Okorafor.

be treated as a reservoir of universal experiences and pan-African content? In order to observe how different creators transform their vision of the future for what has been historically, abhorrently dismissed as a passive or impoverished continent, I propose to analyse the development of this idea in a comparative approach.

1. The Notion of Afrofuturism – Theoretical Approaches

The contemporary notion of Afrofuturism, as expressed in global and African popular culture, has been developed in Afro-American thought since the 1960s and 1970s.³ The practices related to the concept have existed for most of the 20th century, as the Afrofuturist creative movement began in the African American context of jazz music and speculative literature.⁴ Some specific roots, defining the genre in the beginning, such as historical fiction, Afrocentricity, and non-Western cosmologies, can be found in the work of William E.B. Du Bois, a writer and sociologist and author of the 1903 books *The Souls of Black Folk*, *The Comet* and *The Princess Steel*. He was most well-known for his non-fiction work and civil rights activism.⁵ Furthermore, several prominent science fiction writers and literary critics such as Samuel R. Delany (author of *Dhalgren* from 1975),⁶ Octavia E. Butler (author of published in 1979 *Kindred*, *Fledging*, *Dawn*, *Parable of the Sower*, *Lilith's Brood* and *Bloodchild* considered one of the primary writers of speculative fiction),⁷ Amiri Baraka (poet and writer, formerly known as Le Roi Jones and Imamu Amear Baraka), Ishmael Reed (author of *Mumbo Jumbo*), or Charles Saunders (author of *Imaro*) have chosen to create the blueprint for Black writers wishing to invent, explore and merge the worlds of science fiction and African American literature. They have been writing within the genre conventions of science fiction and tried to explore fantasy, cosmic realities, space and time travel, a figure of “the Other” – the stranger in a distant land in the context of speculative and futuristic technology, as well as interactions with the supernatural world.

3 ‘Afrofuturism in Popular Culture,’ *TEDx Talks*, 14 September 2012, <https://tedxnairobi.com/talks/afrofuturism-in-popular-culture/> (accessed 12 March 2021); Lisa Yaszek, ‘Afrofuturism, Science Fiction, and the History of the Future,’ *Socialism and Democracy*, Vol. 42, No. 20, 2006, pp. 41–60.

4 See a thought provoking essay about the use of the ‘Afro-’ prefix in the context of African art: Phetogo Tshupo Mahasha, ‘Art Criticism: is the Prefix ‘Afro-’ (as in ‘Afro-Futurism’) Arresting our Imagination and Manifesto Salesmanship?,’ *This is Africa*, 24 July 2013, <https://thisisafrica.me/art-criticism-prefix-afro-afro-futurism-arresting-imagination-manifesto-salesmanship/> (accessed 7 April 2020).

5 William E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, New York: Bantam Classic, 1903.

6 Samuel R. Delany, ‘Racism and Science Fiction,’ in *Dark Matter*, Sheree R. Thomas (ed.), New York: Warner Books, 2000, pp. 383–97.

7 Octavia Butler, ‘Bloodchild,’ in *Bloodchild and Other Stories*, Octavia Butler, New York: Seven Stories Press, 1996, pp. 1–32.

Later, in 1994, the term “Afrofuturism,” as an ideology and critical theory, also called the Black Speculative Arts Movement, was officially coined by Mark Dery, an American author, lecturer and cultural critic, with the publication of the essay *Black to the Future*. *Interviews with Samuel Delany, Greg Tate and Tricia Rose*.⁸ He affirmed a connection between the speculative science fiction universe and the Black experience. While describing the genre, he posed essential questions:

“Speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the context of 20th century technoculture – and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future – might, for want of a better term, be called Afrofuturism. The notion of Afrofuturism gives rise to a troubling antinomy: Can a community whose past has been deliberately rubbed out, and whose energies have subsequently been consumed by the search for legible traces of its history, imagine possible futures? Furthermore, isn’t the unreal estate of the future already owned by the technocrats, futurologists, streamliners, and set designers — white to a man — who have engineered our collective fantasies?”⁹

Although the prefix ‘Afro-’ specified above actually referred to the twentieth-century technoculture and pop culture of African Americans (in a certain context of oppression and marginalisation of communities), and not necessarily Africans, musicians and speculative fiction writers, as well as researchers, they embraced it eagerly. First of all, they spoke prophetically on the subject of an improved future for Africans living in the Diaspora and Sub-Saharan African countries. In 1998, the British-Ghanaian writer and theorist Kodwo Eshun in his book *More Brilliant Than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction*, widely developed the idea based on the notion of future in music of artists such as Sun Ra.¹⁰ Avant-garde, free-jazz musician Sun Ra stars in the Afrofuturist film – *Space is the Place* (1974), for which he wrote and composed the music – highly experimental, electronic, cosmic, transcending space and time and serving as an soundtrack during a long intergalactic journey. African American music pioneered by other important artists such as Herbie

8 Mark Dery, *Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose*, in *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberculture*, Mark Dery (ed.), Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994, pp. 179–222.

9 Dery, *Black to the Future...*, p. 180.

10 Kodwo Eshun, *More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction*, London: Quartet Books, 1999; Kodwo Eshun, ‘Further Considerations on Afrofuturism,’ *CR: The New Centennial Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2, Summer 2003, pp. 287–302.

Hancock, Miles Davis, Parliament Funkadelic, DJ Spooky, were seen as a way of escape and a useful tool to critique the status quo of Black communities.¹¹ As described by Mark Dery:

“Afrofuturism bubbles up from the deepest, darkest wellsprings in the intergalactic big band jazz churned out by Sun Ra’s Omniverse Arkestra, in Parliament-Funkadelic’s Dr. Seuss-ian astrofunk, and in dub reggae, especially the bush doctor’s brew cooked up by Lee «Scratch» Perry.”¹²

Given these circumstances it is unremarkable that for several years, Afrofuturism has become an important area of university research, courses, as well as organisational units, such as The African Speculative Fiction Society¹³. Yet today, the pioneering studies of the Afrofuturist literary form remain *Afrofuturism 2.0: The Rise of Astroblackness*, edited by Reynaldo Anderson and Charles E. Jones, as well as *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora* (an anthology that contains work from some African-American writers, including the aforementioned Samuel R. Delany, Tananarive Due, and Nalo Hopkinson) and *Dark Matter: Reading the Bones* by Sheree Renée Thomas.¹⁴ A similar, in-depth view was proposed by Ytasha Womack, who elaborated on cultural and philosophical exploration and described it as “an intersection of imagination, technology, the future and liberation,”¹⁵ that combines elements of speculative fiction, fantasy, Afrocentricity, magical realism and non-Western beliefs. To be more precise, because of its unique history, Afrofuturism tries to rewrite the world

11 To explore Cosmic Culture mix check here: ‘Cosmic Culture: A Journey into AfroFuturism,’ *AfroCyberPunk*, 30 August 2021, <https://www.afrocypunk.com/blog/cosmic-culture-a-journey-into-afrofuturism/> (accessed 10 May 2021).

12 Dery, *Black to the Future*..., p. 182.

13 Yann-Cédric Agbodan-Aolio, ‘What is Afrofuturism / Qu’est-ce que l’afrofuturisme?’, *The African Speculative Fiction Society*, 2021, <https://www.africansfs.com/resources/what-is-afrofuturism-quest-ce-que-lafrofuturisme> (accessed 12 August 2021).

14 Reynaldo Anderson, Charles E. Jones (eds), *Afrofuturism 2.0: The Rise of Astro-Blackness*, London: Lexington Books, 2016. On the reception of critical works by futurists, see also several useful publications such as: De Witt Douglas Kilgore, ‘Afrofuturism,’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, Rob Latham (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015; Bill Campbell and Edward Austin Hall (eds), *Mothership: Tales from Afrofuturism and Beyond*, College Park: Rosarium, 2013; Sheree R. Thomas (ed.), *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*, New York: Warner Books, 2000.

15 Ytasha L. Womack, *Afrofuturism. The World of Black Sci-fi and Fantasy Culture*, Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2003, p. 9. See more: Ivor W. Hartmann (ed.), *Afro SF: Science Fiction by African Writers*, [place of publication not identified]: Story Time, 2012; Chardine Taylor-Stone, ‘Afrofuturism: Where Space, Pyramids and Politics Collide,’ *The Guardian*, 1 January 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/science/political-science/2014/jan/07/afrofuturism-where-space-pyramids-and-politics-collide> (accessed 11 May 2021); Ruth Mayer, “‘Africa as an Alien future’: The Middle Passage, Afrofuturism, and Postcolonial Waterworlds,” *Amerikastudien/American Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 4, 2000, pp. 555–566.

experience in terms of a series of more or less continuous metaphors, multiple inversions, plastic transformations, and necessarily mechanical super-bodies.

Creative Afrofuturist content is less common in Francophone discourses than in Anglophone ones since it is more closely identified with the African-American context. Nevertheless, this trend can be seen more and more often in French-speaking countries and general African postcolonial studies. According to Achille Mbembe, a Cameroonian philosopher, Afrofuturists use art or literature to re-imagine counter-futures free of stereotypes, Western dominance and their subaltern position, reflect on the relation between technology and various black cultures, and to question a normative history, as well as their current conditions in the present.¹⁶ “*The world is a prison we need to escape from in order to start all over again in an entirely new planet or galaxy as in the Afrofuturist text*” – Mbembe said.¹⁷ In order to expand and broaden the discussion around the concept, Mawena Yehouessi proposed 3 steps to Afrofuturism: conceptualisation, incarnation and expansion(s). In one of the essay she presented the issue of embodiment:

“Afrofuturism is first a matter of individual paths. Between personal fantasies, provocation and leadership, it comes from strong and free-minded characters, and its mission is to give everyone enough courage to free themselves and to define themselves. Afrofuturism plays with common or imposed laws and habits, it writes its own mythology and manifesto [...] Afrofuturism is then an original and auto-determined way of life: it is the strength of the myth.”¹⁸

She suggested that blending the African Diaspora with an Afrocentric view of humanity and of Africa with science, technology, and philosophy Afrofuturism can be considered a creative reaction to Western dominance and the normativity of European, American or colonial expression. As rightly observed by M. Yehouessi:

“It is more than a way to escape, as it offers alternatives to a present that we have no grasp on and that can deprive us from our existence. It is the

16 Alexander R. Galloway, ‘Achille Mbembe on Afrofuturism and the “Genealogies of the Object”,’ *Culture and Communication*, 7 December 2018, www.cultureandcommunication.org/galloway/achille-mbembe-on-afrofuturism-and-the-genealogies-of-the-object (accessed 10 August 2021).

17 Achille Mbembe and David Theo Goldberg, ‘In Conversation: Achille Mbembe and David Theo Goldberg on “Critique of Black Reason”,’ *Theory, Culture & Society/Body & Society*, 3 July 2018, <https://www.theoryculturesociety.org/blog/interviews-achille-mbembe-david-theo-goldberg-critique-black-reason> (accessed 10 May 2021).

18 Mawena Yehouessi, ‘3 Steps to Afrofuturism: Incarnation,’ *Black(s) to the Future* website, <http://blackstothefuture.com/en/3-steps-to-afrofuturism-incarnation/> (accessed 10 February 2020).

advent of using new imaginaries as critical tools to question the world in order to come up with new narrations of History. Afrofuturism is full of authors who present new – more or less radical but always new – representations of the world in order to think of, imagine and concretise another version of the world. Beyond dreams, Afrofuturism becomes a prospective methodology.”¹⁹

2. Futurism and Cultural Praxis – Popular Culture, Music and Cinema

In this way, Afrofuturism, which cannot be defined as only a subgenre of science fiction, has continued to evolve significantly in the 21st century, offering a powerful, strong and conflicted commentary on the legacy of the African Diaspora. The moment the film adaptation of the Marvel comic – *Black Panther* – appeared in cinemas in 2018 (and later won an Oscar), its well-deserved success at the box office revealed that the concept of Afrofuturism had become a truly inspiring phenomenon. However, apart from the kingdom of Wakanda,²⁰ a prosperous alternative future, this trend has been developing within Afro-American and African art, visual studies, literature, performance, photography, film and the music industry for years, including Senegalese virtual-reality film *The Other Dakar* or Kenyan artistic form of *AfroBubbleGum*. *Black Panther* starring Lupita Nyong’o (Nakia), Chadwick Boseman (T’Challa) and Letitia Wright (Princess Shuri), among others, is a clear expression of a movement, an intersection of sci-fi and African pride, provoking discussions around re-imagined worlds. A production designer, Hannah Beachler, influenced by Afrofuturistic architecture, fashion and Afropunk aesthetics, while describing the construction of Wakanda, admitted the cultural significance of the film:

“For me, Afrofuturism really was the bridge between the mythology, the art, the politics, the science of Africa and of the culture and the sci-fi. I’m always in this transformative place with everything as far as how it evolves.[...] I drew from a lot of different places, I think, and keeping the tradition involved in the aesthetic and the design language was of the utmost importance, because it’s about black representation, the black future and agency using architecture and history and science

19 Mawena Yehouessi, ‘3 Steps to Afrofuturism: Conceptualisation,’ *Black(s) to the Future* website, <http://blackstothefuture.com/en/3-steps-to-afrofuturism-conceptualisation/> (accessed 10 February 2020).

20 The kingdom of Wakanda is a technologically advanced utopian society, a fictional African country that has never experienced colonialisation and ancient African traditions remained there a common practice. It symbolises a dream, a vision, of what the people of Africa would have created in the absence of invasion, occupation and supremacy on Wakandan culture. Hence, the story envisions a culture free of Eurocentric imperialism.

and myth and biomimetics, and biomorphosis, and all of that went into the design.[...] I think the most important element really is their history. That's an important element to Wakandans, their ancestry, their history. Where they came from, and what their future is, because from the past goes the future, right?"²¹

Wakanda's creators highlighted also some Afrofuturists inspirations in several works that incarnate the Afrofuturist sensibility and disturbance, for instance: in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (with the proto-cyberpunk protagonist),²² Jean-Michel Basquiat's painting entitled *Molasses*, the film productions of John Sayles (*The Brother From Another Planet*),²³ Lizzie Borden (*Born in Flames*) and Sharon Lewis (*Brown Girl Begins* – a post-apocalyptic tale set in 2049, based on Nalo Hopkinson's 1998 award-winning novel *Brown Girl in the Ring*), the music of Jimi Hendrix (*Electric Ladyland*) and Miles Davis (techno-tribal global village *On the Corner*), Hancock (fusion-jazz cyberfunk *Future Shock*), as well as Planet Patrol, Wrap 9's, Afrika Bambaataa, Alvin Toffler, comics of Milestone Media or graffiti of Rammellzee. What is important, the nuances of consent and identity are recurring themes for all artists and leading proponents of contemporary Afrofuturism. In the contemporary music world, provocative and stimulating singers like Erykah Badu, Missy Elliott, Janelle Monáe (songwriter, singer, actress, activist with her recent album *Dirty Computer*), Lina Iris Victor, Kendrick Lamar, Rihanna, Solange Knowles, Blizt the Ambassador took their listeners on a journey into a world of pop, psychedelic jazz, funk and dub, but infused elements of space travel, future and unrealistic utopia.²⁴ The styles musicians employed in their work was not incidental to their futuristic philosophy. It serves as a means of gluing together highly diverse materials, approaches and visions. In other words, Afrofuturist music is treated as a continuation of a simultaneous futuristic reality, organised in accordance with a utopian model, which did not respect the model rules of aesthetic stylisation.²⁵

21 Brad Gullickson, 'Building Wakanda: An Interview with "Black Panther" Production Designer Hannah Beachler,' *Film School Rejects*, 7 February 2018, <https://filmschoolrejects.com/black-panther-interview-production-designer-hannah-beachler/> (accessed 4 May 2020).

22 Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, New York: Vintage, 1989 [1952].

23 Joni Boyd Acuff, 'Afrofuturism: Reimagining Art Curricula for Black Existence,' *Art Education*, Vols. 73, 3, 2020, pp. 13–21.

24 See more: Patrycja Kozieł, 'Z Kinszasy na Księżyc. Afrofuturystyczna mbira,' [From Kinshasa to the Moon. Afrofuturistic mbira], *Glissando*, Vol. 40, 2021, p. 31–39; Marlo David, 'Afrofuturism and Post-Soul Possibility in Black Popular Music,' *African American Review*, Vols. 41, 4, 2007, pp. 695–707.

25 Patrycja Kozieł, 'Afrofuturism – Few Reflections on Musical Narratives,' *African Popular Cultures*, 2020, www.africanpopculture.wordpress.com/2020/01/10/afrofuturism-few-reflections-on-musical-narratives (accessed 4 July 2021).

3. Toward Africanfuturism – Differences and Reconsiderations in Literature

It is worth noting here how the concept has transformed in recent years, most visibly in literature, where there has been a great expansion in futurism engagement initiatives. Many authors recognise excellence in African speculative fiction, known for its utopian and liberation themes, and seek to change the fact that the publishing world's centre of gravity still remains Western. To fully capture the distinct parameters that define the development of the genre, it needs to be admitted that the movement is renewing attention in the book world and has a profound effect on African pop culture that exists at the intersection of futurism and fantasy. Indeed, the challenge is how different experiences, cultural appropriation, the need self-legitimation, spirituality and representation are reconstructed within novels and short stories, such as: *Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi, *Trazer: Kids of Stolen Tomorrow* by Joseph O. Adegboyega-Edun, *Nigerians in Space* and *After the Flare* by Deji Bryce Olukotun, *The Intuitionist* by Colson Whitehead, *The Pray of Gods* by Nicky Dryden, *An Unkindness of Ghosts* by Rivers Solomon, *The Galaxy Game* and *Redemption in Indigo* by Karen Lord, *The Murders of Molly Southbourne* and *Rosewater* by Tade Thompson or *What It Means When A Man Falls From the Sky* by Lesley Nneka Arimah. More recently, the contemplation over the shape of vividly rendered future for Africans – this time outside the Diaspora context – mixing utopia and social dystopia, the struggles of humanity to survive and recalling the future reaching back into the past (including indigenous knowledge, mythology and cosmology) are key issues in transformative and revolutionary works with complex structure, including *The Fifth Season* by Nora K. Jemisin (the first author to win the Hugo Award for best science fiction or fantasy novel in three consecutive years), *Freshwater* by Akwaeke Emezi, *The Rafi* by Fred Strydom, *Azotus the Kingdom* by Shadreck Chikoti; and *Do You Dream of Terra-Two?* by Temi Oh, or *Brown Girl in the Ring*, by Nalo Hopkinson. In this possible future, the protagonists located in extraterrestrial contexts or moving through hi-tech future cities, are born with exceptional powers and fight in a post-apocalyptic reality or remain fractured between different realities while practicing indigenous and social knowledge. In addition, the axis of the world becomes a selected African country, community or culture, set in the context of the continent's multiculturalism and multi-religion setting.

A highly self-acknowledged attempt to reproduce the futuristic effect in literature is work by Nnedi Okorafor (Nnedimma Nkemdili Okorafor), who firmly and radically distanced herself from Afrofuturism, postulating she

belongs to a separate genre: Africanfuturism,²⁶ as a new cultural landmark. Distinguishing itself from the pre-existing name is not accidental, but serves as an important source for emancipatory literary and cultural thought, and has been followed by other novelists. Okorafor, who concerns herself with broad cultural and creative phenomena, is a futurist pioneer, an award-winning novelist of African-based science fiction, magical realism and fantasy. As Nigerian-American, born and raised in the United States (one of the birthplaces of classic science fiction) to Nigerian immigrant parents, Okorafor is best known for weaving different African cultures and her Nigerian heritage into creative, fantastic settings (Nigerian, Namibian or hybrid). Among her works aimed at both adults and adolescents, one should mention: *Lagoon* (2015, a British Science Fiction Association Award finalist in the category of Best Novel), *Who Fears Death* (2010, a World Fantasy Award winner for best novel), *Kabu Kabu* (2013, a *Publisher's Weekly* best book for Fall 2013), *Akata Witch* and its continuation *Akata Warrior*, the Binti trilogy (*Binti*, *Home* and *The Night Masquerade*), *Broken Places & Outer Spaces*, *Ikenga*, *Zahrah the Windseeker* (2005, winner of the Wole Soyinka Prize for African Literature) or *The Book of Phoenix* (2016).²⁷

Importantly, in 2019 Okorafor published a text on her blog entitled *Africanfuturism Defined*, in which she coined a new term and professed belonging to Africanfuturism – as opposed to earlier Afrofuturism. Despite the fact that during her talk at an official TED conference in 2017, she discussed the inspiration and roots of her work connected to Afrofuturism, while saying “My science fiction had different ancestors – African ones,” the current diversification of genre was driven by essential factors.²⁸

“I am an Africanfuturist and an Africanjujuist. Africanfuturism is a sub-category of science fiction. Africanjujuism is a subcategory of fantasy that respectfully acknowledges the seamless blend of true existing African spiritualities and cosmologies with the imaginative...

26 Nnedi Okorafor, ‘Africanfuturism Defined,’ in *Africanfuturism: An Anthology*, Wole Talabi (ed.), [place of publication not identified – online]: Brittle Paper, 2020, p. 11.

27 She is also an author of children’s book *Chicken in the Kitchen* that won an Africana Book Award and a full professor at the University at Buffalo, New York (SUNY).

28 Nnedi Okorafor, ‘Sci-fi Stories that Imagine a Future Africa,’ *TED Global*, 2017, https://www.ted.com/talks/nnedi_okorafor_sci-fi_stories_that_imagine_a_future_africa/transcript#t-548061 (accessed 10 February 2020). Later, she revealed her reasons very accurately: “I started using the term Africanfuturism (a term I coined) because I felt... 1. The term Afrofuturism had several definitions and some of the most prominent ones didn’t describe what I was doing. 2. I was being called this word [an Afrofuturist] whether I agreed or not (no matter how much I publicly resisted it) and because most definitions were off, my work was therefore being read wrongly. 3. I needed to regain control of how I was being defined.” Okorafor, ‘Africanfuturism Defined...,’ p. 9.

Africanfuturism is similar to ‘Afrofuturism’ in the way that blacks on the continent and in the Black Diaspora are all connected by blood, spirit, history and future. The difference is that Africanfuturism is specifically and more directly rooted in African culture, history, mythology and point of view as it then branches into the Black Diaspora, and it does not privilege or center the West.”²⁹

The content of the above-mentioned Okorafor essay was reprinted in the first anthology containing eight stories representing the new trend, entitled *Africanfuturism: An Anthology*, edited by Wole Talabi in 2020. At the outset, the collection promises a bird’s-eye view of the concept of futurism as perceived by authors from Nigeria and Zimbabwe. It is an interesting phenomenon that some African writers and writers, including Dilman Dila, Rafeeat Aliyu, Tlotlo Tsamaase, T.L. Huchu, Mame Bougouma, Diene Mazi Nwonwu and Derek Lubangakene adopted this term as a way of identifying what distinguishes their works from an already well-established understanding of Afrofuturism, after all, more than a quarter of a century has passed since the forging of term by Dery. Okorafor explained: “Africanfuturism is spelled as one word (not two) and the ‘f’ is not capitalised. It is one word so that the concepts of Africa and futurism cannot be separated (or replaced with something else) because they both blend to create something new.”³⁰ As the authors postulate, they are demanding a place for Africa and Africans in the future. If, however, Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism can be regarded as similar trends, what is futurism in its new, Afrocentric version?

Africanfuturism may be understood more productively as a globally mobile category of identification, linked to the history of the continent, its vibrant materialism and sonic spirituality. Okorafor admitted that much of Western-rooted science fiction (mostly white and male-oriented) speculates about technologies, futuristic societies and social issues, that which is beyond and within our planet and universe. In contrast Africanfuturism does not need to extend beyond the continent of Africa, and its central default is African. She claimed that science fiction is one of the greatest and most effective forms of political writing concerning the African future. The reason for that is all about the question she tried to answer: “what if?,” “what if a Nigerian-American wrote science fiction?” Her first major story took place in Nigeria. Seeing no reflection of anyone who looked like her in that kind of narratives before, she could not relate to stories preoccupied with xenophobia, colonisation and seeing aliens as others. Okorafor took inspirational trips back to Nigeria with her family in the late 1990s and included the magical realism and fantasy

29 Okorafor, ‘Africanfuturism Defined...’, p. 9–10.

30 Okorafor, ‘Africanfuturism Defined...’, p. 11.

inspired by compassion of Igbo and other West African traditional cosmologies, mythology and spiritualities. She ultimately asked questions: “what if an African girl from a traditional family in a part of future Africa is accepted into the finest university in the galaxy, planets away? What if she decides to go?”³¹

In the trilogy called *Binti*, she described a girl called Binti, the main protagonist, who left the planet in order to seek education from extraterrestrials.³² In a distant future land of Africa, Binti is a mathematical genius of the Himba ethnic group (from Namibia). She is accepted into an intergalactic university on another planet and she decides to go. Carrying the blood of her Himba people in her veins, adorned with traditional clothes, Binti leaves the earth. This idea of leaving the earth and then becoming something more, a super human with unspecified identity, is one of the most important characteristics of Afrofuturism. It might be well observed that Binti is confronted with the contradictions of the duality of the worlds she was put into. The human world of that of an urbanistic galaxy. We can simply call it a different type of science fiction, but Okorafor explained the difference between classic science fiction and Afrofuturism using the octopus analogy. Like humans, octopuses are some of the most intelligent creatures on Earth. However, according to Okorafor, octopus intelligence evolved from a different evolutionary line, separate from that of human beings, hence the foundation is different. The same can be said about the foundations of various forms of science fiction.

First of all, the author uses the symbols of mothership and time travel, alternative realities, which would be utilised by all futuristic artists. For Okorafor the imagination is productive of the cultural revolution. The narrator is emphasising the sound, colour, dynamisation of the movement and image of the world. Secondly, through including themes such as the cult of African civilisations, materialism, urbanism, the narrator reinforces the certain ways of thinking rooted in the general vision of communities, which are stereotypically not connected to the category of future. They are always regarded as underdeveloped or still developing, trapped in the past, in contrast to European or American societies, which lead the pave to a limitless future. Okorafor explained it clearly, when commenting *Akata Witch*:

“To be African is to merge technology and magic. That’s a bold statement to make and I can imagine certain groups of African people rising up like angry snakes against such a blanketing statement but so be it. In my experience as an African, the mystical and the mundane have always coexisted. It’s expressed within the explanation of things, in ways of doing things, the reasons for doing things. That’s just life.

31 Okorafor, ‘Sci-fi Stories...’

32 Nnedi Okorafor, *Binti*, New York: A Tom Doherty Associates Books, 2015.

So add the fact that technology is a part of African life, too, and you get a natural merging. I'm not doing anything in my fiction that doesn't exist already. I got the idea FROM my experiences of being an African, from being amongst Africans, and being IN Africa."³³

That is why, as asserted by Achille Mbembe, instead of the conventional terrestrial condition, futurists, such as Okorafor, shift to a 'cosmic condition,' which in practice is the scene of reconciliation between the human, the animal, the vegetable and all the other vital forces.³⁴ What is more, Binti serves as an example of a powerful female protagonist, courageous and fair.

Another question posed by Okorafor is "what if aliens came to Lagos, to Nigeria?" The futuristic vision of Nigeria is indicated in the next novel of Okorafor – *Lagoon*.³⁵ She develops its narrative across three acts: 'Welcome' (in which aliens such as Ayodele make contact with the people of Lagos), 'Awakening' (an explosion of violence across the city), and 'Symbiosis' (a period of utopian transformation, in which the aliens and humans come together to form a new post-capitalist Nigeria). The novel's plot revolves around the aliens and interactions with three human protagonists: Adaora – a marine biologist, Agu – a soldier, and Anthony – a Ghanaian hip-hop artist, who have special, superhuman abilities. The novel also incorporates various Nigerian folkloric elements: Udide (a trickster spider, responsible for weaving the past, present and future) or Legba (god of language and the crossroads).

"Everybody saw it, all over the world. That was a real introduction to the great mess happening in Lagos, Nigeria, West Africa, Africa, here. Because so many people in Lagos had portable, chargeable, glowing, vibrating, chirping, tweeting, communicating, connected devices, practically everything was recorded and posted online in some way, somehow, quickly. The modern human world is connected like a spider's web. The world was watching. It watched in fascinated horror for information, but mostly for entertainment. Footage of what

33 Qiana Whitted, "'To Be African Is to Merge Technology and Magic'". An Interview with Nnedi Okorafor,' in *Afrofuturism 2.0: The Rise of Astro-Blackness*, Reynaldo Anderson and Charles E. Jones (eds.), London: Lexington Books, 2016, p. 209.

34 To be precise, Mbembe stated: "No single Earth could ever be the sole home of such a futuristic form of life (for which, again, the Black is the prototype). In its historical configuration, the Earth at its core could only ever be a vast prison for humans like these: metallic people, made of money, or wood, or liquid, all in an endless transfiguration. Both transitory and plastic, this human vessel could only reside, ultimately, in the Universe as a whole. Instead of the terrestrial condition, one would thus shift to a cosmic condition, the scene of reconciliation between the human, the animal, the vegetable, the organic, the mineral, and all the other vital forces, whether borne of the sun, the night, or the stars." See more: Galloway, 'Achille Mbembe...'

35 Nnedi Okorafor, *Lagoon*, New York: Saga Press, 2016.

was happening dominated every international news source, video-sharing website, social network, circle, pyramid and trapezoid. But the story goes deeper. It is in the mud, the dirt, the earth, in the fond memory of the soily cosmos. It is in the always mingling past, present and future. It is in the water. It is in the powerful spirits and ancestors who dwelled in Lagos. It is in the hearts and minds of the people of Lagos. Change begets change.³⁶

The last remark bears on the functional significance Okorafor accords with futurism. For Africans, homegrown science fiction can be a will to power and a chance to make prevalent the idea of 'Otherness.' The primary goal of Okorafor was to present the struggle with tradition and constant search for innovation. The fascination with urbanisation, life in the megacity of Lagos and the tendency towards political provocation are also common elements. In the story, Lagos becomes the centre of global action, so from the point of view of people who were deprived of a voice for centuries, Africanfuturism invited Nigerians to perform the utopian world, dream of a bright new tomorrow, seek out their roots and reconnect with their cultural heritages.

4. Further Conceptualisations – the Journey into the Future

Africanfuturism is oriented not only on technological innovations, but also on connection with the idea of Pan-Africanism and redefinition of the image of Africa, still associated in global public discourse with backwardness and passivity. However, going beyond this type of explanation, it should be assumed that in reality Afrofuturist authors manifest a creative speculation, focused on internal and native experiences, hopes and fears, and above all the need to reach for a more precise language of expression. Getting rid of the dissimilarity of the white gaze and *de facto* Western way of thinking, they propose another option to fight for – paraphrasing Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o – 'the decolonisation of the mind.'³⁷ In their own version, they always place Africa, Nigeria or one of the African mega-cities at the centre of the universe, for example Lagos, which flourishes thanks to technological progress. In Okorafor's short story from *Mother of Invention*, the writer breaks her ties with the Anglo-American historical and geographical context, transferring her story world to the technologically advanced Nigerian city of New Delta in the Anthropocene. The narrative borrows from the social space of Nigeria elements from its most distant areas in order to create a completely new space from them, which is the meeting point of the past, present and future.

36 Okorafor, *Lagoon...*, p. 49.

37 Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind. The Politics of Language in African Literature*, London: James Currey, 1986.

Following the story of protagonists of comic books, novels, movie characters, artists and musicians in a distant futuristic journey, the recipient (listener or reader) of Africanfuturism simultaneously performs two kinds of journeys in space-time. It can be said that the first of them is an expedition into the physical, tangible, spatial, objective and, in a sense, geographic, world – space, universe, foreign planet, asteroid, distant realm, ancient African kingdom. The unit that finds itself there is surrounded by African people with superpowers, experiences the world in a different dimension, mostly an idealised cultural cognitive model.

The second expedition, however, is an identity and metaphysical journey to the imaginary world in which the point of reference is pan-African community, co-opted between history, the mythology of various African societies, a sense of uniqueness and richness of spiritualities and myths. It is a uniqueness that occurs beyond time and space. It does not often belong to only one ethnic group. This expedition consists, therefore, in the constant launching of collective or individual myths and complexes of ideas about the world contained within futurist discourse. What makes it significantly different from standard science fiction, speculative expression or Afrofuturism is the fact that it is profoundly steeped in ancient African traditions and identities, in order to celebrate the innovation of cultures. It engages Africans in contemporary foresight into long-term cultural, social, and political developments.

Conclusions

It is critical to remember that Africanfuturism even more intensely reproduces historical and literary evidence, philosophical thought and experiences, showing references to the stigma of colonialism and self-affirmation, topics richly represented in the *Négritude* movement and the writings of Frantz Fanon.³⁸ To sum up, the theoretical approach to the movement, included in the expression Afrofuturism or Africanfuturism, assumes the use of a new discourse on the work of Africans or Africans in the Diaspora, penetrating into the considerations we relate to, such as global popular culture and the migration of cultural content. The two terms are distinct, but interrelated, because they share a common interpretation and assumptions, and second, an objective. First of all, the two concepts share more than just historical experience. Despite the geographical differences and the point of reference, however, the empirical functionality of both concepts relates to the redefinition of the baggage of history treated as superior, correcting past wrongs and stereotypes about the passivity of the continent's inhabitants. Africanfuturism, in line with Nnedi Okorafor's proposal, is an aesthetic experience that shows its most important

38 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, New York: Grove Press, 2008.

features: unity and coherence of meaning, unanimity, alternative and subversive nature, as well as subjectivisation in the choice of the creators' intentions. It assumes a greater focus on one's own, native experiences that do not remain in polemics with other cultures, as well as an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Each example holds insights and implications for a dilemma: could futurism be regarded as a form of counter-culture? As I notice, in contrast to Afrofuturism in the historical and philosophical aspect, a change of perspective strongly resonates here. Giving the status of the main subject to Africans from African countries, it modifies both the artistic form and determines the structure of a given product – music, picture or novel, which is inclusive, heterogeneous and connective. It is also a tool for masking discourses that do not notice the dynamic changes of African cultures, unjustly removing them outside the brackets, to the periphery.

The Use of Comic Musical Skits to Overcome Fear and Anxiety during the Outbreak of Covid-19 in Nigeria

Abstract

Nigeria experienced its first index case on 27th February 2020, when an Italian was diagnosed as having contracted Coronavirus. With the rise of Covid cases, social media was agog with myths, fables, information (both true and false), and fake drugs that could be used to cure Coronavirus. This research examines three indigenous-oriented comic musical skits that were aimed at allayed the fear of contracting Covid-19. The theory applied to this study is psychoanalytic. It is argued that comic musical skits were forceful tools used to alleviate the fear of contracting Covid-19.

Keywords: Covid-19 in Nigeria, Hausa Comedians, Psychoanalysis, Comic Musical Skits, Fear.

Introduction

As of the time of writing this paper, 20,273,569 people had contracted the virus, with 739,490 deaths and 13,201,059 recovered. The United States of America is recorded to have the highest number of cases at over 5,251,446 million people with over 166,192 deaths. Other countries with high numbers of infected people are Brazil, India, Russia, Peru, Chile, Spain, Mexico, with others following close behind. In Africa, there were by the time of writing over 870,000 confirmed cases of the coronavirus across the continent, with a number of African countries enforcing containment measures to curb the spread of the pandemic.

According to John Hopkins University and Africa Center for Disease Control on Covid-19, the number of recoveries is high with 295,242 patients fully recovered and 13,246 deaths. Nigeria has recorded 46,367 cases of Covid-19 with quite a good number of patients recovering from the disease.² These recoveries have, however, not stopped the Nigerian Centre of Disease Control (NCDC) from insisting on the wearing of mask in public; embarking on constant broadcasts of the importance of washing hands; not touching

1 PhD, Lecturer, English Department at Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai, Niger State, Nigeria, e-mail: mustafalinda994@gmail.com.

2 Abdur Rahman Alfa Shaban, 'Africa COVID-19 stats: 874,036 cases; 18,498 deaths; 524,557 recoveries,' *Africanews*, 29 July 2020, www.africanews.com/2020/07/13/coronavirus-in-africa-breakdown-of-infected-virus-free-countries (accessed 13 July 2020).

the face; maintaining social distancing; informing the public on the need for people over 50 to avoid going out into public places, as well as people with preexisting medical conditions such as diabetes and the need for people to report suspected cases to the appropriate bodies.

However, the fear of contracting Covid-19 has elicited the making of countless online videos and audio clips that either debunk the existence and spread of the disease or explain the serious implications of falling under its scourge. Social media with platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, YouTube and particularly WhatsApp, have all been used in the proliferation of information (both real and fake) about Covid-19. While many of these videos have illustrated their messages through the use of frightening scenes of patients suffering and dying from the disease, some have showed patients who have recovered from the disease talking about their experiences while others are comic videos, which in their own way of trying to inform the public, have mimicked politicians, church members and other famous personalities all in a bid to drive away fear and anxiety from the minds of their target audiences. Based on the existing facts available to this study, this paper shall illustrate how Nigerian citizens were enlightened about the devastating effects of not complying with the rules related to Covid-19. Freud's conception of anxiety or fear, as well as other psychoanalytic theorisation by others was applied as the theoretical tool to explore this.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1. The Conception of Anxiety and Fear in Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud, who is also known as the father of psychoanalysis, was the first to coin the term “anxiety neurosis” in 1895 and went on to explain anxiety as the critical problem of neurosis.³ With his theory evolving over the years, Freud in 1926 linked the cathexis of previous traumata and their memories to the specific effects of anxiety, which he states in the following:

“Anxiety is not newly created in repression; it is reproduced as an affective state, in accordance with an already existing mnemic image. If we go further and enquire into the origin of that anxiety-and of affects in general-we shall be leaving the realm of pure psychology and entering the borderland of physiology. Affective states have become incorporated in the mind as precipitates of primeval traumatic experiences and when a similar situation occurs, they are revived like mnemic symbols.”⁴

3 Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, translated by Nicola Luckhurst, London: Penguin Books, 2004 [1895].

4 Sigmund Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete*

Freud devised a structural model of anxiety in which he posits that the personality of a person is comprised of an id, ego, and superego with anxiety resulting from conflict between these forces and the need to inhibit unacceptable thoughts and feelings from emerging into conscious awareness. Consequently, anxiety is a signal of unconscious fantasies of imagined dangerous situations. These fantasies are provoked by instinctual wishes or by perceptions of external situations.⁵ Anxiety becomes problematic when defence mechanisms are no longer able to inhibit its manifestation adequately and symptoms therefore surface.

Freud observed the relationship between fear and anxiety noting that fear and anxiety are unpleasant and undesirable experiences, which he explains here:

If the memory image of the hostile object is in any manner freshly cathected (e.g., by fresh perceptions), a condition arises which is not pain but has a similarity to pain. It includes unpleasure and the inclination to discharge corresponding to the experience of pain. Unpleasure is released from the interior of the body- is freshly provoked- by the cathexis of memories.⁶

However, fear and anxiety are two different experiences. Sweeny & Pine, in their work titled “The Etiology of Fear and Anxiety”, posit that fear is different from anxiety noting that the latter provoke more intense reaction than the former. Thus, they define the term “fear” as a specific emotion which occurs as a result of the perception of potentially dangerous stimuli while anxiety is a fear-like state that is out of proportion, in terms of duration, degree of avoidance, or subjective distress, relative to the current level of danger provoked by potential fear stimuli.

According to Akhtar (2014), fear may be unidentified yet the tone of the situation can reveal dangers that are real and external. In his words, Akhtar posits thus:

Fear is a response to external danger; anxiety to dangers emanating from the internal world...[It] is a “dysphoric reaction to an actual object (e.g., a wild animal, a knife-wielding drunkard), event (e.g., an

Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, J. Strachey and A. Freud (eds), London: The Hogarth Press, 1926d, p. 93.

5 Robert Michels, Allen Frances and M. Katherine Shear, ‘Psychodynamic Models of Anxiety,’ in *Anxiety and the Anxiety Disorders*, A. Hussain Tuma and Jack D. Maser (eds), New York: Routledge, 1985.

6 Sigmund Freud, *A Project for a Scientific Psychology*, Standard Edition, Vol. 1, London: The Hogarth Press, 1950a, pp. 295–343.

earthquake, a stampede), or situation (e.g., watching a horror movie, losing control of a car on an icy road) that is felt to be threatening.”⁷

To explain the severity of fear, Akhtar identifies with Grand (2002) who postulated four stages of dysphoria in the face of approaching danger: “(a) apprehension (mild anticipation of a bad occurrence); (b) dread (the conviction that one is facing danger and a person’s reluctance to encounter this impending danger); (c) Panic, which is an overwhelming sense of being afraid and alarmed hyperactivity; and (d) terror,-a feeling of doom. (Grand, 2002)”.⁸ Although fear causes a discomfiture of consciousness and the sub-conscious, it is a necessary emotion which supports the survival instincts of any living thing (including animals and people). Fear serves as a protective device and warns an individual of impending danger such that the individual gets prepared to face or avoid the unpleasant predicament. Some fears are widespread while others emanate as a result of “developmentally unfolding, epigenetic sequence of fantasies that are specific to human beings.”⁹

Despite the differences between anxiety and fear, the two terms have similar characteristics. Fear and anxiety both evoke a sense of dread, that something bad is about to happen. Also, both are unpleasant and both can serve as alarms that alert an individual to a likely danger yet their difference lies in the fact that fear is a response to external danger while anxiety reacts to internal uncertainties. Akhtar insists that no matter their similarity or dissimilarities, fear and anxiety coexist. He traces this to the notion that external threats become more pronounced due to internal vulnerabilities, which also can be externalised.¹⁰

1.2. Methodology of the Research

The method applied to this research is a careful study of video clips that feature humorous information about Covid-19. A qualitative study deploying the psychoanalytic theory of Freud and others was applied to guide this research to conclusion.

2. Overcoming Fear and Anxiety with Comic Musical Skits during the Outbreak of Covid-19

The first comic musical skit examined for this paper is titled “Corona Part 2.” It was acted and produced by four young men dressed in women’s

7 Salman Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering: Fear, Greed, Guilt, Deception, Betrayal, and Revenge*. London: Karnac Books Ltd., 2014, pp. 4–6.

8 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering*..., p. 4.

9 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering*..., p. 4.

10 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering*..., p. 8.

clothes. As they dance like middle age women, they sing about the outbreak of the Corona disease in China but particularly express their disappointment about China's refusal to warn the world about the killer disease. They note that China's insincerity to the world is against the preservation of humanity. However, the people of China should be forgiven by all Nigerians. Singing in Hausa, which is one of the major languages spoken in Nigeria, the comedians dressed as middle aged women show how such women in churches across Nigeria tend to sing about what ails their society. The following are their exact words:

2.1. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Muyafe, muyafe (four times).

Abin da China su yin manaa, muyafe (twice).

Su nan chi bera, (daiye), sun a chin kenkeso (daiye),

Sun nan chin taana, (daiye), har da kwado, ga targwada (daiye), har da haladu (daiye).

Tor mai zai sa Corona bai zai kama su baa? (*muyafe* twice then humming).

Praisss the Lord! Mu ne matan zumunta Assemblies of God's Church,

First Baptist Church, Caanan Redeem Christian Church of God, Living Faith, Dunamis.

Wannan she ne wakan mu na biyu, muna keran she corona.

Yaa in de kunan soraranmu, baru sarki ya bishekuu. (Ammin!).¹¹

“Let's forgive (said four times thus constituting the chorus).

For all that China has done to us all, we should forgive.

The Chinese eat rats, raw!, they eat cockroaches raw!

They eat earthworms while they are still alive and even frogs.

Bats too are eaten raw and pigs too.

Why won't corona infect them (the Chinese) greatly? (the chorus is said twice, then humming continues as the interlude).

Praisssse the Lord! We are the married women choir group from the Assemblies of God church; the First Baptist Church, the Caanan Redeem Christian Church of God; the Living Faith and the Dunamis Church.

This song is our second, which we have named corona part two.

As you all have listened to us, we pray that the King of Kings should protect you alllll.”

11 Zumuntan Matan Abcrlld, *Corona Part 2, YouTube*,² April, 2020,<https://youtu.be/Hntj139xXX0> (accessed 15 April 2020).

The one minute, five seconds video is a deliberate mimic of these indulgent Christian women who criticise everything they hear or see in their communities through the songs they sing in church. To alleviate the fears of the Nigerian community, the song's major aim is to inform Nigerians about occurrence of the disease and how it has developed into a viral disease. They sarcastically accuse the Chinese for their habit of eating exotic animals without cooking them, insinuating that this may have been the cause of the spread of Covid-19, as can be deciphered hence:

2.2. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Su nan chi bera (dainye), sun a chin kenkeso (dainye)

*Sun nan chin taana (dainye), har da kwado, ga targwada (dainye), har da haladu (dainye).*¹²

“The Chinese eat rats, raw; they eat cockroaches raw;

They eat earthworms (raw) while they are still alive and even frogs (raw).

Bats too are eaten raw and pigs too.”

Akhtar contends that fear plays an important role in prejudice.¹³ The funny music skit is prejudicial and externalises the fears of the Nigerian populace about the exotic eating habits of the Chinese by stating how the Chinese people are fond of eating cockroaches, earth worms, frogs etc., without taking into cognizance that these animals may harbour disease-causing pathogens. This makes the comedians ask; “*Toor mai zai sa Corona bai zai kama su baa? Why won't coronavirus infect them (the Chinese) greatly?*”¹⁴

“Corona Part 2” is an indirect act of scrutinising the identities of supposedly dedicated Christian mothers who are interested in talking about the pain and fears of people. These women portray corrupt or deceitful Christian. They go about observing and criticising every perceived “evil” act in the community without verifying and proffering solutions. Instead of being the virtuous mothers/women talked about in the bible, they are consumed with the fear of their true self, hence they come together to create frightening figures and images in their songs and end up “project[ing] dread and danger.”¹⁵ In this study, the frightening images they create is the dread of contracting the coronavirus from a “rat-eating” race, which has no connection whatsoever to the staunch Christian values of forgiving people who might have cause harm to others.

12 Zumuntan Matan Abcrld..., video excerpt: 00:17–00:28.

13 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering...*, p. 17.

14 Zumuntan Matan Abcrld..., video excerpt: 00:29.

15 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering...*, p. 18.

“Corona Part 2” metaphorically tries to allay the fears of the Nigerian public. Instead of projecting the drastic effects of the disease, the comedians avoid singing about how not to contract the disease, thereby drawing the audience’s attention away from the fear of contracting Covid-19. They instead direct the audience’s attention to China and their exotic eating tastes, linking this habit to the start of the virus but sarcastically insisting that everyone should forgive the Chinese for allowing the outbreak of the disease in their country and then transporting it all over the world without regard to humanity, as depicted here:

2.3. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Muyafe, muyafe (four times).

Abin da China su yin manaa, muyafe (twice).¹⁶

“Let’s forgive (said four times thus constituting the chorus)

For all that China has done to us all, we should forgive.”

Freudopines that displacement in itself makes avoidance of a feared object/situation easier to bare.¹⁷ Hence, the skit is targeted at displacing the devastating effects of the viral disease so as not to make the fears/anxiety of contracting Covid-19 conscious and so they tactfully displace audience attention to married women’s groups in churches who are fond of singing about the things that ailsociety.

The next skit however deviates from the mild presentation of Covid-19 as acted out by the four comedians earlier discussed. In this skit, the men bring to the fore how Covid-19 spreads like wild fire, killing everyone in its path. In this skit, a group of five men with local drums, walk the streets of one of Nigeria’s northern states singing about how everyone needs to pray in order for God to intervene and stop further spread of the disease. The following are the lyrics of the song:

2.4. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Chorus

Gaiya muna Allah waidu;

Ka kare dukan duniya;

Ka kare dukan Nigeria

Chuta da koronavairios (said thrice)

Wangan anoma aka gani ta shao dukan duniya;

16 Zumuntan Matan Aberld..., video excerpt 00:03.

17 Sigmund Freud, ‘Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis,’ in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Strachey and Freud (eds)..., pp. 151–318.

Wagan chuta wagan ka gani ta shao dukan duniyan;

Chorus (twice).

Aha abin mamaki da ka gani;

Wadawo a kasar waje;

Sai kaibe shi wurin guda;

Anyi hau an gani maida koronavairios;

Chorus (twice).

Yan malam adini musulmai dukan duniyan;

Da malamai na christa na christochi dukan duniya;

Don Allah ku taiyamuna adua, don Allah ku taiyamuna adua;

Chorus (twice).

Nine dan kwarai, nine dan dali, baban kwarai maka din nijeria;

Nijeria arje har Kebbi, gar a kebbi ma birni kebbi;

Birni Kebbi Mallam dali, nine na yi wannan waka chuta da koronavairios;

Chorus (thrice) till end of song.¹⁸

Chorus

“Greetings to the people of the world in the name of Allah,

There is something that is killing everyone in the world;

There is something that wants to kill everyone in Nigeria;

It is the disease called coronavirus (said thrice).

This phenomenon is so dangerous that it has taken the lives of so many in the world today;

This disease is so lethal that it has spread around the world, taking lives;

Chorus (twice).

This surprising situation that we are experiencing today;

Erupted in foreign lands;

Kept on spreading in a particular place;

Where it was intensely studied and discovered to be the deadly coronavirus.”

Chorus (twice).

We therefore call on all Muslims all over the world;

And all Christians all over the world no matter the denominations they belong to;

18 Untitled indigenous musical comic skit on coronavirus: ‘VID-20200328-WA0010,’ *Whats.App*, 00:00–2:26 (accessed 13 April 2020).

We ask in the name of Allah, that they should all pray for the world against this deadly disease (twice).

Chorus (twice).

I am the novel/ good musician, one who is good and truthful in Nigeria;

I am in Nigeria, in Kebbi state, even in the town of Birni Kebbi;

I am the great musician from Birni Kebbi,

I am the one that sings about the dangers of contracting coronavirus;

Chorus (twice).

Fear is built in right from the beginning of the song. According to Freud, “Anxiety is not newly created in repression; it is reproduced as an affective state, in accordance with an already existing mnemonic image.”¹⁹ The two minute and twenty-six seconds skit warns people about the devastating effect of contracting coronavirus. The musicians use the already existing fear of contracting the disease as a major fact that they must transmit to the world. They thus bring in the drastic image of death and the near end of the world, as can be noted in the following lyrics:

2.5. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Wagan anoma aka gani ta shao dukan duniya;

Wagan chuta wagan ka gani ta shao dukan duniyan.

“This phenomenon is so dangerous that it has taken the lives of so many in the world today;

This disease is so lethal that it has spread around the world, taking lives.”²⁰

It is clear from the preceding lyrics that the musicians’ fear is projected out onto the public such that it draws people’s attention to their music and the spreading coronavirus. The portrayal of the fear of Covid-19 is used as a protective device to warn people of the pandemic so they can do all they can to protect themselves.

Again, this untitled skit relates the feeling of “dread” and “terror” in the hearts of the people. Dread and terror are two categories of fear that Akhtar²¹ identifies as an interpretation of a person’s reluctance to face danger and an overwhelming feeling of doom, respectively. Thus, the singer through his music, without weighing the consequences of his words, promotes feelings of dread and terror as a means of mandating the public to be very careful in order

19 Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms...*, p. 93.

20 Untitled indigenous..., video excerpt 00:30.

21 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering...*, p. 18.

to avoid getting infected. The song starts on a frightening note, which is aimed at calling the general public's attention to how critical it is for people to pay attention to the developing trend of Covid-19:

2.6. The Song Hausa Language and English Translation

Ka kare dukan duniya;

Ka kare dukan Nigeria

Chuta da koronavairios (chorus is said thrice).

“There is something that is killing everyone in the world;

There is something that wants to kill everyone in Nigeria;

It is the disease called coronavirus.”²²

The song does not rely on specific information about coronavirus, instead it describes how people are dying from an unknown disease that is lethal and incurable and causing the death of Nigerians. Even though many have died from this plague, the spread of the disease has not got to the stage where it seems the world will be depleted of people in a short while, yet this musician's message portrays it as such and in the process creates an avenue where onlookers and listeners develop high levels of anxiety.

The only information this skit is able to relay to the public is that the disease “Erupted in foreign lands” (*Wadawo a kasar waje*), and the name of the disease “Where it was intensely studied and discovered to be the deadly coronavirus” (*An yi hau an gani maida koronavairios*).²³ The humorous way in which the rendition is made is therefore a subtle means of alleviating the fears and anxiety of Nigerian society. The fear in the words cannot be literally identified, but the tone in which the musician calls for prayers from both the Muslim and Christian faiths gives an indication of the severity of the pandemic. This is observed in the following:

2.7. The Song in Hausa Language and English Translation

Yan malamai adini musulmai dukan duniyan;

Da malamai na christa na christochi dukan duniya;

Don Allah ku taiyamuna adua, don Allah ku taiyamuna adua.

“We therefore call on all Muslims all over the world;

And all Christians no matter the denomination they belong to all over the world;

22 Untitled indigenous..., video excerpt 00:00–00:29.

23 Untitled indigenous..., video excerpt 00:53–01:03.

We ask in the name of Allah, that they should all pray for the world against this deadly disease.”²⁴ (twice)

The call made to adherents of the two major religions in Nigeria sends a message of a dreadful situation that needs the full cooperation of everyone irrespective of their religious commitments. According to the music video acquired from WhatsApp, the spread of Covid-19 needs the unifying efforts of all Nigerians and people of the world so that a solution can be found. The high death toll should not be left to medical personnel alone but that supernatural intervention through prayers by Muslims and Christians is also necessary in the complete eradication of coronavirus.

The last skit is a comic one that satirises the government of Nigeria about the continued perpetuation of corruption even during the outbreak of Covid-19 in Nigeria. The skit, by Edo Pikin, is entitled “What is the difference between Corona and Ebola?” (subsequent use will be WITDBCAE) and is acted as a one-on-one interview with a supposed medical practitioner. Spoken in English, the interviewer asks the doctor what are the pertinent differences between the two dangerous diseases. The dialogue, which is punctuated with intermittent one-second frightening tunes, is presented thus:

Interviewer: “Good afternoon doctor, please sir what is the difference between Corona and Ebola?”

Doctor: “The difference is very, very clear. You understand *naa*. Ebola is an outdated Corona and Corana is an updated Ebola. Ebola is an old artist that does not have a stage to perform again. Corona is the new artist, the reign of the moment going on different tours. Ebola has seen its menopause; corona is the slaying queen. Now listen to me, corona is made in China and their product does not last. If only corona knows that the amount of roots and *agbo* (herbal medicines) we have in this country, then corona will go and squat with Ebola. The *oga pata pata* (the boss that totally oversees these diseases) of them all, the general overseer of them all is bad government. Do you know that the problem of this country is this country? Do you know that immediately corona entered into Nigeria, Nose masks moved from sixty naira to six thousand naira? Even hand sanitiser moved from five hundred naira to seven thousand, five hundred naira? We want to cash out for people to pass out. We want to make profit so that people will go six feet, you and the corona which is more deadly? Do you know that when coronavirus got to the airport and saw the Nigerian government, corona said hmm!

24 Untitled indigenous..., video excerpt 01:24–1:39.

No need to enter into this country because our senior colleagues are here already. The greatest mistake corona made was to come to Nigeria. We cannot have two diseases in one country. It is either corona stays and bad government goes or bad government stays and corona goes. You cannot use masks to prevent coronavirus but can you wear a nose mask to prevent corona leaders? Some viruses are infected while some virus are elected. Do you know that corona and bad leaders have killed more people more than coronavirus? Bad government is the *ogapatapata* of them all and the general overseer of them all. Bad government does not live abroad, bad government lives here in Nigeria, thank you.”²⁵

This comic narrative extracted from YouTube @abingoslayking explains the basic information about Covid-19 on one hand and likens the devastating effects of coronavirus to the bad and corrupt leadership in Nigeria on the other hand. Instead of intensifying fear, like the two other music-comedy skits earlier analysed, this video’s narrative humorously explains what coronavirus is and what it is not. The mock doctor likens coronavirus to “Ebola,” “a new artist” and a “slaying queen.”²⁶ The “doctor” further allayed the fears of his audience by stating that “corona is made in China and their product does not last. If only corona knows that the amount of roots and *agbo* (herbal medicines) we have in this country, then corona will go and squat with Ebola.”²⁷

Akhtar contends that when people do not want to face fear or anxiety, they unconsciously displace their fears from the actual object of fear to a “more acceptable substitute” which “becomes bound to a specific object/situation.”²⁸ In the comedy skit by Edo Pikin, the mock doctor transfers the fear of contracting Covid-19 onto the bad government in Nigeria. To the comedian, the bad government is responsible for the hike in the price of face masks (humorously referred to in the video as nose masks) and hand sanitisers, insisting that some sets of corrupt and unsympathetic individuals are using the pandemic to make financial profits instead of trying to put in place a holistic means of ending the spread of Covid-19.

Watching this skit, life during the outbreak of covid-19 becomes easier to bear because “the specificity of the fear now makes matters manageable through the active process of avoidance.”²⁹ The video directs people’s attention to the problems which Nigerians are already conditioned to. The bad government

25 Edo Pikin, ‘What is the Difference Between Corona and Ebola?’, *YouTube*, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1jwERWVMIs&ab_channel=McEdopikin (accessed 27 May 2020).

26 Pikin, *What is the Difference...*, video excerpt 00:06–00:17.

27 Pikin, *What is the Difference...*, video excerpt 00:17-00:25.

28 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering...*, p. 12.

29 Akhtar, *Sources of Suffering...*, p. 12.

is institutionally entrenched such that scores of people die daily even before Covid-19. The fake doctor displaces the fear of contracting coronavirus with bad governance that has stunted political, economic and social growth, insisting that the use of face masks will not help Nigerians overcome bad governance. This is captured in these lines:

“The greatest mistake corona made was to come to Nigeria. We cannot have two diseases in one country. It is either corona stays bad government goes or bad government stays corona goes. You cannot use mask to prevent coronavirus but can you wear nose mask to prevent corona leaders? Some virus are infected while some virus are elected. Do you know that corona bad leaders have killed more people more than coronavirus?”³⁰

In their mission to inform the public about the serious implications of the spread of Covid-19, the comedians bring to the fore corrupt practices that make coronavirus less devastating than corrupt officials. Bad officials are metaphorically described as an “elected virus” and so getting infected by this virus is more dangerous than the infectious disease termed “infected virus.” This “elected virus” causes more death than coronavirus because bad officials will want to cash in on the pandemic rather than trying to find a lasting cure and dissuade further spread of the disease.

Freud insists that the advantage offered by displacement in overcoming fear is that the original offensive idea does not become conscious. In fact, Freud pointed out that displacement by itself renders avoidance easier.³¹ So, the skit downplays the “original offensive” fear of Covid-19 by portraying bad governance as a formidable and more deadly phenomenon that kills more people than coronavirus. The comedy skit, which is packed full with substantial information about covid-19, juxtaposes fear with the need for Nigerians to abhor corruption and stop others from indulging in corrupt acts. Therefore, by displacing the dangers of Covid-19 with bad governance, this video was able to dispel the myth of coronavirus not being a curable disease through the transference of public attention unto bad governance which is likened to an incurable disease.

According to WITDBCAE, the disease of bad governance is what is causing further deaths of patients who have been diagnosed with Covid-19. Corrupt government officials are more concerned with enriching themselves at the expense of innocent lives lost in the process of acquiring funds to treat coronavirus patients, as is stated thus: “We want to cash out for people to pass out.”³² So the deaths that are actually occurring in Nigeria are a result of

30 Pikin, *What is the Difference...*, video excerpt 00:56-01:15.

31 Freud, ‘Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional...’, pp. 151–318.

32 Pikin, *What is the Difference...*, video excerpt 00:43–00:44.

escalating corruption in the country and not the pandemic itself as noted thus: “Do you know that corona bad leaders have killed more people more than coronavirus?”³³

Conclusions

With the daily rise of coronavirus cases in Nigeria, the internet continues to be rife with various kinds of video clips that either warn the Nigeria populace about the devastating effects of contracting coronavirus or subtly seek to dissipate people’s fears about the disease. While some music and comic clips sing or narrate about the origin and environmental place from where the coronavirus started, how it is contracted and how to avoid it, others create fear in people by emphasising the potency of the disease, how fast it spreads and kills, why there is no cure and the possible end of the human race. The three comic musical skits studied in this paper are just a few of the many video clips that are on line and created to foster fear in the minds of their audience.

The clip titled “Corona Part 2” satirically transfers the fear of Covid-19 onto middle aged women who are fond of criticising the public instead of establishing avenues to assists young people, other women and their immediate communities. These women hide behind the church/religion to sing songs that frustrate their listeners in church. The untitled clip in which five men go about singing (in Hausa) to warn people of Covid-19 is another funny skit that propels people to face the disease with prayers rather than hiding away in fear and anxiety. These men therefore suggest that the only solution to solving Covid-19 is consistent and repentant prayers via the Muslim and Christian religions. WITDBCAE by Edo Pikin, the last comic skit analysed, displaces the fear of coronavirus by insisting that the Nigerian populace should rather be afraid of corrupt bad government instead of a disease that may likely die off. For this set of comedians, bad governance in Nigeria is more lethal than the Corona virus and according to these comedians, many people die in Nigeria as a result of misappropriation of funds allocated for the treatment of infected patients.

Finally, this paper concludes that all the clips studied target the psychology of people in order to either eradicate their feeling of dread or propagate fear, anxiety and dread in subtle ways. They also use various means to divert the fear of an imposing image (Coronavirus) onto an image that is more acceptable and acts as a substitute for the dangerous Corona virus (e.g. bad governance, over indulging Christian women). In this way, fear and anxiety of Covid-19 becomes more bearable and is not imprinted on the minds of people, who can go about their daily lives without succumbing to psychological breakdowns.

33 Pikin, *What is the Difference...*, video excerpt 01:13–01:16.

Infotainment During the Pandemic: An Analysis of *Gidan Badamasi* Television Drama of Arewa 24

Abstract

Media is central in the matrix of communication exchange between people and authorities, especially in the time of unplanned and unexpected crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper investigates the use of infotainment to educate the public about COVID-19 by a leading Hausa language television station Arewa 24 through one of its prominent weekly drama series *Gidan Badamasi* (“House of Badamasi”). Specifically, this paper analyses how the producer of *Gidan Badamasi* presented the non-pharmaceutical COVID-19 preventive protocols as outlined by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in two specially produced episodes on COVID-19 and aired intermittently on the Arewa 24 Television Station. In its conclusion, the paper acknowledges the display of creativity in presenting the protocols to families and businesses.

Keywords: Infotainment, Infodemic, COVID-19, Television Drama, Arewa 24.

Introduction

On 27th February, 2020 the Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC) confirmed the first case of the Corona Virus Disease in Lagos, Nigeria’s economic capital. This was a few months after the global outbreak of the disease that originated from Wuhan Province in China and its subsequent declaration as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation on 30th January, 2020.

As the world became embroiled in the crises triggered by the global pandemic, the media – as a critical sector of society – has been playing a vital role in combating the pandemic through programmes aimed to enlighten the public. This paper analyses how *Gidan Badamasi*³ Television Drama of Arewa 24 TV station fused information about Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the drama, with the aim of finding out how the drama demonstrates the non-pharmaceutical preventive measures of COVID-19 as outlined by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in two special episodes of *Gidan Badamasi*.

1 PhD, Lecturer in the Department of Information and Media Studies, Faculty of Communication, Bayero University Kano, e-mail: midanja.ims@buk.edu.ng.

2 PhD, Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Information and Media Studies, Faculty of Communication, Bayero University Kano, e-mail: nibrahim.ims@buk.edu.ng.

3 A Hausa Television Drama Series aired daily at intervals on Arewa24.

COVID-19 in Nigeria

Nigeria's first case, according to the NCDC, was reported on 27th February, 2020 involving a 44-year old Italian who had entered the country from Milan through Murtala Muhammed International Airport aboard a Turkish Airline three days earlier, and went to Ogun state where he owned a business. Immediately the case was confirmed, the contacts of the person were identified, including 20 people in Lagos and 40 in Ogun State. Since then, the cases of COVID-19 infections rapidly rose across the country to 168,552 confirmed cases and 2,124 deaths as of July, 2021.⁴

This situation necessitated the Nigerian government to join other governments in the world to take measures to reduce the spread of the disease. These initially started with travel cessation and night-time curfews in Lagos and Abuja. Later, compulsory use of face masks and total lockdown was imposed on the entire country.

Despite these measures, there was unprecedented spread of the disease. The pandemic took its toll on a society that was already be devilled with multi-faceted crises, including the *Boko Haram* insurgency in the north-eastern part of the country, the kidnap-for-ransom and banditry attacks in the north-central and north-west and agitations for secession from the south-eastern part of the country. The imposition of total lockdown without adequate commensurate palliative measures worsened already deepening socio-economic woes. The situation in Nigeria at the time of the global outbreak was described by the NCDC as "...weak health systems compared to countries in other regions; high population density notably in informal peri-urban settlements; prevailing conflicts and humanitarian crises...; and, the contending burden of other diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and sickle cell disease."⁵ In the midst of these socio-economic crises, the Nigerian entertainment sector stepped in by tailoring programmes and music specifically about COVID-19.

COVID-19 Protocols

In order to curb the spread of COVID-19, the NCDC laid down a list of protocols, which – according to the NCDC – included physical spacing between people and between employees and customers. Such a distance should be a minimum of 2 meters; plus regular washing of hands for 20 seconds at home

4 World Health Organisation, *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*, Situation report, No. 42, 2 March 2020, <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200302-sitrep-42-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=edd4> (accessed 15 July 2021).

5 Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, *One Year After: Nigeria's COVID-19 Public Health Response (February 2020 – January 2021)*, Abuja: Federal Ministry of Health, 2021, p. 1.

and the provision of alcohol-based sanitisers or water and soap within business premises; and mandatory use of non-medical face masks/covering.

With regards to weddings and funerals, the NCDC protocol indicted that the number of attendees should be limited to 20 close family members. The NCDC ruled that business owners must ensure the wearing of face masks when selling goods and services, must ensure the provision of sanitisers and appropriate personal protection equipment to all workers and must limit the number of workers and customers at a time to allow for physical distancing within premises.

The Media, Infotainment and Infodemic during COVID-19

In the era of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Nigerian media were confronted with three sets of audience groups; the first group are those who looked at the pandemic pessimistically, as a mere western' conspiracy to reduce the world's population. The second group viewed the pandemic as a disease that only affect well-to-do members of society. The third group involved those that believed there was no pandemic in the region and that the government was only using it to siphon public funds and garner international palliative attention in terms of cash which would be diverted for personal use.

The outbreak of COVID-19 paved way for massive a infodemic campaign. Infodemics according to the PAHO, are defined as an overabundance of information – some accurate and some not – that make it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need them.⁶ It also refers to:

“a large increase in the volume of information associated with a specific topic and whose growth can occur exponentially in a short period of time due to a specific incident, such as the current pandemic. In this situation, misinformation and rumours appear on the scene, along with manipulation of information with doubtful intent. In the information age, this phenomenon is amplified through social networks, spreading further and faster like a virus”.⁷

According to Ayesha Anwar, Meryem Malik, Vaneeza Raees and Anjum Anwar, “whenever there is an outbreak, people tend to turn to the media for information”.⁸ In a study conducted by Nigerian Emergency Management

6 The Pan-American Health Organization, *Understanding the Infodemic & Misinformation in the Fight Against COVID-19*, PAHO Fact Sheet number 5, 2020.

7 John Zarocostas, 'How to fight an infodemic,' *The Lancet*, Vol. 395, Issues 10225, 2020, p. 676.

8 Ayesha Anwar, Meryem Malik, Vaneeza Raees and Anjum Anwar, 'Role of Mass Media and Public Health Communications in the COVID-19 Pandemic,' *Cureus*, 14 Sep 2020, Vol. 12, No. 9, e10453, p. 8.

Agency in August 2020 in collaboration with International Organization for Mitigation, 99% of the respondents in Nigeria were aware of the existence of the coronavirus and their means of getting information about the disease included: awareness campaigns in the local and international media and by word of mouth. The contribution of the media is “manifested in the form of journalists and media outlets deciding to be responsible and thus support the measures announced by governments and health organisations worldwide.”⁹ Anwar et al emphasised this critical role of media in creating awareness and disease control.¹⁰ They observed that the media modifies people’s behaviour and attitudes, which had helped people adopt essential protective measures during the previous outbreak of the H1N1 epidemic in 2009.

Since the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic, governments all over the world have battled to check rumours and misinformation about the disease, something made possible by the internet and social media/networks. This misinformation tended to induce fear in the minds of the people and propagate unscientific and unverified cures for COVID 19. To dispel these rumours and misinformation, governments sought the help of media to supplement regular communication and community engagement. Ideally, media is supposed to relay reliable, fact-checked information that would help citizens make informed and knowledgeable decisions.

According to David and Sommerlad, “the COVID-19 pandemic is a health crisis, but it is at the same time a crisis of information—one which has created an overabundance of information and misinformation that has in turn constructed a global infodemic.”¹¹ The concept of Infodemic, according to Anwar et al, entails the “rapid and far-reaching spread of both accurate and inaccurate information about a disease.”¹² Adding further, Yossi and Sommerlad stated that, “in the context of the COVID-19 infodemic, we have witnessed various attempts by both democratic and authoritarian regimes to increase control over the flow of media and information and to control information regarding the spread of the virus. One important function of the media was to act as mouthpieces for the governmental and public institutions...”¹³

The World Health Organisation (WHO) suggested that experts and authorities should rapidly employ ways to relay necessary and concerning

9 Yossi David and Elizabeth Sommerlad, ‘Media and Information in Times of Crisis: The Case of the COVID-19 Infodemic,’ in *COVID-19 and Similar Futures. Pandemic Geographies*, Gavin J. Andrews, Valerie A. Crooks, Jamie R. Pearce, Jane P. Messina (eds), Cham: Springer, 2021, p. 137.

10 Anwar, Malik, Raees and Anwar, ‘Role of Mass Media....,’ p. 8.

11 David and Sommerlad,, ‘Media and Information....,’ p. 137.

12 Anwar, Malik, Raees and Anwar, ‘Role of Mass Media....,’ p. 10.

13 David and Sommerlad,, ‘Media and Information....,’ p. 137.

information to the public as soon as possible using mass media, including print media (brochures, pamphlets, newspapers), television, Internet, and social media.¹⁴

On the other hand, infotainment is a term that involves blending information into entertainment. Boukes observed that infotainment is an umbrella term for a range of genres that provide a softened form of communication by combining information and entertainment within one outlet.¹⁵ Infotainment has been propelled by a scramble for audiences in a competitive media environment by commercial television stations. “News coverage has thus become a potential source of revenue for media companies instead of just a societal duty. Consequently, many producers of news are guided by a media logic in which news outlets aim to survive commercially, rather than by a public logic in which informing the audience would be the primary goal”¹⁶ This changing nature of news dissemination made news producers tailor information towards the needs of the market, therefore presenting information in the form of entertainment. The news thus became entertaining and entertainment becomes news. This is achieved by making the news more accessible to the audience in terms of language, presentation style and framing, “to evoke engagement of all citizens, political content should be produced in a diverse range of styles, modes, and combinations of topics that match the capacities, experiences, and interests of everybody, including “non-elite” citizens. Infotainment, arguably, does so.”¹⁷

***Gidan Badamasi* Drama of Arewa 24 Television Station**

Arewa 24 television station was launched in 2013 as the first 24-hour Hausa-speaking television station in northern Nigeria through funding from the State Department of the US government in order to promote peace building, ensure deradicalisation and counter violent extremism as guides to its programming. Thus the aim was to provide uninterrupted entertainment to the audience.

Since its commencement of broadcasting in 2014, Arewa 24 has become the foremost Hausa-language television station that magnifies the rich Hausa culture through programming that focuses on deeply-rooted socio-political issues and drama presentations that highlight societal problems. The station had an audience of 38 million as of February 2020. Another core area of the

14 World Health Organization, *Managing Epidemics: Key Facts about Major Deadly Diseases*, Geneva: World Health Organization, 2018.

15 Mark Boukes, ‘Infotainment,’ in *International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies. Forms of Journalism*, T. P. Vos, F. Hanusch, D. Dimitrakopoulou, M. Geertsema-Sligh and A. Sehl (eds), Hoboken (NJ): Wiley-Blackwell, 2019, doi: 10.1002/9781118841570.iejs0132 2019.

16 Boukes, ‘Infotainment,’ p. 1.

17 Boukes, ‘Infotainment,’ p. 3.

station's programming is providing by a platform for up-coming musicians and artists.

In addition, Arewa 24 has a robust online presence, where content is made available on social media such as YouTube. Furthermore, there also exists a phone application *Arewa 24 on Demand* for mobile phone users to subscribe to watch any programme at the viewer's convenience globally.

Gidan Badamasi (Badamasi's House) is one of the favourites of many drama series aired by Arewa 24, running into its third season. The drama falls within the *Sit-Com* genre and has family conflict as its central theme. Family conflicts are common in Hausa television drama and home videos. They "mainly focus attention on family conflicts and upholding traditional Hausa family values."¹⁸ The show is produced and directed by Falalu A. Dorayi. Its central plot is a battle of wits between a rich, but stingy old man, wheel chair-bound Alhaji Badamasi and his many cunning and greedy children, led by his eldest son Dankwambo.

Methodology

This paper is based on a qualitative research technique, whereby it relies on qualitative content analysis of two selected short dramas produced by Falalu A. Darayi. Content analysis is conducted in order to document the words, themes and concepts used within the selected dramas in order to make inferences about the messages they contained and how they are used in educating audiences about non-pharmaceutical COVID-19 preventive protocols as outlined by the NCDC in two selected episodes.

Qualitative Content Analysis is a technique for systematic description of spoken or visual communication. It involves analysis of media content such as television, movies, videos and Internet. The justification for adopting content analysis is that the study focused on the production of drama series, which according to Walizer and Weinir, involves a systematic procedure devised to examine content.¹⁹

Data Presentation and Analyses

For the purpose of qualitative content analysis, two specially produced episodes of *Gidan Badamasi* were selected. They are: (i) *Rashin sani ya fi dare duhu* ("Knowledge is better than ignorance"), and (ii) *Cin kasuwa da Corona* ("Business in Corona").

18 Abdalla Uba Adamu, *Transglobal Media Flows and African Popular Culture – Revolution and Reaction in Muslim Hausa Popular Culture*, Kano: Visually Ethnographic Productions, 2007, p. 79.

19 Michael H. Walizer and Paul L. Wienir, *Research methods and analysis: Searching for relationships*, New York: Harper & Row, 1978.

1. Storyline of *Rashin sani ya fi dare duhu* (2 minutes, 25 seconds)

Three of Alhaji Badamasi's grown-up children are dressed up in preparation to attend a friend's party despite the outbreak of the Corona pandemic. Seated in his courtyard, Alhaji Badamasi queries their decision to attend a party. Their decision to attend was informed by the vast range of misinformation about the Corona Virus, such as that the disease does no harm to young Africans. In agreement with Alhaji Badamasi, the eldest son Dankwambo debunked all the misinformation by highlighting the non-pharmaceutical Covid-19 Protocols and he locks the gates to prevent them from going out.

2. Storyline of *Cin kasuwa da Corona* (2 minutes, 50 seconds)

Adhama, Alhaji Badamasi's son-in-law, is set to return to his business after the lockdown imposed to curtail the spread of Corona. From home he is tutored by his wife on how to observe one of the key Covid-19 protocols before going out. At his place of business he was also instructed by his boss to follow the new business rules during the pandemic. Although he registered displeasure with the new rules, his boss explains that observing the new rules is the only solution to check the spread of Covid-19. He further explains in detail the inevitability of living with the new rules.

Discussion

The first episode of *Gidan Badamasi* is entitled *Rashin Sani Ya Fi Dare Duhu* ("Knowledge is Better than Ignorance") and was produced during the outbreak, with society fighting infodemic in part caused by misinformation about the virus. The episode starts with three children of Alhaji Badamasi coming out of the house and about to get into a car to attend a party. The way the trio were portrayed signifies the young's exuberance; Bazooka is holding a guitar, Gimba is shown dancing his way to the car, while Zilly is well-dressed for a party. However, their encounter with their father, who is seated in the courtyard while shaving, show they were misinformed about the disease that had already consumed the lives of many. Upon sighting them, Alhaji calls them and enquires where they are going 'naked.' The word naked is used to describe their vulnerability, a point Alhaji emphasised "Going out without face masks is like moving around naked."

The children claim that as young people and as Africans, they are immune to the disease. Dankwambo, Alhaji's eldest son drives in to demand what is going on. When the father tells him they are going to a party during the pandemic, he expresses his astonishment and informs them there is no way they can go out without face masks. Dankwambo tells them that "Corona doesn't discriminate

between the young and the old. The only solution is washing hands, wearing of face masks and social distancing.” Zilly and Gimba say they have never seen a patient of Covid-19 and that both are physically sound. Dankwambo further observes that a person may contact Covid-19 and remain asymptomatic and will go about spreading the disease to loved ones like their aged father without knowing it. Upon reaching an understanding about the dangers of attending a party during the pandemic, the house of Badamasi is chained closed.

The second episode is produced as it became clear that people had to learn to live with Corona after months of lockdown and as businesses were gradually re-opening, hence the title *Cin Kasuwa da Corona* (“Business in Corona”). When Adhama is preparing to go out to his business, his wife Hauwa is shown directing him on how to wash his hands properly with soap and water for 20 seconds to avoid spreading the virus and to cover his face with anything that can conveniently cover the mouth and nose, not necessarily the conventional face mask. At the stall, Adhama’s boss, Zaidu is shown directing his customers on the ‘new normal,’ which includes the rule of maintaining a two-meter space between people and applying hand sanitiser before and after touching the wares on display. He also offers face masks for sale at a discounted rate. The programme does not limit the application of Covid-19 protocols to seller and buyer, but also to employees of the same business. It shows how Zaidu uses a tape to demarcate how they will be seating at the stall with Adhama, and also insists that whenever Adhama interacts with the wares for sale he should sanitise his hands with alcohol-based sanitiser. These prevention methods are also re-echoed by Adhama as the only means of preventing the spread.

At the beginning, both episodes start with the regular theme music and an animated picture of Alhaji Badamasi’s house. By so doing, the producer may be evoking the popularity of the programme among the audience of the television station and inducing them to pay attention to what is aired. However, the house is embossed against a background that involves an image of the virus and the titles of the episodes. When observing the framing of the camera shots of the drama, we discover that, despite the display of ignorance about the dangers posed by Covid-19 by some of the characters, all the shots are framed to emphasise social distancing, with each of the characters standing or sitting 2 meters away from each other. At the conclusion of each episode, instead of the end credits to accompany the theme music, a picture of the Producer/Director is shown with a face covering and a bold text that states *Ka rufe fuskar ka, ka kare sauran mutane* (“Cover your face to protect others”), which may have been done to give the audience a lasting impression about the messages contained in each episode.

Conclusions

This paper has shown that information when fused with entertainment can be used to convey messages. *Gidan Badamasi* has incorporated the NCDC-outlined Covid-19 non-pharmaceutical preventive protocols into drama and at the same time debunked infodemics that have accompanied the outbreak of the pandemic using local language understood by the majority of people in northern Nigeria.

The findings of this research are:

1. Local drama in local language is a channel of communication that can be harvested towards the attainment of societal goals in the time of the pandemic.
2. *Gidan Badamasi* television drama utilises characters, actions, dialogues and camera framing to present Covid-19 prevention protocols to families.
3. The drama is also used to discredit misinformation that feeds the infodemic in society
4. The drama subtly educates businesses on how to operate during the pandemic.

Based on the above findings, this research concludes that television dramas can be used to promote a social cause, in this case dramas presenting Covid-19 prevention protocols to families and businesses on how to restart after lockdown. However, the subject of further research may be to investigate the extent to which this changes the attitudes of media audiences.

Oral Literature and Comic Books as a Form of Promotion and Social Commentary: the Response of Kugali to the Global Lockdown

Abstract

We are living in interesting times. Times of plague – the pandemic of Covid 19 – changed the world as we knew it. Its beginning can perhaps be considered the most dire time so far because of the dominant feeling of uncertainty, which had to be tackled on a psychological level. This paper refers mostly to the events of 2020 and concentrates on the ways in which we adapted to the new situation. In this regard, the emphasis here is on the actions of Kugali – a leading African comic book publisher.

Keywords: Times of Plague, Oral Literature, Comic Book, Graphic Novel, Popular Culture.

Introduction

2020 was supposed to be remembered for the numerous events on the international and local stages. Be it the Tokyo Summer Olympics, the European Football Championships, the Expo exhibition in Dubai, the Nigeria Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition in Lagos or even the National Buffalo Chicken Wing Festival held in Buffalo. It simply had something for everybody, but nothing turned out as planned. 2020, instead of bringing sporting emotions to the masses and business opportunities to global shareholders, brought a surprising lesson and taught the world to always expect the unexpected. COVID-19 – an infectious disease first reported in Wuhan, China as an uncommon type of pneumonia – rapidly spread to all continents. Now, with the global number of cases at 257,490,283 and the death toll surpassing 5 million,² it has become the biggest threat modern society has had to face in many years.

Despite the seriousness of the circumstances, the following paper is not going to evaluate the global pandemic situation, although some details will be mentioned as they are necessary to fully understand the changes in the social and economic environment, but they will not represent the main part of the

1 Assistant Professor, Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences, e-mail: mkrasniewski@iksio.pan.pl.

2 This type of data is dynamic. Presented figures refer to November 2021, but will be obviously higher at the time of publication.

study, which will concentrate on one specific case, namely the response of Kugali, one of the leaders of the comic book industry on the African continent³ to the lockdown situation. It will explore various implications of the publisher's actions and show the potential changes in the entertainment industry. The choice of the topic is deliberate. It starts with the statement that comic books, if carefully made, can be treated as a bridge that connects generation gaps and introduces traditional oral literature elements to younger generations. Thus, we will try to elaborate if and how the graphic novel can be used as a tool for informal education. Those elements and how they are presented will also be studied in the paper, as well as the general role of popular culture within the society. However, before we move on to the more detailed section let's shed some light on the key elements of the social transitions triggered by this "irregular pneumonia" or "little flu."⁴

COVID-19 – Crisis, Response, and... Crisis Again?

The pandemic brought many changes in social behaviour as countries had to adapt to the new situation, minimise the number of new cases to keep the health industry running and prevent the spread of the disease to keep the epidemic under control. Some of them learnt from early mistakes, like Italy and Spain, and the others, like Brazil, have paid dire price for their negligence. While living in the middle of the historic event it is hard to say how the situation will unfold as it can change greatly even between the time of writing this paper and the time of the publication of the volume. For now, we can only hope that it will go in the positive direction, but the global tendency to loosen the restrictions, which may be observed in May and June, should raise some legitimate concerns. As for now, we can only refer to the events that have happened already or are happening right now. We can make some predictions, but we should consider the future mostly as a blank book which is yet to be written.

The fact is that the Coronavirus pandemic has made the world stop moving, not literally of course but the results are the same. Almost all international events, including those mentioned in the opening sentence of this paper, have been either cancelled or postponed. From the ones listed above, the Chicken Wings were longest in the fight, but finally lost the battle and its September date

3 More information about the company, its mission statement and goals can be found here: <https://kugali.com/>.

4 As the disease was compared by the Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro at a public speech on March 24th 2020. The statement was subsequently quoted by many sources including CNN. See: Flora Charner, 'Bolsonaro Continues to Dismiss Covid-19 Threat as Cases Skyrocket in Brazil,' *CNN*, 8 May 2020: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/08/americas/brazil-coronavirus-bolsonaro-response-intl/index.html> (accessed 31 May 2020).

could not be maintained as the death toll in USA in late May 2020 surpassed 100,000⁵ and the disease's spread was not showing any visible signs of slowing down.

The unrelenting rules of social distancing have a similar face all around the globe and the most common among them is the ban on mass gatherings, which made the organisation of Expo or the Olympics literally impossible. Even without the restrictions, any decision to launch an event on such a global scale would go against common sense, as it can be assumed without a doubt that among the guests will also be also the one who is not invited, but remains invisible and deadly all the same. This personification of the virus is intentional as it is a common feature of the educational or satirical cartoons and comics that are made to teach about virus prevention measures⁶ or to ridicule the lack of proper response from governments or society. It makes sense as COVID-19 is not only a real threat, but it also became an enemy to many people around the globe. Some of them are facing the threat on a daily basis such as healthcare workers or those running services which are essential to the economy and the others were forced to stay at home by the various forms of movement restriction.

Lockdown measures vary from place to place but almost everywhere around the globe a partial or even total limit on movement was imposed. Here, African countries are not the exception. The impact of the postponement or cancellation of a sports event on the life of ordinary people is insignificant at best. We can safely assume that the statistical Kenyan or Ethiopian can live their life without seeing the efforts of the country's world class Olympic runners. Nigerian football fans probably did not even notice the postponement of the event as the Olympic Eagles did not qualify. However, all of them will certainly face difficulties in their everyday life as the social and economic implications of the lockdown are a totally different case. Getting back to the sports example, a person can live a lifetime without seeing a football match, but the same person will not live longer than two weeks if he will be deprived of the basic necessities, which are food, water, shelter and, at the times of plague, also health care. Two weeks is the most drastic scenario, but it doesn't change the fact that the worldwide lockdown will most likely result in economic recession even in strong economies. It is needless to say that most Sub-Saharan African countries are not global leaders as far as the economy and

5 'COVID-19 Dashboard by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University (JHU),' Arc GIS Dashboards website, 2020, <https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6> (accessed 31 May 2020, data currently available with daily updates).

6 It is usually presented as a grim, greenish ball with somehow sinister facial features.

social services are concerned and – with low literacy rates⁷ and many people working in the informal sector – they may prove to be more vulnerable if the economic hiatus lasts too long.

Nigeria first introduced the lockdown on 30th March 2020 in three major centres of the epidemic: Lagos, Ogun State and Abuja, which is the Federal Capital Territory.⁸ With the spread of the virus, the regulations were stretched accordingly and soon after movement limitations were introduced nationwide taking very restrictive measures in various places and sparking protests all over the country. One person died and 90 people were arrested in Kusada after riots erupted on 28th March as a response to the Katsina State government decision to ban congregational prayers in the mosques. Property damage included burning down local police headquarters and official residence of the Divisional Police Officer.⁹ At the end of April unrest erupted in Lagos where construction and refinery workers protested against the restrictions of the lockdown. According to the protesters, the limitations of movement deprived them from any source of income. As a result, five police officers were injured, two police posts were devastated and 50 people were arrested¹⁰ These are just two examples, which show different aspects of lockdown-related frustration. This dissent in turn is also spreading to different social groups due to the abuse of power by local officials and police brutality in imposing lockdown restrictions. Also, the imposition of the restrictive lockdown measures can be considered one of the reasons behind the eruption of terrorist-related violence in the northern states of the federation, where a series of attacks in the villages of Katsina, Kaduna, Borno, Zamfara and other places led to the destruction of property and the deaths of hundreds of people in late May and early June.¹¹ It is reasonable to see a connection here as the restriction of movement leads to the restriction of any work-related activity in the labour sector and thus makes desperate, unqualified workers more vulnerable to indoctrination, especially when brainwashing is accompanied by a piece of meat and a bowl of *tuwo*. Growing insecurity in the

7 'Nigeria Literacy Rate 1991–2022,' *Macrotrends*, 2020, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/NGA/nigeria/literacy-rate> (accessed 31 May 2020).

8 Fidelis Mbah, 'Nigeria announces lockdown of major cities to curb coronavirus,' *Al Jazeera*, 30 March 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/nigeria-announces-lockdown-major-cities-curb-coronavirus-200330095100706.html> (accessed 30 March 2020).

9 Abu Maguba, 'COVID-19 Riots: One dead in Katsina as rioters raze police station over restriction on congregational prayers,' *The Sun*, 28 March 2020, <https://www.sunnewsonline.com/covid-19-riots-one-dead-in-katsina-as-rioters-raze-police-station-over-restriction-on-congregational-prayers/> (accessed 30 March 2020).

10 AFP, 'Nigerian workers riot over Covid-19 lockdown,' *New Straits Times*, 28 April 2020, <https://www.nst.com.my/world/world/2020/04/588042/nigerian-workers-riot-over-covid-19-lockdown> (accessed 30 April 2020).

11 '#NorthernLivesMatter: See di five recent attacks wey shake northern Nigeria,' *BBC Pidgin*, 11 June 2020 <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/media-53012057> (accessed 12 June 2021).

region led to the creation of the hashtag #NorthernLivesMatter¹² used in social media by people demanding action from the federal government.

At the time of writing, it was not possible to see how the situation will unfold but what is certain is the fact that growing tensions accompanied by the heavy social and economic costs of the lockdown were the reason behind the governmental plan to gradually ease the lockdown regulations starting from 5th May 2020. However, with the number of cases still growing at the time of writing and the mortality rate higher than in the neighbouring countries of similar social and economic background, the situation is far from normal.¹³ Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the opening of the economy, especially in the regions with the highest number of cases (like Kano) will go slower than it was initially planned and that some lockdown restrictions might be reintroduced. Then, given the fact that the economic situation of the most vulnerable people didn't change, the ongoing crisis can only escalate unless it's properly addressed by the federal government.

It is needless to say that lockdown restrictions affected the labour sector and this fact is visible in the examples presented above. However, the working class who expressed their righteous anger in Lagos are not the only ones affected by the restrictions. They had an impact on everybody, as even a handful of company workers who were able to perform their duties online were also affected by the curfew that limited the freedom of movement and the possibilities to acquire food and resources. Their struggle was obviously minimal if compared to the most vulnerable but is accompanied by problems of members of the modern "middle class," that is shop and hotel owners, but also traders and other groups whose income is related to services. In the modern economy, if one sector is struggling others will follow, as people will be less likely to spend their money on things that are not considered non-essential. That's why industries like entertainment, publishing or mass media can become indirectly affected even if the service provided by them can be moved to the Internet or already exists mostly online.¹⁴ Also, those three sectors, even in "normal" times, have the highest impact on the social perception of reality and their role increases when people look for a reliable source of information about the disease or the situation in the country or simply when they are trying to find some relief

12 Developed as an obvious reference to the #BlackLivesMatter slogan which became omnipresent in the news media after the killing of George Floyd by the police in Minneapolis.

13 'Coronavirus: what Nigeria can do post lockdown,' *The Conversation*, 2 June 2020, <https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-what-nigeria-can-do-post-lockdown-138995> (accessed 4 June 2020).

14 Of the three, the entertainment is definitely hit by the restriction of movement and public gatherings which prevent the organisation of any events, but income can be supplemented by the online sale of the entertainment products.

from everyday struggles. Even if the said people do not have the means to pay for the content. Thus, paradoxically, some media and publishing houses can actually find the situation somehow beneficial.

Apart from economic, the lockdown can also have a significant cultural impact as people who are unable to do physical shopping develop different entertainment habits and transfer their activities online. Firstly, because of lack of choice and, later, because of caution and comfort of internet browsing and online shopping. This means that the people who are somehow “addicted” to cultural content, might transfer their interest from live performances or movie screenings and physical copies of music cd’s, books, comics and magazines to their digital equivalents even if they have been more likely to avoid them before the pandemic. As with all the predictions, this one is yet to be proven, but some moves in the entertainment industry (online exhibitions, online theatre, concerts, cinema etc.) might facilitate the transition. By making some moves to support people during lockdown and quarantine, the publisher or creator can increase recognition and positive perception of the brand. The same means can be used to simply promote products or to raise awareness about the pandemic situation or other social matters.

This leads us to the actions of the main protagonist of this paper – Kugali Media – as it is a publishing house that fits all the categories mentioned above. We can assume that all these reasons were behind the publisher’s decision to release free comics on 5th April, 2nd May 2020 and 10th July 2020. However, in the course of the paper, we will try to answer the question of whether self-promotion was the only motivation behind it.

Kugali Media – Mission and Background

Linking Kugali Media with the problems of the Nigerian lockdown is not obvious but it is valid. The self-proclaimed biggest pan-African comic book publisher¹⁵ has its headquarters in London, UK, but also maintains strong links with the most populous Sub-Saharan Country. It would be enough to check the background of the company’s founders – Fikayo Adeola, Hamid Ibrahim, Ziki Nelson and ToluOlowofoyeku who (apart of Hamid Ibrahim who was born in Uganda) either reside in Nigeria or are members of the Nigerian diaspora in the UK. The leaders share a lot of know-how between themselves with Hamid Ibrahim having experience at the highest level of video design as a former technical director at MPC, an award-winning visual effect production house which contributed to blockbusters like *Dumbo* and *Lion King*. Tolu

15 This statement is as bold as it’s true. In the world dominated by the Western oriented and produced cultural products there’s not much competition for a platform which promotes African themed comic books.

Olowofoyeku before starting Kugali gained experience in the independent video game production sector and started his own studio called Illuminare Game Studios.¹⁶ The experience, together with the passion for comic books and visual arts (video games, cartoons, augmented reality) led to the creation of a platform with the focus on “telling stories inspired by African culture using comic books, art and augmented reality.” According to Kugali, “these are stories that respect history, embrace the present and imagine the future of Africa.”¹⁷ This corresponds with the interests of the particular members of the founding group. As Ziki Nelson stated in an interview with *Riot* in October 2019, one of his favourite modern comic book stories is “*Kayin and Abeni*, which is a Sci-Fi comic that uses traditional African art and aesthetics to create a new take on what the future might look like. All of the weapons, tech and gadgets are inspired by traditional African art and design and what that gives you is a Sci-Fi experience unlike any you’ve seen before.”¹⁸ Here we can see a clear embracement of afrofuturism, deeply soaked in the traditional African juice and the firm belief that an African perspective can greatly enrich current perceptions of the entertainment industry. This in turn is reflected in the publisher’s portfolio as Kugali is clearly doing its best to use the platform for the promotion for artists who come from different parts of the African continent but who share similar views on the importance of tradition and social background of the presented stories.

Despite a rather short time on the market¹⁹ Kugali has already published two comic book anthologies and created a significant database of digital comics, including works from Nigeria, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Uganda and other Sub-Saharan countries. However, although recognised locally, the company is still waiting for a major breakthrough and the number of 3,886 followers²⁰ of the Kugali’s social media channel is hardly impressive if we consider the publisher’s goals and ambitions. Moreover, the recent influx of fans²¹ is most likely related to the announcement of *Iwájú* – the first, African-themed animation series, which is going to be produced by Kugali in cooperation with Disney and released on the media giant’s streaming service – Disney+ – in 2022.²²

16 All the biographical notes can be found on the publisher’s website: <https://kugali.com>.

17 Mission statement can be found on: <https://kugali.com/pages/about-us>.

18 An interview with Ziki Nelson, *Riot*, (n.d.), available on: <https://timetoriot.com/blog/friday-riot-ziki-nelson> (accessed 12 June 2021).

19 Domain kugali.com was created on 25th November 2015.

20 And 3,703 “Likes”, by November 2021.

21 Just at the end of the promotional campaign it was 2745 followers and 2643 “Likes”, <https://www.facebook.com/kugalimedia/> on 29 June 2020 and 2640 (!) on 29 July 2020.

22 The announcement first appeared on social media on 11 December 2020: <https://www.facebook.com/DisneyAnimation/posts/10158591064476855> (accessed 12 December 2020).

The reality is that online distribution and social media following are significant capital, which can greatly influence sales either by the direct approach of buyers/followers or by increased range of posts and higher recognition of the company's actions. Higher following simply means that the posts have a bigger audience and are more likely to be commented or shared, thus increasing the fan and buyer base. Looking from this perspective, Kugali's decision to release free comics is a very pragmatic, promotional move as by giving people samples of the products in distribution, the company can gain new followers and encourage the current ones, especially those who are quietly following updates on social media, to actually invest in the content by buying a particular product or by supporting the distributor through its *Patreon* channel.

This is a common marketing move in use for almost any type of product, be it a shampoo, perfume, dog food, music, video games and obviously – a comic book. If we locate this action in the context of the global pandemic, we have another potential benefit as any company which releases free content at the time of the forced lockdown can expect such a move to be seen as pro-customer as they are literally supporting the people who are forced to stay at home during quarantine or due to the governmental restriction of movement. They simply aim to make the lockdown more bearable. Moreover, in the comic book industry, the example for this kind of action came from the very top as on 3rd April 2020, just two days before Kugali's announcement, Marvel – one of the world's biggest publishers of the graphic novels and a pop culture giant, released some of its older and most classical series²³. The offer expired in May as the move, apart from pro-customer and covid-related reasons, was most likely aimed at popularising the publisher's service, Marvel Unlimited, a system of subscription-based content access.

It is worth pointing out that Kugali didn't make any direct reference to the action of its much bigger cousin, but regarding the position of Marvel in the industry and the fact that the publishers of African comics are publishing them because of a passion for both Africa and comics, we can safely assume that in this case Marvel was a source of inspiration. To put it simply, it would be barely possible if the people who devote their professional life to publishing comics were not aware of the promotional actions of the global leader in comic book publishing. By making this assumption, it would be easy to skip to the quick conclusion that the small company simply followed the example of the big one and jumped onto the pandemic bandwagon to warm up its image, increase its visibility and increase sales.

23 Jon Porter, 'Marvel is making some of its comics free while we're all stuck inside,' *The Verge*, 3 April 2020, <https://www.theverge.com/2020/4/3/21206652/marvel-unlimited-free-comics-spider-man-captain-america-x-men-coronavirus> (accessed 29 June 2020).

This conclusion, however, would be as quick as it would be diminishing for Kugali's efforts, given the quality and type of content released. Kugali's portfolio is impressive if we talk about the African comic book and visual novel, which means that within a niche it is a global leader, but the exact number of titles available in the company's distribution could not be even remotely compared with the respective repositories of the big players – Marvel and DC²⁴. Despite this, Kugali released 8 titles in two bundles, which were made available to the public 5th April and 2nd May 2020, respectively. The third bundle, which includes another 4 comics, came out without announcement on 10th July 2020 and all of them are available at the publisher's website – kugali.com.²⁵ Some of them were complete stories within a single issue, while others are part of ongoing series, so the volumes which were made available can be considered an extended teaser. If we consider that one of the company's main goals is to promote African comics as a medium and African storytelling in general, we have to acknowledge the fact that the released books, which are a significant part of the stock, represent various approach towards the content and can serve as a promotional tool for both. After all, what is a better way to promote something than to give people free access?

Lessons from the Times of Plague

The comic book is a pop culture product. This banal statement corresponds with a highly favoured definition of popular culture²⁶ and is unlikely to fit into the standards of so-called "high culture," which is characterised by the significant artistic standard²⁷ and while being mass produced, serves commercial purposes (in contrast to high culture, which is a result of individual creation²⁸). It also corresponds with the common perception of the comic as a product of simple entertainment value, which targets audiences among children and teenagers. As long as the definition is valid, we have to admit that the comic book is also a subject of stereotypes. Storey, while dismantling and deconstructing various definitions of popular culture, underlines the common paradigm of the perception of the cultural product, while pointing out and tackling the idea of opposition between inferior popular culture and widely respected high culture.²⁹ When it comes to comic books, this rather simplistic classification is true in most cases, especially the part about mass-produced

24 DC Entertainment also released some free content and included some significant discount on some of its flagship titles on 21 April 2020.

25 Kugali Media website, <https://kugali.com/> (accessed 10 July 2020).

26 John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture, 5th Ed.*, New York: Pearson Longman, 2009, p. 6.

27 Storey, *Cultural Theory*..., p. 7.

28 Storey, *Cultural Theory*..., p. 8.

29 Storey, *Cultural Theory*..., p. 8.

content with disputable artistic value and the purpose of production being clearly commercially oriented. However, 'comics' is a very wide category as it includes short stories or even single strips made for satirical purposes as well as long standing series of many volumes. Thus, it is impossible to impose similar measures to such a wide and developed phenomenon. Here, the quality of the content is a subject to variation, so blind application of the common definition would be inappropriate. It is similar if we use the subjectivity of opinion and just say that music in general lacks any artistic value just because Beyoncé's songs lack quality.

Mila Bongco defines comic books as a "tangle of 'competing languages' comprising both graphic and verbal signs,"³⁰ thus "the key to understand comic art does not lie in the words or pictures alone but in the interaction between them."³¹ As we can see, we have two, equally important, parts of content: graphics and writing. So, if we agree that graphics and painting are art forms, then the same can be said about literature and writing. Why should the product, a combination of these two aspects, by definition be disregarded artistically? Let's be serious and judge each product by its unique value and consider comics as a medium which stands on and even crosses the border between art and literature. We thus have to admit that the definition of art and "high" culture is constantly changing and that the paintings by Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró or Solo Ouedraogo would not have been considered "artistic" enough in the 17th Century when royal courts in Europe were impressed by the highly realistic works of Diego Velázquez. Culture and reception of art changes along with society and the borders between "popular" and "high" are becoming more fluid, with the former potentially being absorbed by the latter. This process is currently visible in many forms of artistic expression which were previously considered as "childish" or "popular" entertainment, be it movies, video games and also comic books or comic art in general. Also, worth mentioning here is that the wide category of "youth" is flexible. There are visible differences between societies as young people have had to adjust to different social and economic environments, which in turn often forcing faster adaptation and, in some areas, hastening inter-generational change.³² As we'll see it later in the paper, African comic books have a tendency to include more mature content and this might be a result of the general, economically forced shift of young people towards social roles more suitable for adults.

30 Mia Bongco, *Reading Comics. Language, Culture and the Concept of Superhero in Comic Books*, New York: Rutledge, 2013, p. XV.

31 Bongco, *Reading Comics...*, p. XV.

32 Catrine Christiansen, Mats Utas and Henrik E. Vigh. (eds), *Navigating Youth, Generating Adulthood. Social Becoming in an African Continent*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2006, pp. 12–14.

Even if we leave behind the discussion about the artistic value of some pop culture products, we have to agree with the statement of Hall and Whannel, namely that “the culture provided by the commercial entertainment market... plays a crucial role. It mirrors attitudes and sentiments which are already there, and at the same time provides an expressive field and a set of symbols through which these attitudes can be projected.”³³ This means that even purely commercial products are a reflection of society and can provide useful information for the study of the habits, behaviour and values of their target audience.

This long introduction was important as comic books are generally considered a medium that lacks sufficient quality and seriousness to be considered a carrier of values or social commentary. Even *Le Grand Pouvoir du Chninkel* by Rosiński and Van Hamme³⁴ or *Maus*³⁵ by Art Spiegelman were not enough to change this perception. Hopefully, this paper can contribute to a change in the negative stereotype and prove that a graphic novel can be a useful medium to carry cultural values and important messages. Quite surprisingly, such elements can be found in the African comics released by Kugali in the lockdown related “giveaway” and this is certainly one of the lessons from the times of plague.

We can synthesise some key features of the presented content and Kugali, as a leading publisher of comic books made in Africa, can be considered a valid window to peek into the trends which dominate the comic book industry on the continent. Of course, the presented works are made for entertainment and as such follow the definitions of popular culture listed above. They all have more or less dynamic writing, the artwork in general is good and they have some unique, African feeling. The entertainment aspects, despite the obvious value related to graphics and writing, will be less important in this study, but on top of that we can see some added value when the comic book goes beyond its stereotypical niche and tries to contribute to the widely considered idea of cultural and social studies.

On the basis of the presented works we can divide the content into its two most significant trends, namely: cultural values and social commentary. However, as we will see below, the above-mentioned trends are actually only guidelines for allocation of the source material as they can mingle and transpire between themselves within a particular volume. Thus, the tag will be given on the basis of the dominant factor and the explanation for this kind of approach will be given in the next paragraph, namely:

33 Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel, *The Popular Arts*, London: Hutchinson, 1964, p. 276.

34 Grzegorz Rosiński and Jean Van Hamme, *Le Grand Pouvoir du Chninkel*, Tournai: Casterman, 1988.

35 Art Spiegelman, *Maus*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1991.

Culture, Society and the Entertainment Industry

Culture, especially its material, literary and artistic forms, is a product of society, but at the same time society itself is shaped by the dominant culture. This dual connotation is not surprising as we should consider both culture and society as dynamic. Both society and culture absorb new elements of reality related to religious, economic or social factors present on global and local levels. While being dynamic and adaptive,³⁶ at the same time culture oscillates around some core values and common heritage, which are considered an important part of the identity of the particular group. Be it an ethnic group, nation, local community or even subculture. By acknowledging the existence of the traditional (core) values and common cultural heritage within the group, we will have to assume that those elements are known to most of the members of the particular group as they are introduced and are absorbed naturally in the early stages of upbringing and cultural development. Based on the above statements, it should not be surprising that in many cases an author's work is based or takes direct inspiration from cultural background and tradition. So, a huge repository of traditional cultural content can become an obvious source of inspiration for any modern artistic product, be it a painting, sculpture, music, film or any form of artistic expression related to writing like literature and the comic book. The latter becomes an especially useful medium if we talk about traditional elements. Expression here includes writing and graphical presentation, which can take the form of painting or even a simple drawing. The crucial point here is the imagination of the author as the medium gives the possibility to recreate any mythological or supernatural creature only with the use of pen and paper. The imagination and skills of the author are aimed to inspire the imagination of the reader, so the presentation can be more symbolic than realistic if this style suits the artist's way of presentation of the story. As a result, any tale about spiritual cults, ancient gods or animal spirits can be told with simple means as the presentation is not harmed by the limitations of the budget which, in the case of the movie industry, can turn even the gloomiest horror story into an unwanted comedy. Simply because of the lack of resources required to create realistic special effects.³⁷ So the symbolic presentation of the graphical elements of the story is part of the agreement between the author and the reader and is one of the key features of the comic book which puts

36 Yes, even radicalisation in the context of the spread of cultural values can be considered an adaptive move, as the culture has to adapt to the new reality by applying new measures of control and prevent influences which are considered harmful by cultural radicals.

37 However, lack of resources doesn't seem to stop the creators of Nigerian movies as supernatural themes accompanied by home-made FX are one of the most popular movie genres currently produced. This trend influences also the other markets such as Ghana movie industry which takes direct inspiration from Nollywood.

unimpeded imagination ahead of realism. Also, the graphic novel itself is a medium that traditionally favours stories with supernatural elements. This fact is most likely related with the history of the genre and the initial audience of the mass produced comic book series being children and teenagers.

On the basis of the above statements we can say that cultural values, be they elements of traditional religions, customs or oral literature, are a common feature of the African comic. We can also state, that apart from the place of origin, the rich influences of African culture are what make these graphic novels African. That is why the initial division of the content presented by Kugali has a fluent character and the works chosen to represent the trends analysed in this paper are those where some particular elements prevail over others. This division is important as it will allow us to show the different functions deployed within the modern cultural medium that is the comic book.

The Comic Book as a Guardian of Cultural Values

Among the stories released by Kugali in the lockdown bundles we have many that include traditional elements, but some of them emphasise oral literature and tradition more than others. One of them is *Mumu Juju*³⁸ by Etubi Onucheyo with the participation of Ifesisnachi Ojikwe.³⁹ It is a comedy piece about smashing demons with a club. Simple as that. The comic has two main protagonists – Mortar and Pestle⁴⁰ – fighters with opposing characteristics – fat and lazy/fit and diligent. It is a dynamic story with cartoonish graphics taking some inspiration from Japanese manga (on page 16 for example). Despite its mostly entertaining character it is soaked in Yoruba mythology, as the demons are the emissaries of Shango, the god of thunder, and the warriors are apparently followers of Ogun, the god of war.⁴¹ *Juju* here is the term used to distinguish the demonic presence and *Mumu* is explained as an expression “used mainly as an insult to someone with low intellect or foolish characteristics.”⁴² This explanation is provided by the author himself; he decided to include a small dictionary of Yoruba and pidgin terms at the end of the first episode. Here we have some glimpses into the local culture and tradition, with the names of food, customs and supernatural beings. The comic itself, despite its rather pretextual storyline can serve as an example of the satirical adaptation of local tradition.

38 Etubi Onucheyo and Ifesisnachi Ojikwe, *Mumu Juju*, (pt. 1, pt. 2), Kugali Media, 2020.

39 Ifesisnachi Ojikwe created pages 7–8 in part 1.

40 Their names, however, are revealed only in the second volume released within the third bundle.

41 As far as we can assume this fact from the insult “Ogun’s dustbin” addressed to one of the warriors. Onucheyo and Ojikwe, *Mumu...*, p. 13.

42 Onucheyo and Ojikwe, *Mumu...*, p. 16.

A more serious approach was taken by Adeniyi Adeniji, the creator of *Taboo: A Date with Death*,⁴³ written and drawn with the guest participation of Kayode “Kro” Odimole. Apparently, the comic was previously published in an anthology under the same name, which was a selection of African horror stories.

It’s a short graphic novel with rather basic artwork and an intriguing story. It starts centuries ago somewhere in the western part of modern-day Nigeria (called simply “Western Provinces”), where Amusa, a night-hunter leaves the hut which he inhabits with his wife and an infant child. He is going out to provide for his family. Amusa is a man of principle who never opposes the gods or questions customs, but yet, fate has to test the strength of his character. On the way back he sees fire and immediately knows that something is wrong. He runs to his household, but it’s too late as his wife and child are already dead. His heart is broken, but even in grief he is not insulting the gods, but instead asking them one question – “why he couldn’t have been there with them.”⁴⁴ Then, out of the dark, the Reaper appears. He tells the hunter that because of Amusa’s piety and the fact that he never insulted the heavens nor questions his fate, he and his descendants will be able to obtain foreknowledge of their fate, and that any time they will see Death will mean that their final hour is near. We don’t know how the prophecy worked for Amusa, we can assume however that he lived long enough to sire children with a different woman and hope that he had a long and successful life. Just after his initial meeting with Death, the story moves us to modern times when one of his descendants – Charles – is enjoying a walk in some Western city. He has heard the stories about the forebringer of fate from his grandmother, but he didn’t believe them. This will change, however, and change quite suddenly when, to his shock, he sees a towering figure looming over him. A tall pale man, with a skull-like face and big eyes without eyelids. Hard to be mistaken, right? It’s the anthropomorphic personification of Death present in the European visual arts since early medieval times. Death, however, seems confused by the meeting. He mentions Charles’ name and strays his eyes as the question mark appears over his head. The boy uses this moment to run away and he runs as far as he can. While trying to outrun Death, he takes a plane, then the *danfo* and finally reaches the suburbs of Abeokuta. It’s the former Western Region so we can assume that this is his family house built on land acquired by Amusa. Although no family members are present, the house is not empty and Charles is going to learn this fact as soon as he enters the building. The stories were true: the one who greets him in the house is Death himself! Charles accepts his fate, after all

43 Adeniyi Adeniji, *Taboo – A Date with Death*, Kugali Media, 2020.

44 Adeniji, *Taboo*..., p. 4.

you can't avoid Death if he is standing in front of you wearing a black suit. He has only one question to ask to the one who brings the end, and this is about Death's confusion during the first meeting not long ago, but in a far-away land. Death's answer is simple "I was surprised to see you all the way over there," he says with a pensive expression "because I knew we had an appointment here."⁴⁵

It's a pretty good twist, right? What makes it even more interesting is the fact that it is the most traditional element of the storyline, as *A Date with Death* is an actual adaptation of a centuries old fairy tale. This fact is hardly surprising as the author doesn't hide this influence and actually states on the cover that the comic is based on the story told by Michael Adekunle. However, it was not possible to reach this particular version of the story and one of the key features of the folktale and oral literature is the fact that the content is subject to variation. The story changes slightly as each storyteller usually adds some personal flavour and adapts it to the local social environment. What is important is the message carried by the fable and the educational values which are transferred through its entertaining presentation. As a result folktales, especially the old ones, usually exist in numerous versions and Adeniji's comic adaptation is actually a modernised version of the Hausa story *The Merchant and Death* published by Piłaszewicz⁴⁶ in his compilation of Hausa folktales and further analysed by Kraśniewski.⁴⁷ This particular version was most likely collected in the Katsina area,⁴⁸ but as it is with the oral literature, the exact place of origin of the story is unknown. We can only assume that it migrated from one region to another. However, the name Amusa as a derivation of the common Muslim name gives us some hint about the direction of this migration and further justifies the reference to the Hausa version.

In regard of the comic book adaptation, it is quite surprising that the older version oscillates around the topic of slavery and relations between slaves and their masters. Here, we have a wealthy merchant, owner of many slaves, houses and camels. One day he visits the seer to learn about the date of his departure from this world and the circumstances of his death. The soothsayer is one of the good and reliable ones so he predicts that after many years of a good and prosperous life the merchant will die on Friday and then points out the exact month and year. When the time comes, the merchant is obviously

45 Adeniji, *Taboo...*, p. 16.

46 Stanisław Piłaszewicz, *Egzotyczny świat sawanny. Kultura i cywilizacja ludu Hausa* [Exotic World of the Savannah. Culture and Civilisation of the Hausa People], Warszawa: Dialog, 1995, pp. 211–213.

47 Mariusz Kraśniewski, *Obraz niewolnictwa w piśmiennictwie hausa i w relacjach podróżników*, Warszawa: Askon, 2014, pp. 47–48.

48 As explained in: Kraśniewski, *Obraz niewolnictwa...*, p. 48, footnote 55.

worried, he stays in his house all day and all his business in town is conducted by a trusted slave. Two Fridays pass and suddenly, the slave comes back from the market pale and frightened as if he has seen Death himself. This actually is the case as a dark figure had greeted him and stared straight into his eyes! Now the master is scared as well, only one Friday is left until the month finishes, so he decides to take some drastic measures. He gives the slave his clothes and orders him to conduct normal business and pretend that he's his own master. At the same time, the merchant, dressed in poor *riga*, travels to the village of Tudun Malga where he has one of his houses. Everything works well, but when Friday comes, Death comes again to the market of the merchant's home town. When he sees Death the slave can say only one thing "I'm ready." He whispers. But Death is not looking for him, he's here for a different person. The slave, however, wants to protect his master even now and boldly communicates that he's not in the town. "I know" – Death responds. "I will meet him in the evening and not here, but in Tudun Malga, this appointment was made long time ago."⁴⁹

As we can see, despite changes in setting, in both versions we have the same moral and the same lessons can be learned from the story. Even some stages of the story are similar as the slave's experience on the market is as thrilling as the street encounter which in the future will scare Charles so much that he will run straight to Abeokuta. Thus, we can summarise both the transcription of the old folktale and modern comic book with the final page of the latter. It ends with one single cadre showing an open door and abandoned backpack and the caption says, "in the end we shall all have our <date with death>."⁵⁰ This is a lesson about the inevitability of fate and certainty of death for all those who are alive. It shows that it doesn't make sense to run away when the plan of life was already written. Clearly it is a very pertinent statement during the pandemic.

If compared with the orature's content, the adaptation shows that even while stripped of the theatrical elements characteristic of the presentation of a folktale in the traditional setting, it is possible to translate the fable itself into the new medium and keep the message intact. This means that in this and similar cases, comic books can be used not only to preserve oral literature and introduce it to the wider audience, but can also serve as a way to transmit the educational elements of the orature to new generations.

A similar approach was taken by the creator of another comic released in the bundle, the one created by Senegalese artist Juni Ba. *Ndaw*,⁵¹ is not only

49 Stanisław Piłaszewicz, *Egzotyczny świat sawanny...*, p. 213.

50 Adeniji, *Taboo...*, p. 17.

51 Juni Ba, *Ndaw*, Kugali Media, 2020.

one of the most popular surnames in Senegambia, but also one of the most unique comics presented by Kugali during lockdown. Here, the inspirations from the folklore are more than obvious and although it was not possible to track the folktale itself, the setting, the storyline and the tempo of narration will allow us to consider this comic book as a modern fable.

Ndaw is the name of a small Djinne who is a creator of toy statues. He lives in an abandoned territory and we meet him just when he finishes his last creation – a scrap robot. He is not too satisfied with the final results of his work so he's going to the junkyard to look for the final, decorative piece. He finds a coin, but it's not perfect, then he finds a tear-shaped stone and abandons the coin. When he's finally going to settle for the third finding – the smiley pin – he sees a big baobab tree house towering above the scrapyard. With little hesitation he enters and discovers that the place is full of treasures! Masks, pots, grinders, books, alchemic alembics and other objects fill the place. In the centre is a hanging nest and a scribed scroll is dangling to the floor from the dark entrance. The Djinne ignores the nest and hastily scrutinises the area in search for something useful. A bowl full of cowrie shells catches his eyes. He already has a vision how he can use the cowrie shell to decorate his robot. He throws away the smiley pin and, ignoring the disdained faces of the pottery figures, decides to grab one shell for himself. But the figures are not painted on clay, they are alive and they'll not allow the thievery to happen. "Satche⁵²!" one of them shouts and this shout is the beginning of some serious problems for little Ndaw. He jumps at once, scared of the shouting. The jump moves the cowrie bowl and the bowl in turn moves the drawer. Finally, some vial with orange liquid falls on the ground and smashes into pieces. Now we will learn who is the inhabitant of the house, as a green-skinned witch with claw-like fingers emerges from the nest. She catches Ndaw and puts him in magic chains.

There is no point in totally spoiling the story, especially if the comic is available online and that the initial introduction to the setting along with some clues about the ending will be enough to evaluate the educational value of the fable. We can say that our Djinne learns about the nature of the witch and the importance of the vial. He learns many secrets and finally escapes from his captivity, but the adventure was so thrilling for small Ndaw that although he can take the cowrie at the end, he decides to keep the smiley pin instead and use it as a final decoration for his robot. This fact is signaled by the exclamation mark within Djinni's speech bubble, and the final creation is visible in the last cadre with a caption saying "Babene Ndaw Djinne."⁵³ We, however, are not going to say our goodbyes just yet.

52 "Thief!". All the local terms have translations provided by the Author.

53 "Farewell Ndaw Djinne"

The story has an important and simple meaning, which is even directly expressed on the comic book pages. “Appreciate the things you have,”⁵⁴ be happy with the things you have achieved especially if you are content with them and, obviously, don’t steal as stealing can get you into trouble. The setting of the story is as important as the message and clearly shows the potential of the graphic novel as a medium for storytelling. It is a marriage of new and old. We have a scrapyard which hides a witch’s hut within a baobab tree, we have an afro-futuristic robot,⁵⁵ but also talking animals, spirits trapped in the furniture or decorations and - most of all – witchcraft. This in turn also connects modernity and tradition as the rituals include some modern equipment and the vial itself looks as if it has been taken straight from a contemporary clinic. This setting tells a very universal story where tradition and customs are still alive despite the widespread modernisation. The final choice of the smiley pin over a cowrie shell can, but probably should not, be interpreted as a preference for modernity over tradition. However, it can also mean that modern things require modern solutions, while old things should be treated in an old-fashioned way.

The comics presented above show the potential of the comic book as a tool for the interpretation of traditional material. Be it a comedy approach to a well-known setting, a careful but modernised adaptation of oral material or the creation of new folklore with the use of the new medium. It clearly shows the potential of the graphic novel in telling African stories, but the references to tradition are not the only thing that can make a locally made comic book a unique experience for the reader.

The Comic Book as a Social Commentary

Of this group we will analyse two comics. Because of the presence of supernatural elements which have a direct connotation with local African tradition they can somehow fit into the previous category, however we will refer to the previously included deliberations about the influence of cultural background on the process of creation. We’ll also follow the justifiable assumption that the supernatural elements are one of the key features of the comic book as a medium. That’s why, a part of the presence of tradition-related content, we will concentrate on the social issues as social background is often as equally important as cultural background as far as the creative process is concerned.

*Lake of Tears*⁵⁶ is a Ghanaian comic by Kobe Ofei (story) and Setor Fiadzigbey (art). It’s a part of a series from which only two episodes were

54 Ba, *Ndaw...*, p. 39.

55 Which by the way looks like a scrap version of the robots from the SF movies made in the 50s.

56 Kobe Ofei and Setor Fiadzigbey, *Lake of Tears*, Kugali Media, 2020.

released for free; the first part is called “The Dark Waters” and the second is called “A Ghosts in a Shell.” The title of the latter is a rather obvious reference to one of the most famous anime movies – *Ghost in the Shell* – directed by Mamoru Oshii and based on the manga by Masamune Shirov. However, apart from the similar title there are no similarities in the story, as the Japanese one is a cyberpunk tale about cybernetic police in a dystopian futuristic world and the Ghanaian one is a story about fishing in Lake Volta. However, it doesn’t concentrate on the idyllic image of the sturdy fishermen who sail early morning to provide fish for the market, instead it shows the dark aspects of the industry as it presents a story about child labour and child trafficking.

We meet Kyei, the main protagonist during one of the nights when he jumps into the water to dive and check the nets. He is approximately 10 years old and so are his friends. Soon after diving, he hurts his leg, gasps for air and the pain-related sudden movement makes him tangled in the net he was supposed to check. To make things worse, a police motorboat approaches the fisherman’s dinghy and the supervisor, a bulky albino man called Opanyin, calls the boy back. As the police siren is getting closer he orders the boat to move, leaving Kyei behind. Anyone of the boy’s friends who is planning to help him will be left as well so they obediently follow the supervisor’s orders. Kyei will later be saved by a mysterious force which pushes him from the water and launches high into the air. He’ll wake up in the company of his rescuers - two teenagers who tell them that he can help to end child abuse or come back to his house and forget about the incident. In the meantime, we will see Opanyin as he’s packing the boys in a small shack and gives them scraps of food. He is shaking all the way back from the lake. Abandoning the child was not his choice but the master – a sinister and faceless figure which we will meet in the second episode – is not a person to mess with. For Master Otu, losing one or two boys is nothing, but losing the boat with all its human cargo will be a serious blow and for this Opanyin will be punished for sure. The second episode follows the albino man even closer. It shows him sitting in the house and drinking heavily to calm his sorrows. He is remembering a story from the previous year when Master Otu severely beats a disobedient boy and then ties him to a plank of wood. The construction is placed on the shore and the boy is taken by the tide waters towards certain death. This is an example for all the boys as all of them, including the boy’s brother, are watching the punishment with horror and disbelief. Opanyin initially tries to stop the master, but he knows that he can’t do much. He borrowed the money from Otu and was then given three choices to settle the debt. He can repay the money along with interest or give his 8-year-old son to work for Master Otu. Those two options are impossible to fulfil, he doesn’t have enough money and he obviously doesn’t want to sell his

son into slavery. He agrees to the third option, which is to supervise the boys during their fishing trips.

From the free content we will not learn how the story has finished and the second episode ends with a cliffhanger as Kyei is asking his rescuers about his miraculous escape from peril. We can say, however, that for the purpose of this study the content we have is more than enough to consider the *Lake of Tears* as a comic book with a social message. The story is dark and is supported by an appropriately disturbing artistic style, with lots of shadows and a decayed vibe. It is highly appropriate, as the comic book talks about important issues related to human rights.

According to Ghanaian law, the minimum age for work is 15 and this is clearly specified in Section 89 of the Children's Act, while section 91⁵⁷ sets the minimum age for hazardous work at 18. Ghana has also ratified most of the international conventions enacted to prevent child abuse. Those are ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age; ILO Convention 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour; the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. However, despite some government efforts to eradicate child trafficking, the abuse of minors is still prevalent and the fishing sector along with cocoa farming are considered the most infected with child slavery.⁵⁸ Children as young as 4 are sold or trafficked to work in the industry and "fishing, including for tilapia; preparing bait, nets, and fishing gear; launching, paddling, and draining canoes; diving for fish; casting and pulling fishing nets and untangling them underwater"⁵⁹ is an especially hazardous form of child labour. According to the CNN Freedom project there are approximately 20,000 children living in slavery conditions in the Lake Volta region.⁶⁰ These figures and the scale of the problem are contested by some scholars, especially Kwame Agyeman, who claim the CNN report is exaggerated and that it "reported on 'child slaves' who were not really enslaved."⁶¹

57 *The Children's Act (Act 560. Enacted: September 24, 1998)*, Government of the Republic of Ghana, <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WBTEXT/56216/65194/E98GHA01.html> (accessed 13 June 2021).

58 *2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Ghana*, US Department of Labor, https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2018/Ghana.pdf (accessed 13 June 2021).

59 *2018 Findings on the Worst Forms...*

60 Leif Coorlim, 'Child Slaves Risk their Lives on Ghana's Lake Volta,' *CNN*, February 2019, <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2019/02/africa/ghana-child-slaves-intl/> (accessed 30 March 2021).

61 Betty Mensah and Samuel Okyere, 'How CNN reported on 'child slaves' who were not really enslaved,' *Al Jazeera*, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/cnn-reported-child-slaves-enslaved-190315103733047.html> (accessed 23 July 2021). Although not mentioned directly among the authors, the article claims that Dr Kwame Agyeman is also a co-author of the referred work.

The comic book portrays the everyday life of the children who are forced to work on the fishing boats and the dangers they are facing. There is limited food, the constant threat of drowning and disobedience is mercilessly punished. We can see it in the story as Master Otu sentences the child to a certain death in the water. Opanyin, the supervisor, is an obviously tragic character and we can assume that his persona will develop further in the series. His story shows the difficulties that the people who live in poor economic conditions have to face every day. The choice he makes, although morally dubious, is understandable as he is trying to protect his family and he despises himself for the work he's doing. The comic itself moves far from the point where the graphic novel is served as a form of easily absorbable entertainment pulp. It sheds light on an important problem and while it is not the role of the authors to implement the solution, they are certainly adding their voice to the discussion and calling on the government to take proper action.

Another comic book *Nani*⁶² takes a similar approach but addresses its main problem from a slightly different angle. ZK Nelson (story) and Jason Lamy (art) created a graphic novel which situates itself very close to the superhero sub-genre within the comic book industry. Here, Kugali presented the first volume divided in two parts and released within two bundles. This is a story about two sisters – Mina and Lamin. They are both martial arts adepts and Mina is most likely a survivor of some form of abuse. Initially, it is not specified what kind of trauma she has experienced,⁶³ but as it is generally mentioned at the beginning of the story, we can assume that this is a catalyst which fuels her determination. The story starts as the sisters are going for a ride with Lamin's boyfriend after a martial art practice session. Bash wants to show them his new car so he's taking them along with his friend Bello. As often happens in the stories, things will not go as planned, but danger comes from an unexpected side. Lamin's boyfriend is planning to kidnap the sisters and hold them for ransom and Bello's role is to help him to execute this plan. They have firearms and Bash is trying to be scary. But due to Mina's fighting spirit and Bello's hesitation his plan encounters some serious obstacles. Finally, Bello points his gun at Bash and while the latter shoots a bullet at his former friend, Mina releases a blast of energy which destroys the projectile and teleports the three of them – Mina, Lamin and Bello – to a magical realm. It's already supernatural enough for the comic book but it goes much further. They will soon encounter a group of powerful warriors trying to kidnap a woman and who capture Mina, who is trying to help her. Lamin will try to fight them but they look invincible. Luckily the woman turns out to be a powerful witch

62 ZK Nelson and Jason Lamy, *Nani*, Kugali Media, 2020,

63 It will be revealed in the second part of the first volume.

and uses her magic to liberate all the protagonists. After that the story goes on. Just like in the case of *Ndaw*, there is no reason to spoil the whole narrative as the initial setting will be enough to evaluate the quality of this comic as a form of a social commentary. In the later stages of the adventure packed with action and twists we meet strange cult, hyena shapeshifters, ancient gods and fighters with supernatural abilities or unhuman strength. However, from our point of view the story is not that important; it certainly has quality, and the reader is encouraged to experience it on their own with the use of the link which was previously provided. Here we will concentrate on the choice of characters.

The attempted kidnapping, which is a cornerstone for the whole story, is a direct reference to a common problem many Nigerians are facing. This is a clear reflection of modern reality but the response of the protagonists is most important. Both sisters fight back against their captors, and they will continue to do so throughout the story as they don't hesitate to use their combat skills. The same can be said about their unexpected companion – the sorceress from the magic land. The thing we try to underline here is that apart from its entertainment value, fast-paced action magic powers and superhero vibe, we have a comic book which sends an important message about women's empowerment. All the main protagonists are women. They are strong, independent, brave and ambitious. They don't hesitate to fight evil and they will not bow to the aggressors even if their opponents are in an advantageous position. The fact that both sisters are practicing martial arts and that the sorceress is armed with ancient powers further emphasises the fact that in a society where rape and abuse of women is still a common problem, a woman has to be able to defend herself. This last statement seems to correspond with the intentions of the authors and the point of view of the publisher. Kugali used both the sisters as icons in the fight against injustice and inequality in Nigeria. Following the discussion about women's safety and lack of punishment for abusers which erupted in Nigerian media after reports of the rape and murders on some Nigerian women,⁶⁴ Kugali released a statement accompanied with the hashtags related to this social and media movement. *#JusticeForTiwa* and *#JusticeForUwa* were accompanied by pictures of Lamin and Mina, both of them showing determination on their faces. The company's statement goes as follows: "here are times when silence is betrayal. Men, call out other men

64 There are many reports about such incidents and the best way to follow the discussion would be to browse the media reports using the relevant hashtags. The discussion moved from Nigeria to the international media, where it didn't find the attention it deserved. However we can find the articles like the one on BBC: Princess Igho Williams, 'Justice for Uwa: Rape & Murder Case of Uwavera Omozuwa Lead to Oda Justice Movement for Victims in Nigeria – See wetin we sabi,' *BBC Pidgin*, 3 June 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/tori-52895321> (accessed 6 June 2020).

when you hear or see them so much as joking about abusing women. You are not “one of the good ones” just because you’re not an abuser. Being decent is not a badge of honour. Don’t be satisfied that you’re not one of the bad ones. Take action and speak out. Hold your brothers and friends accountable. We stand with all women. The victim is never at fault. The only cause of rape is rapists.”⁶⁵ It is worth mentioning that a few weeks earlier the publisher’s Facebook profile had become a platform for the fight against racism and race-related violence as one of the posts supported #BlackLivesMatter movement as a response to the events following the killing of George Floyd by police in the US. If it comes to social issues, Kugali certainly had a busy lockdown.

Conclusions

The first question we should ask ourselves while concluding the paper which mentions the pandemic in its title and devotes the first paragraph to the covid-related lockdown is whether the cases presented are actually relevant. They are, of course, as they are a part of the content released by the publisher during the time of the lockdown and in the response to the lockdown. But are the comic books which were promoted by Kugali within the three bundles related to the global health, economic and social situation? The answer is quite simple. Because of the subject and somehow reassuring message, the inclusion of *Taboo: A Date with Death* bears a visible significance and can be considered as a direct reference to the pandemic and the feeling of insecurity connected with the disease, which is potentially terminal for any person affected. As for the others, their relationship with the problem can simply be coincidental and none of the graphics novels which were analysed for the purpose of this paper directly mention the problem. However, we can extract some message about the importance of medicine from the example of Ndaw’s vial or the one about the vulnerability of economically excluded people, which in turn fuels modern slavery and human trafficking. It’s quite easy to provide a plausible explanation for the fact that SARS-CoV-2 is not directly addressed as the pandemic is a new, ongoing event so there are not many cultural products so far which relate to this problem. They will most likely appear soon enough as culture does not accept a void and artistic forms of expression have already started to include the subject of the pandemic. This fact, however, doesn’t diminish the quality and the importance of the content introduced during the lockdown.

The comic books presented and analysed here are just a few examples from the portfolio of the leading publisher of African graphic novels. They don’t even consist of half of the titles released within the “pandemic bundles.”

65 Kugali’s Facebook post from 2 June 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/kugalimedia/photos/rp.p.1447774042212402/2692618384394622/?type=3&theater> (accessed 14 July 2020).

Their inclusion within this study was not an attempt at evaluation of the whole market of African graphic novels, but rather a glimpse at some trends which shape African comic book reality. They come from different countries but share similar approaches towards social issues and the cultural material. The main conclusions were mostly provided at the end of each paragraph but let us briefly summarise what lessons have we learned about culture in the times of plague. Also, let us answer one of the initial questions: was the release of the free comic books a promotional move by Kugali which was meant to increase the sales of their products? Or was it something more? We can probably settle for the assumption that both those questions deserve a positive answer. From the marketing point of view, the release of the free content during the COVID-19 related lockdown was certainly a good step and the content supports this claim. Apart of some short, single-volume stories (like *Ndaw* or *Taboo*... which were analysed in the paper) the content includes some of the first volumes of comics which later continue in the form of series. These volumes can serve as a demonstration of the authors' skills in narration and artistic value which characterise each of the products. The reader who is interested in the story is very welcome to buy the whole product from the publisher's website. Moreover, those who feel a connection to the characters or develop some soft spot for the artwork can buy additional decorative pieces from the same online shop. It's all true and the fact that the promotional move failed to bring a lot of movement to the company's social media profiles is not that relevant as it was impossible to predict this at the beginning of the promotional campaign. We can further assume that this would discourage most publishers from promotional movements of this type in the future as the release of the free content somehow limits the repository of paid content and limits profits. However, Kugali released their third and so far final bundle on 10th July so probably apart from the marketing aspects of any giveaway orchestrated by a business owner, there is much more to it than that. After all, can we consider a comic book as just a product like any other? The content of the graphic novels presented in this paper proves otherwise. We are aware that perception of quality is a subjective matter – one person will like the writing, another will like the artistic style and others will dislike it or like it completely. It's a matter of personal preferences. Thus, we can leave artistic value behind. But if it comes to informative value, we can certainly talk about a cultural creation with deep meaning and an important message and purpose, be it preservation or adaptation of traditional values which are omnipresent in the African oral traditions or a commentary on important social issues or an attempt to draw the attention of the public to human rights abuse. All of these elements are present in the comic books from Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal presented here. This is especially significant if we consider that comic books can have

significant educative functions when they steer the attention of their statistical, young reader towards important social problems or promote traditional values. Thus, in the reality of the coronavirus pandemic, covid-related lockdown and the actions of Kugali, we can say that the culture and the comic books are undoubtedly the winners. The lockdown gave inspiration to customer-related moves to support people obliged to stay at home. But the response of Kugali brought them not only in-house entertainment conveniently available in the comfort of their shelters, it also showed the potential of the comic book as a tool to promote, preserve and translate oral literature and as a useful medium to talk about current social issues. This is a lesson which anyone can learn by trusting Kugali to be a guide during the exploration of culture in the times of plague, even if “the plague” itself is not that present in the storyline of the presented products.

Youth Unemployment in Urban Zimbabwe in the 21st Century: Analysing the Drivers, Impacts and Cultural Implications

Abstract

Zimbabwe entered the 21st century experiencing an economic decline. This has had a great bearing on the country's youth in terms of employment. Young people in urban areas have been especially badly affected. The cause of such a high unemployment level has been a contentious issue. Contending issues have centred around, on one hand, the external environment impinging negatively on the Zimbabwean economy and on the other hand a failed state and economic mismanagement. Rising unemployment has had various impacts on the young people's economic, political and economic plight. This research analyses the various competing factors that have led to unprecedented levels of urban unemployment in Zimbabwe in the 21st century. It also considers the effects of unemployment on Zimbabwean society as a whole and suggests ways of dealing with this problem. Methodologically, the research relies on secondary sources and relies on already existing and available interviews in the media.

Keywords: Zimbabwe, Youth, Unemployment, Zimbabwean Culture, Urban Society.

Introduction

Just like other developing countries, Zimbabwe has been experiencing the challenge of growing youth unemployment. The drivers of this phenomenon are the complex circumstances derived from the historical development of the country as well as international political-economic issues beyond the state's control. It is against this background that the paper seeks to explore the causes of youth unemployment in urban Zimbabwe as well as its impact.

Historical Background to Unemployment in Zimbabwe

Unemployment causes widespread poverty, increased crime rates, political instability, exploitation of labour and reduced economic development in society.³ The International Labour Organization defines unemployment

1 Associate Professor in the Department of Governance and Public Management, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe, e-mail: chigorap2000@gmail.com.

2 Lecturer in the Department of Politics and Public Management, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe, e-mail: mciloa@staff.msu.ac.zw.

3 'What are the Effects of Unemployment on Society?', *Reference*, 25 March 2020, <https://>

in terms of three criteria, namely “without work, available for work or seeking work at the time of reference.”⁴ Based on this definition one can note that it describes the state of many young people in Zimbabwe based on the statistics given above. Colin McIntosh defines employment as the fact of being paid to work for a company or organization.⁵ The Round Table Community has suggested five types of unemployment: frictional – which refers to a person who is attempting to find a new job; cyclical – which is a result of an economic recession whereby the supply of labour is greater than demand; voluntary – which occurs when people choose not to work; structural – when the skills, experience and education of workers do not match job openings available and institutional unemployment – which is caused by government interference in the labour market.⁶

The definition of “youth” has also been a contentions one especially when it comes to the issue of unemployment. For Zimbabwe it is clearly defined by the Constitution, Section 20 sub section 1, which defines youth as any person aged between 18–35.⁷ However, when it comes to stating the figures for unemployment it is important to note that the majority between 18 to 25 still go to school – high school, tertiary institutions, vocational training centres and university.

Youth unemployment in Zimbabwe in the 21st century has been rising at a fast rate, accounting for 62.1% in 1994, 65% in 1999, 67.5% in 2002 and 59.6% in 2004⁸, with estimates for 2012 indicating 68%. Research has shown that Zimbabwean youth experience all the above types of unemployment, but especially voluntary, as evidenced by the enormous growth in the informal sector,⁹ which is said to be dominant in the economy. The general indications are that most young people are involved in carpentry, co-operatives, agriculture, technical skills (catering, hairdressing, electronics repairing, decoration, car

www.reference.com/world-view/effects-unemployment-society-fe1a57c72fca5b51 (accessed 23 August 21).

- 4 International Labour Organisation, http://www.roundtablecommunity.org.hk/qef/mconf/mg20_topic_sg.pdf, (accessed 13 February 2017).
- 5 Colin McIntosh, *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 496.
- 6 International Labour Organisation...
- 7 Government of Zimbabwe, *Constitution of Zimbabwe*, 2013, p.20.
- 8 African Development Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, *Africa Economic Outlook 2012, Promoting Youth Employment*, 2012, www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/sites/default/files/content-pdf/AEO2012_EN.pdf (accessed 14 February 2017).
- 9 ‘Informal Employment Dominates,’ *Economist Intelligence Unit*, 23 June 2015, <http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=453276029&Country=Zimbabwe&topic=Economy> (accessed 13 February 2017).

wash, dress making and design and so on), construction, vending, mining, arts and culture, and commercial sex. This contrasts with McIntosh's definition, which is biased only on formal employment. The situation on the ground in Zimbabwe shows that employment is not only limited to formal white collar jobs but also includes informal self-employment.

This brings us to the conclusion that many who are unemployed are voluntarily unemployed. This view has been buttressed by Leubker, who noted that the informal sector contributed above 80% of jobs in the country in 2004.¹⁰ He argues that the concept of an informal sector is not necessarily relevant in industrialised countries where paid employment in formal enterprises dominates, and where the majority of own account enterprises are registered under national legislation which is the case with most in Zimbabwe. Research has revealed that this is a result of factors such as laziness, ignorance, being choosy, fear of stigmatisation, stereotypes that the informal sector is for the uneducated, and social status, just to mention a few.

The Drivers

I. Industrial Collapse

The country has faced industrial collapse as one of the effects of 'investor-repulsion' policies, such as the Indigenisation and the Economic Empowerment Policy, which was adopted as an Act of Parliament in 2007, hereinafter the IEE Act.¹¹ According to Section 3 (1) (a) of the IEE Act: "The Government shall, through this Act or regulations or other measures under this Act or any other law, endeavour to secure that: At least 51% of the shares of every public company and any other business shall be owned by indigenous Zimbabweans."¹² This policy was enacted in 2013 as part of the ruling party ZANU PF's manifesto during the 2013 elections. These policies led to a huge outflow of white commercial farm owners as well as foreign investors leaving millions either formally unemployed or massively retrenched as the commercial agriculture and industrial sectors declined. According to studies by the Confederation of

10 Malte Luebker, 'Employment, Unemployment and Informality in Zimbabwe: Concepts and Data for Coherent Policy Making,' *Issues Paper No. 32 and Integration working paper No. 90*, ILO-Sub Regional Office for Southern Africa, Geneva: International Labour Office, 2008, [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Ghana_Jan2009/Background%20doc2%20for%20paper%2039%20\(ILO-WP-90\).pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Ghana_Jan2009/Background%20doc2%20for%20paper%2039%20(ILO-WP-90).pdf) (accessed 15 February 2017).

11 Government of Zimbabwe, *Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Act*, FAOLEX Database, 2007, <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC170800/> (accessed 22 February 2017).

12 Government of Zimbabwe, *Frameworks, Procedures and Guidelines for Implementing the Indigenous and Economic Empowerment Act*, 2016, Chapter 14:33, <http://www.investzim.com/attachments/article/252/Indigenisation%20Framework%204%20January%202016.pdf> (accessed 22 February 2017).

Zimbabwe Industries (CZI), industry's capacity utilisation was 18.9% in 2009, 57% in 2011, 44.9% in 2012 and 39.6% in 2013¹³. Saungweme, et al concluded that the economy of Zimbabwe was shrinking, whilst the labour force was growing, that is, the economy was unable to absorb growing labour input, resulting in rising unemployment.¹⁴

Another factor leading to industrial collapse has been the economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by the West. According to Moyo, the purpose of the targeted economic sanctions is to wreak economic havoc in the country and render it dysfunctional.¹⁵ The sanctions were imposed in the form of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic recovery Act (ZIDERA) of 2001 by the United States Congress, which gave the US veto powers on Zimbabwe's applications to multilateral financial lending agencies, the suspension of budgetary support previously provided to the government by the European Union (EU), the imposition of visa bans and asset freezes by the US, EU, Canada, New Zealand and Australia on influential individuals associated with the government and the ruling ZANU PF as well as the prohibition of military support and technical assistance that could enhance the government's repressive capacity. The sanctions resulted in a drastic scaling down of business and the economy as well as souring of relations with the West, which forced the government to look elsewhere, namely in adopting the "Look East Policy" which some scholars have argued is a new form of "Eastern Colonisation" of Africa.

II. Unavailability of Formal Vacancies as a Result of "Stale Employees"

The research discovered that one of the driving factors behind youth unemployment is the fact that there are many so-called "stale employees" who are still formally employed. In a focus group discussion, one young man defined these "stale employees" as those of over pensionable age and the elderly who should legally be in retirement. This research also observed that the Constitution and the Labour Act Chapter 28:01 of Zimbabwe do not provide for a retirement age limit under conditions of termination of employment. In addition, the Constitution also does not give an age limit or definition of an elderly person,

13 Talknice Saungweme, Simeon Matsvai and Rose C. Sakuhuni, 'Econometric Analysis of Unemployment, Output and Growth of the Informal Sector in Zimbabwe (1985-2013),' *International Journal of Economics and Research*, March – April 2014, p. 1–9, [http://www.ijeronline.com/documents/volumes/Vol%205%20iss%2002/ijer%20v05%20i2\(1\).pdf](http://www.ijeronline.com/documents/volumes/Vol%205%20iss%2002/ijer%20v05%20i2(1).pdf) (accessed 22 February 2017).

14 Saungweme, Matsvai and Sakuhuni, 'Econometric Analysis...'

15 Simbarashe Moyo, 'Delinking as Panacea to a State under Siege: Zimbabwe's Reaction to the Targeted Economic Sanctions,' in *The Post 1980 Chimurengas Explained*, Richard Runyararo Mahomva and Simbarashe Moyo (eds), Bulawayo:LAN Publication, 2015, p. 59.

thereby leaving the interpretation of the term open. The retirement age has been generally set between 55–65 by Pension Fund service providers, indicating a lack of uniformity in terms of the legal framework guiding retirement age as the limit is set differently by the various pension funds. As a result this leaves employers and the pension funds free to retire an employee at their discretion, which may disenfranchise the economically active youth who are unemployed without any primary legal binding conditions.

III. Attainment of Higher and Tertiary Education

Research has also shown that some young people are unemployed because they are still in education. Based on the definition of ‘youth’ given earlier from the Constitution of Zimbabwe, at the age of fifteen young people are in secondary school in forms two or three working towards getting their Ordinary Level education. If they have pass they proceed to Advanced Level, which they finish around the ages of 18–20.

Zimbabwe’s education system is regulated by the Education Act of 1987.¹⁶ Tsiko compiled a factsheet in 2018 that revealed the following facts: the Zimbabwean education system is made up of two years of pre-primary school – referred to as Early Childhood Development (ECD), which is offered to children from 3 to 5 – seven years of primary school and 4 to 6 years of secondary education, followed by higher education in college or university. Additionally, the report shows that in 2018, Zimbabwe had 13 State Universities and 7 Private ones, 13 Polytechnic Colleges, 13 Teachers’ Colleges, 43 vocational training centres and 16 quasi-government and independent research institutions. However, Tsiko also notes an important fact that while Primary and Secondary education have been meant to be entirely free since 1980 when thus was declared as a fundamental right, parents now pay fees to support budgets that come from the state, which are largely inadequate.

The above data shows an increase in the enrolment of students in tertiary institutions across board between 2009 and 2014. Additionally, the report also reveals that, on average every year, about 300,000 students sit their O-level examinations and out of this number, about 30,000 proceed to A-level and another 20,000 enroll at tertiary institutions – for vocational, polytechnic and university education.

16 Sifelani Tsiko, ‘Where does Zimbabwe’s Education Stand?’, in *Zimfact*, 13 March 2018, <https://zimfact.org/factsheet-where-does-zimbabwes-education-stand/> (accessed 20 August 2021).

Tertiary education enrollment

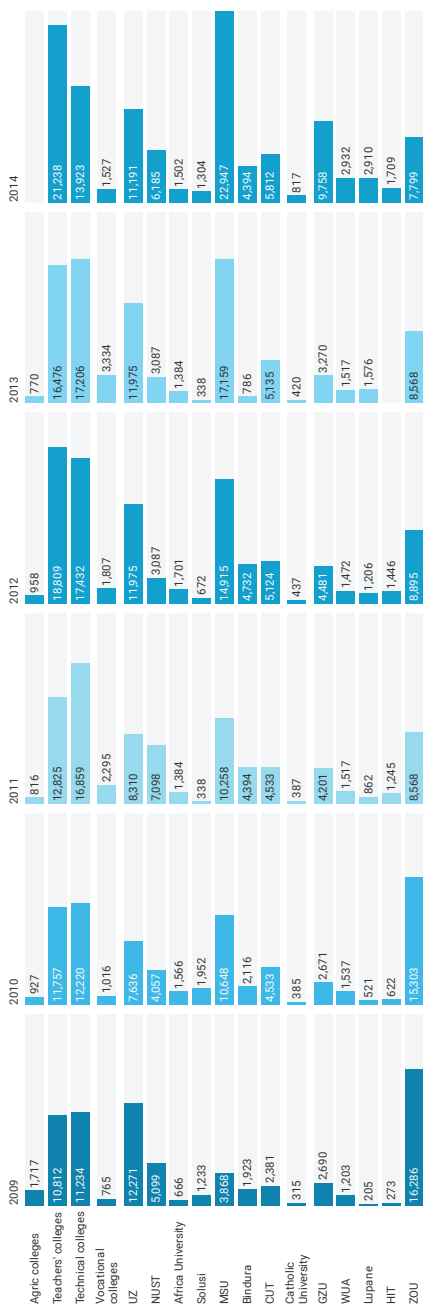


Chart: Nelson Banya - Source: ZIMSTAT - Get the data - Created with Datawrapper

Figure 1. Enrolment in Tertiary Education in 2014¹⁷

17 Tsiko, 'Where does Zimbabwe's...'

Experts say enrolment at the postgraduate level accounts for a very small proportion of the total enrolment in public universities in Zimbabwe. While there have been more than 30,000 enrolments at undergraduate level in recent years, there are fewer than 4,000 students registered for masters' degrees and fewer than 350 pursuing doctoral studies in Zimbabwean higher education institutions. This shows that a great number of students who pass their Advanced level education proceed to enroll at undergraduate level in universities whilst others go into the other tertiary institutions, as shown in Figure 1 and so attain at least one basic tertiary certification. This may also explain the reluctance of young people to enroll for further tertiary education such as post graduate and doctoral studies. The above data help explain why some young people are unemployed at this age.

Beyond the age of twenty, young people are usually pre-occupied with attaining Higher and Tertiary Education through First degrees, Masters Degrees or PhDs. A general observation of enrolment statistics at the Midlands State University shows that the enrolment age ranges between 18–30 years for undergraduate degrees. This leaves them with the last five years of their youth to secure formal employment, which may not be guaranteed given the small labour market, as well as unrealistic qualification requirements.

Unrealistic Job Requirements by the Employers

The case in Zimbabwe is that most formal employers require experienced employees, with the minimum being 4–5 years. Young people tend to fail to qualify for these jobs as a result because they will tend to be fresh graduates from tertiary institutions. Hence they will be looking for those jobs in order to gain experience. However, some companies and organisations offer unpaid internship programmes for young people, which give them first-hand experience on the job.¹⁸ This in turn makes the programmes less attractive for young people hoping to get a pay check and be able to afford to pay for their upkeep and their families.

V. Unregistered Informal Enterprises

The research shows that some youth are concentrated in the unregistered enterprises of the informal sector.

“Faced with a lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector, Zimbabweans have displayed great ingenuity to create jobs for themselves as carpenters, street-vendors, cross-border traders, sculptors or brick-moulders. These jobs have kept many people in employment,

18 Global Peace Careers, *NGO Internships in Zimbabwe*, 2021, <https://globalpeacecareers.com/magazine/ngo-internships-in-zimbabwe/> (accessed 25 August 2021).

and thus have helped to avoid high open unemployment despite adverse economic conditions. However, most informal workers find themselves on the fringes of the law – they often lack the required license or violate zoning by-laws that ban commercial activity from residential areas.”¹⁹

This is another factor that distorts the statistics of the government and other research institutions, which are based upon registered enterprises. According to the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) cited in Leubker, “employees are considered to have informal jobs if their employment relationship is, in law or in practice, not subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits (advance notice of dismissal, severance pay, paid annual or sick leave, etc.).”²⁰ The reasons may be the following: non-declaration of the jobs or the employees; casual jobs or jobs of a limited short duration; jobs with hours of work or wages below a specified threshold (e.g. for social security contributions); employment by unincorporated enterprises or by persons in households; jobs where the employee’s place of work is outside the premises of the employer’s enterprise (e.g. outworkers without an employment contract); or jobs for which labour regulations are not applied, not enforced, or not complied with for any other reason.” In addition most young people are self-employed or doing work for food – *maricho/ ilima* – in rural areas, which is a type of employment.

The Impact

1. Drug and Substance Abuse

The University of Maryland Medical Centre defines substance use as the continued use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs with negative consequences that may include problems at home, work or interpersonal relationships as well as with the law.²¹ A wise man once said, “An idle mind is the devil’s playing ground.” This has manifested itself in communities where idle and demoralised unemployed young people have sought refuge in taking drugs and intoxicating substances. Most of these substances are illegal and very cheap, for instance very strong cough syrup, which they call “Broncho,” marijuana which they smoke or eat raw in meals or baked muffins known as weed cakes and glue. The use of these substances tends to be abuse because they are used in ways which they are not meant for (entertainment). In addition to the above-mentioned consequences, these

19 Leubker, ‘Employment, Unemployment...’, p. 5.

20 Leubker, ‘Employment, Unemployment...’, p. 13–14.

21 ‘Drug Abuse,’ University of Maryland Medical Centre, <http://umm.edu/health/medical/ency/articles/drug-abuse> (accessed 28 February 2017).

also result in spontaneous decisions such as sex orgies, unprotected sex, and rape among other things, which may lead to outbreaks of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies.

2. Vandalism of Property

Unemployed idle youth may often find themselves engaging in social ills such as property vandalism as a form of entertainment. This may take the form of graffiti on infrastructure as well as theft. Some have lost their lives for example in the theft of copper electrical cables. High density suburbs such as Nkulumane in Bulawayo have experienced theft of water pipes and meters and some households have not managed to replace them.

3. Social Loitering

Redundant youth may also resort to loitering just to kill time. Many spend time sitting or walking around in groups, sometimes posing as a threat to public security, especially when they are intoxicated with substances. Sometimes they verbally abuse passers-by, thereby violating other people's right to freedom of movement.

4. Marital Breakup

Unemployment has driven many young men and women to prefer dating married men and women so they can be well taken care of economically and financially. The young unmarried want to be associated with already established older men and women rather than their single counterparts who may still be struggling to find themselves. As a result many marriages have crumbled.

In addition, some have argued that unemployed young men cannot afford to pay the traditional *lobola* (bride fee) that gives them the right to marry. On the average, research has shown that *lobola* can be charged at a minimum of \$5,000 excluding the cattle and other cultural requirements. An article by Dube notes a young couple whose relationship was on the verge of collapse after the family had charged him \$1,500 worth of groceries, \$9,000 for various charges and 8 cows as *lobola*. In response to the article, a talk show host, Mai Chisamba, said publicly that the current *lobola* charges were unjustified. She stated that,

“the charges are taboo. People are no longer following culture. They have commercialised the practice and unfortunately this is blocking our children from getting married [...] Parents should remember that the ‘boys’ who are marrying their daughters do not have money.”²²

22 Jennifer Dube, ‘Zim’s Lobola Charges Stir Controversy,’ *The Standard*, 17 February 2013,

In some instances, this has led to employed women helping their significant others by contributing a part or paying the total amount of *lobola* themselves, which is culturally not acceptable as the Africans believe that the payment of *lobola* by a young man is a sign of commitment to the bride and her family, thereby guaranteeing respect and loyalty eternally.

Furthermore, in some instances unemployed youth have been traditionally forced into arranged marriages so as to economically and financially sustain the family. This scenario is rampant in traditional society, which still believes in polygamous marriage whereby a family forces their daughter or arranges that the daughter be an additional wife to a wealthy man. In most societies early marriage has been practiced from time immemorial. Children used to be married after attaining puberty, from the 12 to 16. This was the case for most of the girls who were given to men often as old as their fathers. The family prestige depended on how many children their daughters bore for her husband. The chance of bearing many children was secured as early as possible. Marriage of girls used to be a source of income to many families. This is how parents used to pressurise their daughters to get married.²³ In some instances, young women have got married out of choice especially in urban Zimbabwe where they choose to be a “small house,” a colloquial and derogatory term that describes a married man’s quasi-polygamous, informal, long-term, secret sexual relationship with another woman. The general public and private discourse conceptualises the “small house” as transactional sex and as a key driver of Zimbabwe’s HIV epidemic.²⁴

Poverty

The World Bank classifies a person as in poverty if they live on less than \$1.90 per day.²⁵ This means that these people only rely on this amount per day as income that is needed to get a basic living standard to afford things such as food, healthcare, education and housing. Unemployed youth often cannot afford basics especially sanitary ware and toiletries for ladies.

<https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2013/02/17/zims-lobola-charges-stir-controversy/> (accessed 25 August 2021).

- 23 Ruth Michael, ‘Factors which Contribute to Early Marriage among Teenagers in Rural Areas. A case of Kasulu District in Kigoma Region,’ M.A. Dissertation, Open University of Tanzania, 2014.
- 24 Mildred Mushinga, ‘The ‘Small House’: An Ethnographic Investigation into Economically Independent Women and Sexual Networks in Zimbabwe,’ PhD Dissertation, University of Pretoria, 2015, https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/57213/Mushinga_Small_2016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed 26 August 2021).
- 25 The World Bank, ‘Poverty Overview,’ 2021, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview> (accessed 14 March 2017).

The Future of Unemployment in Zimbabwe

1. There is need for the government to revise its policies and enact investor-friendly policies which will attract investors, thereby creating employment and economic rehabilitation.
2. The government must be strategic in executing its foreign policy and pursuit of national interests, so as to avoid creating diplomatic enemies in the international system as this will only isolate the country and stall economic development.
3. The basic and higher education sectors have tried to indoctrinate students that they should not only strive to be employed after school, but also employ others. An example is the teaching of entrepreneurship as a mass compulsory module at the Midlands State University. Even though this is essential in combating unemployment, it only equips the students with theoretical aspects of the practice. The learning institutions do not have the capacity to establish practical facilities where students can fully practise. Hence it becomes useless. Therefore, it is important for institutions to become innovative and come up with sources of revenue and capacitate themselves, in the face of dwindling government financial support.
4. The prospective employers must have realistic recruitment requirements in order to make space for inexperienced youth fresh out of school. In addition, the requirement of experience should be emphasised on managerial posts not general shop floor positions where one's capabilities for the job can be assessed through probationary periods which can be paid or unpaid depending on the contractual agreements.
5. The national primary regulatory legislation such as the Constitution and the Labour Act should explicitly state the retirement age of every employed adult so as to create uniformity in the application of the law. This would also avoid the accumulation of stale employee and create space for young people. The *status quo* whereby that decision is left to the discretion of the pension funds does not protect the unemployed who are not be members of the pension funds. Additionally, the inefficiency of the pension system may work better for stale employees by giving them the opportunity to work for longer and maintain their economic conditions as long as possible.
6. Institutions of higher learning have come up with modes of entry that cater for those who are formally and informally employed such as the parallel, block release and weekend school. Therefore young people no longer have an excuse of not working due the fear of losing out on pursuing their studies.

Conclusions

It can be concluded that youth unemployment in Zimbabwe has varied causes and a wide ranging impact on society. Addressing the challenges calls not only for revitalisation of governmental policy to include an investor-friendly environment and careful manipulation of the external environment, but also for individuals concerned to make strategic choices regarding their future.

Gandhi, Non-violence and the Culture of Peace: Reflections on Africa

Abstract

Philosophically, Gandhi's ideas of non-violence, *satyaagraha* or peace and harmony, have been instrumental in creating a conducive environment for establishing peace and a culture of peace in many parts of globe. There is a thread running throughout Gandhi's teaching and practice of non-violence, in particular culture of peace programmes and their successful adoption in many parts of Africa particularly due to Gandhi's first experiments of non-violence in South Africa. The paper attempts to bring out analysis of Gandhi's influence on UNESCO's culture of peace and non-violence programmes and its experiments in various parts of Africa.

Key Words: Non-violence, Peace, Culture of peace, Africa, *Satyagrahi*

Introduction

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi attempted to cultivate a culture based on purity of mind, purity of means, unity of man, non-violence, *sarvodaya*,⁴ trusteeship. These become guiding principles for establishing a culture of peace and methods of conflict resolution in today's crises-driven society.

Many international institutions, organisations and leaders have been inspired by the ideas of Gandhi both in terms of setting the basic principles and acting on the strategies adopted by him. The culture of peace programme has been instrumental in resolving many conflicts in Africa. There has been a key strand throughout Gandhi's teaching and practice of non-violence, the culture of peace programmes and their successful adoption in many parts of Africa, particularly due to Gandhi's first experiments of non-violence in South Africa and its significance in the present context. UNESCO's culture of peace and non-violence programme remains the most important reference point in this regard.

1 Assistant Professor, Centre for Gandhian Thought and Peace Studies, School of Social Sciences, Central University of Gujarat, India. e-mail: priya.k.ranjan@cug.ac.in and priya.k.ranjan@gmail.com.

2 Assistant Professor, Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences, e-mail: mzahirinejad@iksio.pan.pl.

3 Ph.D student, Centre for Gandhian Thought and Peace Studies, School of Social Sciences, Central University of Gujarat, India, e-mail: lakshmikalundia@gmail.com.

4 *Sarvodaya* is a Sanskrit term which generally means "universal uplift" or "progress of all."

Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to analyse Gandhi's influence on UNESCO's culture of peace and non-violence programmes and experiments in various parts of Africa.

Gandhi, Non-violence and South Africa: The Land of Experiment

Gandhi arrived as a 23 year-old barrister and spent 21 years in South Africa, where he experimented with non-violent methods of conflict resolution, which in turn provided him with experience to lead the successful freedom struggle in India based on the same principles of non-violence, *Satyagraha*⁵ and truth.⁶ Gandhi, speaking to Yusuf M. Dadoo and Gagathura M. Naicker, stated on April 11, 1947 that

“truly speaking, it was after I went to South Africa that I became what I am now. My love for South Africa and my concern for her problems are no less than for India, because it was in South Africa that I discovered the weapon of *Satyagraha*, and it was there that I offered a successful non-violent *Satyagraha*. It encouraged me in my line of thought and strengthened my faith.”⁷

Gandhi with great humility acknowledged his attachment to South Africa, saying “I have myself lived in South Africa for twenty years and I can therefore say that it is my country”⁸ two days before his tragic assassination on January 28, 1948.

5 Gandhi modified the word *sadagraha* suggested by Shri Maganlal Gandhi and preferred to correct it as *Satyagraha*. *Satya* (truth) implies love, and *agraha* means firmness, engenders and therefore serves as a synonym for force. Gandhi began to call the Indian movement “*Satyagraha*,” that is to say, the Force which is born from truth and love or non-violence. For details see: ‘*Satyagraha in South Africa*,’ in *The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Mahatma Gandhi (ed.), Vol. II, Ahmadabad: Navajivan Trust., p. 107.

6 Gandhi said that for him truth was the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of out conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle, that is God... For details see: Mahatma Gandhi, *Young India, 1927–1928*, India: S. Ganesan, Madras, 1935.

7 Both Dadoo and Naicker were the leaders of the passive resistance movement in South Africa. For details see: ‘Talk with Dr. Y. M. Dadoo and Dr. G.M. Naicker, April 11, 1947,’ in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 87, Mahatma Gandhi (ed.), New Delhi: The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1983, p. 257, <https://www.gandhiserve.net/about-mahatma-gandhi/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi/087-19470221-19470524/> (accessed 5 May 2021).

8 ‘Speech at Prayer Meeting, New Delhi, January 28, 1948,’ in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Mahatma Gandhi (ed.), Vol. 90, New Delhi: The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1984, pp. 515–517, <https://www.gandhiserve.net/about-mahatma-gandhi/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi/090-19471111-19480130/> (accessed 5 May 2021).

Gandhi fought against racial discrimination, humiliation and inhumane practices. The establishments of the Natal Indian Congress in 1894 and Transvaal British Indian Association in 1903 were particularly aimed at countering discriminatory imperial law. The Transvaal Asiatic Ordinance of 1906 stipulated that all Indians had to register and carry passes, an unjust move clearly based on discrimination. Gandhi strategically chose to fight this law with the weapon of non-violence even after the Ordinance was enacted as the Asiatic Registration Act in July 1907. The large-scale non-violent participation of the Indian community on July 31, 1906 to defy the law under the principle of *Satyagraha* led to Gandhi's first rise to public recognition. Gandhi along with 150 persons imprisoned for violation of the law became instrumental in pressuring the imperial power to reach a settlement of the conflict and resulted in a provisional settlement between General Smuts and Gandhi in January 1908.⁹ However, the commitment to repeal the law by General Smuts was not fulfilled and Gandhi first experienced the cynical character of empire. Gandhi, a relentless *Satyagrahi*, continued to fight against the law until the conflict reached the stage of resolution.

Additionally, the most unjust and dehumanising act experienced by Gandhi and the Indian community as a whole was when the Cape Supreme Court declared virtually all Indian marriages invalid and validated only marriages performed under Christian rites and duly registered in 1913.¹⁰ Moreover, economically, the imposition of an annual tax of 3 pounds on indentured labourers¹¹ intensified the Indian community's ire. Gandhi reignited the idea of communal harmony and used it to lead the movement while mobilising all the diverse elements of the Indian community both in Transvaal and Natal. It was a great march bringing together all religious¹² people from diverse occupations – merchants, hawkers, professionals, workers and indentured labourers in a righteous struggle. Gandhi admitted that “the whole community rose like a surging wave. Without organisations, without propaganda, all – nearly 40,000 people – courted imprisonment. Nearly 10,000 were actually imprisoned.

9 The provisional settlement under which the Indians would register voluntarily and the government would repeal the law. ‘Young India, April 20, 1921,’ in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 20, Mahatma Gandhi (ed.), New Delhi: The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1966, p. 15, <https://www.gandhiserve.net/about-mahatma-gandhi/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi/020-19210415-19210819/> (accessed 13 June 2021).

10 ‘Satyagraha in South Africa...,’ p. 256.

11 Who did not return to India at the expiration of their contracts. ‘Satyagraha in South Africa...,’ pp. 302–304.

12 People of different religions-Hindu, Muslims, Parsis and Christians participated non-violently in discipline, Satyagraha in South Africa.

A bloodless revolution was carried out after great discipline and self-suffering.¹³

Subsequently, many prominent leaders of Africa¹⁴ continued to adopt Gandhian methods of non-violence and conflict resolution towards a non-discriminatory harmonious society in accordance with their time and context. South African leader Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu¹⁵ among many others can be cited in eliminating apartheid based on multiple forms of discrimination and establishing harmonious social relationship with the idea of “the rainbow people of God.”¹⁶

Evidently, Gandhi’s non-violent methods of conflict resolution for the creation of a peaceful society based on equality, liberty and communal harmony – what he called *Satyagraha* – made him a leader in the fight against the British Empire. Gandhi later successfully accomplished the larger objective of liberation of India. He laid the founding stone for cultural peace developed through promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence in South Africa long before, which in turn became a motto for many programmes of international organisations.

Gandhi, Non-violence and the Culture of Peace

Strategically, Gandhi was the first to combine a variety of tactics according to a strategic plan in a campaign of explicitly non-violent action, and the first to conduct a series of campaigns toward long-term goals. The supreme value of *ahimsa* is pacifism. He believed that the means justify the ends,¹⁷ unlike Niccolo Machiavellian for whom the ends justifies means.¹⁸ Gandhi

13 ‘Young India, April 20, 1921,’ in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 20, Mahatma Gandhi (ed.), New Delhi: The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1966, p. 15, <https://www.gandhiserve.net/about-mahatma-gandhi/collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi/020-19210415-19210819/> (accessed 13 June 2021).

14 To name few Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo and Dr. Xuma.

15 Tutu followed the strategy of non-violence for peaceful change in Africa. For details see: Colman McCarthy, ‘Tutu: In the Tradition of Gandhi,’ *The Washington Post*, August, 17, 1985, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1985/08/17/tutu-in-the-tradition-of-gandhi/cb191c2c-5638-4747-858e-78a50881ff85/> (accessed 14 June 2021).

16 Tutu stated that “ you are the rainbow people of God. You remember the rainbow in the Bible is sign of peace. The rainbow is a sign of prosperity. We want peace, prosperity and justice and we can have it when we, all the people of God, work together.” Desmond Tutu, *Tutu D. The Rainbow People of God: A Spiritual Journey from Apartheid to Freedom*, Cape Town: Double Storey Books, 1996.

17 Gandhi said that the means may be likened to a seed, the ends to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the ends as there is between the seed and the tree. Anthony J. Parel, *Gandhi: Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 81.

18 Machiavelli is of the view that evil means may have to be done to preserve one’s political life. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by James B. Arkinson, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2008, p. 61.

emphatically stated that “non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute.”¹⁹ Gandhi’s *Ahimsa* is not a negative, not a non-injury, but a positive attitude of sacrifice, love and forgiveness for humanity. The moral power generated by non-violence is much greater than the force of violence and armaments. Gandhi insisted that non-violence is dynamic and active. In practice, “the essence of non-violence technique is that it seeks to liquidate antagonisms but not antagonists themselves.”²⁰ Gandhi makes this clear, stating that “I am not pleading for India to practice non-violence because it is weak. I want her to practice non-violence conscious of her strength and power.”²¹

According to Gene Sharp, Gandhi’s method of non-violent activism necessitates, the *satyagrahi*, a believer in *Satyagraha*, constantly seeks to live a life of truth and love.²² He believes that the practice of love and self-suffering will bring about a change of heart in his opponent. The *satyagrahi* tries to change both individuals and institutions.²³ Stephen Zunes comprehends non-violent action as a deliberate tool for social change.²⁴ According to Zunes, basically, non-violent action is categorised in three broad groups:

1. Persuasion and protest²⁵
2. Non-cooperation
3. Non-violent Intervention

Non-violent protests are actions of peaceful resistance that do not go as far as rejecting cooperation or directly interfering in a situation. This category is primarily symbolic. Persuasion and protest include actions such as speech making, picketing, petitions, vigils, street theatre, marches, rallies and teach-ins.²⁶ Gandhi’s non-cooperation is well known from trade unions

19 The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law-to the strength of the spirit. Gandhi, *Young India*, 1927...

20 Gandhi, *Young India*, 1927..., p. 167.

21 Gandhi, *Young India*, 1927...

22 Gene Sharp, *Gandhi Wields the Weapon of Moral Power [Three Case Histories]*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publications, India, 1960, pp. 59.

23 Sharp, *Gandhi Wields...*, p. 4.

24 Stephen Zunes, ‘Nonviolent Action and Human Rights,’ *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 2, 2000, pp. 181–187.

25 The main purpose of protest and persuasion actions is to communicate a message that something is wrong and people are ready to do something about it. A frequent goal for non-violent protest is to communicate a message to opposition. Jorgen Johansen, ‘Nonviolent Revolutionary Movement,’ in Charles Webel and Jorgen Johansen (eds), *Peace and Conflict Studies: A Reader*, USA: Routledge, 2012, pp. 312–322. Protest and persuasion actions may build a conducive setting for later more targeted disruptive or potentially high-risk actions.

26 ‘198 Methods of Nonviolent Action,’ Albert Einstein Institution, 1978, p. 2, <http://www.aeinstein.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/198-Methods.pdf> also (accessed 16 May 2021).

and their use of strikes. This method consists of social, economic and political forms of non-cooperation such as: social ostracism, strikes, work slowdowns, withdrawals from bank accounts, stay homes, and boycotts by various groups such as consumers, workers, traders and management.²⁷ Additionally, non-violent action is an alternative both to passivity and to violence as an option in conflict.²⁸

Gandhi aimed at a way of living peacefully while incorporating all diverse expression and thought, beliefs and world views, culture and practices without having any forms of violence and discriminations. He strives to build society based on cultural diversity, peace and harmony promoting culture of peace.

The Culture of Peace: Reflection on Africa

The culture of peace was introduced in 1986 by Peruvian scholar Felipe MacGregor.²⁹ It was launched by UNESCO at an international congress held on “Peace in the Minds of Men” in Yamousouka in Cote d’Ivoire in 1989. The United Nations provides a broad definition of the culture of peace “as a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life. It follows that to move toward a culture of peace or to strengthen those elements of a culture of peace that already exists”.³⁰ This is a culture of peace centred around activities and policies which promote the aspects of culture which foster peace and cultivate the elements of peace in a society. In other words, it is the embodiment of “cultural peace, structural peace and direct peace. When these three facets of peace come together, we have a culture (i.e. community, state, or world) of peace.”³¹

UNESCO has played a vital role in promoting a culture of peace in Africa multidimensionally. Historically, UNESCO was created in 1945 to embody a genuine culture of peace and establish the “intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.”³² Objectively, UNESCO’s motto – as above – marked the

27 Webel and Johansen, *Peace and Conflict...*, p. 149.

28 Ronald M. McCarthy and Christopher Kruegler, *Toward Research and Theory Building in the Study of Nonviolent Action*, Cambridge: The Albert Einstein Institution, 1993, pp. 2–3, <https://www.aeinstein.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/TowardResearchandTheoryBuildingintheStudyofNonviolentAction.pdf> (accessed 18 July 2021).

29 Peruvian scholar MacGregor brought the phrase and definition of culture of peace. He illustrated the term in his book of peace education in Peru in 1986, named “Cultura de Paz.” See. ‘Early History of the Culture of Peace,’ <https://www.culture-of-peace.info/history/page2.html> (accessed 20 May 2021).

30 ‘Culture of Peace,’ the United Nations Resolution A/RES/52/13, 15 January 1998, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/52/13> (accessed 18 July 2021).

31 Reber-Rider, ‘Bulding Cultures of Peace in the Rold: One Peace Centre at a Time,’ *International Journal on World Peace*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2008, pp.73–88.

32 ‘UNESCO in brief-Mission and Mandate,’ <https://www.unesco.org/en/introducing-unesco>

primary purpose to build peace through international cooperation in education, sciences and culture. UNESCO's programmes contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals defined in the 2030 Agenda adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.³³ Significantly, promotion of culture of peace and non-violence in Africa constitutes the vital objectives of UNESCO in this regards.

At its 1995 General Conference UNESCO defined the culture of peace as "values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing, based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity."³⁴ A Culture of peace represents "an everyday attitude of non-violent rebellion, of peaceful dissent, of firm determination to defend human rights and human dignity."³⁵ According to Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, a culture of peace is a vision, "linked to the search of social and economic justice" in which everybody plays an active part. Its principle is "to provide the required harmony, both intellectual and moral, to unite people working around the world for peace and justice and to inspire hope and determination for the common task."³⁶

This integrated understanding of peace and peace education is reflected in the Declaration of a Culture of Peace on September 13, 1999 and the Programme of Action³⁷ in the General Assembly resolution 53/243 of October 6, 1999. Article 4 of the Declaration indicates that education is one of the primary means of building a culture of peace.³⁸ Article 9 of the programme of action contains specific actions for fostering a culture of peace through various initiatives.³⁹ UN work on the culture of peace was furthered by UN General

(accessed 6 July 2021).

- 33 'Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda> (accessed 23 July 2021).
- 34 Adam Przeworski, 'Conceptual History of UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programm,' in Alexander Chubarian, Vladimir Lomeiko, Dan Smith and Janusz Symonides, (eds) *A Culture of Peace: A Handbook*, Moscow: UNESCO and International Institute for a Culture of Peace and Democracy, 1997.
- 35 David Adams, 'Preface,' UNESCO and a Culture of Peace: Promoting a Global Movement, UNESCO, Paris, 1995, <https://www.culture-of-peace.info/monograph/pages4-5.html> (accessed 27 July 2021).
- 36 David Adams and Michael True, 'Unesco's Culture of Peace Programme: An Introduction,' *International Peace Research Newsletter*, Vol 35, No. 1, 1997.
- 37 The programme defines eight domains of action which includes culture peace, sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights and so on.
- 38 For details see: 'Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace,' 53/243 Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/a/res/53/243> (accessed 28 September 2021).
- 39 Through education, including involving children in activities for instilling the values and goals of a culture of peace, revision of curricula and textbooks with regards to peace,

Assembly resolution 52/15 of November 20, 1997, by which it proclaimed the year 2000 as the ‘International Year for the Culture of Peace’ and its resolution 53/25 of November 10, 1998, by which it proclaimed the period 2001–10 as the ‘International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.’

Significantly, UNESCO plays a vital role in promoting a culture of peace in Africa in multidimensional aspects both alone and in collaboration with other governmental and non-governmental organisations. UNESCO’s strategy for promotion of culture of peace is three-pronged: 1) educating for a culture of peace; 2) furthering the promotion of cultural pluralism and multicultural dialogue and 3) encouraging learning.⁴⁰ Arguably, Africa is understood as the continent where a “culture of peace is rooted in the values, belief systems and forms of spirituality, local knowledge and technologies, traditions and forms of cultural and artistic expression that contribute to the respect of human rights, cultural diversity, solidarity and the rejection of violence to build democratic societies.”⁴¹

Collaboratively, UNESCO with the Centre for Prospective and Strategic Studies (CEPS) held a forum “A culture of Peace in West African: Essential for economic development and social cohesion” in 4–5 June 2012. Participants of fifteen West African countries discussed the set of principles and proposal for action for development of culture of peace.⁴² A Pan-African Forum⁴³ jointly organised by UNESCO, the African Union and Angolan government on the theme “Sources and resources for a culture of peace”⁴⁴ to deliberate and take actions in this regards. This forum provided a platform for bringing high-level personalities, experts, representatives of international and regional

encouraging and strengthening efforts in developing skills and values supporting a culture of peace, and expanding the culture of peace initiatives in institutions of higher education.

40 In the sources and forms of violence, and promotion of the means and mechanisms available to prevent violence and conflict a source, having regard to the upholding of human rights and the moves towards democracy and tolerance of cultural difference. Mame Lauri Salas, ‘Promoting a Culture of Peace,’ *New Zealand International Review*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 2001, pp. 14–16.

41 ‘Biennale of Luanda: Pan-African Forum for the Culture of Peace,’ African Union, 18–22 September 2019, <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20190918/biennal-luanda-pan-african-forum-culture-peace> (accessed 26 September 2021).

42 ‘A Culture of Peace in West African: Essential for Economic Development and Social Cohesion,’ Report of the International Forum of Reflection, Abidjan, 4–5, June 2012, <https://knowledge-uclga.org/IMG/pdf/acultureofpeaceinwestafricaessentialforeconomicdevelopmentandsocialcohesion.pdf> (accessed 26 September 2021).

43 ‘Pan-African Forum, 26–28 March 2013, Luanda, Angola,’ UNESCO Clearinghouse for Global Citizenship Education, 2015, <https://www.gcעדclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/resources/%5BENG%5D%20Pan-African%20forum.pdf> (accessed 26 September 2021).

44 ‘Pan-African Forum...,’

organisations and states members, Non-governmental Organisations from 43 African countries.

Notably, the forum discussed an “action plan for the culture of peace in Africa” based on the three themes that shaped its agenda: natural and cultural sources and resources, as well as the African youth. Additionally, the forum became instrumental in launching the “Pan-African Movement for a culture of peace in Africa.”⁴⁵ The forum helped in generating multi-level support in favour of “Make Peace Happen” initiated by the African Union in 2010. Significantly, the forum recognises the cultural, natural and human resources of Africa as the three essential pillars to creating an inclusive and holistic approach to the culture of peace.⁴⁶

UNESCO played vital role in establishing the “Network of Foundations and Research Institutions for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace in Africa”⁴⁷ with the collaboration of the Felix Houphouet-Boigny Foundation of Peace Research and the African Union. Moreover, the UNESCO works to implement “Intersectoral and interdisciplinary Program of Action for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence” along with a Mid-Term Strategy (2014–2021) aimed at building peace by building inclusive, peaceful and resilient societies” in Africa.⁴⁸ The African Union Commission Strategic Plan attempts to implement the programmes on regional integration, peace, security and democracy with UNESCO.

Specifically, UNESCO also led activities to strengthen the culture of peace and non-violence. A project entitled “Promoting a culture of peace and non-violence through education”⁴⁹ was started in 2012. By this project, UNESCO made a comprehensive mapping out of current policy and resources of 45 countries in sub-Saharan Africa to provide a picture for fostering a culture of peace.⁵⁰ UNESCO plays a crucial role in the post-conflict peace building process through developing a contextualised functional literacy. For instance, UNESCO became instrumental in providing functional literacy to a large section of society in South Sudan.⁵¹ Collaboratively, UNESCO, the

45 ‘Africa Sources and Resources for a Culture of Peace,’ UNESCO, 2013, <https://cop.unescochair-unifi.it/documents/view/id/9/lang/en> (accessed 26 September 2021).

46 ‘Africa Sources and Resources...,’ p. 3

47 ‘Network of Foundations and Research Institutions for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace in Africa,’ UNESCO, <https://en.unesco.org/priorityafrica/cultureofpeace> (accessed 28 September 2021).

48 ‘Africa Sources and Resources...,’ p. 1.

49 ‘Africa Sources and Resources...,’ p. 6.

50 ‘Africa Sources and Resources...,’ p. 6.

51 UNESCO’s Country Director and Representatives of South Sudan, Mr. Julius Banda, stated that improved access to literacy, numeracy and skills development for youth and adults especially girls and women remains a top priority for UNESCO in South Sudan.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Development Bank developed “educational tools for the promotion of human rights education, citizenship and culture of peace, democracy and regional integration” in the formal education systems of 15 member of states.⁵²

Similarly, UNESCO takes initiatives to promote a culture of peace and non-violence in the countries which are in transition moving towards democracy. For instance, in Tunisia, UNESCO supports the implementation of a national strategy for the creation of 24 citizenship and human rights clubs, with a view to reforming and generalising civic education in primary education and secondary schools.⁵³ In Egypt, a gender-sensitive manual is being developed in collaboration with the Ministry of State for Youth, the Ministry of Higher Education and other stakeholders.⁵⁴ Many significant activities are undertaken by UNESCO in Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Malawi, Burkina Faso, Mali, Uganda, South Sudan and Nigeria and other part of Africa for the promotion of a culture of peace through education, science, media and teaching of peaceful of resolution of conflicts. UNESCO remains committed to go for “long walk of peace, towards culture of prevention and building stable and thriving societies.”⁵⁵

Conclusions

Significantly, non-violent methods of conflict resolution and constructing peace through the promotion of a culture of peace in diverse societies proves to be most appropriate. The non-discriminatory, non-exploitative, all-inclusive, development for all, multi layers culture of peace and non-violence initiatives form an umbrella project based on win-win principles. In fact, the interplay between Gandhi’s teaching and practice of non-violence and the idea of a culture of peace, significantly provides an idealistic value and pragmatic framework to work for peaceful, cooperative and harmonious social order. In this direction, UNESCO’s plays instrumental role in bringing the same on the ground through culture of peace and non-violence programmes.

Precisely, the overall objective of UNESCO remained centred around building peace by building inclusive, peaceful and resilient societies through promotion of culture of peace in Africa. The development of a culture of peace is a necessary condition for the security and development of Africa in particular and the world at large and thereby obtaining the vital objective of “welfare for all.” In fact, it seems there is a thread through Gandhi, non-violence, the

52 ‘Africa Sources and Resources...,’ p. 7.

53 ‘Africa Sources and Resources...,’ p. 8.

54 ‘Africa Sources and Resources...,’ p. 8.

55 Stated by Director General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay.

culture of peace and Africa. Here UNESCO plays as a linking this thread and attempts to complete the unfinished work of Gandhi in establishing peace through peaceful means. Evidently, UNESCO imbibed the idea of Gandhi while quoting him in the “a vision in action” document, that “there is no route to peace, peace is the route.”

Editorial Principles

Hemispheres. Studies on Cultures and Societies is a yearly journal published online. Articles from current and recent issues are available at: hemispheres.iksiopan.pl

Articles submitted to the journal should not be submitted elsewhere. Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to publish any material under copyright (see the ‘Ghostwriting’ and ‘Statement for authors’ files at: hemispheres.iksiopan.pl).

Articles must be in English or French. The article should begin with an abstract of up to 100 words, followed by five keywords which should describe the article’s main arguments and conclusions. Manuscript length should be between 25,000 and 40,000 characters (including the main text, footnotes, and spaces), and should be typed on A4 paper, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with ample margins on all sides.

The entire manuscript must be 1½-spaced and numbered consecutively. The title, the author’s name and her/his institutional affiliation should be at the top of the first page (do not use headnotes). All titles in non-Roman alphabets must be transliterated. An English translation of other language titles should be provided in square brackets after the title.

Footnotes at the bottom of the text page are obligatory, and they should be typed in 10-point Times New Roman font and single spaced. Quotations must be numbered consecutively throughout the text and the style of note citation should conform with the following examples:

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. 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.
4. Zygmunt Komorowski, *Kultura Afryki Czarnej* [Cultures of Black Africa], Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1994, pp. 89–90.
5. Larry J. Dimond, ‘Rethinking of Civil Society,’ *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July 1994, p. 4.

6. 'Tunisia's al-Nahda to Form Party', *Aljazeera*, 1 March 2011, [http://www.aljazeera.com/news/%20 middleeast/2011/03/201131132812266381.html](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/%20middleeast/2011/03/201131132812266381.html) (accessed 10 November 2011).
7. *Sudan Peace Act Report: 21 April 2003*, Washington DC: Department of State, 2003, www.state.gov/p/af/rls /rpt/2003/19790.htm (accessed 23 August 2013).

When notes to the same work follow after interruption, use the author's last name and a shortened title of the book or article. **Do not use op. cit. or other Latin terms.**

8. Hinnebusch, 'Syria under Bashar...', pp. 20, 22.

A bibliography should be included at the end of the paper. It should list, alphabetically by author's last name, all the books and articles cited in footnotes.

More substantial editing will be returned to the author for approval before publication. No rewriting will be allowed at the proof stage. Authors will be asked to return the material to the editorial office within 4 days of receipt, or approval will be assumed.

Articles are qualified on the basis of a double-blind review process by external referees (see the 'Peer Review Process' file at: **hemispheres.iksiopan.pl**).

Manuscripts and all editorial correspondence should be addressed to: **hemispheres@iksiopan.pl**

