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Polish Academy of Sciences**



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A Failed Acculturation-by-Naturalisation Experiment. The *néo-français* in Tunisia under the French Protectorate¹

Abstract

This article addresses the issues of intercultural contacts and presents historical experiences that relate to contemporary phenomena of the increased flow of migration. The relationship between acculturation and naturalisation and the concepts of integration of colonial peoples with France during the Third French Republic and the colonial empire have been examined. These concepts assumed integration through acculturation and assimilation, and the instrument conducive to this process was to be naturalisation. The article refers to archival material and explores individual cases of naturalisation in Tunisia during the period of the French protectorate. The documents prove that the act of naturalisation itself did not lead to greater acculturation. The main obstacle to acculturation expected by the French authorities was the constant identification of naturalised *indigènes* with native culture through socialization with the native environment.

Keywords: acculturation, naturalisation, French Colonial Empire, North African People, Tunisia.

Introduction

Acculturation is a phenomenon accompanying contact with another culture. It means the adopting of elements of a foreign culture as a result of an individual's adaptation to the new socio-cultural and psychological changes (Maehler et al., 2019, p. 1; Berry, 1997, p. 5). The classical definition of acculturation by Melville J. Herskovits from the 1930s says that it is "the transfer of cultural elements from one social group of people to another," which is the result of an inclination or belief expressed by a people to adopt the culture of another (Herskovits, 1938, p. 2). In the literature on the subject, there is a belief that there is an organic relationship between acculturation and naturalisation. Many studies show that acculturation in the country of residence is an essential motive for migrants to apply for citizenship, and this promotes integration. Other studies point to the other side of the phenomenon, namely that naturalisation increases the degree of identification of migrants with the country of

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residence (Maehler et al., 2019, p. 1), and the intensity of social interactions with natives.

In France, naturalisation was legally sanctioned in 1792. The Naturalisation Law created the concept of *nouveaux Français* and referred to those foreigners who defended the Republic. At the time of the First Empire, 14 million New French had theoretically the same rights and guarantees as the French, but the incorporation of new citizens into the “nation” raised the problem of France’s political identity. The main question then was: what did it mean to be French? Thus, three terms and concepts entered the discourse: *citoyenneté*, *naturalité*, and *nationalité*. These terms, transferred to colonial politics and the discussion of slavery and races, gained additional meaning (Sahlins, 2004, pp. 113–117; Weil, 2008, pp. 14–18; Lehning, 2001). Namely, acculturation became a vital part of colonial policy. In the case of the colonial empire of France during the Third Republic, French citizenship was theoretically opened to everyone who wanted to belong to the French nation but assimilationist principles restricted this access to people of one culture (Amara, 2012, pp. 15–16). Adaptation was regarded “exclusively in the container space of nation-states” (Faist, 2010, p. 208). On the one hand, radical assimilationism did not give special cultural rights to ethnic and religious groups; the second position favoured granting such rights, but saw it as a transitional period ending with the adoption of the dominant group’s culture. From 1889, the authorities of the Third Republic tended to extend the *jus soli* principle to overseas territories. The draft legal acts on naturalisation prepared at that time treated citizenship as “a symbol of the republican revolutionary ideology, which gave a universalistic dimension to the Republic.” On the other hand, there were still strong tendencies to reject the possibility of a multi-cultural society and to apply assimilationist principles (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 32). Edwige L. Lefebvre stresses that “the French concept of citizenship has always intentionally neglected /.../ cultural pluralistic dimensions, because of a fear of social fragmentation” (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 15).

This contradiction between republican ideas and colonial interests exacerbated during World War I. Soldiers from the colonies and protectorates fought on the fronts of this war in Europe, including about 270,000 soldiers from French North Africa. As early as the fall of 1914, the French Minister of War submitted proposals to grant French citizenship to soldiers from North Africa as a reward for their dedication to France. For the minister, granting citizenship was an instrument aimed at ensuring a constant flow of recruits to the French Army. Yet, his proposal stimulated the discussion on equal rights for people from the colonies and the policy of integrating the colonial population with France. If anti-colonial circles in France raised the war minister’s

proposal as the correct way to integrate the colonial population with France through naturalisation, the colonial lobby challenged this idea, arguing that naturalisation did not automatically lead to acculturation, which was supposed to be the ultimate goal of integration.

Methods and Materials

This article refers to a discussion in the sociological and psychological literature that shows how complex acculturation is. This common phenomenon occurs when two groups or individuals from different cultures are in continuous and regular contact with each other. These contacts result in changes in the cultural patterns of both groups, which may be significant in some situations (Herskovits, 1938, p. 149). John W. Berry emphasises that the process of communicating two cultures appears neutral, but in practice one side always exerts a more decisive influence on the other. It can provoke various reactions, including opposition or rejection of a more robust culture (Berry, 1997, p. 7). In this situation, acculturation refers to a weaker culture that modifies its patterns under the influence of a more robust culture. The final stage of acculturation is assimilation, expressed in the acceptance by the group or individual of the patterns of culture with which the contacts occur. It is done at the expense of native culture patterns. The theory that is most often used in the study of immigration is the canonical account of assimilation provided by Milton Gordons, which has been subject to intensive critique and numerous studies suggest directions for reformulation (Alba, Nee, 1997). However, other outcomes of these cultural encounters are possible. They can be expressed in adopting only some patterns, e.g. the acquisition of knowledge and skills, including linguistic skills, in establishing social contacts, adopting a behavioural repertoire (food, leisure behaviour), integrating into the social structure (e.g. adopting the education system and places on the labour market), or finally a change of identity or sense of belonging (Maehler et al., 2019, p. 2).

Research on acculturation allowed us to distinguish acculturation profiles or typologies, the most famous of which is Berry's proposal, who believes that there are four acculturation situations: assimilation (a strong orientation towards the culture of the residence country), separation (a strong orientation toward the culture of origin), integration (a strong orientation toward the culture of origin and the culture of the residence country), and marginalisation (a weak orientation toward both cultures) (Berry, 1997, p. 9). Jean S. Phinney proposed similar typology in relation to the identity of young immigrants in the USA, Israel, Finland and the Netherlands, namely: integrated identity, assimilated identity, separated identity, and marginalised identity (Phinney et al., 2001, p. 498).

Two issues discussed in the literature are particularly important for this paper. The first is the psychological aspect of acculturation. Acculturation creates psychological problems as it is related to “behavioural shifts,” “cultural learning,” and “social skills acquisition”. “Psychological adaptation to acculturation is considered to be a matter of learning a new behavioural repertoire that is appropriate for the new culture,” we read in the Berry’s study (Berry, 1997, p. 12). In some cases, the tension that arises from getting to know and assimilating elements of a foreign culture may be so strong that it leads to “culture shock” and “acculturative stress” (Berry et al., 1987, pp. 49-511; Da Silva et al., 2017, p. 214). The psychological aspect of acculturating means that the individuals or groups must solve the problem of how to acculturate. Solving this problem can be called choosing an acculturation strategy. Berry writes that acculturation strategies address two issues: “cultural maintenance (to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered to be important, and their maintenance strived for); and contact and participation (to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves)” (Berry, 1997, p. 9). Since the strategy implies an active role of an individual or group subject to acculturation in adopting the patterns of culture of the country of residence, it can be assumed that the selection of these patterns and the scope of their acceptance may assume the achievement of specific goals and may be different depending on circumstances that are often individual and unique.

The second issue of acculturation research relates to socialisation. This term primarily refers to learning the native culture. Its result is internal acceptance by the individual of the behaviour, beliefs, and other norms and actions of community members with which the individual identifies himself (Cromdal, 2006, pp. 462–466). In the case of intercultural contacts, socialisation, understood as the entry of an individual into a group with a culture other than their native culture, acquires a special meaning. Valery Chirkov emphasizes that proper acculturation begins “after meeting and encountering a cultural community that is different from the cultural community where he or she was originally socialised” (Chirkov, 2009, p. 94). Therefore, it can be assumed that the frequency of contact with the cultural environment of the host country and the durability of ties with the native culture environment are of significant importance for the acculturation process. However, it does not automatically lead to assimilation and is of an individual nature.

This article analyses the documents of the French Centre des Archives diplomatiques, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMAE), in La Courneuve, particularly the archival group *Correspondence Politique et Commerciale, Nouvelle Série, Guerre 1914–1918* with several subgroups (1664–1671).

They concern the presence of soldiers from North Africa in the French army during the First World War. In particular, the reports of the Resident General of France in Tunisia, which at that time was under the French protectorate of the subgroups 1664 (Jul 1914– Feb 1915), 1665 (March 1915–October 1915) and 1670 (*Panislamisme* 1914–1915), were used. In April 1915, the Resident-General in Tunisia sent a report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the behaviour of Tunisian *indigènes* who had been naturalised. The Resident compiled a list of Tunisian Muslims who had been naturalised under the decrees of the President of France of February 28, 1899, and October 3, 1910. He was interested in the influence that French codes exerted on naturalised Tunisians and the changes in the mentality and behaviour of these new French (*néo-français*) after obtaining French citizenship. The report was based on detailed information received from his subordinate Civil Controllers (*contrôleurs civils*), who supervised individual governorates on behalf of France in the protectorate system in Djerba, Grombalia, Gafaa, Sousse, Kairouan, Sfax, Kef and Bizerte. The issue of naturalisation of the indigenous inhabitants of Tunisia during the French protectorate has been addressed in many studies, the most comprehensive of which is Yahya El-Ghoul's book *Naturalisation et nationalisme en Tunisie de l'entre-deux-guerres*. Its author considers citizenship issues under colonial rule to be based on statutory demarcations strictly separating populations. He points out that until 1923 any sense of dignity attached to the naturalisation procedure was very rare among the Tunisians as French citizenship was seen as acceptance of imperial rule. The situation changed in 1923 when the colonial authorities of the protectorate of Tunisia opened up access to French nationality, both to foreigners, mainly Europeans, and to Tunisians, without waiting for the assimilation effect of naturalisation (El-Ghoul, 2009; see also Clancy-Smith, 2022; Lewis, 2014; Sayad, 1993).

French Colonial Policy

French colonial policy was oriented towards acculturation, understood as assimilation. The conflict in Algeria in 1830 initiated France's occupation of the country. In 1857, after the conquest of Kabylia, all of Algeria was in the hands of the French. Algeria was incorporated into France as an integral part, divided into departments and covered by French legislation. The country occupied a unique place in French colonial policy. As Charles Jonnart, a minister, senator and later the Governor-General of Algeria, wrote in 1893, it was neither a colony nor a separate department. The Law of December 19, 1900 provided that Algeria was to have a separate budget, governed by two assemblies of representatives of the population – *les Délégations financières* and *le Conseil*

supérieur. The indigenous population was represented in these assemblies and city councils (Bernard, 1926, pp. XIII–XIV; Vatin, 2015, pp. 27–28; Frémeaux, 2016). In 1881, Tunisia and in 1904 Morocco became protectorates of France, which meant that the local structures of power headed by the Bey in Tunisia and the Sultan in Morocco had a social organisation. North Africa became a crucial destination of French colonisation. The French settled in the countries and capital was invested. In 1911, 4,740,000 people lived in Algeria, including 752,000 Europeans, 304,000 of whom were French. Tunisia had a population of 1,928,000, of whom 1,730,000 were *indigènes*, 50,000 Palestinian and 148,000 Europeans, including 46,000 French. In Morocco, the population was 4.5 million *indigènes* and 50,000 Europeans, including 28,000 French. Between 10 and 11 million *indigènes* and around one million Europeans were then living in the three countries of North Africa (Bernard, 1926, p. XVIII).

France's policy in North Africa was to implant themselves there and win over the *indigènes*. This meant double assimilation: the French from Algeria should look like the French from France and the *indigènes* should look like Europeans. The *sénatus-consulte* from 1865 was to serve this purpose. It made it possible for *indigènes* to obtain the rights of a French citizen, but on condition that they give up the personal status as Muslims. Naturalisation was therefore associated with assimilation, and very few Algerian Muslims chose to do so. The low number of applications for naturalisation caused astonishment in France and was explained by the ignorance of Muslims, who did not realise what benefits of civilisation could be brought by naturalisation (Hamel, 1880, p. 6). Those who did not decide to naturalise-assimilate, and thus the vast majority of Algeria's population, received special status, that of the *indigénat* or native population. Laure Blévis writes that the history of Algerian citizenship during the colonial period underwent few inflections after 1865, which strengthened France's presence and brought institutionalisation of colonial domination (Blévis, 2001, p. 559). In 1881, a code de *l'indigénat* or native penal code created penalties unknown to common law for forty-one offenses "peculiar to the natives." These offences were scaled down to twenty-one in 1890. Until 1919, Muslims had to pay various taxes, so-called *impôts arabes*. From 1901 onwards, a new native policy was officially introduced, entitled the "policy of association." The principle of legislative assimilation was rejected and the new policy aimed at the "advancement of Muslims within their own civilisation" (Ageron, 1991, p. 69 and pp. 73–74; Betts, 2005, pp. 106–133). Judith Surkis stresses that the French colonial authorities in Algeria constructed Muslim legal difference and used it to deny Algerian Muslims full citizenship. One example of this is polygamy and anxiety about it was used as a rationale for exclusion (Surkis, 2019, pp. 55–89). In 1892, Eugène Etienne,

an exponent of colon ethnocentrism, called for a strict separation of Muslims and colons (Cooke, 1976, p. 18).

However, as Richard S. Fogarty and David. Killingray write, “assimilation, as the orthodox republican justification for empire, never entirely disappeared as a theoretical goal of French colonialism” (Fogarty, Killingray, 2015, p. 115), as was shown by the discussion on the naturalisation of Muslim soldiers fighting in the French army from 1914.

1915 Discussion on the Naturalisation of the Colonial Population

On November 20, 1914, Alexandre Millerand, the Minister of War, sent a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in which he expressed the view that the war and the participation of Algerian soldiers in it had created a new situation in the matter of naturalisation and made it necessary to take steps to resolve this issue. The Minister proposed to create formal and legal possibilities for Algerian soldiers to choose between their current personal status and the naturalisation and acceptance of French citizenship (*la nationalité française*) as “compensation for their loyalty to us” (*Minister of War to Minister of Foreign Affairs*).

Millerand’s proposal had two aspects. On the one hand, it referred to broader discussions about the possible naturalisation of Muslim inhabitants of Algeria and, in this respect, did not go beyond the colonial discourse of the Third Republic. However, he stated, “the moral attitude and civic education of Algerian Muslims were not adequate for them so far to be able to exercise their civil rights fully consciously, but those of them who are so brave and gloriously shed their blood for their adopted motherland, they are becoming more and more worthy of acquiring the rights of a French citizen” (*Minister of War to Minister of Foreign Affairs*).

On the other hand, the issue of naturalisation had a military and political aspect as it would lead to an increase in the number of volunteers from North Africa to join the army, which would reduce the number of soldiers called up to serve in the army from France. From a political point of view, making a decision enabling the people of Algeria to obtain the rights of French citizens would weaken the power of propaganda carried out by the Ottoman Empire and Germany aimed at separating the Muslim world from France. In addition, such a decision would meet the expectations of the *Jeunes-Algériens* community, which advocated the close integration of Algeria with France but demanded the same citizenship rights for the people of Algeria that the French had. At the same time, the minister expressed the view that the opposition of many political circles in France to the naturalisation of the Algerian population

for fear of the far-reaching effects of this decision was unjustified because, according to him, only a tiny part of Algerian society would benefit from the right to naturalisation, as the majority would want to keep their current personal status (*statut personnel*).

On April 1, 1915, the Chamber of Deputies heard a new draft law on facilitating naturalisation by Muslim soldiers from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. The draft was submitted by four deputies – Albin Rozet, Georges Leygues, Louis Doizy, and Lucien Millevoye – known for their liberal views on the rights of the colonial population. The deputies began with high patriotic tones, listing war operations involving indigenous soldiers from North Africa. Such behaviour by Muslim soldiers was a complete disappointment for German propaganda, which had hoped that slogans of a holy war between Muslims and non-Muslims would drag soldiers from North Africa to the side of Turkey. The loyalty of North African soldiers to France was total, and the bravery of Tunisian recruits from the 1912 enlistment in the recent battles at Charleroi and Reims was especially emphasised in the orders of the Minister of War and statements of the Governor-General of Algeria. “Everyone, no doubt, will agree that this lasting loyalty deserves immediate compensation from the sovereign nation,” we read in a speech by deputies. “This matter should be considered separately from the issue of electoral reform, announced for a long time and expected to be carried out after the wars’ end. For France, it is an obligation to find a form of compensation for *indigènes* who fight for her and show devotion to her cause. The highest satisfaction they can receive from France will be French citizenship (*la nationalité française*) as the most valuable form of compensation” (*Chambre des Députés: Albin Rozet, Georges Leygues*).

Liberal deputies clearly stated the purpose of their project, which was to create such conditions for the naturalisation of indigenous soldiers that their applications would not depend on the goodwill or the whims of the state administration in Algeria and the administrative authorities of the protectorates in Morocco and Tunisia. The law in force at that time allowed the French administrative authorities to refuse the application of French applicants. Consequently, the first Article of the new law would refer to Muslim soldiers from Algeria and give them the right to receive the rights of a French citizen (*la qualité de citoyen français*) by a simple declaration of the acquisition of those rights after reaching the age of 21 and at any time. The only condition was to attach a good behaviour certificate from an army superior. Active or former Tunisian and Moroccan soldiers could not obtain French citizenship by simple declaration because Tunisians and Moroccans were foreigners by French law. However, the French administrative authorities could not reject

the principle that they would receive full French citizenship rights and their declaration (application) of the desire to receive French civil rights (*Chambre des Députés: Albin Rozet, Georges Leygues*).

The draft of the four deputies was more of a political declaration than a law given the existing legal system. The authors did not ask any naturalised French citizens to give up their native culture in favour of French culture. We read: “Some will probably have objections to the new law’s effects because the number of applications for naturalisation will not be significant. However, this is about the symbolic significance of our proposal. We believe that it is not too zealous to ex officio give one group of people the right of a French citizen as compensation for their attachment to France and - on the other hand - let them retain their personal status as Muslims to which they are so attached and which we constantly respect. Our proposal does not mean these people are obliged to apply for citizenship. When proposing to grant *indigènes* citizenship, we do not put ourselves in the position of someone who assesses their behaviour because whether they accept citizenship or reject such a possibility depends on their beliefs and self-assessment of their situation. The proposed law will no doubt show that France knows what gratitude and dignity are; in this way, it will reward individual units and show the magnitude of the entire indigenous population” (*Chambre des Députés: Albin Rozet, Georges Leygues*).

The draft law’s authors were convinced that the new law would significantly impact the future of France’s relations with the indigenous population, as it would be a step in overcoming mutual prejudices. They were more politically than culturally conditioned, for the Muslim faith alone determined these relations to a lesser extent than the activities of religious brotherhoods and political groups. The authors were concerned with the ideas of Pan-Islamism, which was increasingly influencing Muslims and turning them hostile to European civilisation. According to the authors, France was losing Muslims and steps had to be taken to regain them. The law on the naturalisation of soldiers would be such an action (*Chambre des Députés: Albin Rozet, Georges Leygues*). The design and thinking of liberal deputies remained within the framework of *la mission civilisatrice* but was ground-breaking in the perception of Muslim culture by politicians. Until then, it had been believed that it was incompatible with republican values. The project’s authors, “allowing” naturalised soldiers to stick to their Muslim personal status, “suggested that the coexistence of two cultures within one European civilisation is possible.” A severe obstacle was polygamy, prohibited by French law, but which liberal deputies saw as temporary, and history confirmed their suppositions.

Millerand’s proposal met with strong opposition from the so-called colonial party. The officials of the Ministry of Colonies noted that the possibility of

naturalisation had not yet attracted Muslims' attention because, for many, it was associated with apostasy and, for everyone, with a departure from Muslim personal status. In this way, they raised the issue of cultural conflict (*Interministerial Commission*). The high officials of the French administration in North Africa were most critical. Gabriel Alapetite, the French Resident-General in Tunisia, explained that a Muslim who was a naturalised French citizen was treated as an apostate in his country. The active exercise of French civil rights conflicted with Muslim family law and personal status. Specifically, it was about polygamy and the unequal position in the inheritance of property under Muslim law. Alapetite strongly spoke against the adoption of any naturalisation law without consultation with the Tunisian authorities and without considering changes in the family and legal situation of the beneficiaries of such law (*Resident General in Tunisia to Minister of Foreign Affairs*).

Charles Lutuad, the Governor-General of Algeria, considered that there was no need to introduce new naturalisation regulations as in the case of *indigènes* from Algeria; their situation was sufficiently regulated by the *sénatus-consulte* of July 14, 1865, and the decree of October 14, 1870. Although both legal acts did not speak of soldiers fighting at the front, the Governor considered that the general provisions of these acts also included the case of soldiers (the *sénatus-consulte* of July 14, 1865). The Governor-General concluded that the new law would not increase the number of applications and naturalisation of the indigenous Algerian population. From 1865–1914 in Algeria, French citizenship was granted to just 1,611 people of the Muslim religion, which meant that 34 people were granted this right every year. According to the Governor, the reasons for this were cultural. Muslims in Algeria treated the adoption of French citizenship as apostasy, and those who applied for citizenship were renegades. In turn, this was conditioned by a lack of knowledge about the benefits of adopting French citizenship for the development of civilisation and the reluctance to naturalise on the part of Muslim religious brotherhoods. The General-Governor concluded that the very law, even the most perfect, would not change this situation and that successful assimilation required taking steps to change the population's attitude concerning the benefits of naturalisation (the *sénatus-consulte* of July 14, 1865).

New French in Tunisia

In April 1915, at the height of the discussion on granting the rights of a French citizen to *indigènes* who served in the French Army, the Resident-General in Tunisia sent a report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the behaviour of those Tunisian *indigènes* who had been naturalised. The

Resident compiled a list of Tunisian Muslims who had been naturalised under the decrees of the President of France of February 28, 1899, and October 3, 1910, and collected information concerning their lifestyle. At the same time, he compiled confidential information about the behaviour of these people as employees of public services to determine to what extent Muslims who received naturalisation identified themselves with the legal culture of France.

The French Resident was interested in the influence that French codes exerted on naturalised Tunisians and what changes in the mentality and behaviour of these new French (*néo-français*) took place after obtaining French citizenship. The questions posed by the Resident were as follows: (1) whether in Tunisia a naturalised French person complied with the provisions of the French Civil Code regarding marriage or still with the provisions of the Koran and (2) whether in the matter of educating his children, especially his daughters, a naturalised Frenchman in Tunisia tried to adapt to a lifestyle consistent with the French civil code, or whether he remained in a world defined by Islamic law. The report was based on detailed information received from his subordinate Civil Controllers (*contrôleurs civils*), who supervised individual governorates on behalf of France in the protectorate system in Djerba, Grombalia, Gafaa, Sousse, Kairouan, Sfax, Kef and Bizerte.

In January 1915, according to the Resident's report, 73 Tunisians who were naturalised French lived in Tunisia, three of whom were naturalised under the decree of July 29, 1887, 64 under the decree of February 28 1899, and six under the decree of October 3, 1910 (*Resident General in Morocco to the Minister of Foreign Affairs*). Civil Controller of Djerba reported to the Resident-General: "While browsing the census of young people who would be of military age in 1914, I noticed that the local Tunisians who are naturalised French do not report to the French authorities [i.e., to the Controller – J.Z.] the fact of the birth of their children," wrote the Civil Controller from Djerba in 1913. He proposed that the sons of naturalised French people over 20 should be included ex officio in the 1914 conscription register and not wait for their father to register them. As for younger children, he believed that their parents should apply for their children to return to their original nationality because they did not represent any "French element" (*Civil Controller of Djerba*).

The personal status of 36 naturalised French living in the Governorate of Sousse had not changed since their naturalisation. They behaved exactly like other Muslims; most did not know French. They should have reported their sons to serve in the French Army, but they had not. Most of them applied for naturalisation during military service (*Civil Controller of Sousse*).

The Civil Controller at Kairouan wondered why the *indigènes* had applied for naturalisation and concluded that individuals who applied were from

lower social classes, most often in military service. They were urged by the French and indigenous officers to do so and had no choice but to obey their officers' wishes. These soldiers knew that, as French citizens, they would not have to pay *medjba* tax and would be less dependent on local notables and *caïds* or provincial governors. *Medjba* was a poll tax paid in Tunisia by all the Bey's subjects after the age of 17. According to the Resident, naturalisation should be cancelled in the case of people who did not cooperate with the French authorities, thus constituting a category of French who "weakened our national prestige." Naturalisation should cover only those *indigènes* whose evolution towards the French language, ideas, and customs was so advanced that naturalisation would only complement this evolution from the legal point of view. Attached to the letter was a list of seven naturalised French living in Kairouan, three of whom were naturalised in the military, one in the police, and one was naturalised by birth (his father was naturalised). The author of this report considered that acculturation should precede naturalisation. "Naturalisation is beneficial for them as it gives them legal protection, but they do not appreciate being French and do not try to get closer to the essence of French citizenship" (*Civil Controller of Kairouan*).

Not all *indigènes* sought to reap the benefits of French citizenship. For many, naturalisation in the army was one of the formal activities performed as part of their official duties. After leaving the army, they did not feel that what had happened while serving meant altering their lives. Thus, their lives in civilian life did not change in any way (*Director of Railway Company*).

The French administration understood naturalisation as a means of civilising the *indigènes* and a road leading to a higher culture. We read about it in the report of the Civil Controller of Djerba on January 23, 1915. The Civil Controller did not notice any change in the mentality of the behaviour of naturalised French in his district and, most importantly, no identification with the French state and its values. For these people, he believed, being naturalised French was about looking out for their interests and using naturalisation's status to derive personal gain from it. Their lifestyle did not differ from that of other Tunisian Muslims. As a rule, they disregarded the obligation to report the birth of their children to French registry offices. If they did not report the birth of their sons to the French Consulate, their sons were not registered on conscription lists for the French Army, and the Tunisian authorities did not call them to serve in the Tunisian Army because they were the sons of naturalised French. They married, divorced, remarried following Islamic law, and did not speak or understand French. "They raise their children under their customs and do not make the slightest effort to civilise" – according to the author (*Civil Controller of Djerba*).

In some cases, the acculturation of *indigènes* who became French citizens was discernible but judged by French administrators to only be occurring on the surface. The Civilian Controller from Kef informed the Resident on January 27, 1915, that two naturalised French people lived in his area. One of them was sent as a soldier in the gendarmerie with a unit to Morocco and was stationed there, while the other served in the local gendarmerie. The man who lived in Kef spoke French well and assisted Europeans in matters concerning relations with the Tunisian authorities; he had completed all the formalities related to being naturalised French, and in particular, he reported the birth of his children at the French Consulate. However, as regards his lifestyle, nothing changed, i.e., he lived like other Muslims. Two of his daughters, who were of school age, never went to school, and his son only attended the Koranic school at the mosque. Another naturalised Frenchman of Algerian origin in Kef was a non-commissioned officer in the *Spahis* expedition unit and had settled in Kef 32 years earlier. In 1883, he was appointed justice of the peace in that city. He married a Spanish woman, knew French well, and “adapted to our customs – as far as external observations can determine it” – wrote the report’s author (*Civil Controller of Kef*).

Eight naturalised French lived in Bizerte, and all of them were naturalised during their military service. One of them was a customs officer in the port, the second operated a motorboat there, and the rest did not have permanent jobs and were engaged in various simple labour. None of them wore either a beret or a cap – which would indicate a change of mentality for the Controller – but only a *chechia* [a traditional Tunisian hat also known as *fez* or *tarboosh* in the Maghreb countries – J.Z.] – a symbol of Arab-Muslim culture to the Controller. The Civilian Controller of Bizerte thus had a different view of the relationship between naturalisation and acculturation than his colleagues, who believed that naturalisation should culminate in the acculturation process. In this case, naturalisation should initiate acculturation, and the first visible step on the way was to change the headdress.

Several reports indicated wearing the *fez* on one’s head as a symbol of belonging to Arab-Muslim culture. Another such symbol was going to an Arab café. On the Bône-Guelma railway, an *indigène* named Balit, was brought up by les Pères Blancs and naturalised in 1907 while working on the railroad. He was a very dedicated worker and was eventually promoted to station manager in Matur-Sud. He registered his marriage with a Muslim woman with a French Administrator, although he divorced only in a Sharia court. However, he was a practising Catholic and received regular communion. He spoke French well and wore European clothes outside his railroad service. He claimed that he would only remarry a Catholic woman, marry in a church according to French

law and bring up his children to be French. His director, however, noticed a few “blemishes” on the image of this man as a wholly assimilated person. We read in the report: “Despite clear signs of progressive assimilation, it must be said that he wears a fez outside his service hours. Moreover, he enjoys visiting traditional Arab cafés during his spare time” (*Director of Railway Company*).

The *néo-français* group – if it grew to the size of social strata due to an overly liberal policy of naturalisation – would threaten the enduring governance of countries where the administration consisted of *indigènes*. The Civilian Controller of Grombalia presented this point of view on January 30, 1915. Naturalised persons maintained a pre-naturalisation mentality, but at the same time pretended to be independent, as French citizens, from the leaders of local communities. They did not observe some rules of the local law. If such people were few, their presence was imperceptible, but if there were more and more of them, their behaviour would lead to chaos in the country’s administration. “Besides, what values will they stand for if they vote in elections as French citizens?” The Controller believed that only the naturalisation of *indigènes* who were well acquainted with French culture would not raise political problems and that only such naturalisation should be the point of reference when considering applications by *indigènes* for French citizenship (*Civil Controller of Grombalia*).

The Civil Controller from Kairouan reported that it was not those *indigènes* who had become naturalised in his district but the families of some notables firmly attached to Islam, including the Mufti family, who wanted to move closer to French culture. These families tried to get their children into French school to learn the French language and civilisation better. Meanwhile, three naturalised French citizens in Kairouan returned to their traditional life after leaving the military. One came from a tribe of nomads who had camped near Kairouan, and it was hard to expect that there he would assimilate himself and his children to the rights and duties of a French citizen. The second was a worker in a mine who lived a solitary life. He had also received naturalisation in the army after serving 15 years. In the case of the third man, one could speak not so much of his approaching French culture but of returning to his Arab-Muslim roots. This man was a policeman and spoke French fluently. He was born to an Algerian father who had become naturalised in 1878. He married a cousin who did not know any French. They had four children who were registered with the French Consulate. The sons attended an Arab-French school where only *indigènes* studied. The daughters went to a Koranic school, and there was no doubt that they would be taken home from school when they reached puberty. The man’s family, who was formally French from birth, was entirely indigenous. Not only did they not socialise with the French environment, but they avoided it (*Civil Controller of Kairouan*).

The French community living in Tunisia could favour the rapprochement of French political culture and organisational patterns. However, contacts between the new French and the French colons were minimal. The new French, as a rule, did not report to the French authorities to register the birth of their children or file tax returns. An example was the payment of the *istitane* personal tax, which replaced the *medjba* poll in 1913 and was paid by both Tunisians and French. The former paid to the offices of the *caïd*, i.e., the Tunisian governor, and the latter to the Administration des Finances, the institution of the administration of the protectorate, dealing with the financial affairs of Europeans, including the colons. *Indigènes* who obtained naturalisation, as a rule, did not report to the institutions of the protectorate so that they would be treated as equal to the French. Therefore, *l'Administration des Finances* did not treat them as part of the European population of Tunisia. They were called upon to pay the *istitane* by the governors' services, which was an arbitrary decision because these naturalised French lived like other *indigènes*. There were two naturalised French people in the *caïdate* of Kairouan, and neither of them applied to *l'Administration des Finances* to pay the personnel tax. However, both signed up to the *Société indigène de prévoyance*, which was established in 1907 as a benefit fund supporting indigenous farmers. They must have been destitute, as they had not paid the 1914 *istitane* tax of 10 francs nor the annual fee of 2.5 francs for membership in the loan and assistance fund. Both were in the French military services and one was called up as a reservist to the local Zouaves battalion. The man did not know French and had three daughters, whose birth he had not reported to the French authorities.

Conclusions

The data from the questionnaires prepared for the Resident-General by the French administration in Tunisia were unambiguous: most of the *indigènes* became naturalised French in the French Army, and after leaving the army, i.e., a few to a dozen years after naturalisation, they were still in the same cultural situation in which they had been at the time of obtaining French citizenship. Newly naturalised Muslims lived indigenously, except in a few cases, just like their co-religionists, both in terms of appearance – headdress and clothing – but also in terms of mentality, language, and customs. Many of them were illiterate and did not speak French; in most cases, they were already married or remarried in the presence of the judge of an Islamic court. Their wives were veiled and locked up. Some of them practised polygamy. As a rule, they did not report their children to the French civil authorities. As a result, their sons could not be included in the French military recruitment records. Due to ignorance, they could not exercise their mandate as French electors – wrote the Resident-General (*Resident General in Tunisia to Minister of Foreign Affairs*).

The Resident-General believed that granting citizenship to indigenous soldiers had led to the formation of a layer of *indigènes* who were formally French but had nothing to do with the mentality of the native French. If they were to change their attitude towards French legal culture, it would mean that their social environment would turn away from them as apostates. The internal conflict of the naturalised French citizen concerning his personal status would undoubtedly spread to family relations, leading to the anarchisation of social life (*Resident General in Tunisia to Minister of Foreign Affairs*).

The examples from the French resident's questionnaire clearly showed that naturalisation did not stimulate acculturation, and various factors and the acculturation strategy conditioned the process of acquiring the patterns of another culture. It was relevant that the naturalised inhabitants of Tunisia functioned in their native environment, which limited contact with the culture of France and perpetuated the patterns of native culture. However, it should be considered that acculturation occurs in a specific historical and political context. The French authorities understood acculturation as assimilation and expected naturalisation to have such an effect. The concept of French citizenship assumed that the citizen of France should actively practice citizenship in the sense that he should fulfil the obligations that he assumed with his citizenship. The title of citizen of France was the highest value and could not be the source only of the *petit bonheur*. The concept of citizenship arose from history and culture and combined political rights and obligations that emerged from history and culture.

As a consequence, French citizenship was linked to the particular culture and its active practising assumed the acceptance of this culture – if not all, then certainly some of its elements and, above all, the law. According to some, naturalisation was the culmination of acculturation and an *indigène* had to give up Muslim personal status if he wanted to receive French citizenship. Liberal deputies did not set such a condition – a naturalised *indigène* could keep his native status at the moment of naturalisation. However, in this case, too, it was ultimately about assimilation. The difference was in the order: in the first case, assimilation was to precede naturalisation; in the second, it was its consequence. However, the concept of citizenship did not allow cultural pluralism.

On the other hand, imperial pride and racial prejudices determined the active effort of colonial administrators to maintain a distance towards the natives, both legal and social, which contradicted the idea of assimilation. Colonial social and power dynamics presented a strange case of acculturation uneasily fit into a model aimed more at contemporary immigration policy. The summary can be Jessica M. Marglin's words who said that relying on terms

like citizenship or nationality without mentioning historical baggage “would ultimately lead to more confusion than clarity” (Marglin, 2021, p. 685). It must be emphasised that Tunisia differed from other North African countries, especially Algeria. The latter was incorporated to France as three departments of the French Republic (albeit with different rights for Muslims, Europeans and Jews), while the former was a protectorate. Because of this, the political context of Algeria, as departments where voting (by settlers) took place, was very different from the protectorate of Tunisia where it did not and where there was at least the pretence of *beylical* sovereignty.

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Carl Jung's Colonial Passages: Archetypes on the Imperial Frontiers

Abstract

The paper explores Carl Jung's personal tendencies towards the process of colonialism on the basis of his travels to Africa and India. The psychologist's views and interpretations of sites of the cross-cultural encounter are also taken into consideration. In order to conduct the analysis, the interdisciplinary relation between the domain of analytical psychology and postcolonialism is outlined. What is more, Jung's key concepts are also explained. Finally, the psychologist's travels are described and analysed in detail. The analysis shows that analytical psychology can be used to deconstruct the complex relationship between the coloniser and the colonised.

Keywords: Carl Jung, archetypes, colonialism, analytical psychology, India, spirituality, European prejudice.

Introduction: Analytical Psychology and Postcolonial Studies

When it comes to the figure of Carl Jung, he is often labelled as an expert in analytical psychology, psychoanalysis, psychiatry and psychology. From the modern standpoint, he is perceived as the key person behind such concepts as archetypes, collective unconscious and individuation. Undoubtedly, the works of Carl Jung had a great influence in such fields as philosophy, literature and anthropology; nevertheless, it is still difficult to use Jung's findings outside the psychoanalytical domain without being accused of spreading essentialism and racism. This is very much the case when one evaluates Jung's texts within the context of the postcolonial discipline. The aim of this paper is to explore Jung's personal tendencies towards the process of colonialism on the basis of his travels to Africa and India, which the psychologist described in his writings. What were, in his view, the complexities of the colonial encounter? Was Jung a prejudiced supporter of the colonial endeavour? Perhaps he was more understanding towards the plight of the colonised than imperial officers on distant frontiers.

Bringing psychoanalytic theory in relation to the postcolonial discourse may appear surprising or provocative, especially in view of the fact that postcolonialism as a discipline has its roots in poststructuralism (During, 2003, p. 125). My choice to focus on the cross-disciplinary encounter between

analytical psychology and postcolonialism did not come from a realisation that postmodernist thought has exhausted its means of deconstructing the historical, political, and cultural conditions of former colonies across the globe, but from the fact that analytical psychology enjoys general resurgence not only in medicine but also in modern academia (Smith, 2016, <http://www.brockpress.com>). Apart from revived interest in Freudian personality psychology and Jungian depth psychology, analytical psychology has recently more and more frequently converged with the field of (post)colonial studies:¹

Scholars in the liberal arts have tended to use Freud as a springboard to examine issues and ideas never dreamt of in his philosophy — like gender studies, postcolonial studies, French postmodernism, Queer theory and soon. [...] [Take for example] a course on psychoanalysis and colonialism, two terms most clinically based analysts would never have imagined in a single sentence (Cohen, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com>).

Indeed, analytical psychology and postcolonialism appear to be an unlikely match; however, the two theoretical frameworks surprisingly complement each other in modern-day contexts. To be more specific, postcolonial studies allow analytical psychology to go beyond its Eurocentric interpretative scope and “speak from the margins about Western culture” (Frosh, 2013, p. 145); that is to say, reveal the irrationality of colonial thought and reaffirm the unconscious position of the primitive self at the centre of every civilised individual (Frosh, 2013, pp. 145–146). In turn, analytical psychology sheds a new light on the ambiguous relationship between the coloniser and the colonised as well as the colonial psyche in the wake of the postcolonial world. Even though analytical psychology may be dismissed by proponents of postcolonial studies as an enabler of the colonial endeavour, at the heart of its psychological theory it also has the subversive power to question racist assumptions (Frosh, 2013, p. 153). For instance, Freud’s division between *the primitive* and *the civilised* can be perceived in the colonial context as a justification of the enlightened European’s domination over an irrational and childish Other (Khanna, 2003, p. 53; Frosh, 2013, p. 143). However, Edward Said’s re-reading of Freud points to the thinker’s critique of national identity. Freud seems to suggest that a nation is not an homogenous construct, by means of race or culture, but such types of identities are in fact heterogeneous because there is always “an outsider at the heart of the nation” (Said, 2003, p. 53) who negates the colonial order (Heller, 2005, p. 172).² On the one hand, the sceptics

¹ I deliberately used the term “post” in parentheses in order to highlight the fact that psychoanalysis influences both the historical condition of living under colonialism and the theory after its end (the postcolonial discourse) that strives to understand this condition.

² As an example, Freud advances a suggestion that the figure of Moses, the founding father of Jewish culture, was actually of Egyptian descent.

of fusing analytical psychology and postcolonial thought frequently cite Freud as the definite reason against doing so (Khanna, 2003, p. 186). On the other hand, the proponents often refer to Jacques Lacan and his concept of identity formation through the mirror stage, which greatly influenced Franz Fanon, the postcolonial researcher par excellence (Khanna, 2003, p. 186; Frosh, 2013, pp. 146–148). However, rarely anyone mentions in this ongoing discourse Carl Jung and his connection with the Orient.

Regardless of the proposed inadequacies, such as putting a strong emphasis on human behaviour and approaching trauma in ambiguous ways, analytical psychology indeed has a significant degree of impact on the re-reading of the colonial condition and its contemporary legacy. Stephen Frosh asserts that “psychoanalysis can be used both to trouble colonial and racist assumptions, and as a stepping stone to some subversive theory” (Frosh, 2013, p. 153), whereas Erik Linstrum adds that psychoanalysis is not an imperfect methodology, but it suffers from insufficient interpretation of its results, especially in the context of modern-day India, where the coloniser’s place has been taken over by a Hindu Nationalist (Linstrum, 2017).

The Concept of Archetypes

The theoretical discipline of analytical psychology is usually associated with the figure of Sigmund Freud (Heller, 2005, p. xii). Undeniably, the Austrian neurologist is considered to be the founding father of psychoanalysis, having devised many ground-breaking theories of his time, such as, for instance, the existence of the unconscious, libido, id, ego, and the superego (Heller, 2005, pp. 89–92, p. 164). As mentioned in the previous subsection, the names of Freud and Lacan are brought up in the discussion on the usefulness of psychoanalysis against the postcolonial backdrop. I believe this is due to the fact that both thinkers dealt to such a great extent with the issue of identity formation, even though they came under heavy criticism for presenting insufficient empirical data in their research (Heller, 2005, p. xiv). Nonetheless, other psychoanalytic researchers, including Carl Jung, remain largely disregarded in the discourse.

Carl Jung was a Swiss psychologist who contributed to psychoanalysis on the basis of his experiences with hospitalised patients. While initially under the influence of Freud and serving as his close associate for the period of at least six years, the two split professionally and went their separate ways. The moment of their theoretical parting is marked by Jung’s publication of *Psychology of the Unconscious* in 1912. Freud was convinced that human life presents itself as a “failed hero story” (Peterson, 2002, p. 313),³ one in

³ A reflection of such a story is, according to Freud, the myth of Oedipus. Although Oedipus

which human development is destined to go in the wrong direction, whereas Jung believed quite the opposite (Peterson, 2002, p. 313). To him, the ethos of the human myth was a “successful hero story”, the awakening of a man who can conceptualise himself as an individual and who is able to conquer chaos and achieve triumph (Peterson, 2002, p. 313). Consequently, Jung rejected Freudian assumptions about religion being simply an occult phenomenon and the libido serving as an important factor in human development.

Jung centred his own assumptions around the notion of *the collective unconscious*.⁴ According to him, a part of our psyche contains antecedent patterns, ideas and memories which are experienced by every individual cross-culturally (Henderson, 1964, p. 107). Therefore, each person is bound to reproduce archetypes; meaning, universal images or symbols which find their reflection in cultural spheres (be it art, religion, politics or literature). Jung never clearly defined the meaning of archetypes. While initially referring to them as “primordial images” (Jung, 1964, p. 67), he based the concept of archetypal images on Plato’s pure forms; that is models non-existent in our reality, but which are sources of physical copies. Yet, this basic explanation is not applicable to patterns of behaviour. In response to critics’ claim that the existence of archetypes cannot be proven, Jung replied that the human experience is the ultimate proof of their presence:

The term “archetype” is often misunderstood as meaning certain definite mythological images or motifs. [...] My critics have incorrectly assumed that I am dealing with “inherited representations,” and on that ground they have dismissed the idea of the archetype as mere superstition. They have failed to take into account the fact that if archetypes were representations that originated in our consciousness (or were acquired by consciousness), we should surely understand them, and not be bewildered and astonished when they present themselves in our consciousness. They are, indeed, an instinctive trend, as marked as the impulse of birds to build nests, or ants to form organized colonies (Jung, 1964, pp. 67–68).

Consequently, Jung explains archetypes not as pieces of information which are inherited from generation to generation but as patterns which drive human development. In this manner, archetypes emerge from the unconscious, pushing an individual to devise, learn, and replicate a certain set of activities.

In relation to the idea of the collective unconscious, Jung described the struggle of consciousness rising towards the light out of the unconscious. This

saved Thebes from Sphinx and ascended the throne, he finds out that he unknowingly killed his father and married, unbeknownst to him, his own mother.

⁴ All Jung’s ideas, mentioned for the first time in the article, are hereafter marked in italics.

mental activity can be labelled as *individuation* in which an individual achieves physical wholeness by becoming aware of his existence (*the Self*) and works on fulfilling his desires (von Franz, 1964, p. 161). However, he may be interrupted in this undertaking by his *shadow*, the negative and hidden characteristics of the identity suppressed by the conscious mind. In order to complete the task of individuation, an individual must acknowledge his shadow as well as either *extraverted or introverted* aspects of his personality and one of the two contra-sexual traits of the psyche: inner feminine in men (*Anima*) or inner masculine in women (*Animus*) (von Franz, 1964, p. 177; p. 189).

Jung's Travels to Africa

The main point of concern with regard to the assumptions outlined above is their application to postcolonial studies. The main link is provided by Carl Jung's travels. Namely, during his quest to prove the existence of archetypes, he embarked on scientific expeditions to East Africa and India in 1920 and 1937, respectively. Jung saw dreams as mediators between the conscious and the unconscious in the individuation process (von Franz, 1964, p. 161). Hence, he was determined to uncover their origins. Jo Collins claims as follows:

It was through his dream explorations that he came to theorise the collective unconscious. For him, [it] was a storehouse of atavistic memories, primordial images, but which the European in his advanced state of civilisation, had substantially forgotten. [...]. These ideas motivated Jung to travel to colonial locales to test his theories. By seeing the colonial environments as primitive, Jung hoped to encounter (in them) the living remnants of these unconscious mythologies which the European had forgotten (Collins, 2008, p. 23).

Upon arriving in North Africa, Jung was unable to tell whether he had found himself in a dream or reality. The African continent manifested itself as a land out of time and beyond European experience, where the dreams of indigenous people would allow him to explore the collective unconscious (Collins, 2008, p. 23). While it may be initially assumed that the aim of Jung's endeavour was to reaffirm European supremacy on the colonial frontiers, it actually threatened the convenient composite dichotomy of Africa/primitive/unconscious, on the one hand, and Europe/civilised/conscious, on the other. Jung sought in Africa evidence that would help him to reclaim the unconscious and primate aspects that were supposedly lost and forgotten by the European psyche.

Jung's perception of Africa was very Eurocentric; he described the continent to be a "naïve world of adolescents"⁵ (Jung, 1965, p. 239). What is

⁵ Jung provided that remark upon encountering Arabic homosexuals in Tunis.

more, Jung experienced a very peculiar dream during his trip, in which he confronted an Arab prince, possibly an alternative version of himself⁶ (Jung, 1965, p. 243). Allegedly, the prince tried to kill Jung by drowning him, however, Jung gloriously triumphed by encouraging the attacker to read one of his publications in Turkmen, even though Jung could not write in that language (Jung, 1965, pp. 242–243). The reading of Jung’s dream from the postcolonial perspective clearly indicates that the psychologist unwittingly sought to reconfirm his civilised identity while being confronted with the colonial reality (Collins, 2008, pp. 24–25; Brooke, 2022, pp. 12–13). In the fight between the European consciousness (the Self) and the unconscious psyche (the Oriental), there is no doubt which one was the most important for Jung. He literally became the coloniser and overpowered the Arab native for the sake of his own safety in the indigenous dream-world (Africa). Yet, Jung himself never interpreted this dream in the colonial context, yet instead he reached the following conclusion: “I became aware of how completely... I was still caught up and imprisoned in the cultural consciousness of the white man” (Jung, 1965, p. 247, Brooke, 2022, p. 13).

He was afraid that “the primitive would invade and overwhelm the consciousness of the European” (Collins, 2008, p. 25). To him, the Orient signified an archetypal space containing memories of prehistoric past (Jung, 1965, p. 246). Without a doubt, these memories are very important for every human being, but their reliving would initiate a relapse into the primitive, the naïve adolescent (Jung, 1965, p. 246). In consequence, “the otherness is no longer a feature of the Arab, but European: the civilised psyche inseparable from its shadow” (Collins, 2008, p. 25).

Jung returned to Africa five years later, after seeing the 1925 British Empire exhibition at Wembley⁷. He was determined to go back and unravel the prehistoric origins of the human by making the natives tell him their dreams. In this manner, Jung would have been able to map out a gap dividing the primitive self of the European⁸ (Jung, 1965, p. 263) and the primitive self of the African⁹ (Collins, 2008, p. 26). During his second visit, Jung set out to visit the Elgoni tribe in Kenya. While travelling on a steamer to Mombasa, he made an acquaintance with many young Englishmen who were going to their assigned posts in the African colonies. Jung remarked that they “were

⁶ Jung referred to the character as an emissary of the self.

⁷ The showcase of cultural and technological items brought from the British colonies around the world.

⁸ Remnants of prehistoric memories that one individual experiences in dreams.

⁹ There was a scientific conviction at the beginning of the 20th century that people of Africa were unconscious in their everyday activities, in contrast to the Westerners, who were advanced technologically.

not travelling for pleasure, but were entering upon their destiny” (Jung, 1965, p. 253). Before the end of his trip, the psychologist was informed that several of his fellow passengers died in the tropics due to various illnesses within a period of just two months after their arrival. This account undermines the general assumption that only British women were unable to withstand the incredibly warm and humid climate of distant colonies (Stoler, 1997, p. 346). What is more, Jung describes the house of a District Commissioner in the Kakamegas settlement as the cause of his own inability to differentiate between reality and dream, because the interior of the residence rejected everything that was African:

We were exhausted and the D. C. helpfully received us with whisky in his drawing room. A jolly and oh-so-welcome fire was burning in the fireplace. In the centre of the handsome room stood a large table with a display of English journals. The place might easily have been a country house in Sussex (Jung, 1965, p. 257).

Consequently, it can be inferred that the British colonisers tried to, quite literally, make themselves at home in the colonial environment, but in fact that environment was so dangerous and deadly that they eventually lost health or even life. Jung was also subjected to these dangers as he was bedridden with fever and laryngitis in the Commissioner’s household only to recover soon after and experience an attack of hyenas on his travelling party (Jung, 1965, pp. 258–259). Yet, these experiences did not discourage Jung from discovering the grandeur of Africa and its people. In a fashion similar to Isak Dinesen just a few years earlier,¹⁰ Jung continued his journey through the unknown regions. In his account, it becomes evident that Jung, apart from appreciating the magnificent landscapes, took to local people, and his friendliness was reciprocated. The Bugishu people began calling him “mzee”, which is an honorary title meaning “old man,” whereas Jung praised their capacity for mimicry because they could accurately imitate gestures and emotions (Jung, 1965, p. 259).

Jung’s critics claim that the results of his visit among the Elgonyi tribe were unfruitful because, to the Elgonyi, Jung allegedly seemed to resemble “a colonial representative,” so they would not tell him their dreams (Burlison, 2005, pp. 142–143). Hence, the local tribe ironically framed him as the distrusted Other within their own environment. Jung himself, however, explains that the Elgonyi’s unwillingness to open themselves to him was due to their fear that possessing the knowledge of their dreams would rob them of their

¹⁰ A Danish author known best for her memoir *Out of Africa* (1937), which chronicles her life in Kenya between 1914 and 1931.

souls just like taking a picture of them was regarded in the same manner (Jung, 1965, p. 265). In addition to this, the type of white man whom the Elgoni greatly despised was the stranger who slept with “their” women (Jung, 1965, p. 262). By no means was this an allusion to Jung; thus, he managed to win, to some extent, the favours of the Elgonis and, instead of their dreams, they showed him what native family life looked like. For instance, a middle-aged Elgoni housewife proudly presented her household, livestock, and children to Jung. Moreover, a tribal medicine man, who informed Jung about the burial ceremonies, remarked the following: “[S]ince the whites were in Africa, no one had dreams any more. Dreams were no longer needed because now the English knew everything!” (Jung, 1965, p. 265). This led Jung to conclude that the authority of an indigenous man was replaced by all-encompassing knowledge of the District Commissioner.

Still, the African setting also had a negative influence on Jung’s psyche. The psychologist felt as if time was moving backwards because he was completely cut off from civilisation. Additionally, the bush made him paranoid as he started walking in circles in order to dismiss the feeling of being looked upon at all sides (Jung, 1965, p. 269). The researchers of Jung’s travels, Jo Collins and Roger Brooke, conclude that he was ambushed in Africa by the shadowy manifestation of the collective unconscious¹¹ (Collins, 2008, pp. 27–29; Brooke, 2022, p. 24). In other words, the supposedly unconscious Africa crept into and compromised the integrity of the European outsider. However, Jung appreciated the mystique of Africa and its inhabitants. Their culture, rituals and the semi-religious cultivation of light by the indigenous people led Jung to conclude that the European is, in fact, a figure tainted by a sense of incompleteness:

The European is, to be sure, convinced that he is no longer what he was ages ago; but he does not know what he has since become. His watch tells him that since the “Middle Ages” time and its synonym, progress, have crept up on him and irrevocably taken something from him. With lightened baggage he continues his journey, with steadily increasing velocity, toward nebulous goals. He compensates for the loss of gravity and the corresponding *sentiment d’incompletitude* by the illusion of his triumphs, such as steamships, railroads, airplanes, and rockets, that rob him of his duration and transport him into another reality of speeds and explosive accelerations (Jung, 1965, p. 240).

¹¹ Collins calls this shadowy presence of Africa as the ethnic shadow, representation of the collective unconscious as well as the suppressed primitive.

The quoted passage is strongly critical of modern man, who compensates for the unexplored personality by technological advancements and ambitions, which find one of their outlets in colonialism. Even though Jung was significantly affected by the Western perspective during his African travels, his opinion on the presence of a white man as the authority figure on tropical frontiers became quite reproachful. His observations suggest that the coloniser should not be longing for larger-than-life adventures, but should rather complete the individuation process because he lacks “the intensity of life” (Jung, 1965, p. 242). Only after developing self-awareness is he able to open himself up to the Other (Brooke, 2022, p. 24). In the end, the dreamworld of Africa formed into a fulfilling experience for Jung, who was already 62 and a respected psychologist at that time.

Jung's Travel to India

In contrast to the research which focuses on Jung's expeditions into the African interior, there are no academic papers centring on his journey to India. Apart from a couple of footnotes (for example in Collins, 2008, p. 30), the primary sources about the psychologist's visit to India remain Jung's own accounts included in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1965) and *Civilization in Transition* (1970).

In 1938, Jung was invited by the British Government of India to participate in the 25th anniversary commemoration service of the University of Calcutta. Taking advantage of the opportunity, and being already interested in Indian religion and philosophy, Jung set out not only to Calcutta but also on a tour around the Indian subcontinent. He stated that India had an influence on him “like a dream” because it was an “alien, highly differentiated culture” (Jung, 1965, p. 274). Undoubtedly, the culture of India may seem to be idiosyncratic to a European because the Republic of India itself is composed of 28 states and 8 union territories. That is to say, that the citizens of India never communicated by means of one common language. Although Hindi is designated as the preferred official language, it was never given the status of the national mother tongue. This is due to the fact that the residents of the subcontinent communicate in a variety of local languages, such as Bengali, Tamil, Punjabi, Telugu, and many others (Mallikarjun, 2004, <http://www.languageinindia.com>).

In contrast to his African expeditions, where he was looking for dreams, Jung was excited to meet Indian people who, unlike indigenous Africans, had the ability to translate their culture into spoken language (English). As a result, Jung had the chance to compare the differences between Indian and European mentalities and, consequently, discover his own dream.

His first paper about the visit, “The Dreamlike World of India” (1939) begins with a modest disclaimer advising the reader not to take his statements about India and its people for granted. The psychologist provides an analogy about a hypothetical foreigner touring Europe for two months while having very little knowledge of the continent’s languages, history and culture (Jung, 1970, p. 515). Indeed, it is difficult to fully grasp India even today. It has to be noted that India is an extremely vast country¹² (<https://www.mylifeelsewhere.com>, 2019), encompassing dozens of diverse cultures and language groups. Although British India was only divided into provinces and princely states, the disparity between indigenous inhabitants was clearly noticeable back then as well.

The paper contains a surprisingly ethnological perspective on India. The psychologist goes on to describe the exotic scenery of Bombay, its crowded streets, jungle-like gardens, and colourful bazaars. While visibly disliking the Anglo-Indian architecture that dominated the colonial landscape at that time, Jung praises the Gateway of India¹³ (*Britannica.com* 2022), which blatantly tries to mimic the Gate of Victory¹⁴ (*Britannica.com* 2022) at Fatehpur Sikri¹⁵ (Jhabvala, 1992, p. 21). In this way, the timelessness and uniqueness of India is emphasised (Jung, 1970, p. 516).

Interestingly, Jung positions himself as a figure between the colonial centre (British India) and the natives (Indian people). As a result, while being a European, he distances himself from participating in the colonial endeavour: “Today it is still the youthful British Empire that is going to leave a mark on India, like the empire of the Moguls, [...] yet India somehow never changes her majestic face” (Jung, 1970, p. 516).

What Jung implies by such a statement is that India, in spite of its rich history, is an ageless land with native greatness that is both “anonymous and impersonal” (Jung, 1970, p. 517). Regardless of the many invaders, the land of India always preserves its identity because, according to Jung, time and space in India are “relative” concepts (Jung, 1970, p. 517). In contrast to ever-changing Europe, India seems to be an oriental, dreamlike reality in which everything is abstract and resembles a fairy-tale environment. Nevertheless, as Jung remarks, the state of perception depends upon one’s position:

¹² For example, in terms of size comparison, India is 13 times bigger than the United Kingdom.

¹³ An arch-monument localised in the modern city of Mumbai. It was built to celebrate the arrival of King George V in India on the 2nd of December 1911.

¹⁴ Also known as Buland Darwaza. It is a sandstone structure erected by the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1601.

¹⁵ The city is located over 30 kilometres from Agra. It was established by Emperor Akbar in 1571 as a result of the Mughal conquests. This settlement is also mentioned by Ruth Praver Jhabvala in her novel *Heat and Dust* (1975).

I had felt the impact of the dreamlike world of India. I am convinced that the average Hindu does not feel his world as dreamlike [...]. Perhaps I myself had been thrown into a dreamlike state by moving among fairy tale figures of the Thousand and One Nights. [...]. It is quite possible that India is the real world, and that the white man lives in a madhouse of abstractions. [...]. No wonder the European feels dreamlike: the complete life of India is something of which he merely dreams. [...]. But I did not see one European in India who really lived there. They were all living in Europe, that is in a sort of bottle filled with European air (Jung, 1970, pp. 518–519).

The psychologist provides a postcolonial, Said-like stance on the English way of life in India. An Englishman is not able to fully immerse himself within the Indian reality because it is too exotic for him. Thus, he prefers to live in confinement with fellow Westerners who think alike due to the fact that the things he imagined about India transform into “formidable realities” (Jung, 1970, p. 519) once the coloniser steps outside of his safe isolation. In other words, Jung presents India not so much as a primordial threat to the Western psyche like, for instance, Africa, but as a distinct dimension which only the native people can fully comprehend. The two worlds, England and India, are too disparate for people who travel between them.

The latter part of the article focuses on reaffirmation of India’s uniqueness by praising the beauty of the Taj Mahal¹⁶ (*Britannica.com* 2022) and the Sanchi Stupa¹⁷ (*Britannica.com* 2022). These landmarks, in Jung’s opinion, constitute the spiritual essence of Indian identity, “the secret of India” (Jung 1970, p. 520). Suddenly, Jung shifts away from the historical monuments to the indigenous women. While participating in the Indian Science Congress, Jung had the opportunity to exchange views with many educated Indian women. However, it was not their wit but their costumes that enchanted him. By no means did Jung attempt to objectify Indian women. His admiration for their appearance had quite anthropological reasons because the psychologist hoped that “the sexual disease of the West, which tries to transform woman into an awkward boy, will not creep into India” (Jung, 1970, p. 521). Strictly speaking, Jung demonstrates in this manner his reproach towards the fashion invasion from the West. The Western woman with her too revealing attire became the symbol of objectification and Jung expresses in his writings hope that the Indian women will not attempt to emulate foreign trends because it would mean a loss of their dignity and elegance (Jung, 1970, pp. 521–522).

¹⁶ The mausoleum located in Agra. Its construction was initiated by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in the 17th century. It took 22 years to build it.

¹⁷ A religious complex made out of stone. It was built over the Buddha’s relics in the 3rd century BCE.

Furthermore, Jung heavily criticises the so-called “English voice” in India, tapping in this manner into the undertones of Mahatma Gandhi’s movement of civil disobedience (Das, 2009, p. 44). Jung reaches the conclusion that the way the coloniser communicates with the colonised is always fake and filled with double standards. Behind the warm, nearly joyous sounds of the British, there hides a substantial degree of unkindness:

It sounds as if they were trying to impress the world with their throaty rumbling tones. [...] The usual brand is the bass voice of the colonel for instance, or the master of a household of numerous children and servants who must be duly impressed. (Jung, 1970, p. 523).

In comparison, the colonised speak “modestly, carefully, politely” (Jung, 1970, p. 523), not because of the oppression from the side of the coloniser, but due to their inherent effeminacy (the *Anima* factor). As Jung notices, a typical Indian family is quite a crowded group living under one roof for a relatively long period of time during which they learn how to harmoniously interact with one another, avoiding a predictable descent into anger and quarrels (Jung, 1970, pp. 522–523). This is made possible thanks to the mother, who serves as the ultimate mentor figure for her children. Thus, in opposition to the masculine colonisers, the effeminate Indians display “both softness of manners and sweetness of voice” (Jung, 1970, p. 523), which also constitute a part of their concealed diplomacy in everyday communication.

The psychologist concludes his analysis by pondering on the state of the British in India. The journey of Western man has not yet ended for he is driven by the promises of progress and eternal conquests. It is easier for him to give authoritarian orders in the field of battle as well as at home. Even if the Indian people are “meant to live in India,” their leaders are not really settled there. A colonial civil servant is “condemned to serve his term there and make the best of it” (Jung, 1970, p. 524). The coloniser, according to Jung, is what he is and acts how he acts because he “[thinks and dreams] of spring in Sussex” (Jung, 1970, p. 524). In consequence, the coloniser lives in his own dreamlike world while longing for England.

The subsequent article titled “What India Can Teach Us” (1939), much shorter in length in comparison to the previous one, concentrates on the spiritual side of the Indian subcontinent. The polytheistic nature of Hinduism is strongly connected with Indian philosophy. Contrary to the figure of the enlightened Western man, who rejects the notion of religion altogether, the enlightened Eastern man embraces it wholeheartedly (Jung, 1970, p. 525). The myths about various Hindu gods correspond with appropriate philosophical concepts, which are in turn taught at Indian universities. Therefore, the followers of Hinduism have no need for the utilisation of Western philosophy. In this manner, Jung

positions India as the binary opposite of the West. The white man sacrificed his individuality and unconsciousness for the sake of being a conscious conqueror and, in fact, this transformation led him to degeneracy¹⁸ (Jung, 1970, p. 528). India's civilisation, in contrast, serves as a mirror to the white man (Jung, 1970, p. 528). While familiarising himself with this unknown and peculiar land, the white man learns a great deal about his own mentality and why it is so different from the Eastern one.

The final text of Jung about India, taken from the section about travels in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1965), refers to the psychologist's journeys to many pagodas and temples, praising their architectural richness. However, unlike in the previous two papers, Jung points to the discomfort and danger; he admits in this article that he suffered from dysentery and spent ten days in hospital. Having recovered towards the end of his stay in Calcutta, Jung experienced a dream in which he found himself on a remote island in England. There was a castle on the top of a hill and Jung intuitively felt that this place was where the Holy Grail had been kept, but the cup was nowhere to be found. After the meticulous search, Jung discovered that the Grail was present on a neighbouring island. Without hesitation, he proceeded to swim across the channel to retrieve it (Jung, 1965, pp. 280–282).

On the basis of this “essentially European dream” (Jung, 1965, p. 282), apparently devoid of colonial undertones, it can be inferred that, in the face of overwhelming Indian impressions, Jung's personal unconsciousness reminded him about the power of myths which perpetuate archetypal patterns: “It was as though the dream were asking me, ‘What are you doing in India?’” (Jung, 1965, pp. 282–283). The exotic colonial frontier serves as a reminder that there exists a reality completely different from the Occidental one, yet by no means inferior or surreal. For a British administrator, it is a land of effeminate natives, mysticism, spirituality and mental perils. To Jung, India represents a multi-layered space of transition. “India did not pass me by without a trace; it left tracks which lead from one infinity into another infinity” (Jung, 1965, p. 284).

Conclusions

In view of the discussed aspects of Carl Jung's “colonial passages,” it becomes apparent that there is an interconnectedness between the fields of psychology and postcolonialism. The ideas of Carl Jung and his Asian encounters open up new horizons on the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. What is more, Jung was not by any means a mindless supporter of the

¹⁸ Once again, Jung provides the case of technological advancements. Man tamed the ability to fly only to use it later for the purposes of warfare. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki appears to be the most fitting example in this context.

colonising processes. If anything, he rushed to point out the inadequacies of the colonised on the oriental frontiers. Additionally, even though the journey of Jung across India did not receive as much academic attention as his African explorations, these expeditions provide evidence that the colonial condition can be dismantled and reinterpreted by means of analytical psychology.

With regard to the outlined approaches of Carl Jung, it can be seen that the psychoanalytical approach allows one to unravel the complexities of colonial encounters. The British colonisers sought to extend the influence of their Empire in quite an archetypal way, which pushed them to undertake journeys into the unknown and implement their own, enlightened *order*. Their arrival in the African and Indian regions undoubtedly initiated a disturbance, or even a state of chaos, among the natives. However, after achieving independence, the colonised would cross the threshold and face their former master in the modern world on an equal footing. The Westerners as well as the Easterners form the composites of all the ancestral wisdom of their predecessors. In the colonial realm, the coloniser desired to spread his wisdom (both positive and negative) among the seemingly unknowing and truly unknowable natives; whereas, in the postcolonial reality, the indigenous people reproduced archetypal images in order to restore their own culture.

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Change and Resistance: A Reflection on the Aba Women Uprising in Colonial Nigeria

Abstract

This study revisits the resistance of women against the British colonial government's introduction of its taxation system in eastern Nigeria and focuses on the problematized relationship between culture and history. Although historical studies have been carried out to explain why women resisted change and why men were largely absent from the struggle against in the colony of eastern Nigeria, new studies on the subject have provided vital information on how women responded to the colonial imposition of tax and how cultural dynamics spurred the women's revolts. Data adopted for the study were taken from primary sources consisting of archival records, participant observers' reports, as well as information on secondary sources such as journal articles and books, in order to explain the ethnography and culture of the Igbo society. This paper argues that women mainly resisted colonial tax imposition without strong involvement of the men, and expressed their anger against the Native Court and Warrant Chief systems, which were, exclusively, male dominated. It concludes that women were not passive victims of colonial intimidation and oppression, but were vanguards of resistance against a hostile and brutal colonial regime in Eastern Nigeria.

Keywords: taxation, warrant chiefs, native authority, indirect rule, women's revolts, ethnographic survey, cultural change, eastern Nigeria.

Introduction

The Aba women's riot was one of the momentous incidents recorded in the history of southern Nigeria. The primary factor responsible for the introduction of taxation in southern Nigeria was the colonial policy of self-sustenance through the generation of internal revenue from each province of the colony. The success of tax implementation in other provinces of colonial Nigeria heightened the calls for the introduction of taxation. It was thus introduced into south-eastern Nigeria as a replacement for forced labour. Even before the introduction of taxation on women, which directly led to the riots, women also bore the burdens of taxation, which had been introduced on men, as there were already concerns about the management of the taxes paid by men.

It is important to note that Lord Lugard introduced the Indirect Rule system because he realised the need to centralise the traditional political institutions of south-eastern Nigeria. There were no pre-existing chieftaincy institutions in the Igbo-speaking areas before the introduction of British rule in eastern Nigeria. Hence, at the inception of British rule, willing individuals were appointed among the people and were given warrants to act as local agents of the British colonial government. There was, however, no formal system of taxation in the stateless Igbo societies, hence, the reluctance of pre-existing traditional authorities to embrace the implementation of new colonial taxation policy. The powers given to the chiefs through the native court system was unprecedented in the historical experience of the Igbos. The Warrant Chief system was fathered by the court of equity which came into existence on the initiative of European and African merchants during the “legitimate trade” era. The government adopted it in its bid to centralise the traditional political institutions of south-eastern Nigeria. The women, however, resisted the British colonial government’s attempt to change their social order through cunning imposition of colonial laws in order to effect the tax collection process. They vociferously contended with the appointed colonial warrant chiefs and vehemently refused to be coerced into compliance with the British predatory and hegemonic demands. They unequivocally registered their grievances against the perceived threat to their social, cultural and economic ways of life as they saw the corrupt native courts and their chiefs as the bastions of colonial oppression and destabilisation.

Indeed, the women’s rebellion against the British colonial imposition of taxes on communities rocked the colonial infrastructure in Owerri Province to its foundation. The collection of taxes on farmers, women, traders and landowners was considered by the Igbo as an infringement on their ideology, customs and values that were not extraneous to the people. The Igbo women challenged the British colonial authority, (*NAI, Headlines*, 1973, p. 5). Not surprisingly, all five provinces of south-eastern Nigeria, with the exception of Onitsha and Ogoja, resisted the introduction of taxes. The plausible explanation on why the local women of these two provinces did not join others in the riot was because a centralised administrative structure of government was operative in Onitsha and Ogoja, unlike which was in practice in other parts of Igboland.

Ethnographic Consideration

It is pertinent to provide an ethnographic survey of the Igbo culture and tradition. The Igbo language is mainly spoken by the indigenous people of south-eastern Nigeria. The land covers an area of 40,922 square kilometers

(Fig.1) The rivers of the geological area of the land provided an ecological niche for the people in and around the area to develop early human population in the community (Okpoko and Ibeanu, 2005, p. 191).

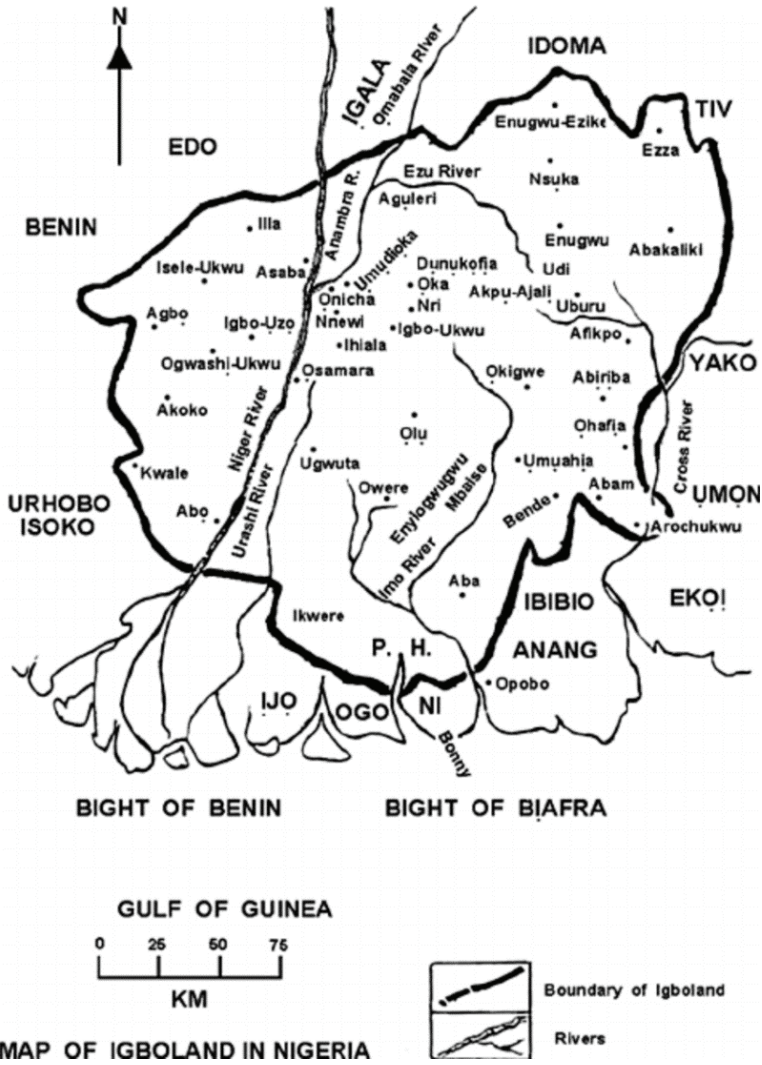


Figure 1. showing Igboland and other major historical centres
Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Igboland-in-Nigeria_Source_fig1_235720609/download accessed on 31st October, 2022

The people exploited Riverine resources and developed skills in canoe building in the Anambra River Benue and other similar areas. The people of the eastern region of Nigeria engaged in farming and trading as a way of life and speak Igbo as their native language, a language that belongs to the Kwa group of the Niger-Congo family, which had its origin around the Niger-Benue confluence. Farming was the main preoccupation among the people, and they planted yam, which they regarded as the “king of crops”. Most communities in the eastern region deified the *yam* spirit, which is variously referred to as *ifejioku*, *Njokuji* and *Ahajioku* (Okpoko and Ibeanu, 2005, p. 192).

The prestige and social recognition that a man is accorded also depended on the number and sizes of yams in his barn. In other words, the yam was the index of wealth and status. Chieftaincy titles such as *Diji*, and *Ojiji eme* were conferred on individuals who excelled in the number and quality of yams they possessed. Besides, pottery and iron manufacture were also popular vocations among the people. There is considerable evidence that both males and females participated in these two vocations. Igbo woman were renowned potters and produced both utilitarian and ornamental wares in commercial quantities. Politically, power was not centralised, although they had a participatory political system in areas such as Ogoja, Onitsha and Afikpo. For instance, an age-grade system was useful in the management of village affairs. The population participation in the political structure, especially male members, which made it difficult for an individual to claim sole authority (Okpoko and Ibeanu, 2005, p. 192).

It is also important to note that the colonial officials failed to understand the political, social and economic set-up of the people, and that ultimately caused the government much embarrassment. They did not understand that, unlike what was quite common in the then Western world, a wife was not completely dependent on the income of her husband. The women of eastern Nigeria were actively involved in trading and acted as intermediaries in the supply of palm products to Europeans. They also imported items such as tobacco, clothes and sold cigarettes and spirits. They also kept domestic animals, earned and spent money on their families to ease the burden on their husbands. Indeed, their trading activities took them all over the east where there were markets for their merchandise. Through the marketing of goods, there were interactions and exchanges of ideas and views among women on current events. The point to note is that whatever happened in one village was reported in other areas on other market days. There was, thus, in existence an association of women through trade (*NAI, Headlines*, 1973) during the period.

Apart from that, the marital system in the east then was exogamous, a custom that compelled the man to marry outside his village. The wife thus remained in touch with people from her original village, and this facilitated

the flow of information across all the villages. The women also had cultural associations that brought them together at regular intervals. During meetings, they sang, danced and exchanged ideas on a wide variety of topics and had rules that regulated the conduct of members. It was, therefore, not surprising to see the rapidity with which the news of the women's riots spread through the east, and although the riots have come to be prefixed with Aba, they did not start in Aba and were not limited to Aba (*NAI, Headlines*, 1973).

In other parts of the region, like Ogoja and Onitsha, evidence abounds that the community adopted kinship systems that peopled the centralised political institutions, and men who had sufficient economic resources and power constituted themselves into a formal assembly for the purpose of governance. In such instances, membership of the assembly was restricted and limited, while admittance of new members depended on the approval of the council, not on lineage or any other familial groups. In sum, political power in the eastern regions was diffused through a complex system of lineage, council, and monarchical representatives, and the king (*Obi*) did not have the privilege of absolute power. This is the plausible explanation why women decided to rebel against the state colonial order in defence of the indigenous political tradition of the Igbo society in eastern Nigeria.

Theory of Culture Change

This study adopts a theory of cultural change to explain why women resisted the colonial imposition of taxes that were alien to the people's tradition and culture in Igbo society. The impetus behind the resistance to change by the Aba women is a historic and significant turning point in the history of colonialism in Nigeria. This finds illustration in the fact that the cultural change witnessed during this period came from within against British imperialism and its attempt to introduce a new culture of tax payment into the region, a culture that was alien to the people. The deliberate and conscious pressure to impose a tax on the people was met with stiff resistance by the women since it was perceived as an insult to their cultural norms. A significant part of the female population refused to comply with the new colonial tax demand - it was not going to be easy to impose new ideas and cultural norms on the traditional ways of life.

Tax and Taxation in the Eastern Province

The establishment of the British colonial administration and the introduction of the Indirect Rule System attracted opposition and riots in south-eastern Nigeria. The administration inaugurated the Native Revenue Ordinance in order to collect taxes on behalf of the government and created the Warrant

Chief system to administer native courts, which were recognised as the de-facto and de-jure ruler of the Eastern Region. Significantly, no such form of direct taxation was collected from the people in the eastern part of Nigeria before 1929. From among the Igbo people, selected individuals were appointed for special assignments, and they served as administrators, rulers, judges and tax collectors. These warrant chiefs, who were perceived by the women as corrupt ‘miniature tyrants’, were created to fill the leadership position because the Igbos had no chieftaincy system within their socio-cultural groups, unlike the Hausa and Yoruba of Nigeria, who operated a centralised system of government. The Igbo people, instead, ran an egalitarian system of government, which recognised authority as emanating directly from the people.

The British administrative structure of indirect rule incorporated native *elites* of the eastern region to administer the local justice system and serve as tax collectors. The warrant chief system emanated as a matter of necessity from the lack of a pre-existing chieftaincy institution in some parts of Africa, like the Igbo, Tiv, Jukun and the Idoma societies of central Nigeria (Oladiti and Alao, 2017. p. 42). The British hired willing participants and gave them “warrants” to act as local representatives of the colonial government among the people. The appointment of these *elites* as provincial chief was viewed by the people of the region as a new invention that was alien to the people’s customary practices and traditions. The new powers given to the provincial chiefs was also enhanced by the Native Court system, and this fostered an unprecedented change against the tradition of the people that was operative before the colonial intrusion. These chiefs began to use their privileged position to accumulate wealth. Besides, women were ignored by the colonial officials in their tax collection schemes and had no roles as judges in the native courts. This angered and in part drove women to revolt against the new colonial policy of taxation.

Notwithstanding the challenges envisaged from the introduction of direct taxation in the eastern provinces, the colonial government was undeterred in its determination to introduce taxation to the region. The government’s resolve was based on the economic expediency of generating internal revenue for the smooth running and development of the eastern region. It was also considered convenient for the region to pay direct tax in conformity with the other provinces of colonial Nigeria. In addition, forced labour, which was acceptable as a substitute for taxation, was considered to be anachronistic, wasteful and burdensome by the colonial authorities. Direct taxation was thus seen an alternative to forced labour (Afigbo, 1972, pp. 209– 210).

Trouble actually started when the Assistant District Officer (ADO), Bendel Division, decided that he needed to have new accurate nominal rolls of men, women, children and livestock, as the earlier assessment conducted was found

to have been arbitrarily prepared (*NAI, Headlines*, 1973, p. 5). To this end, the Lieutenant-Governor, Harry Moorhouse, proposed a scheme to the Governor of colonial Nigeria for the introduction of a poll tax on adult males in the eastern provinces in August 1924. This was to be followed by a sensitisation campaign and registration of all male adults in the provinces.

The Lieutenant-Governor showed some understanding of the people's objection to the numbering of their women and children and there was a limitation of his proposal for a registration to only the male adults within the provinces. However, the tenure of Sir Hugh Clifford as the Governor of Nigeria at the time was close to termination, hence his decision to leave the taxation question in the eastern provinces to his successor. Barely a few days after the resumption of Sir Graeme Thomson, he approved the introduction of taxation in the untaxed southern provinces. To this effect, he directed the Lieutenant-Governor of the southern provinces to work out a plan for taxation of the provinces (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 3).

Major U.F.H. Ruxton, who succeeded Harry Moorhouse as the Lieutenant-Governor of the southern provinces, submitted a taxation scheme that was an offshoot of his predecessor's proposed scheme. However, the new ordinance that he proposed on poll tax in the provinces was based on his assumption that the Native Revenue Ordinance could not be applied on the southern provinces without a great deal of resistance. Ruxton believed that the whole basis on which the Native Revenue Ordinance rested in Northern Nigeria and Yoruba provinces were completely absent and that its wording was "lacking in meaning to officers in the eastern provinces." (Afigbo, 1972, p. 216). By April 4, 1927, the Native Revenue Ordinance (though with slight modifications) became law in the eastern provinces. The Lieutenant-Governor appointed W.E Hunt to embark on a sensitisation campaign on the new law throughout the provinces. Residents were also instructed to estimate the annual value of land and produce in each community, estimate the annual value of profits from trade, production and employment in each community, and estimate the value of all livestock. Based on these assessments, each of the officers then proposed a flat rate of 2½% as tax for all male adults (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, pp. 4-5).

In the Lieutenant-Governor's proposal, the imposition of direct taxation on the eastern provinces was to take effect on April 1, 1928 and in anticipation of possible resistance by the people to its introduction, the Legislative Council was to approve an increase in the Police Force. However, the proposal by the Lieutenant-Governor for a new taxation ordinance for the eastern provinces was rejected and the limitation of the new ordinance to a poll tax was also rejected. The Lieutenant-Governor maintained his position on the Native Revenue

Ordinance and was persuaded to support the extension of the Ordinance to the eastern provinces.

In many parts of the eastern provinces, the assessment exercise was not without a hitch; the concept of taxation was not only new to the people at the time of its introduction, its whole idea was contrary to their belief system; an eminent historian succinctly noted the people saw it as “either ‘tax on head’ or ‘tax on land’, which further meant ‘ransom’ or ‘land rent’” respectively. Taxation raised the question of how a free man could be required to pay a ransom on his head or how a stranger could ask for rent on land from the sons of the soil. This was a question which nobody could answer, but the conservatives were sure that a tax demand with such implications was unethical (Afigbo, 1960, p. 550).

The concept was therefore bound to be met with hesitation, if not absolute resistance by the people. In the Aba Division of Owerri Province, the announcement of taxation “was received with general sullen and obstinate signs of defiance and refusal to accede to the demand” (Afigbo, 1972, p. 266), but the women were under no illusions about the outcome of a direct assault. The Owerri Division was also a tough nut to crack for the assessors: “as soon as the purpose of the assessment was announced to be taxation, considerable opposition was experienced.” (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry, 1930*, p. 5). The people adamantly refused to provide information and fled from their compounds at the sight of the assessors. They even threatened and abused any chief or member of their community who assisted the assessors.

Olakwo and Okpala were at the centre of the women’s defiance. At Olakwo, the police were assaulted by a group of indigenes. However, after a threat of patrol the ringleaders of the group were produced for punishment. The primary bone of contention in the areas where the indigenes failed to cooperate with the assessors was the assumption that the exercise was in preparation for the forceful occupation of all lands and palm trees in each community. By and large, “resistance to the initial taxation was certainly uniform in most of the east but it was a silent, nearly hopeless resistance.” (Gailey, 1970, p. 91). Thus, the first year of taxation did not give a clear indication of what was ahead as tax was collected with little or no difficulty. In fact, Owerri Province exceeded the estimated tax returns (Afigbo, 1972, p. 235), but this initial success was only transient and it soon morphed into disorderliness and anarchy the following year.

Investigating the Foundations of the Owerri Women's Insurrection

If the processes of tax collection were peaceful and hitch-free in 1928 when it was first undertaken in the Owerri province, the same cannot be said of the year that followed. At the beginning of 1929, every index seemed to point towards a repeat of the previous year's success, and it was this situation that prompted Major C.T Lawrence, the Secretary of the Southern Provinces, to note that there was no sign of impending disaster as "nothing in the middle of 1929 pointed to the possibility of an explosion." (Afigbo, 1972, p. 235). It is however significant to note that the success recorded in the first year of taxation did not erase deep-seated issues surrounding the introduction of taxation in the province. The turn of events after October 1929 brought the underlying deep-seated issues to the fore.

As already established, direct taxation of men in the Calabar and Owerri provinces was alien to the people; there was no record of the existence of its collection in the tradition of the people before it was introduced by the British colonial regime. With the introduction of taxation, the colonial administrators, who had been credited with increasing understanding of the people over whom they ruled (Tamuno, 1972, p. 102), betrayed their lack of accurate knowledge of the social organisation of the people, and owing to the fact that only superficial knowledge existed as regards the organisations in the eastern provinces (Memorandum of the Secretary, Southern Provinces, on the Origin and Causes of the Disturbances in the Owerri and Calabar provinces, paragraphs 160 and 276), the introduction of taxation was more or less an act of putting the cart before the horse. The introduction of taxation was not preceded by education of the de facto rulers of the people. The subordination of these leaders by the warrant chiefs robbed the colonial administration of opportunities to closely interact with the people and this made the implementation of colonial policies difficult.

Also, the uniform introduction of taxation in all the hitherto untaxed areas was not in tandem with any level of preparation of each area. The time decided upon for the introduction of taxation thus found some areas less prepared than others. In the Owerri Province, the people had not evolved a more centralised system of political organisation, hence, the expediency of the use of warrant chiefs for the purpose of propaganda and assessments. The conspicuous roles of the chiefs in the introduction of taxation on men made them obvious targets for the women's revolts against possible taxation (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 95).

Taxation had an excruciating effect on some men, to the extent that some of them resorted to pawning or borrowing from warrant chiefs at exorbitant rates (Matera *et al*, 2012, pp.105–106). Archdeacon Benson, whose sympathy

rested with the people, noted that in many cases, in order to raise the cash for tax, people resorted to borrowing money that none of them could possibly pay back, some even pawning their children in order to pay their debts (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 96). There were even instances of men who pawned themselves in order to pay tax, and this was a point of severe complaint by the women during the revolts. The heavy burdens of taxation were not only borne by men, but also by women, who made indirect contributions to the payment of their husband's taxes.

Hit by the heavy weight of taxation on their husbands, the women took independent initiatives, not only to resist the rumoured taxation of women, but the idea of taxation altogether. Akulechula, one of the women leaders, denied the suggestion from certain quarters that men encouraged women to move about, and noted that:

It is against native custom for women to leave their houses without the permission of their husbands but ... men had been made to pay tax and the rumour that women were going to be taxed spread around... Women became infuriated because they had already felt the burden of the tax on men...". They "acted according to their consciences and there was no law made by men that women should not move about (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 105).

In the same vein, the people were curious about the management of the tax proceeds. The uneven development in the provinces made the inhabitants of less developed parts to demand to know what tax collectors were "going to do with the money." (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 96). While a number of projects were carried out in the Calabar Province, by the end of 1929, many parts of the province had no roads, bridges or public buildings.

The Indirect Rule system, which the British favoured, only bred discontent and complaints. Indeed, the women saw the Native Courts and their chiefs as the bastions of colonial oppression, especially in the introduction of taxation and its rumoured extension to women. Corruption was the greatest defect of the Native Court system. It was a situation where judges took bribes while some people used their connections to enrich themselves and avoided punishment for their crimes. The Native Courts were not only, in most cases, used as tax collection centres, they also served as trial courts for tax defaulters. In addition, members of the Native Courts were engaged in extortion, persecution, bribery and corruption. They abused their offices by refusing to pay due dowry whenever they took a wife, while they wasted no time in demanding full reimbursement of amounts that they never even paid in the first place, should the woman leave them, not considering the depreciation that must have occurred as a result of the tax burden the women must have endured before marriage.

The events surrounding re-assessments and rumoured taxation of women also coincided with the drastic drop in the price of oil palm and palm kernel, the production of which was largely done by the women. The price of palm kernel per 50lb of kernel dropped from 5s. 9d. in 1928, to 4s. 6d. in 1929. Similarly, the price of a four-gallon tin of palm oil dropped from 7s. 0d. in 1928, to 5s. 10d. in 1929 (Memorandum of Secretary, Southern Provinces, 1929, Paragraph 81). The reduction in the prices of palm kernel and palm oil had a ripple effect on the daily activities of the people. The importance of the prices of the commodities made it a principal subject of daily discussion at the markets, especially by the women, who were the major producers of the commodities. There was an intricate link between taxation and oil prices within the context of the re-assessment of 1929; the assessments of 1927, which formed the basis of the tax flat rate of 7s., was largely based on the proceeds from palm oil sales. There was thus the question of possible over-taxation in the light of the prevailing reduction in palm kernel and palm oil prices in 1929 (Afigbo, 1972, p. 238).

One could say that the agitations for an increase in commodity prices and the issue of taxation caused and reinforced each other: low commodity prices agitated the women and predisposed them to protest against the government or its agents, who were perceived as culpable for the reduction in commodity prices, while the tax revolts offered an opportunity to bring up the issue of commodity prices before the government. The revolt against taxation and the reduction in commodities became so embedded in the women's revolts that whenever the women were asked to state their grievances, they always presented the low price of palm produce as one of them.

Significantly, the inability or unwillingness of the people to trust the colonial government was the fruit of a seed sown in November 1926 when the computation of adult males commenced in preparation for taxation, as issued by the Resident, Mr. Ingles, to all district officers. The district officers were charged with carrying out their tasks clandestinely (Gailey, 1970, p. 80). Between November 1926 and March 1927, the count was done with relative ease as the people were not aware of the real purpose of such counts. The fact that the people had been counted before also made them less suspicious of the new counts. However, strong opposition from the people was triggered the moment they became aware of the commencement of taxation in April 1927. Definitely, prior to April 1927, when Nguru District was assessed, it was not announced that the purpose of the enumeration was taxation. But as soon as the purpose of the assessment was announced to be taxation, there was considerable opposition (*Assessment Reports*, Owerri Division Records, p. 1, paragraphs 1 and 4). The counting of the people without the people knowing

the object of the exercise was not only a breach of a fundamental principle of good governance, it also created the background of the people's distrust of the colonial government and its intentions in the implementation of subsequent tax laws.

While it was never the intention of the colonial government to introduce taxation of women in the Owerri Province, every action of the government pointed in that direction. Since counting preceded the taxation of men, taxation seemed to be the natural consequence of the counting of women (Akpan et al, 1988, p. 25). The re-assessment was necessitated by the inadequacy of the 1927 assessment; some of the warrant chiefs inflated the number of taxable males in their communities during the counting that preceded the introduction of taxation in 1928.

The Women's Rebellion in the Owerri Province

The revolts that later engulfed most parts of the Owerri Province was sparked when the introduction of the new system of nominal rolls for tax collection was announced to some chiefs and counting began on October 14, 1929 (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 11). The women's resistance, which gradually became active, developed and fragmented into an unequal contest between the womenfolk and the British colonial government. It was a violent struggle between a large number of locals against perceived injustice and oppression of an unfriendly government.

Although the chiefs were clearly informed that the new system had nothing to do with the taxation of women, that the women were to be counted invoked the memory of the previous deception by Resident Ingles. The women therefore considered the new count as a precursor to the taxation of women. Chief Oparaocha, who strongly believed that the women had been pushed to the brink, explained: "the women had been deceived... but afterwards they paid tax... First, ...the counting of the men was done and nobody told them the object of it, but some time afterwards they were told they were to pay tax" (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 11). Women within the district (especially the Oloko women) discussed the taxation question at every opportunity and were unanimous in their opposition to the new count. By the time counting began at Oloko around November 20, 1929 the community was already precariously balanced on a keg of gun powder and only a little spark was needed to ignite an explosion. Being aware of his people's defiant position on the new count, Chief Okugo of Oloko vacillated on the nomination of a counter until he was warned on November 18, 1929 that the count must be concluded within the next eight days. He then, unenthusiastically, nominated

Mark Emeruwa, who commenced his counting from Okugo's compound and on Saturday, November 23, 1929 he proceeded to the compound of Ojim Nwanyewura, where one of Ojim's wives had an altercation with Emeruwa, who reported her to Okugo, who, in turn, threatened to report her to the District Officer.

The next day (Sunday), Nwanyewura joined a meeting of Oloko women, led by Ikonnia, Nwannedie and Nwugo. At the meeting Nwanyewura told the women that Emeruwa had approached her to count her people. The testimony of Nwanyewura was a breaking point in the women's struggle as her account was clear evidence that women were already being approached directly for the count. Before Nwanyewura's account, information about women had been obtained through their husbands. Armed with the account of Nwanyewura, the women stormed Emeruwa's residence, asking why he had said that women should pay tax (Van Allen, 1972, p. 173).

For the women, counting was synonymous with taxation. They therefore sent a palm leaf, which symbolised the call for all women to converge at Oloko, a town district and within the twinkle of an eye women from far and near trooped in. The congregation of women marched in a procession to the Niger Delta Pastorate Mission, which housed Emeruwa to "sit on" him (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 14). The women marched from there to Okugo's house to demand an explanation from him on why he ordered women to pay tax. Okugo's reaction was not only rude but abusive and the women responded by sitting on him too. The women also sent a delegation, led by Ikonnia, Nwannedie, to the District Head. The women's delegation recounted to the District Head how Okugo's men injured many of them in an attempt to drive them away, and how (though without verifiable proof) Okugo shot a pregnant woman.

The District Officer (DO) henceforth admitted that although the counting had been initiated by him, it was not intended as a tax document since the women's names were not noted on paper. Dissatisfied, the women demanded the surrender of Okugo's judicial cap, which was resisted by his stick-wielding servants, who attempted to chase the women away. In the altercation that ensued, Okugo was mobbed by the enraged women and was only rescued by a police officer. However, not before the women had damaged a part of Okugo's house and he was forced to take refuge at the Native Court compound (*Report of Mr. Cook*, District Officer, Bende, from November 29, 1929).

On November 27, 1929, the DO met about 1,000 women from Aba, Bende and Owerri divisions at Oloko and reassured them that they would not be taxed. However, the women demanded a written assurance from the District Officer, saying that "it was in the same manner that men were made to pay tax

... after the women have been counted they will be made to pay tax (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 14). Although the DO issued them a written assurance, he, however, refused to accede to their request for the release of Okugo, whom he arrested and had charged for assault. Following the resumption of Captain Hill as the new District Officer on December 2, 1929, the women's calls for the trial of Okugo were unrelenting. The new DO, on one hand, promised to throw Okugo's cap of office to the women, and the next day he was tried, convicted of spreading false news and assault, and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Emeruwa, on the other hand, was convicted of assault and sentenced to three month's imprisonment (Afigbo, 1972, p. 241–242). Unfortunately, the trial and conviction of Okugo and Emeruwa, and the assurances by the British colonial government that women would not be taxed did not lead to the total suspension of the women's demands. In fact, in spite of the return of relative peace to Oloko, the women's protests did not abate as their meetings continued, using the Oloko example as both inspiration and template for further demands from the British government. This is because, on one hand, some of the women did not trust the sincerity of the government in keeping its word that women would not be taxed, while on the other hand, other women desired more far reaching changes than the mere convictions of Okugo and Emeruwa. The women were even more radical and uncompromising in their demands as they wanted all the Court members in Owerri Province sacked and all Native Courts razed to the ground. The women's leaders directed members to work towards the idea of 'de-capping' Court Members' and disallowing them from hearing cases anywhere, and that anyone that patronised the Native Court was to be sanctioned (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 36).

Significantly, the revolts at Oloko had ripples effect in other parts of the province, as women went on a rampage against all instruments of taxation: the Chiefs and the Native Courts. The women followed the established model of pulling down Court buildings, destroying Court records and freeing prisoners at Ayaba, Asa, Azumini and Obohia areas, and on the December 9, 1929, women from the Okpala, Nguru, Ayaba and Oloko areas converged at Owerriinta, where they decided that their chiefs be stripped of their caps, as had been done by the Oloko women (Bastian, 2002, p. 261). The women then marched to the Native Court and disrupted the proceedings by assaulting the chiefs in a calculated attempt to strip them of their caps. Some of the women broke into the prison cells and released eight prisoners. They proceeded to Okpala, where the DO, Ferguson's presence did not even deter them from besieging the Native Court in an attempt to pull it down. Afterwards they demanded from the DO that women should not be taxed and that the prices of local produce

should be increased while those of imported goods reduced. Not only that, the tax on men too was to be significantly reduced, a demand which the women later refocused to a total abolition of all forms of taxation.

The DO made his way to Owerinta on December 10, 1929. There he met around 3,000 to 4,000 women from the Oloko and Ayaba districts in the Bende Division, Ngor and Okpala Districts in the Owerri Division and other towns in the Owerinta district. The women bitterly complained to the DO about the rumours of women's taxation and low produce prices, which the DO denied. He went on to arrange a meeting with agents, who provided an explanation about the produce prices. The women insisted on meeting the DO at Aba five days later in order to officially place their grievances before him. On the same day, the women attacked the lorry of Mr. Matthews, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, on his way back from Aba. They threw missiles, sticks and yams at his lorry and placed a six-foot long log of wood across the road. A large number of women invaded the Ngor Native Court and freed six prisoners. The women tore up the Court books, pulled down the Court house and destroyed every building in the compound (*Report of Mr. Matthews*, 1929, p. 1). Also, about 3,000 women marched to the Nguru Native Court to see a note that had been issued by the DO the previous day that noted women would not be taxed, a copy of which was given to Chief Nwaturocha, and which many towns insisted on having a copy of.

The women insisted that not only should men be excused from taxation, but also that the tax already paid should be returned. They released all prisoners in the cells, tore the Court records to shreds, looted properties within the premises and destroyed all the buildings, with the exception of the rest house. In the Okpala, Ngor and Nguru areas, groups of women demanded the judicial caps of warrant chiefs and destroyed the houses of those who refused. In the riots, twenty-one members of the Nguru Native Court were either assaulted or had their properties destroyed, with fourteen and sixteen Native Court members suffering the same fate in the Ngor and Okpala areas, respectively (*Report of Mr. Cook*, paragraph 48).

From available records, one could affirm that Aba was relatively peaceful until December 10, 1929, when women gathered in the market square in protests. According to a Court messenger, the women complained that the "... the women at Owerinta were... demonstrating... because if it was true that women were to be taxed it would affect them..." (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 36). At around 10 p.m. on the same day, between 300 to 400 women marched to Mr. Toovey's house, which formerly housed the DO. They threw stones and sticks at the house and damaged some parts of the building. Mr. Toovey attempt to dissuade the women from the window was rebuffed

as some of them climbed the staircases of the building and even attempted to break down the door with sticks. Mr. Toovey's shots, which were fired into the air, eventually dispersed the women (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 36).

On the morning of the next day, a large number of women flocked into Aba to attend a women's meeting at Eke Akpara. Women from Aba itself had already left the town for the meeting, but other women from farther distances trooped in as they got the notice of the meeting. A group of the women assaulted Mr. Logius, an agent of a foreign company (Messrs. Ollivants) and proceeded to the compound of Mr. Henderson, the Area supervisor of the United Africa Company, Aba, where they chased labourers out and took machete off one of the fleeing grass cutting labourers. The women broke all the windows of the house and proceeded to Owerrinta road, while some sat on the bank at the roadside. Unfortunately, two of the women who stayed at the roadside were killed during an altercation with Dr. Hunter, both knocked down (named Nwanyioma and Ukwa) while trying to dodge the women who stood in front of his moving car (Bastian, 2002, p. 265).

The women, in retaliation, destroyed the Doctor's car and invaded the premises of Barclays bank after which they proceeded to the premises of the United Africa Company. The women approached the entrance of the company with shouts that "the doctor has killed women of our party" (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, p. 46). The women, earlier dispersed by the police, reconvened in large numbers after about thirty minutes. Some of the women, who had gone beyond Aba for the meeting, returned to town when they learnt about the accident. An Inspector and three other officers who attempted to disperse the women noted that they "struggled with these women from the Colonial Bank through the new factory road up to the Government offices" (*Report of Mr. Toovey*, Station Magistrate, Aba, December 23, 1929, paragraph 9).

The British Colonial Response and the Consequences of the Women's Rebellion

The Resident's efforts to persuade the aggrieved women to sheath their swords was met with physical assaults on him; the women knocked off his helmet and poked his back with sticks. Some of the women proceeded to the house of Mr. Toovey in an attempt to bring down his wife, but were prevented from gaining access to the house. The Resident ordered his orderly and Mr. Toovey to "fire over the heads of the rampaging crowd" (*Report of Mr. Toovey*, Station Magistrate, Aba, December 23, 1929, paragraph 9), but one woman received a gunshot wound in her leg. The women regrouped at

Eke Akpara and returned to Aba to state their grievances. There, Mr. Jackson advised the women to return to their villages and send delegates to express their grievances. This further infuriated the women, who were now joined by hundreds more women from the Omuna area. However, at about 7 p.m., a large majority of the women returned to their villages only to return in the morning of the next day, determined to enter Aba, but were repelled. Troops of the Third Battalion of the Nigeria Regiment arrived in Aba at 7:30 a.m. and aided the dispersion of the women. At noon, about 4,000 to 5,000 women were rough-handled by the police following the reading of the Riot Proclamation to them. Four of the women suffered varying degree of injuries, but were undeterred as they reconvened about an hour later. At this point, a more determined government force finally broke their resolve as no further attempt was made to enter the town (*Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, 1930, pp. 48–49).

The colonial government adopted the threat of a one-year imprisonment and the issuance of notices against gatherings within a one-mile radius of merchandise stores. Special constables were also recruited and European traders, missionaries, court messengers, government labourers and co-operative youths were also mobilised to curb the spread of the uprisings. Not only that, the troops that were drafted in demanded food and other necessities from the local inhabitants and those places that refused to meet such demands were burnt down. The use of armed forces and razing of homes, and sometimes, whole compounds, became tools used by the British colonial administration to restore law and order and bring ‘pressure to bear upon a recalcitrant primitive community’ (Akpan, 2002, p. 33). Damages were also levied on towns where government properties were damaged while soldiers seized property in lieu of unpaid damages. Following the suppression of the revolts, the government appointed two commissions of enquiry to investigate the causes of the women revolts.

The revolts had a far-reaching effect on the political organisation of colonial eastern provinces (Falola, 2011, p. xix). It had the immediate effect of the suspension of assessment and tax collection in the province. In some parts of the province, tax was not collected for many years as the government had to wait until total restoration of calm before taxation was gradually reintroduced. That the women’s absolute opposition and demand for an immediate holistic and radical change to the Warrant Chief institution was echoed by one of the women during a sitting of the first commission of inquiry when she noted that “...these disturbances will go on perhaps for fifteen years... until all the Chiefs have been got rid of, but until then the matter will not be settled.” (Bastian, 2002, pp. 263–264).

The immediate changes that attended the revolts was not as radical as the women wanted, but they were significant. Some warrant chiefs were deposed during the course of the riots and the colonial government endorsed the removal of all unpopular warrant chiefs. As a result of the women's revolts, the appointment of Native Court members was subjected to a unanimous decision of the people at town meetings. Similarly, the commission of inquiry on the women revolts recommended that Native Court members whose positions were not hereditary should be limited to a term of years instead of a life-time appointment, as demanded by the women. While the women's revolts did not immediately result in the abolition of the warrant chief institution, it questioned the effectiveness of the institution and initiated the process of its eventual abolition.

The second commission of enquiry made far reaching recommendations towards solving the problems that preceded the women's revolts. The report convinced British authorities to undertake a new orientation of policy in the governance of the region. This culminated in the 1933 Native Authority Ordinance and the 1934 Courts and Native Legislation Authority acts, which, amongst other things, eradicated the Warrant Chief system and replaced it with more traditional institutions and authorities (Matera, 2012, p. 130).

The revolts also compelled the colonial administration to embark on a rigorous study of the indigenous society and people of the province. Consequently, administrative officers gathered relevant information that were compiled into Intelligence Reports on people over whom they ruled, and by 1934, 200 Intelligence Reports had been produced (Nwabara, 1972, p. 201). These reports served the purpose of correcting the errors of the past, when policies were imposed on the people without recourse to the social context. One of such endeavours was C.K Meek's *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, A Study in Indirect Rule*, which served as a framework for reforms within the province. The colonial authorities also commissioned Sylvia Leith-Ross and Margaret Green to study the lives of Igbo women. Leith-Ross published *African Women: A Study of the Ibo of Nigeria* in 1939, while Green published *Ibo Village Affairs* in 1947 (Matera, 2012, p. 130). The women's revolts underscored the incompatibility of the Indirect Rule system with the pre-existing socio-political structure of the people and forced the colonial authority to rely more on expert opinions drawn from rigorous investigations than on the spot assessments by the 'men on the spot' who had the benefit of 'stored wisdom', but whose knowledge of the people over whom they ruled was, unfortunately, grossly exaggerated (Tamuno, 1972, p. 108).

Conclusions

This study revisited the women's revolts of 1929 and located it within the context of change and resistance during British colonial rule in Nigeria. The study concluded that while the immediate cause of the revolts was the taxation of men and the rumoured taxation of women, the crux of the revolts can be located within the political-economic background of women and British colonialism's aggressive nature. Indeed, colonialism in eastern Nigeria altered the balance of power between men and women by giving more power to masculine-oriented institutions as symbolised by the Warrant Chief institution. That was not the situation before the advent of colonialism.

The circumstances that induced the large-scale women's revolt had been almost totally absent in Nigeria during the British rule in Nigeria, and when it appeared in 1928/29 in the Owerri province, the revolt that developed was instantly crushed by the British government. Although the weapons of the weak, which included propaganda, false compliance, slander, arson, sabotage etc. were adopted by the women at various stages during the crises, these were grossly insufficient to deter the British government, which was prepared to crush whatever opposition that may be sparked.

The Aba Women's uprising epitomised a history of 'normal' exploitation and 'normal' resistance. Indeed, the women were invariably doomed to defeat and eventual massacre as the great insurrection was too disorganised to achieve any lasting result. It was an impatient, loud struggle, stubbornly pursued by both rural and urban dwellers in 1929 and which could not have accomplished many gains. It was in effect a flash in the pan, a short movement that was unceremoniously crushed by the British colonial hegemonic regime.

The study established that violence or the threat of violence against women always have the potential to constrain their choices and hopes. They sap woman's energy, compromise their physical and mental health and erode their self-esteem. The damage in turn carries a cumulative cost to society, since abused and injured women are less able to work, care for their children, or become active citizens. One can only imagine the social, economic and mental agony that these women went through in the hands of an insensitive British administration whose violent and exploitative enterprise left many of their colonial possessions badly battered and bruised long after the people had regained their independence.

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HEMISPHERES

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Exploring Africanisation of the University Curriculum in Zimbabwe: An Afrocentric Approach

Abstract

Conversations about Africanisation of university curriculum are part of the epistemic crisis and efforts to debunk Eurocentric thinking characterised by binarisms, racial biases and discriminatory attitudes towards Africans. An Afrocentric perspective troubles conceptualisation of notions of African humanity *vis-à-vis* the vexing question of epistemological trajectories undertaken in postcolonial Zimbabwe. This study focuses on African efforts to design an African-oriented curriculum at university level. Analysis is provided of worrying issues in Zimbabwe's curriculum, including the philosophy-guiding universities. This discussion is based on the premise that there is need to re-configure the African epistemic base from which Africans view and conceptualise the world.

Keywords: Africanisation, Afrocentric approach, curriculum, Eurocentrism, epistemic crisis, university curriculum, Zimbabwe.

Introduction

Conversations about curriculum reforms are always highly politicised, as rightly observed by Kable (2001). The university curriculum in Zimbabwe has for a long time been dogged by competing agendas and discourses, especially from dominant groups, and lack of a holistic epistemological approach for existing curriculum challenges. Most pertinently, the reviews of the university curriculum need to be considered in the context of well-defined epistemological pathways to be undertaken, defined skills, relevance in the global context, and knowledge to be imparted. These are complex issues that require serious academic attention to investigate the subject of

the Africanisation of the university curriculum. This study focuses on this pugnacious topic with regard to the often frantic efforts to come up with an African-oriented university curriculum in Zimbabwe. It is in this regard that discourses about Africanisation should be understood. This situation is not exceptional to Zimbabwe, but common throughout Africa. In view of the above insights, the paper seeks to answer the following research questions: How can the present university curriculum in Zimbabwe be Africanised? What are the epistemic and ideological dis/connections in the current university curriculum in Zimbabwe? What are the pedagogic, ideological and practical challenges faced by Zimbabwe in adopting and implementing Africanisation of the university curriculum?

Theoretical Framework: Afrocentric Approach

Afrocentrism valorises African ideology, worldviews or thoughts and calls for shifts from European ideology (Winters, 1992). Onyewuenyi (1993) posits that the Afrocentric standpoint is:

a series of activities by concerned African and African-American scholars and educators [which is] directed towards achieving a particular end of ensuring that the African heritage and culture, its history and contribution to world civilisation and scholarship, are reflected in the curricula on every level of academic instruction (Onyewuenyi, 1993, pp. 39–40).

Advocates of Afrocentrism, such as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, p. 23), request “a rewriting and reconstruction of the whole panorama of human history in its account of the origin of mankind, the origin of philosophy, science, medicine and agriculture architecture”. Scholars in this school of thought embarked on the mission to challenge Western European ideologies by rewriting and valorising the African past. The Afrocentric paradigm adopted in this study is relevant and useful in the interrogation of Africanisation discourse in the context of university education in Zimbabwe. Most importantly, the Afrocentric school of thought investigates the need for human equity and justice with regard to existing epistemological canons.

Africanisation and the Curriculum

Africanisation is defined from different vantage points by different scholars. For example, Makgoba (1997, p. 199) emphasises culture and identity in his understanding of this concept and considers Africanisation as “a process of inclusion that stresses the importance of [positioning and] affirming African

cultures and identities in a world community". For Ramose, Africanisation refers to:

[...] the African experience in its totality, is simultaneously the foundation and the source for the construction of all forms of knowledge... Africanisation...holds that different foundations exist for the construction of [diverse] pyramids of knowledge. It disclaims the view that any pyramid is by its very nature, eminently superior to all others. It is a serious quest for a radical and veritable change of paradigm so that the African may enter into genuine and critical dialogical encounter with other pyramids of knowledge. Africanisation is a conscious and deliberate assertion of nothing more or less than the right to be African (Ramose, 1998, p. i).

In addition, Higgs (2003) proposes a more integral approach to Africanisation discourse by arguing that if we consider the concept of *Ubuntu*, which is a southern African philosophy that focuses on human loyalties, we might get a better understanding of Africanisation. What Higgs suggests in his definition is that Africanisation encompasses or embraces humanity in its diversity and totality. Similarly, Louw (2010) considers Africanisation as a way of surpassing individual and national identities, searching for mutual understanding and our African and global diversity. The above strands of Africanisation show diversity in the understanding of the concept and is revisited in the debate section for further scrutiny and discussion.

Another important concept in this discussion is curriculum. The term curriculum is defined by Pinar (2012, p. 80) as "a formal course of study, emphasising content or subject matter". Reid (2012) and Odendahl (2011) also define a curriculum in terms of the experiences of each learner, the implication on how the content is learned and can be the process of outcomes and behavioural objectives. In the context of higher and tertiary education, the curriculum refers to "what knowledge is included or excluded in university teaching and learning programmes" (Le Garange, 2004, p. 145). Other problematic issues which need to be investigated are: How to Africanise the university curriculum in Zimbabwe and still remain relevant in the international arena; Is the Africanisation narrative of the curriculum sustainable within the context of international standardisation of university curricula framework? In other words, the conversation about Africanisation of the university curriculum in Zimbabwe brings to the fore the multi-layered struggles required for transformation to occur.

The Africanisation Debate

The discourse of Africanisation is incomplete without Ngugi's (1987/2009) insights. He aptly writes that "[d]ismembered from the land, from labour, from power, from memory, the result is the destruction of the base from which people launch themselves" (2009b, p. 28). Inspired by Ngugi's insights, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, p. 23) also poses the following polemical questions: How can 'dismembered' people be 're-membered'? How can they re-launch themselves from the world of 'non-being' into the world of 'being'? How can they recapture their lost land, power, history, being, language and knowledge?

The above questions are thought-provoking when debating the concepts of Africanisation, decoloniality and liberation, which are also entangled in conversations about educational curricula. The above critical questions posed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni demand on-going academic conversations and investigations in an attempt to provide answers and solutions. Africanisation discourse is a response to these fundamental questions. These discourses, namely, Africanisation, decoloniality and liberation, arise from the need to address the impact of colonialism on Africans and their contemporary existential circumstances. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, p. 23), colonialism is not an "episode, but a process of dismemberment, subjectivisation, domination, control and exploitation". There is a convergence of ideas from Ngugi and Ndlovu-Gatsheni on the need for re-humanisation and 're-memberisation' of African humanity, which was previously dehumanised and dismembered by the process of colonialism.

Similarly, Makgoba (1997) views Africanisation as an orientation towards the promotion of the African way of life (culture) and the worldview of Africans. He postulates that:

It involves incorporating, adapting and integrating other cultures into African visions to provide the dynamism, evolution and flexibility so essential in the global village. Africanisation is the process of defining or interpreting African identity and culture. It is formed by the experiences of the African diaspora and has endured and matured over time from the narrow nationalistic intolerance into an accommodating, realistic and global form (Makgoba, 1997, p. 25).

From the above, Makgoba places emphasis on the significance of African cultures and identities, which work together to promote self-pride and considers inclusivity in the university curriculum. Much akin to Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2015, p. 26) observation that the long-term effects of the dismemberment process "were out of sync with their history and memory, out of sync with

their being and [became] human beings who have lost name, language, culture, religion and identity”, Africanisation is a broader process of re-naming the previously ‘unnamed’, legitimising the previously delegitimised and creating a sense of ownership for indigenous people.

Similarly, Lebakeng, Manthiba and Dalindjebo (2010) note that indigenous African epistemology was considered defective and any knowledge coming from indigenous Africans was deliberately overlooked, deemed inferior and that there was a need to further develop and re-orient towards a Western epistemological model. Furthermore, the colonisers “ignored the unique demonstration of the human genius that people in different parts of the world have employed in taking different pathways to knowledge creation, transmission and dissemination successfully” (Keto, 2003, p. 5). Clearly, the main thrust of Western education was to denigrate the indigenous people in Zimbabwe/Africa and deny them valuable and relevant social knowledge about themselves and their communities. Lebakeng, Manthiba and Dalindjebo (2006) argue that the resuscitation of local knowledge and problematisation of epistemic reliance from the West could be realised in the inclusion of African indigenous epistemology. Failure to acknowledge the significance of philosophies from Africans perpetuates epistemological injustice and biased monolithic views of humanity. These scholars emphasise that:

the imperative for the inscription of indigenous African epistemology into the curriculum and underpinning education with African philosophy is, in the first instance, a question of rights, and thus, a matter of natural and historical justice. In advocating for the reversal of epistemicides, there is a need to place indigenous knowledge systems on the same level of parity with other epistemological systems in an effort to achieve formal and substantive equality (Lebakeng, Manthiba and Dalindjebo, 2006, p. 76).

Hickling-Hudson, Matthews and Woods (2003, p. 3) are “apprehensive of the power of education to influence thought and behaviour.” They argue that Eurocentric representations distort the culture and history of formerly colonised African countries, such as Zimbabwe, in a binary fashion, thus: “the Orient and its history – like the West and its history – are constructed through a tradition of thought, imagery and vocabulary in a manner that serves the interests of Western rule”. Mazrui (1978, p. 18) similarly exhorts “young Africans to struggle to conquer African self-contempt” otherwise termed ‘cultural cringe’, a term used by Tiffin (2003), occasioned by Eurocentric education. Such a critique of colonial education as well as the desire to forge an identity for Africans have resulted in the re-assessment of the curriculum and the

increased advocacy for Africanised education in the postcolonial era. Africanisation of the university curriculum is a deconstructive thought that is located within epistemological politics and the decolonisation project that defines curriculum conversations in postcolonial Africa. Blade Nzimande, the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology in South Africa, made insightful remarks about the nature of education in contemporary Africa when he noted that:

Over the last few decades, some things have not changed. There has been no significant break in relation to knowledge production between the colonial and postcolonial eras. African universities are essentially consumers of knowledge produced in developed countries (UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education, 2009, p. 30).

Nzimande (2009) suggests the need for an epistemological rupture from Eurocentric epistemes for African universities. Africanisation of the university curriculum in Zimbabwe is relevant when we consider the fact that the only university of Rhodesia, renamed the University of Zimbabwe after independence, was an affiliate of the University of London, meaning it adopted Western epistemological canons, to the exclusion of African mores. This means that the type of curriculum imposed on Africans was Eurocentric, thus relegating African culture, values and ethos.

This paper focuses on an analysis of the reasons behind the importance of infusing Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) within the Africanisation discourse and investigates whether this approach sufficiently addresses the problem that proponents of IKS, and Africanisation of the university curriculum, are trying to resolve. According to Letsekha (2013, p. 7), the IKS “is understood as local knowledge, which is unique to every culture or society, embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships and rituals, and is commonly held by communities rather than individuals”. The infusion of IKS into the university curriculum is also further supported by Mwinzi (2016), who, however, contends that this process needs to be regulated in order to be relevant at the global level. The significance of infusing the epistemology of Africa necessitates positioning the type “of rationality, objectivity, rejecting what is obsolete, accepting what is apt, modifying and adapting what can augment creativity in terms of improving the psychological, intellectual and economic realms” (Mwinzi, 2016, p. 380). The author further argues that an insertion of epistemology of Africa in the university curriculum is a fundamental resolution to destructive differences, distortions and obscurities in contemporary university learning. It is thus important that the present university curricula requires re-assessment, re-thinking and re-energising of African IKS and epistemology.

Yet, some scholars, such as Alatas (2009), Connell (2007) and Crossman (2004), advocate a less radical position in the process of Africanisation and infusion of IKS into the university curriculum. For example, Crossman (2004) is of the view that the idea of Africanisation of the university curriculum should not racialise and ethnicise ideas of knowledge. The author further believes there is a need for finding other benchmarks and standards for locally, regionally and internationally shared knowledge and practices. Horsthemke (2009) also posits that conversations about Africanisation have highlighted some loopholes, which demand attention. He states that:

[n]either the idea of ‘an African essence, culture and identity’, nor the notion of ‘African ways of knowing’, constitutes an appropriate theoretical framework for conceptualising the change required in higher educational thought and practices... instead, that the transformation agenda can be better met by a different human rights approach (Horsthemke, 2009, p. 573).

Connell (2007) warns that when discussing IKS in the context of Africanisation discourse, it is imperative to acknowledge that various types of knowledge may entangle in a troublesome and complex way with identity and politics. Considering the fact that Zimbabwe, like many other African countries, is multi-racial and multi-ethnic, with numerous and diverse groups of people, the problematic questions to be addressed are: How are IKS selected? What content is suitable to cater for such diversity? These are critical questions which point at the dilemma that academics encounter in championing the implementation of Africanisation and the infusion of IKS into the university curriculum.

In advancing Africanisation discourse there is a need not to over-emphasise IKS, as it could be detached from the global context. In other words, Africanisation of the university curriculum should not ignore the demand to be relevant to international educational standards. Is it essential to refrain from an epistemological paradigm based on contempt, racism and arrogance, but rather promoting humility, respect and sincerity as important standards infusing the new university curriculum. This view concurs with the tenets of *Ubuntu* philosophy, which encourages inclusivity, interconnectedness and humanness in educational epistemic pathways, including the university curriculum. Guided by *Ubuntu* philosophy, Africanisation of the university curriculum should adopt a broader perspective that projects ethos of humanism, universalism, interconnectivity and respect for human rights in their diversity and the collectivity of humankind.

Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru and Makuvaza (2014), Shizha (2006) and Mukusha (2013), among others, advocate the incorporation of indigenous knowledge

in Zimbabwe's university curriculum. The infusion of local knowledge into the curriculum is considered paramount and may help "define and determine academic knowledge relevant for African societies and economies" (Shizha, 2006, p. 20), in place of colonial education. Such scholars criticise colonial education for undermining traditional societies and spearheading an individual Western value system, which was foreign to Zimbabwean/African belief systems (Shizha, 2006). The adoption of an African-centred curriculum could instil self-confidence, patriotism and communally-oriented graduates who can demonstrate pride in their African-ness/Zimbabwean-ness. Drawing from the above reflections, the conversation about Africanisation is a complex one since it is marked by numerous ambiguities, grey areas and contestations.

The Africanisation discourse is not complete without mentioning the role of indigenous language in the university curriculum. The continued dominance of English over African languages in Zimbabwe and Africa at large, promotes linguistic imperialism and denigration of indigenous cultures (Ngugi, 2009/1987). In this article, we subscribe to the view that language is a carrier of culture, hence, if a language is undermined or denigrated, it follows that its speakers are also inferiorised. In a situation where indigenous languages have been developed into written forms, it is pertinent that universities design and adopt language policies that recognise and empower indigenous languages and consider such languages in teaching and learning.

Africanisation and the University Curriculum in Zimbabwe

There is general consensus that the university curriculum in Zimbabwe in the postcolonial era needs to be Africanised in line with decolonisation logic that privileges Africanity in epistemological discourses (Mignolo, 2011/2012, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Africanisation discourses call for the inclusion of what was previously considered to be subaltern knowledge from Africans (Mignolo, 2012). According to Van Heerden (1997), Africanisation in the context of education is usually understood in relation to the reformation of educational curriculum and the inclusion of African values and ethnics. He notes that:

For at least three centuries since the conquest of the indigenous people in the unjust wars of colonisation, the education curriculum... did not include African philosophy. For the colonial conqueror and the successor in title thereto, the indigenous conquered peoples had neither an epistemology nor a philosophy worth including in any educational curriculum (Van Heerden, 1997, p.70).

The Bantu educational system for black Rhodesians was meant to restrict intellectual growth of learners by misrepresenting knowledge and making it a point that the colonisers would control the acquisition of knowledge of both learners and teachers, thereby reinforcing state propaganda (Kallaway, 1988). The type of education offered to black Rhodesians was meant to create a permanent state of political and economic inferiority. In this sense, the colonisers utilised education as an ideological instrument that supported the white superiority/black inferiority dichotomy. Yet, this could be read as an essentialist and, perhaps, patriotic narrative since it can be argued that the colonial administration in Rhodesia educated blacks who could be employed both in public and private sectors, whereas the postcolonial administration in Zimbabwe is educating and training teachers, nurses and other service personnel who would otherwise be unemployed. During the colonial period, white settlers dispossessed black indigenous people of their identity, self-respect and anything African, leading to an uprooting and deracination of these people. The deracination of the indigenous people prevented them from developing their autonomy and self-growth. This is in reminiscence of Mignolo's (2007) notions of the logic of coloniality and grammar of decoloniality.

From the foregoing discussion, it is apparent that Africanisation of education is inevitable in order to correct the epistemological and hermeneutical injustices created during the colonial era. Mignolo (2009) demands epistemic disobedience in order to depart and challenge the colonial logic of the postcolonial era. Ramose (2002) equates colonial education to 'epistemicides', pointing out the damaging effect on Africans. Therefore, Africanising the university curriculum in Zimbabwe should be conceptualised as the development of scholarship and research done in institutions of higher learning, such as colleges and universities to drive educational transformations that could be expected to restore the dignity and self-pride of indigenous people. This concept is anchored in the fact that this type of education will produce people who are rooted in their communities and who are cognisant of the challenges faced by Africans.

Africanisation of the university curriculum in Zimbabwe is meant to unify very diverse communities with different ethnic values. Although Africanisation of the university curriculum in Zimbabwe should valorise the African past in order to create a unified future, it is essential to consider Mignolo's (2011, p. 45) proposition of "epistemic disobedience" as a way of delinking African from Eurocentric thought. Mignolo further argues that:

Epistemic disobedience leads us to decolonial options as a set of projects that have in common the effects experienced by all inhabitants

of the globe who were at the receiving end of global designs to colonise the economy, authority...to colonise knowledges and beings (Mignolo, 2011, p. 45).

Epistemic delinking is then necessary for opening epistemological spaces for a new humanity, thinking and knowledge. It is equally unjust, both philosophically and epistemologically, to think that Africanisation, no matter how it is defined, is a panacea to the problems of university curriculum in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe's University Policy Framework

In Zimbabwe, university education is coordinated, regulated and promoted by the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE). The council was “created through an act of parliament, Chapter 25:27 in 2006” (Garwe, 2014, p. 3). The ZIMCHE was established to replace the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). Garwe further explains that the ZIMCHE assesses “the standards of teaching examinations, academic qualifications and research in institutions of higher education” (Ibid., p. 3). It is composed of 21 council members, nominated for a three-year period. Out of the 21 council members, three are appointed from internationally recognised institutions of higher education to ensure quality assurance (Garwe, 2014). The appointment of members is done in accordance with high professionalism, as enshrined in the ZIMCHE Act, 2006. Members should have experience and expertise in the domain of university education and should guide and render advice on issues of quality assurance. Thus, the council becomes the responsible authority of university education in Zimbabwe and its overall function is to offer guidance on educational policy matters (ZIMCHE Act, 2006). The ZIMCHE is a regulatory body whose roles include accreditation, de/registration and auditing of higher learning institutions. It also plays an advisory role, as it works in liaison with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in Zimbabwe. It also promotes regional and international cooperation between universities. In Zimbabwe, the idea of ‘teaching/learning’ should be approved by the ZIMCHE, which regulates and monitors educational practices in universities. The ZIMCHE encompasses reforms, policies, infrastructure, strategies and plans made by institutions of higher learning. With reference to Zimbabwe, the ZIMCHE has sought to infuse Africanisation in the curriculum since 2019, with the creation of the minimum body of knowledge (MBK).

Global Standardisation of the University Curricula

Africanisation of the university curricula needs to be undertaken in the context of the global arena. There are many factors to consider when one talks of standardisation of university curricula at the global level. These include benchmarks for international rankings, such as university evaluation, academic evaluation, research evaluation, publications and scientific papers (Huang, 2011). University evaluation is a term used to explain both academic and research evaluation, such as university research output or achievement, university administration and the quality of education offered. However, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate university from academic evaluation. Academic evaluation focuses mainly on scholarly activities, achievements and results of research investment (Daniel and Fisch, 1990). Research evaluation includes teaching, community and university services, while scholarly publications are used in research evaluation. However, there is need to rethink and critique the set international university ranking benchmarks to guard against a resurfacing and domination of the Eurocentric epistemological model. For instance, it is pertinent to question whose benchmarks are dominant. Another relevant question is whether these international benchmarks are defined within an African context.

In the Zimbabwean context, viable library facilities with internet connectivity in universities are critical for local and global spaces of engagement. Good library facilities are the bedrock of serious and vigorous research, which leads to high standards of university education. Another fundamental aspect is research funding for empirical and non-empirical studies. Funding is also an indispensable factor for postgraduate students, especially those undertaking master's, doctoral and postdoctoral studies. Recently, Zimbabwe designed a new approach to the university curriculum (Education 5.0), which emphasises innovation and industrialisation. Education 5.0 is about setting key missions for Zimbabwean universities, which include teaching, research, university services, innovativeness and industrialisation. These five missions seek to produce graduates who can create jobs through the application of acquired skills and knowledge. This is a marked shift from the previous Education 3.0 (teaching, university service and research), which was a colonial epistemological model designed to produce and feed employees into existing colonial industries (Murwira, 2019). In Zimbabwe, Education 3.0 was one of the colonial vestiges to be dismantled in line with decolonisation and the Africanisation project in independent African states. The noted limitations of Education 3.0 led to the construction of Education 5.0 to meet the contemporary local and global standards of university education. Education 5.0 was created for the purposes of industrialisation and modernisation. In Zimbabwe, almost

all state universities have established innovation hubs, for instance Chinhoyi University of Technology successfully launched an Artificial Insemination Programme, which is attracting both local and international attention, pointing at the success story of Education 5.0.

Another key initiative from the ZIMCHE in the process of standardisation of the university curriculum in Zimbabwe is the minimum body of knowledge (MBK). The MBK project was initiated by experts from each of the study areas in order “to achieve comparable standards in what is learned by students embarking on similar degree programmes in various universities across the country” (Garwe 2014, p. 5). For instance, in the area of New Testament studies, there are significant modules which should be compulsory for the successful completion of the Bachelor of Arts Honours in Religious Studies degree programmes. A student cannot specialise in New Testament studies without taking modules in Hellenistic Greek and History of interpretation from the first century up to present. These are international requirements for one to specialise in the above-mentioned degree programme in reputable universities globally. Therefore, the MBK should include areas to meet the set international standards. Furthermore, the MBK for students undertaking a Bachelor’s degree programme in Linguistics should include areas such as Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology, Syntax and Semantics. These areas are critical for students to compete on the global market and be accepted by reputable international universities. The MBK project offers compatibility and comparability of Zimbabwean university curricula with the international university education community. In this regard, the Zimbabwe university curriculum is in tandem with international quality assurance.

Challenges of Africanising Zimbabwe’s University Curriculum

One of the primary problems which African scholarship faces is a dependency syndrome. Institutions of tertiary education in Africa and Zimbabwe tend to be copycats and maintain colonial Western values (Makgoba, 1996). It could be argued that universities in Zimbabwe and Africa at large, are not autonomous and scholarship is fundamentally imitative. Lebakeng, Phalane and Dalindjebo (2010, p. 73) argue that African universities are characterised by the phenomenon of the ‘captive mind’ or ‘mental captivity’ since their scholastic “roots are defined more consciously and consistently within the framework of the various Western philosophical and methodological schools.” These universities may be accused of reification and their approach is dominated by Western colonial thought in the mimicry evident in course replication and duplication. Some of the features of a captive mind-set are an indiscriminating attitude towards ideas from the West (Lebakeng, Phalane and Dalindjebo

2010; Alatas, 1972; Altbach, 1977), the inability to address fundamental issues of indigenous society and a failure to tap into local resources, such as indigenous languages and religion (Ngugi, 1986; Wiredu, 1995). There are other challenges, which include:

1. Lack of political will since the colonial educational model serves the interests of the ruling elite;
2. African countries, including Zimbabwe, claim to be independent, but in reality this remains an elusive idea since the former colonial powers tend to have to approve any serious curriculum reforms undertaken. The Western models of education remain in place because African leaders view these as part of the modernisation of African states; and
3. The language utilised for 'languaging' the curriculum is itself problematic, because it reflects Western biased curriculum or linguistic imperialism.

Way Forward

The above insights and reflections enrich debates around Africanisation of the university curriculum. Apple (2004) rightly observes that no education is ever neutral, hence the discourse about Africanising the university curriculum in Zimbabwe is also in the service of specific ideologies or worldviews. This means that the reforms in university curriculum should be undertaken in a critical and cautious manner in order to investigate the assumptions, claims and beliefs embedded in Africanisation discourses. While the infusion of local knowledge into the university curricula may encounter a number of challenges, as highlighted in the foregoing discussion, there is need to identify a comprehensive substitute discourse. Mwinzi suggests that:

Africanisation must oscillate on the continuum of re-orientation of persons, institutions, structures, products, processes and ideas towards a fresh, creative and constructive imaging of Africa and African contexts, which take the past, present and future African reality and African potential seriously, consciously and deliberately (Mwinzi, 2016, p. 384).

In addition, Africanisation of the university curriculum should be directed at resolving any form of stereotyping and racial discrimination, as rightly alluded to by Garvey when he states that:

...with pride in self and with determination of going ahead in the creation of those ideas that will lift them to the unprejudiced company of races and nations. There is no desire for hate or malice, but ... to see all mankind linked into a common fraternity of progress and achievement

that will wipe away the odour of prejudice, and elevate the human race to the height of real godly love and satisfaction (Garvey, 1969, p. 26).

The above Garveyan viewpoint of Africanisation of the university curriculum calls for a ‘remembering’ of black people and the entire human race that has been fractured by racial and social categorisation. In other words, Africanisation discourse seeks to subvert long held racial prejudices, classism and white-black dichotomisation, which can be traced back to the slave trade. In this sense, Africanisation is a search for human integration, equality, justice and inclusivity. Humanity is realised in its totality and given the opportunity to define epistemological pathways collectively.

Prinsloo contends that “Africanisation is a legitimate counter narrative and the quest for an African identity is its multiple intersectionality with gender, race, location, language, religion and cultural markers” (Prinsloo, 2010, p. 19). He also emphasises that African academics should be able to question Western canons of knowledge and celebrate and validate the contributions of indigenous knowledge systems. Hence, universities must not be ivory tower institutions occupied by an elite minority ignorant or indifferent to the prevailing poverty and squalor that surround them. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017, p. 23), “a genuine African university should draw inspiration from its context, not a transplanted tree, but growing from a seed that is planted and nurtured in the African soil”.

Concluding Remarks

From the above discussion, it appears that Africanisation of the university curriculum in Zimbabwe and other African countries, is important to make the knowledge taught appropriate and meaningful to the aspirations of the local people. This paper provides a critical interrogation of the concept of ‘Africanisation’ as a problematic socio-political construct that can be viewed as a specific reaction within the broader context of the Afrocentric conversation *vis-a-vis* university education in Zimbabwe. Positioning Africanisation debate within postcolonial and Afrocentric discourses, the subject becomes a necessary counter-narrative to the historical and continuing Western hegemonic practices that disregard the importance of ontological and epistemological canons in Africa and, specifically, university education in Zimbabwe. The discourses of Africanisation, as a counter-narrative, though necessary, should, however, not be taken or promoted uncritically or unconditionally.

In the light of the above scholarly insights, university education and its curricula are highly contested and debatable discourses and spaces as different stakeholders bet their claims for different motives and purposes. While

acknowledging the existence of these divergent claims, observations and worldviews, this paper focuses precisely on the debate about Africanisation of the university curriculum in Zimbabwe and grapples with the polemic questions around how to Africanise and the amount of Africanised content in the university curriculum. These and other questions deserve an ongoing scholarly inquiry since the exact parameters of Africanness are not very clear. The other fundamental aspect for consideration in this debate is that Zimbabwe's university education should also fit into the global educational framework and meet international standardisation criteria.

It is further argued that African knowledge or indigenous knowledge systems need to be developed and that they should be infused into the existing Zimbabwean and African university epistemological models to mitigate the dominance of Western canons. Through this position, we intend to contribute to this scholarly dialogue, examine alternative epistemological canons and embrace diversity in contemporary academic conversations. The African university curricula in general, and Zimbabwean curriculum in particular, should involve a serious inquiry that will obviously contribute significantly towards positive transformations.

In the first place, the need to Africanise the curricula arises from, and contributes to, the African tenets of knowledge and praxis, not as discriminatory and counter alternatives to Eurocentric epistemological canons, but rather, as surely salient, scientifically rigorous and valid. In debating about the Africanisation of the university curriculum in Zimbabwe, the academic community needs not only investigate existing Western educational canons in Africa, but also critically question the proposed new epistemological pathways and the nature of knowledge to be infused into the available university curricula. From these reflections about this contentious and topical subject, it is essential to rethink the discourse on Africanisation in a more critical way and re-examine the new educational pathways to be undertaken not only in consideration of the needs of the indigenous people but also within the wider global context.

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Review¹: Mark LeVine, *We'll Play till We Die: Journeys across a Decade of Revolutionary Music in the Muslim World*, Oakland 2022: University of California Press, pp. 310.

The book, combining the form of an academic work with a musical travelogue, is a continuation of *Heavy Metal Islam: Rock, Resistance, and the Struggle for the Soul of Islam*, which was published in 2008, two years before the main wave of political transformation in the Arab countries started.

LeVine's volume is just the newest and one of the most interesting examples of the growing body of texts analysing the central importance of popular music in Arabic popular culture and its influence on the wider sociopolitical context of the region. LeVine makes use of his rich experience as a researcher, traveller and musician, also with experiences of playing or recording with some of the musicians mentioned in the book.

First of all, why is researching music in the Arab countries so important for Cultural Studies and widely understood Middle Eastern Studies? To put it in a straightforward way, and paraphrasing the author's own words, popular music is a crucial element of widely understood popular culture. Its creation, production, circulation, performance and consumption can be a powerful generator for social relations, can build new or empower existing communities (see: p. 252). The researcher describes his position and changes of context, showing the difference between the current situation and that when the previous book was published: "In the years since *Heavy Metal Islam's* publication, that generation moved from the subcultural margins to the countercultural centre and the revolutionary avant-garde, only to wind up largely pushed to the margins again, with too many people either crushed or pushed right out of their homelands into exile, if not into prison or even far too early graves"

¹ This review is part of the research financed by the National Science Centre in Poland in years 2021–2024 (the project *Cairo Music Scene(s) Since 2011: Between Political Activism and Cultural Change*, led by Michał Moch in the frame of „Opus” program, number of the project: 2020/37/B/HS2/01940).

(“Author’s Note”, p. xiii). This evolution is well reflected in LeVine’s analyses that prove global acclaim of the “revolutionary artists” after 2010, but then also their marginalisation or (sometimes forced) access to the mainstream but connected to ramifications of censorship. The American researcher also convincingly describes constant cycles of politicisation and depoliticisation of Arabic popular music, with a key example of hip-hop, which started as a platform for political dissent, but then gradually evolved into a more auto-thematic *battle rap* or Americanised subgenre of trap (see: pp. 42–46, where it is developed regarding the Moroccan scene).

LeVine’s particular interest is in the variety of genres that he calls EYM (*extreme youth music*), the category into which he places metal, punk and post-punk, hip-hop, intelligent dance music (IDM) and local scenes of electronic music, as well as some examples of more mainstream-oriented *indie pop*.

LeVine concentrated on the very diversified music scenes based in six main areas: Morocco, Egypt, Palestine/Israel, Lebanon, Iran and Pakistan, which corresponds with the six main chapters in the book. However, he also gives many examples from the other places, such as Tunisia (mainly to compare with the Moroccan example), Turkey and Indonesia, which are widely covered in the final part “By Way of an Epilogue.” Most of the main chapters were created (or, using LeVine’s own words, “arranged and mixed”) with the respective local musicians/activists: in the case of Egypt – two anonymous² collaborators (“a longtime Egyptian male MC and female music writer”; p. 30), Palestine – MC Sameh “SAZ” Zakout and Abed Hathout, Lebanon – Jackson Allers, a significant promoter of the local scene, Iran – the female rapper Salome MC, and Pakistan – a composer and sound designer, Haniya Aslam and metal guitarist, Mekaal Hasan. The final part was enriched by the impact of important scholars of the subject: Pierre Hecker, Nahid Siamdoust and Jeremy Wallach. Contributions were also made by other researchers, e.g. in the Palestine chapter, Nadeem Karkabi’s comments on the relative unimportance of metal and the origins of IDM and *electro shaabi*’s great development among Palestinians are valuable (pp. 103, 127).

In the Egyptian part, LeVine (with his anonymous co-writers) makes some interesting theoretical assumptions, for example on page 65 he coins the category of “avant-garde” for the Tahrir generation or the “new generation” (Modern Standard Arabic: *al-ġīl al-ġadīd* or *al-ġīl at-Tahrīr*; Egyptian Arabic: *il-gil il-gedid*), with the examples of Nubian-influenced band Black Theama, charismatic female artists: Dina El Wadidi (Dīnā al-Wadīdī), Youssra

² This anonymity can be significant and illustrate the situation of Egypt’s alternative scene after the establishing and strengthening of the Sisi regime after 2014.

El Hawary (Yusrā al-Hawārī) and Maryam Šāliḥ (Maryam Saleh), and the important role played by talented poets–authors of song lyrics (the late Mido Zohair, Rami Yehia etc.). The American writer interestingly paints different trajectories of the strongly politicised artists' development: from indie-pop stars, Cairokee, who have chosen indirect, metaphorical messages, to Ramy Essam (Rāmī 'Iṣṣām), a hero and victim of the 25 January Revolution, who left Egypt for artistic residence in the Scandinavian countries, still creating very openly anti-government songs, but at the same time putting at risk the health or even survival of his former collaborators who stayed in the country.

The part on Lebanon (*Remixed but Never Remastered*) somehow dialogues with an earlier key study by Thomas Burkhalter (Burkhalter 2014) of the Beirut scene. Some artists are analysed in both books (e.g. Yasmine Hamdan, Scrambled Eggs, metal bands such as Kimaera), and some are mentioned with a slightly different approach (the most popular rock/indie band, Mashrou' Leila). It seems that when LeVine is more concentrated on the social aspect of music and its community-building dimension, Burkhalter turned more towards individual strategies of avant-garde artists and their musical innovativeness. Despite these differences, both the American and Swiss writers meet in their observations on how a total politicisation of life in Lebanon translates into radical, avant-garde music, which is also related to the sense of hopelessness in a city shattered by wars, sectarianism and the apocalyptic August 4, 2020 explosion at the Port of Beirut. This uniqueness and desperation can be felt equally in totally different genres and styles: El Rass rapping, Mazen Kerbaj's experimental prepared trumpet playing and war-inspired sonic collages by Khaled Yassine. The common point between Burkhalter and LeVine is also the important role of transnational links in and between music scenes, which is one of the main topics of the former's book and well proved by the latter, who gives many examples of the strong bonds between Lebanese, Palestinian and Egyptian musicians, e.g. Maryam Saleh–Zeid Hamdan duo, the Alif Ensemble band or multiple contacts between Beirut and Cairene IDM artists and DJs.

Also, chapters on Iran and Pakistan offer some important material. In the first case they introduce, on a bigger scale (as is in the case of the Arab countries), the problem of relations between diaspora and local artists who try to circumvent censorship and limitations in organising live shows, and have to skilfully navigate between periods of clampdown and relative liberalisation ordered by the partially theocratic government. The Pakistani example, I think less popular in the West than the other countries mentioned in earlier chapters, is also instructive, bringing to the fore some universal issues,

such as changes on the musical market caused by the great programmes, campaigns and talent shows funded by “global beverage companies”: Pepsi, Coke and Nescafé. The influence of these processes is multifaceted: on the one hand, it homogenises the scene and makes artists dependent on the power of transnational corporations, but at the same time it opens perspectives for young alternative artists to reach a wider audience and gain new possibilities of performing live. One of the most interesting stories in the “Pakistan” chapter is about the music played in the Chitral Valley, which is inhabited by followers of an ancient form of Hinduism, so the region is very different compared to hegemonic Muslim culture of Pakistan (p. 249). LeVine cites here the history narrated by the Chitral native, Irfan Ali Haj, who said that the producers from the aforementioned popular *Coke Studio* programme tried to force a local female group to play their music, “which is naturally in 7/8 or odd meters, into a 4/4 beat” (p. 249). The effect was that young musicians couldn’t play in their normal, spontaneous, improvised mode, just because producers wanted to have the effect of “a trance, EDM type of beat. A very hipster 2018 beat” (p. 250). This story illustrates how complicated the question of tradition and innovation in non-Western music is; it is not, by any means, a straightforward relation between what is “Western influence” and “local tradition/heritage,” but rather a complex battle of styles, genres and identities, where the colonial attitude is often manifested by local native members of elites or the cultural-political mainstream.

Such paradoxes are also embodied in the situation in Indonesia, a country with a president who has been a “metalhead” (Joko Widodo, himself a very ambiguous figure), a thriving “female hijab metal” scene, and at the same time growing re-Islamisation of daily life and calls for a ban on specified musical genres formulated by conservative circles and Widodo’s opponents, who are using such arguments on a daily basis as part of a political rivalry.

In the book, LeVine attempts a balancing act between a moving and expressive travelogue, in which he strongly sympathises with his heroes/co-writers, and a more distanced scientific discourse, which is well rooted in the state-of-the-art. The language is also quite brutal and sometimes even explicit (especially in the interviews with local interlocutors), which corresponds well with the brutal voices of his favourite metal vocalists. A certain flaw, but also quite characteristic for other examples of the literature of the subject, is subjective concentration on the genres that are preferred by the author. In LeVine’s case, it is his constant fascination and preoccupation with heavy metal in its different sonic manifestations and subgenres. From my point of view, quite critical but also well acquainted with the history of

metal, the most interesting here is the feminist strand, epitomised with Massive Scar Era's history. The band, also called Mascara, formed in Alexandria but later moving to Cairo, is unique, being a mainly female (earlier all-female) alternative band including a frontwoman, singer and guitarist Cherine Amr (who sings with both a clean, melodic voice and a brutal metal, growling one) and violinist Nancy Mounir, whose characteristic playing created a sort of a cultural hybridity between death/thrash/progressive metal on one side, and Oriental melodic scales on the other. One of their highlights is the EP *Color Blind* (2018), with a very characteristic track, *Unfollow*, also praised by LeVine in his analysis. The band itself is quite subversive, especially taking into account the level of sexual harassment societally, but also inside the metal subculture. Unfortunately, Cherine Amr has left Egypt and settled in Canada in recent years.

If we touch the importance of metal for the very concept of the book, its revolutionary potential and nature is controversial. Metal is a very niche, subcultural phenomenon, and also to some extent homogenised by its use of ubiquitous English lyrics, and often repeated patterns of composing and playing riffs. So, assessing the real impact of metal in non-Western societies is very difficult. It seems that LeVine turns to the idea that a purely Western genre at the beginning has become indigenised and appropriated in a new environment. It is also consistent with decolonial theories that are widely cited and treated by LeVine as one of the main methodological inspirations.³ I would be glad if, for example in the Egyptian part, there would be more references to the very interesting, multi-genre alternative music which flourishes in Egypt (e.g. the different projects of Maurice Louca). Sometimes, instrumental music can formulate equally moving social communiqué as is in the case of songs with developed and socially engaged lyrics. At the same time, we have to respect the musical choices of the author who does not hide his special emotional attachment to some genres and *milieus*.

Still, metal has a lot of features that are very informative about contemporary Arab societies. I like a lot the fragment of the book which cites Iraqi "metalhead" Faisal al-Murar saying that "Metal remains one of the best

³ LeVine tries to broadly use the so-called "Indigenous theories and methodologies" in order to "break down the dominant modernist and colonial frameworks" ("Author's Note", p. xxx). In the "Epilogue", he revisits the preliminary assumptions, trying to show how two intersecting processes occur: firstly, adoption of specific forms of music by indigenous members of the society, and secondly, gradual "indigenisation" of "foreign" genres, that become so embedded in the local reality they "reproduce without constant new input from outside" (pp. 256–257). The latter option is something bigger than hybridisation of music, because it is not just a hybrid of local and foreign influences, but rather a totally new artistic quality as Indigenous Australian "songspirals", mentioned by LeVine as an instructive example (p. 257).

metrics for measuring society's acceptance of difference" (p. 254). This is even more true if we consider the paradoxical situation which mainly female metal bands have to navigate.

Turning to the very positive and innovative sides of the volume, it offers a comparative analysis based on observations from many and very diversified places in the Arab and Islamic world. It is rather rare because books and papers have tended to concentrate on particular countries and scenes, although with exceptions to this rule, such as the earlier and closely thematically related books by Hisham Aidi (Aidi 2014) and Robin Wright (Wright 2011). Aidi's monograph especially can be treated as a point of reference, though the researcher was more interested in examples from the Muslim diaspora in Europe and North and South America showing how new, sometimes radical, discourses are produced and embedded in musical genres, also as a reaction to state policies. So, both Aidi and LeVine observe how music is becoming politicised and radicalised, but *We'll Play till We Die...* provides more purely local, Arabic-language native material.

Among the not numerous downsides of the book, I could mention some typos such as "Bansky" (p. 117) in the pseudonym of the famous street artist and activist. Not easy to understand is the mistake in the name of the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, who is referred in the book as Khameini (three times in short succession from page 180 to page 186) and the error is repeated in the "Index." Obviously, it is the result of accidental melting of two pivotal surnames: Khamenei and Khomeini, but such a mistake should not happen in so well-researched a study.

LeVine's book, obviously, has a scientific value and can be discussed in the academic *milieu*. But at the same time, it is not only or mainly an academic book and it is directed to a non-academic wider audience, interested in the cultural transformations of the whole Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region. From this point of view, it may also have an important impact on media discourses regarding contemporary Arab and Islamic cultures, far exceeding the scope of the purely scientific debate.

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17th AfryKamera African Film Festival in Poland

The AfryKamera Film Festival ran from September 30 to October 9, 2022 in Warsaw and featured more than thirty films, including several competitive categories, such as feature films, musical documentary features, short films and animations. The programme is continuously available in numerous cities in Poland and on the biggest online platforms. As indicated in the festival's official Manifest, AfryKamera is changing, developing and referring to the future, hence this year's poster, which, like the entire event, was linked to Afrofuturism, a visual, literary, and philosophical concept and artistic genre of groundbreaking significance for Afro-American and African communities. The overall meaning of Afrofuturist influences in art and cinema remains a matter of debate, as this edition of AfryKamera demonstrated. The festival was focused on two main themes, which examined events from the past and the fate of African societies, and oscillated around topics related to the future, hope and a deep faith in agency.

Firstly, "The Roots of Music", served as the introduction to the world of the rich and prominent African music scene and its development through the 20th century. The impressive set of contemporary productions proposed an inspiring and energetic journey through the past and present music life in Sub-Saharan Africa, including *The Rumba Kings* (2021; directed by Alan Brain; a musical documentary on how Congolese rumba was born in the 1950s), *Elder's Corner* (2021; directed by Siji Awoyinka; a documentary on Nigerian music from 1950s to the 1970s, highlife, jazz and afrobeat and their essential legends, for instance, Tony Allen or Fela Kuti), as well as *Rumba Rules, New Genealogies* (2020; directed by David Nadeau-Bernatchez, Kiripi Katembo, Sammy Baloji; the story on Brigade Sarbati Orchestra and the urban scene in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo); *Cesária Évora* (2022; directed by Sofia Fonseca; a documentary on the world-class singer known for performing *morna* – a style of singing and dancing characteristic of the Cape Verde Islands). "For what better way to map a country's history than through its music and the fascinating people who made it?" rightly asked Wilfred Okiche (from Olongo Africa), and the answers were to be found in a cross-sectional view of the musical strands that underpin many African identities.

The second key motif, yet perhaps more striking, was “Africa Mon Amour”, offering an equally romantic, and empathetic look at interpersonal relationships, the world of feelings and sense of community and identity. Several perfectly selected films fitted into this discourse: the internationally acclaimed best film of the year in Africa *The Gravedigger’s Wife* (directed by Khadar Ayderus Ahmed of Somali-Finnish origin), Zanzibar – a Tanzanian official film of the festival’s opening *Tug of War* (2021; directed by Amil Shivji) and *The Blue Caftan* (2022; directed by Moroccan artist Maryam Touzani). All resonated strongly and in a poetic dimension with the sublime slogan of love, suffering and sacrifice for homeland and family, searching for strength in the face of adversity, loss and political turbulence.

Importantly, the festival was honoured with a plebiscite with awards for the best productions in three categories. The viewers and the jury watched 33 films to select the best feature, the best documentary and the best short film. The jury of short films, which included Patrycja Kozieł and was chaired by Wiktor Bagiński, awarded the production *Irréprochable* (“Flawless”; 2021; directed by Anaïs Lonkeu). What resonated most strongly from this drama and fantasy fiction was the message: “*When you’re black, you have to work twice as hard as the others, otherwise you will disappear*”, the explanation given to Laura, a primary school pupil, by her mother. *Is it true that this might happen to black people as soon as they do not behave correctly? Lonkeu posed a question to its audience, expressing disagreement with ethnic stereotypes and social inequalities.*

While the Audience Award for Best Documentary was given to the already mentioned *Rumba Rules, New Genealogies*, the Audience Award for Best Full-Length Feature was won by the animated film *Nayola* (2022), proving that this difficult topic, which is a little discussed outside the Lusophone world, is needed and important. José Miguel Ribeiro’s dramatic debut animation that traced the legacy of the decades-long civil war in Angola (1975–2002) was written by Virgílio Almeida and based on the short story *Caixa Preta* (“Black Box”) by Mia Couto and José Eduardo Agualusa, two notable writers from Portuguese-speaking Africa. This outstanding feature animation film presented the life of three generations of women, such as Nayola, who went to the interior of Angola during the conflict, in search of her husband who was reported missing in the fight.

References to the Afrofuturism, the completely supernatural world, sci-fi, and the impact of space and extraterrestrials on human beings were, in turn, implemented through films such as *Underneath: Children of the Sun* (2022; directed by David Kirkman) and *The Gravity* (2022; directed by Cédric Ido), as well as a special set of short films under the common name “Afrofuturistic”,

including French-Moroccan feature by Sofia Alaoui *So What if the Goats Die*” (2020); Kenyan visual exploration made by Jim Chuchu *We Need Prayers: This One Went to the Market* (2017); Swiss-Rwandan production by Kantarama Gahigiri on astronauts, *Ethereality* (2020); C.J. “Fiery” Obasi’s adaptation of Nnedi Okorafor’s short story, *Hello Rain* (2018); and Congolese *Mulika* by Maisha Maene (2022).

The second element of short films screened in the “Africa Calling” collection featured several dramatic as well as comedic performances, exploring new paradigms of identities and migratory movements, and included the aforementioned award-winning *Flawless*, and also Nigerian *Precious Hair & Beauty* (2021) by John Ogunmuyiwa; Senegalese *Astel* (2021) by Ramata-Toulaye Sy or Angolan *A Lisbon Affair* (2021) by Hoji Fortuna, among others.

As every year, the festival was accompanied by events from the intersection of the arts – exhibitions, concerts, discussion sessions and a set of meetings with filmmakers, for instance, educational workshops for children led by Ogi Ugonoh, Naija Fusion dance classes with Precious Uwazuruonye Nwabueze, music workshops with Katarzyna Fifi Sylla and discussions led by the Scientific Club of Postcolonial Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Warsaw. The concert of Noumassana Dembelé, whose leading instrument *iskora*, a kind of harp central for *mandingue* music and exhibition “Arewa Omobirin Eja” created by Polish-Nigerian artist Marta Baczewska-Ologele, were exceptional undertakings that absorbed the audience directly into the world of music and art, complementing the function and message of the festival itself, to present bottom-up African artistic activities taking into account a non-Eurocentric perspective.

Again, the 17th AfryKamera elicited an array of pivotal questions regarding the direction of the dynamic and fascinating growth of African cinema and its international and global recognition. This year’s festival should be considered one of the most important events concerning contemporary African cultures and societies, significant challenges and paradoxes, or current trends in the field of arts, which is still underestimated in Poland. Moreover, it once again confirmed that an ethical, visual narrative about Africa, presented by native artists, is the best method to enrich the multicultural dialogue and educate the audience in Poland.

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Example:

There is still a labelling issue when it comes to flavourings in food. It is noted that, “flavours such as vanillin which occur naturally in food are called ‘nature–identical.’ The label does not have to state where it comes from.” (Wilson, 2009, p. 257).

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Other aspects of *sharī‘a*, such as those dealing with the rights of religious minorities, women’s rights, and human rights in general, also need to be revised and reconsidered. Contextualisation of the Qur’ānic stipulation and examination of its linguistic and stylistic structure – as discourse – would reveal that the jurists’ work was basically to unfold the meaning of such stipulation and to re-encode this meaning in various social contexts (Abū Zayd, 2006, p. 95).

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