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“Translation” as Validation of Culture: The Example of Chinua Achebe

Abstract

Africa’s post-colonial literature has largely been in response to Western denigration of Africa. This article examines Chinua Achebe’s approach to the challenge of reclaiming the African past. His chief tool for such reconstruction is here termed creative “translation”. The major thesis is that Achebe is remarkably successful in recreating the African past, through his craft of language. This assessment is based on Achebe’s accomplished domestication of English, which both native Igbo speakers and L₁ English speakers will easily appreciate.

Introduction

Since language constitutes a crucial component of culture, it is not surprising that the language question in modern African literature has been a source of intense, even perennial controversy. Two literary giants, Chinua Achebe of Nigeria and Ngugi wa Thiong’o of Kenya, well encapsulate the two principal viewpoints. While the latter has resolutely turned his back on English as his creative medium, the former and several other African writers have not succumbed to the wind of nationalism sweeping through the African literary landscape. Rather, they have maintained the status quo, preferring to produce their works in non-African languages. While wa Thiong’o announces with enthusiasm and valedictory finality: “This […] is my farewell to English as a vehicle for any of my writings. From now on it is Gikuyu and Kiswahili all the way”,¹ Achebe himself declares as follows: “I have been given this language and I intend to use it”.²

For Achebe, it is imperative for Africans to know, “where the rain began to beat us,” in other words, African writers must first dispose of what he has called the fundamental theme. “This theme,” he declares, “put quite simply – is that African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity”.³ This can justifiably be

called Achebe’s literary-cum-artistic “manifesto” as he pursues his overriding objective of demonstrating the reality and authenticity of the African culture, especially before the very dawn of Western colonialism.

Achebe’s figure unarguably looms large in African literature. Ezenwa-Ohaeto observes that “Achebe is the man who invented African literature because he was able to show […] that the future of African writing did not lie in simple imitation of European forms but in the fusion of such forms with oral traditions”.4 Nnolim adjudges Achebe, “the chief inaugurator of the great tradition which is concerned with cultural assertion or cultural nationalism which stresses and promotes the innate dignity of the black man”,5 while Bernth Lindfors labels Things Fall Apart, “the first novel of unquestioned literary merit from English-speaking West Africa”.

A real colossus, Achebe has contributed immeasurably to the task of getting the world to comprehend the African and his continent. Regarding such an assignment, he actually considers himself a missionary: “The whole purpose of African literature […] is to change the perception of the world as far as Africans are concerned, and for me that’s being a missionary. So I have been very busy spreading that good news that Africans are people, that we are not savages and cannibals”.7 The Igbo culture, it must be said, remains a relatively understudied one. In the introduction to their book,8 Andrzejewski, Piłaszewicz and Tyloch remark as follows: “We particularly regret some of the omissions; we hope that the Igbo speakers of Nigeria, for instance, or the Shona speakers of Zimbabwe, will understand our inability to provide total coverage of the continent, given the multiplicity of languages”. Thus, this article is also envisaged as a contribution to the growing scholarly corpus on Achebean criticism, especially concerning his very efforts to interpret and validate African culture.

By focusing on Achebe’s trilogy,9 this article demonstrates that his works are fundamentally a portrayal of the pristine African society, its clangy clash with Europe, and the destructive impact on the indigenous societal structures. The article thus explores how Achebe has risen to the challenge of employing a “foreign” language as his creative medium. It will be shown that Achebe remarkably surmounts the hurdle of crossing the source-target language divide. This is essentially by means of what is here termed as creative “translation”. A major thesis here, therefore, is that by his deft manipulation and fusion of the resources of both Igbo and English, Achebe achieves his artistic goals with great conviction and remarkable success.

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7 Ezenwa-Ohaeto, Chinua Achebe…, p. 270.
Achebe boldly confronts the problem of how the writer can convincingly convey indigenous ideas, create his characters, model their speech, all in a language culturally “shaped” to convey a quite different world view and range of experiences. Since, “there is no use of language which is not embedded in the culture”10 a study such as this which focuses on the recreation of linguistic realities of Igbo society will lead to a better understanding of discourse in that culture. Of the selfsame society, Achebe himself declares: “This is one of the major cultures in Africa, and it’s received [only] scant attention”.11

Achebe and the status quo

Achebe’s novels promptly portray him as a foremost nationalist, an accomplished craftsman clearly committed to a reconstruction (political, social, linguistic-cum-cultural) of the African past. Indeed, he is acutely concerned with keeping the records accurate and righting, “the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement,”12 that is, Western denigration and distortion of Africa.

Diverse dimensions of such denigration are directly deducible from the novels of, say, Cary and Conrad, which painted a “sweet” picture of the African, supposedly in his absolutely barbaric and inclement environment. Achebe’s declares: “one of the things that set me thinking was Joyce Cary’s Mister Johnson which was praised so much, and it was clear to me that it was a most superficial picture […] And to think that Mister Johnson was esteemed by the US magazine Time as «the best novel ever written about Africa!»”.13

Thus Achebe’s writing displays an unquestionably corrective consciousness; a response to, and compelling rejection of, racist and pernicious portrayals of the African and his environment by such works as Conrad’s Heart of Darkness and Cary’s Mister Johnson. But Achebe counters such stereotyped portraiture of Africa by means of a genuine, credible and convincing artistic depiction of an indigenous African civilization, both before and during the colonial onslaught. Achebe clearly rises above the jaundiced perceptions which preceded the publication of the classic, Things Fall Apart.

Thus, his portrayal and interpretation of the society is balanced, not couched in idyllic or romanticist terms or depicting the Igbo/African past as Utopian: “We cannot pretend that our past was one long, technicolour idyll. We have to admit that like other people’s pasts ours had its good as well as its bad sides”.14 Achebe is a discriminating ethnographer, a competent and compassionate chronicler whose major artistic preoccupation is to demonstrate that the Igbo/African past, “with all its

12 Chinua Achebe, ‘The Novelist as Teacher’, in Morning Yet…, p. 44.
imperfections” is not “one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God’s behalf delivered them”.15

Validation via cultural “translation”

African writers and other intellectuals have sought diverse means of rewriting histories, considering the numerous warped Western views regarding Africa. Achebe’s contribution to such validation of African culture is seen essentially in his efforts to recreate the Igbo past in realistic fashion. Of course, a sub-thesis here is that Achebe’s chief tool for interpreting the indigenous Igbo culture lies in translation. In its strictest sense, translation constitutes a crucial component of language and literature studies, and thus plays a critical role in the development of different languages. Such works as Ferdinand Oyono’s Houseboy, or Mongo Beti’s Mission to Kala could only have been made accessible to the wider world only through translation. Thus, translation remains, “an indisputable key to communication, development and understanding in our multilingual world”.16

Still, the term translation is not necessarily a concept to be taken over-literally. Of course, the bare term translation naturally suggests a straightforward rendition or transposition of thoughts from a source to a target language, in this case, Igbo to English. It must be stressed, therefore, that in this investigation of Achebe’s attempts to render the Igbo macrocosm in a major world language, the term “translation” is seen from a creative viewpoint. Thus, the article demonstrates what is here termed as creative “translation”, and how Achebe employs it variously to validate the Igbo culture by interpreting and elucidating it artistically.

Various examples here from Achebe’s trilogy will reveal his central concern with translating the Igbo cosmos, validating such aspects of their material and non-material culture as language, beliefs, sartorial manners, arts and crafts, rituals, socio-political organization and culinary processes. Such validation rests essentially on Achebe’s efforts at recreating Igbo speech patterns and linguistic rhythms. Thus, the Igbo speaker who is also competent in English will promptly appreciate the enormous artistry involved in Achebe’s linguistic attempts and tamperings to authenticate the African culture.

It is here posited that the very heart of Achebe’s creative “translation”, lies in its overwhelming concern with, or attention to, linguistic realism. One crucial component of Achebe’s Africanization or nativization of English is seen in his injection of Igbo expressions into the narrative mainstream of his novelistic creations. Leaving a term or concept untranslated, Achebe then proceeds in delicate fashion, to weave in neat descriptions that leave the non-Igbo reader in no doubt regarding the exact meaning or context of the word. It is by means of such ingenuity that he validates such Igbo concepts as osu, obi, ikenga, agbala, ogbanje and efulefu.

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The vast cultural distance separating Igbo and English shows how Herculean it is to achieve equivalent terms as a rule. But Achebe the conscientious craftsman effectively depicts indigenous notions and experiences, such as the important Igbo cosmological concept of *chi*, a reverberation of which one encounters especially in *Things Fall Apart*. An understanding of such a thematic pivot considerably aids the reader’s appreciation of Achebe’s trilogy especially.

Achebe’s *modus operandi*, that is, the incorporation of indigenous words, underscores one crucial element of the linguistic texture of Igbo: ideophones. To announce the new moon, Ezeulu “beat his *ogene* GOME, GOME, GOME, GOME”\(^{17}\) while the Christians’ bell went, “GOME, GOME, GOME, GOME, GOME”.\(^{18}\) This ideophone actually reverberates throughout the novel, while Chapter 6 is also replete with ideophonic representations of the sound of the *ogene*, which Achebe accurately captures: “*Gome, gome, gome, boomed the hollow metal*”.\(^{18}\)

While modern technology, with its proliferation of social media, ensures that messages are beamed across the globe with tremendous speed and precision, Achebe validates Igbo culture, by showing one indigenous mode of disseminating information; the message is beaten on the *ikolo*, to be deciphered accordingly. Thus, “the Chief Priest sent word to the old man who beat the giant *ikolo* to summon the elders and *ndichie* to an urgent meeting at sunset”.\(^{19}\) The reader also encounters the comment: “Soon after the *ikolo* began to speak to the six villages”.\(^{20}\) Achebe’s language here attains utmost gracefulness, commanding crispness and credibility, for while modern man is *spoken to* by such phenomena as the fax, e-mail, or the Internet, the Igbo is pertinently depicted as transmitting, receiving and decoding information from the big drum, wooden or metal gong.

Obika, “was one of the handsomest young men in Umuaro”, and “his nose stood *gem*, like the note of a gong”.\(^{21}\) From Achebe’s artistic-cum-descriptive hints, even the non-local reader can correctly decode the ideophone *gem* as portraying a nose perfectly pointed and poised on a proud, princely face. Thus Achebe depicts, say, one dimension of the Igbo conception of beauty, possibly different from that of, say, a Western culture. Thus the Igbo ideophone *gem* is to present the description far more forcefully than such a “correct” English expression as, say, “an aquiline nose,” which “stood straight or erect” is capable of.

In pursuit of his cultural-nationalistic purpose, Achebe exploits another aspect of Igbo culture, namely ethnomethodology, as Akueke “asks” Adeze: “What am I telling you?”\(^{22}\) The Igbo love for discourse is generally acknowledged, but while we are not here concerned with the dynamics of Igbo turn-taking, the pragmatic implication of

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\(^{17}\) Achebe, *Arrow…*, p. 2.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 42.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 63.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 141.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., p. 40.

\(^{22}\) Ibidem.
the question is clear. Analysts well acknowledge that, “conversation involves turn-taking and that the end of one speaker’s turn and the beginning of the next’s frequently latch on to each other with almost perfect precision and split-second timing”.\textsuperscript{23} Since conversation constitutes a structured event, Akueke demonstrates one aspect of Igbo conversational behaviour: the use of questions as a turn-taking device. Her question represents a simple conversational strategy to switch the topic. With a keen eye for even Igbo cultural minutiae, Achebe does not favour such a standard English equivalent as \textit{You won’t believe this, Better believe this} or \textit{I have (some great) news for you.}

Whether Achebe is introducing an Igbo ideophone or other indigenous words, his consummate skill is apparent. His artistry ensures that such “foreign” words or concepts are infused into the narrative in a manner that leaves the non-Igbo reader in no doubt of what the context is exactly. Thus, Achebe’s inventive integration of hints on diverse cultural phenomena ensures that such information is not allowed to obtrude into the narrative mainstream, as extraneous, anthropological, or sociological data.

Apart from the \textit{Africanization} of English by such interspersion of Igbo words, Achebe also employs the apparently simple technique of transliteration. Discerning readers will find this particularly evident in his handling of idioms and proverbs drawn from the vast mines of Igbo oral literature. Ezeani, the chief priest of the earth goddess, reprimands Okonkwo for shattering the peace during the Week of Peace by displaying the traditional machismo and bravery of wife-beating: “Your wife was at fault, but even if you came into your obi and found her lover on top of her, you would still have committed a great evil to beat her”.\textsuperscript{24}

The portrayal here promptly reveals an accomplished craftsman at work; it is a highly measured, credibly refreshing, and aesthetically satisfying “translation”. While such standard expressions as \textit{going to bed with, making love to or sleeping with,} which are well dressed in the euphemistic accoutrements of polite English, have unlimited capacity for conveying the artist’s thought, Achebe deliberately repudiates them in favour of recreating his indigenous linguistic rhythms. Clearly, there is a conscious effort to validate Igbo idioms and speech by capturing their exact flavour or texture.

The \textit{Igboness, Africanness,} indeed ultimate un\textit{Englishness}, of \textit{being on top of someone} (a woman) is obvious. The alternative expressions given above, which are decently dressed and in the euphemistic accoutrements of polite or polished English, will certainly serve any artist’s objective. But more importantly, Achebe’s description here is so carefully crafted that the native speaker will grasp, even be enchanted by, the local idiom of sexual connexion, while the non-Igbo can simultaneously savour its delightful flavour. Thus, Achebe’s creative “translation” here displays a more exciting and stimulating countenance than, say, such authentic English equivalents

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 75.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Guy Cook, \textit{Discourse}, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 52.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Achebe, \textit{Arrow…}, p. 12.
\end{itemize}
of going to bed with, making love to, sleeping with, or committing adultery/fornication/immorality. Even to the greenest or most naive foreign reader, the whole idea of lying on top of one cannot be a question of playing mere games.

Achebe’s approach to the problem of depicting African experience in a non-African tongue is particularly instructive here. Igbo speech decorum demands that sexual and such “personal” matters as the genitalia, or bodily secretions be couched in euphemistic terms. But Achebe’s strategy here accurately reflects the unequivocal Igbo linguistic fact that elders may exercise their poetic immunity by downplaying such rules of decorum, employing instead, language that borders on the Rabelaisian, or on obscene humour. Achebe’s keen eye for realism ensures that such coarse humour or other “taboo” aspects of Igbo speech are not glossed over or “polished” in the novels.

Even Arrow of God alone provides ample illustration of this assertion. One of Ezeulu’s in-laws tells him, “We cannot say that your son did wrong to fight for his sister. What we do not understand, however, is why a man with a penis between his legs should be carried away from his house and village”. In fact, several portions of Arrow of God employ, Armah-fashion, the language of shit. On one occasion, Ezeulu declares in public: “If you go to war to avenge a man who passed shit on the head of his mother’s father, Ulu will not follow you to be soiled in the corruption”. On another, he fumes as follows: “Go back and tell Ezidemili to eat shit. Do you hear me? Tell Ezidemili that Ezeulu says he should go and fill his mouth with shit”. In similar fashion, Akukalia shouts, “Go back to your house, […] or I will make you eat shit”.

Later, he bursts out: “go back and tell Ezidemili that Ezeulu says he should go and fill his mouth with shit”. Nwaka taunts Ezeulu: “you passed the shit that is smelling; you should carry it away”. Such prominence of what approaches the language of shit provides further testimony of the great depth of Achebe’s stylistic arsenal. Of the same novel, Okoh declares: “of all the novels, Arrow of God particularly depicts traditional Igbo discourse with ultimate ebullience and Achebean sophistication”.

Characterization constitutes not only a crucial component of novelistic composition, but also, as we here show, a major domain in which Achebe’s artistry is evident. Achebe’s characters do not simply traverse or roam the vast Igbo cultural-cum-communal canvas; rather they are of profound conception, competently speaking the society’s typical rustic, original, down-to-earth language. Ezeulu, for example, is imposing and superbly convincing, “so rich,” in the words of Bamikunle, “it is almost

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26 Ibid., p. 27.
27 Ibid., p. 54.
28 Ibid., p. 24.
29 Ibidem.
30 Ibid., p. 144.
impossible to do an exhaustive analytical study [on him])." To say that Achebe creates convincing characters conveys a cliché, but perhaps his most outstanding is Ezeulu, who declares as follows: “Today the world is spoilt and there is no longer head or tail in anything that is done. But Ulu is not spoilt with it”.

While this constitutes a syntactically perfect piece, it raises some semantic problems: regarding collocation, for instance, “world” and “spoil” present us with two words whose co-occurrence can be considered clearly incongruous or impossible.

The idea here can be properly paraphrased by such standard, grammatically impeccable, even accomplished, forms as: It is a mad (or topsy-turvy) world, Everything is gone mad or There is neither rhyme nor reason to it. While the non-Igbo reader may not immediately conceive of the world as spoilt, the idea of uselessness, lawlessness, disorder, general laxity, even diverse abominations, which Achebe desires to convey by means of this Igbo idiom, will be understood by the reader when he thinks of head or tail, whether in literal or connotative terms. The idea simply recurs that there is now no order, no pattern, no discipline, while lawlessness, abomination, and things unheard of before have now tenaciously taken centre stage.

The discerning critic or keen reader promptly discovers here a clear fusion and blending of Achebe’s craft and his artistic aims. Indeed, the intention here could best have been conveyed by the notion that the world has run amok, gone berserk, haywire, or crazy. In the context of standard English, another writer may have conveyed the idea of there being no order, pattern, even rhyme or reason in things being done, but Achebe logically opts for the local but authentic of inwe isi m’odu (“having no longer head or tail”), which strikingly conveys, even to a foreigner, the idea of a topsy-turvy, deranged, meaningless, confused, confusing world.

Achebe’s idiom of the world “being spoilt”, or “having neither head nor tail,” to depict the confusion in contemporary society, is a particularly potent one and will not be lost on the indigenous. Still, Achebe proceeds to literally and rightly render the world as having no longer head or tail. Such combination by no means impedes meaning, as even a foreigner will adequately appreciate the concept here being conveyed, namely that Achebe’s simple traditional idiom of the world, “being spoilt”, “having neither head nor tail” [“meaning”, “sense”] to depict the highest degree of spoiltness, or the utter hopelessness and meaninglessness of contemporary society, of course, carries great impact.

Achebe causes the protagonist Okonkwo, to complain thus to his friend, Obierika, about his [Okonkwo’s] son, Nwoye:

“I am worried about Nwoye. A bowl of pounded yams can throw him in a wrestling match […] I can tell you, Obierika, that my children do not resemble me. Where are

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33 Chinua Achebe, Arrow…, p. 27.
the young suckers that will grow when the old banana tree dies? If Ezinma had been a boy I would have been happier. She has the right spirit”.  

This short text is not only artistically compact, but culturally dense, as it displays a profound profusion of “information” about the Igbo world. The imagery is authentic; the culture projected by a reference to its agricultural, even culinary-cum-recreational endeavours. Achebe authenticates the African culture by presenting aspects of it for the reader to appreciate: the Igbo sport of wrestling, the societal significance of yams (pounded yam is the Igbo staple food), the society’s patriarchal leanings, even attendant emphasis on male children. Such carefully worked in passages particularly point to what we argue is Achebe’s artistic motivation or overall design: to validate or authenticate the African world.

The homeliness of Achebe’s imagery here is indisputable; to pitch a man against food in a wrestling contest is as inventive as it is aesthetically satisfying. As if such luscious assault on verisimilitude is not enough, Achebe, the truly fastidious artist craftsman, provides a more devastatingly humorous scenario: the fufu actually thoroughly throwing the man. No matter its size or volume, fufu remains essentially a soft mass, so the picture here is of an insufferably indolent, effeminate, indeed womanish man. Achebe’s invention cannot be lost on an Igbo audience, since their society prizes strength highly, advocating the value of hard work and manliness, while abhorring laziness. This fact Achebe underscores in setting the scene in Things Fall Apart, making Okonkwo loathe Unoka, and harbour a pathological fear of any indication that he [Okonkwo] is weak or womanish, like members of the new sect. Of such obsessive dread for any semblance of failure, Nwodo asserts: “This is generally considered an Igbo common or national trait, a very intriguing phenomenon”.  

As an intellectual, Ezeulu is convinced about the superiority and thus, eventual victory, of the white man’s mission. In the following passage, he speaks to his son, Oduche, before setting him on the quest for the white man’s superior knowledge.

“‘The world is changing,’ he had told him. ‘I do not like it. But I am like the bird Eneke-nti-oba. When his friends asked him why he was always on the wing he replied: ‘Men of today have learnt to shoot without missing and so I have learnt to fly without perching.’ I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eye there. If there is nothing in it you will come back. But if there is something there you will bring home my share. The world is like a mask dancing. If you want to see it well you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white man today will be saying had we known tomorrow’”.  

Only a few, if any, Achebe scholars will disagree that he here attains the pinnacle of his consummate craftsmanship. The language here is, of course, English, but the

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34 Achebe, Things Fall Apart, p. 46.
36 Achebe, Arrow…, pp. 45–46.
very heart of the passage – its rhythm, tone, texture, and idiom – is unmistakably that of the Igbo oral traditions. Achebe convincingly and accurately captures Igbo orality: the very words put in Ezeulu’s mouth are not only original but also infused with utmost authenticity. The lucid compactness, delightful readability, and sophisticated simplicity of the text further demonstrate the profundity of Achebe’s artistic paraphernalia. The design of the text guarantees great appeal to the Igbo audience, while also displaying a corresponding capacity to communicate fully to the foreign.

The idiom (to) be my eye there may not qualify for the tag “standard English”, yet, it cannot be deemed as doing violence to English. But by means of such “deviation”, Achebe is concerned with capturing the exact manner in which an Igbo elder would express the idea of representing someone satisfactorily. Both idioms (being one’s eye and had I known) are as exciting and instructive as they are Nigerian. Achebe could have portrayed Ezeulu’s thought by, say, I want you to be my representative there and I don’t want to have any regrets tomorrow. But while such straightforward, unadorned rendition will convey Ezeulu’s thoughts adequately to his son, and be just as easily understood by a non-local audience, it lacks the power to capture the authentic Igbo speech atmosphere or setting, such as Achebe’s approach here achieves. For the master-craftsman Achebe, such version must be a bare and pale reflection of the traditional Igbo society’s penchant for a digressive, allusive and proverbial discourse style.

Achebe engages in a conscious effort to capture the traditional background; thus he puts in Ezeulu’s mouth to express his feelings, words that are original and imbued with maximum authenticity. The keen reader soon discovers that in this, as in other portrayals, Achebe recreates the pristine African society with great passion and consummate artistry. Not surprisingly, Lindfors makes what must now be considered a milestone or classic statement in African literature: “He [Achebe] is a careful and fastidious artist in full control of his art, a serious craftsman who disciplines himself not only to write regularly but to write well”[emphasis mine].

This translation carries even greater verisimilitude and appropriateness, particularly in the context of the traditional Igbo culture which thrives on communality, and thus sharing (say, of meat at meetings). If an elder is absent at such communal gatherings, his son or representative may be delegated to bring home the elder’s own share. Thus, it is not just the master storyteller-craftsman at work here. Indeed, we discover Achebe the nationalist, satirist, and social commentator engaging in a delicate creative task: the idiom here employed is particularly proper, depicting the well-known Nigerian context where, instead of preaching national unity, the different ethnic nationalities think primarily of grabbing their own share of the so-called national cake.

Many scholars and Africanists will acknowledge that African family life thrives on communality, but Achebe does not obscure its destructive dimensions. Indeed, his portrayal of one of such aspects, namely polygamy, is couched in characteristic

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37 Lindfors, ‘The Palm Oil…’, p. 3.
Igbo linguistic fashion, as he makes a co-wife say of another: “How could she [her co-wife] see me? I am not big enough for her to see”.38 As anyone versed in both languages will appreciate, Achebe’s not big enough to be seen idiom is distinctly Igbo and presents the context far more forcefully than if Akueke were to declare: “I am not important” or “Am I not to be reckoned with?”

Even more appetizing is Adaeze’s idiom of an estranged couple, “suddenly become[ing] palm oil and salt again”. Similarly, the native Igbo speaker will savour Achebe’s authentic presentation of the characteristic Igbo tone of boldness and frankness, even finality, in the following, as Ofoka tells Ezuelu: “If you do not like what I have said you may send me a message not to come to your house again”.39 The same traditional tone of definiteness, frankness and finality is evident in Ezeulu’s address to his in-laws:

“Akueke will return but not today. She will need a little time to get ready. Today is Oye; she will come back to you on the Oye after the next. When she comes, treat her well. It is not bravery for a man to beat his wife. I know a man and his wife must quarrel; there is no abomination in that. Even brothers and sisters from the same womb do disagree; how much more strangers. No, you may quarrel, but let it not end in fighting. I shall say no more at present”.40

The portrayal here is exquisitely realistic; culture requires elders to speak truthfully, even in frank and forthright fashion. The conversation brims with local colour regarding Achebe’s mode of portraying the time. The deviation is clear; Achebe the craftsman clearly jettisons the more usual expression of, say, “next week,” in favour of the indigenous Igbo market week (on the Oye after the next). The L1 speaker will acknowledge Achebe’s success in capturing the Igbo manner of rendering such thoughts, while any discerning foreigner who has witnessed an Igbo village-square or clan meeting, will recognize the accurate delineation of the Igbo linguistic cosmos and the artistry involved in Achebe’s Igbonization and Africanization of English.

Nor does Achebe’s great ear for his native rhythms, or his concern with Africanizing English find expression only in the rural novels. Indeed, he is no less successful in creating urban characters still quite in touch with their linguistic roots, and whose utterances are essentially a distillation of traditional Igbo speech. To quote Okoh:

“The Umuofia community in Lagos, of course, does not boast the same rural ambience as our other two novels [Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God], since the characters are not only city dwellers, but also Westernised in several aspects. Still, No Longer at Ease demonstrates the same over-riding concern with recreating Igbo phenomena and society, even the compelling linguistic subtleties of its specialised speech”.41

38 Achebe, Arrow…, p. 73.
39 Ibid., p. 188.
40 Ibid., p. 6.
In the city novels, then, Achebe also meticulously manipulates local idioms. Nor is such conscious, concerted tinkering with his city characters’ traditional speech any less successful.

In the city novels, in fact, some of Achebe’s “translations” reflect not just the Igbo, but also the general Nigerian linguistic culture. Though well Westernised, Obi is still at home with the idioms of his native culture. “And if this is what you meet about…, you may cut off my two legs if you ever find them here again”, he declares on storming out of a UPU meeting, rather than, say, “I shall never come to your meetings again!” It is to be stressed again that Achebe’s overall artistic objective influences his preference for “cutting off one’s legs,” an expression a native Igbo speaker must judge far more forceful for underlining one’s total or unyielding resolve. The UPU president addresses Obi: “But there are two words I should like to drop before you. You are very young, a child of yesterday. You know book. But book stands by itself and experience stands by itself”.

Two words, a child of yesterday, and to know book are all heavily Igbo-flavoured expressions. Still, the comment, “We must not drink because we see our neighbours drink or run after women because our thing stands up”, as well as “Do you know what medicine that osu woman may have put in his soup to turn his eyes and ears away from his people?” cannot fail to be quietly savoured by Igbo speakers. Such expressions as charm him, cast a spell on him, hypnotise him are clearly standard English, but Achebe’s concern with interpreting Igbo culture, and exposing especially its distinctive discoursal style, dictates the more picturesque and realistic to turn his eyes and ears away from his people.

The following conversation also takes place at a UPU meeting:

‘Have they given you a job yet?’
‘Not yet, I am attending an interview on Monday.’
‘Of course, those of you who know book will not have any difficulty… otherwise I would have suggested seeing some of the men beforehand.’
‘It would not be necessary,’ said the President, ‘since they would be mostly white men.’
‘You think white men don’t eat bribe? Come to our department. They eat more than black men nowadays’.

Achebe engages in an adroit manipulation of English, actually borrowing but, more importantly, artistically reworking, ideas from Nigerian Pidgin English. The president could well have said, “You are well educated, so there should be no problems,” but Achebe “translates” this idea as to know book. In employing to know book, for the idea of being well educated, Achebe simply stops short of using the local Pidgin term, bukurum (“advanced education,” “bookish,” “university level”).

42 Achebe, No Longer…, p. 75.
43 Ibid., p. 74.
44 Ibid., p. 75.
46 Ibid., pp. 29–30.
Of course, the expression to eat bribe is grossly ‘unEnglish’. But Achebe is not just concerned with transliteration, but with the variety called Nigerian English. The idiom to eat (chop) bribe is appropriately chosen, given the Nigerian penchant for chopping, especially government funds. Such booty is called awufu or fosa (corrupt slang for FOC = “free of charge”). In local Nigerian parlance, such chopping or grabbing is legitimised, even defended as one’s divine right to the so-called national cake. Conventional or “perfect” English can perfectly convey the idea here by such an expression as Even white men do take (or accept) bribes these days, but Achebe favours a reworking of the Pidgin phrase, to chop money, as well as “seeing some of the men beforehand,” which is also adapted from Nigerian English and has nothing to do with vision. In the Nigerian context, it indicates offering a bribe, before the interview, to influence the panellists and thus boost one’s chances.

The final products of Achebe’s tinkering with the language cannot, strictly speaking, be called standard English, nor are they conversely quaint. But while his renditions remain flagrantly “unEnglish,” no legitimate charge of doing violence to the language can be brought against him. In his own words: “The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use”.47

Even in its apparent simplicity, Achebe’s prose displays remarkable complexity, subtlety and suppleness. In moving from source to target language, Achebe convincingly captures in English, the grammatical, semantic, and cultural countenance of Igbo. In his intrepid experimentation with, and direct domestication of, the English language, Achebe hardly sings in a minor key; his translations and stylistic ensemble always rise to concert pitch. It is a clear testimony to Achebe’s compelling artistry, indeed his, “extreme restraint in the use of language”48 that while such manoeuvres or extraordinary liberties taken with indigenous Igbo speech are not couched in conventional English, even the die-hard critic-cum-purist of the language cannot deny their communicability and vibrancy. There is today a proliferation of Englishes world-wide, and Achebe further contributes to it by his successful surgery on the language. By his linguistic efforts in general and Igbonization in particular, he also contributes in no mean terms to greater global understanding of the Igbo, of Nigeria, and the entire African continent.

All the examples here reveal the distinctive creative energies of a competent craftsman, appropriately harnessed. Achebe’s skilful manipulation of indigenous idioms constitutes the pivot of his powerful portrayal of the Igbo world and sensibility. Rao comments as follows: “The use of idioms lends Achebe’s language and style a native flavour and force. Besides giving us a close and convincing picture of a society in transition, this technique helps his characters sound natural while speaking an alien tongue”.49 Achebe’s particular manipulation of English, Okoh comments as follows:

47 Achebe, Morning Yet…, p. 61.
“such adaptations are highly realistic, presenting an accurate picture of Igbo verbal behaviour. Achebe is a foremost cultural nationalist, with a profoundly intimate knowledge of Igbo culture. Such an asset is successfully fused with his fictional-cum-narrative accoutrements, to produce a thoroughly and veritably valid picture of the indigenous Igbo speech habitat”.

Any discussion of Achebe’s use of language would be as incomplete as it is irrelevant, if it lacked at least some reference to his inimitable use of proverbs, “that Achebean maxim about which more ink has literally been spilt than on several of his utterances put together; Among the Igbo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten”. Achebe employs proverbs for diverse literary, stylistic or structural purposes, as well as to reflect their overwhelming importance in Igbo society. As Okoh points out, “Achebe’s use of fictional dialogue not only bears an unmistakable imprint of authenticity, but also effectively captures the texture and verbal flavour of Igbo speech”.

A sample of Igbo proverbs, which can actually be seen as a true trademark of Achebe, would here suffice:

“The man who brings ant-ridden faggots into his hut should not grumble when lizards begin to pay him a visit.

The world is like a Mask dancing. If you want to see it well, you do not stand in one place.

A person who has not secured a place on the floor should not begin to look for a mat.

If all snakes lived together in one place, who would approach them?

If a child washed his hands he could eat with elders.

I cannot live on the bank of a river and wash my hands with spittle”.

Conclusion

The importance of the language question in African literature can be gauged by the considerable ink and energy that people have dissipated on it. The question of how indigenous African experience may be conveyed in a non-African language constitutes a major problem for the writer, but as this article has demonstrated, Achebe successfully and creatively rises to the enormous challenges of such cross-cultural communication. The focus has been on Achebe’s highly refined recreation

51 Ibid., p. 243.
52 Ibid., p. 243.
53 Achebe, Arrow…, p. 163.
54 Ibid., p. 55.
55 Achebe, No Longer…, p. 60.
56 Ibid., p. 81.
57 Achebe, Things Fall Apart…, p. 6.
58 Ibid., p. 148.
of the multifaceted mask of Igbo discourse, even the society’s sheer love for words. Achebe’s thorough understanding of his indigenous Igbo culture blends eloquently with his remarkable linguistic skills in English and the result is a delightful manipulation of the latter, the medium of his creative endeavours.

Achebe’s portrayal of Igbo linguistic experience gracefully transcends mere transposition of African speech patterns into an \( L_2 \). The examples here typify his artistic consciousness, consummate craftsmanship and sheer sensitivity to language, all of which engender a highly realistic portrayal of Igbo society. The examples reveal an accomplished writer at work, not only artistically injecting the flavour of indigenous speech, but also transferring its tempo and rhythms into English. Achebe’s artistic endeavours to depict the Igbo world in realistic fashion, as well as his exhilarating manipulation of indigenous idioms and imagery have been shown here.

The impact on the native speaker of Achebe’s linguistic efforts to evoke the real Igbo world has been stressed. His successful tinkering with the communal language he assigns the characters means that the final product is recognisably English, apart from its accessibility to even a literate Igbo audience. It is a mark of Achebe’s excellent craftsmanship that foreign eyebrows are not necessarily raised at the apparent ‘unEnglishness’ of his “translations,” coinages and linguistic manoeuvres. His ingenious integration of cultural information is equally successful, indeed, well guaranteed to delight the foreign audience, without boring the local or Igbo.

While fiction is Achebe’s medium for portrayal of the African past, it is sufficiently realistic and convincing. As Okoh underlines: Achebe’s “compelling artistry in general, and dialogic re-enactment or reconstruction of oral communication in particular, successfully capture the essence of Igbo speech or linguistic behaviour”.\(^{59}\) Any reader competent in both Igbo and English will concede that Achebe subtly and seemingly effortlessly traverses the treacherous terrain of intricate expression in both languages. The stanchion of his success lies in a deft manipulation and fusion of the resources of both tongues.

Achebe’s “translations” exude a highly sophisticated air, while his imprint of originality is undeniable. His language displays a simplicity and poise that is not only elusive, but simultaneously brightens the horizons of World ‘Englishes’. The verdict here on Achebe’s linguistic achievement is not based on an assessment of, say, his knowledge of impeccable English or the kind which the native speaker considers correct or standard. Rather, the assessment of his linguistic dexterity is based on the yardstick of the impression which such polished translation makes on the knowledgeable native speaker or audience.

In all the novels, Achebe engages in a deliberate domestication and conscious refashioning of the English language as he pursues his artistic-cum-nationalistic objectives, which are appropriately propelled by the fundamental theme. Indisputably, his creative “translation” does no violence to English: it is one that both the Igbo \( L_1 \) speaker and native English speaker will understand and sufficiently savour. Thus,

\(^{59}\) Okoh, ‘Chinua Achebe and Two Faces…’, p. 108.
Achebe successfully validates Igbo/African realities by his linguistic manoeuvres and ingenious overstepping of the boundaries of standard English.

This article has shown that Africa’s foremost novelist is a formidable linguistic innovator who has opened new vistas and extended the frontiers of the English language. By means of his creative *domestication* or artistic reworking of Igbo vernacular speech, Achebe succeeds in breathing fresh life into conventional English, imbuing it with a new propensity for conveying *non-English* concepts and ideas. Inevitably, the present utter internationalization of English has produced a proliferation of ‘*Englishes*’. In all, then, Achebe has fashioned a brand of English, one which can distinctively be labelled *Achebean*, while simultaneously exuding a universal appeal. As if to illustrate the benefits of language contact, Achebe’s work is clearly characterized by an exhilarating *Englishization* of Igbo and an even more exciting *Igbonization* of English.
Justice, Fairness and the Quest for an Egalitarian Society in Africa: A Reading of Bukar Usman’s Select Tales in Taskar Tatsuniyoyi: Littafi na Daya Zuwa na Goma Sha Hudu [A Compendium of Hausa Tales Book One to Fourteen]¹

Abstract

The vehicle of folklores has been a tool for social justice. This paper explores the potency of folklore in mitigating societal inequality and other oppressive tendencies. It canvasses the need for the re-reading of Hausa folktales because that would deepen justice, fairness, equity and equality in society. The paper stresses that tales such as the ones in Bukar Usman’s compendium of Hausa tales, Taskar Tatsuniyoyi: Littafi na Daya Zuwa na Goma Sha Hudu, could be sunbeams against injustice. The paper concludes that the (re)interpretation of folktales could be a rudder for the Ark of justice to safely navigate violent waves.

Introduction

One of the major preoccupations of folktales, for centuries, has been the construction of an ideal society, in which, as Plato would say, “Justice reigned supreme”. Man’s highest premium could be rightly said to be placed not on anything else but on building a society that is just, fair and peaceful. Khalid Imam asserts that, “Justice is the rain every society needs to survive, and its absence tames peace and prosperity like prisoners sentenced to life”.² In other words, the absence of justice waters injustice and a society where the weed of injustice invades unhindered will certainly be consumed in the wild fire of chaos and retrogression. Hence the quest for a just society is motivated by human’s inescapable desire to naturally avoid those things that are not only deleterious but deprive the society of peace and prosperity. And sadly, in a community where injustice reigns supreme, the fundamental rights of people are nothing but eagles with clipped pinions.


² Excerpt from Khalid Imam’s forthcoming book of aphorisms entitled Heart of Wit. Also see Imam’s Facebook wall, 13 June 2015.
It is evident that man, being a social animal, lives in a commune of people. And the community mankind inhabits was, still is and will always be chaotic, insecure, oppressive, if not war-ravaged, with the complete erosion of an established social justice, freedom and fairness. Folktales, as this paper would debate, are one of the many tools human beings used and have been using to shape the fortune of their society – for the society to be secured, to be free and to be just to all. As the earliest form of arts, the human inhabitants of planet Earth, adopted and are still using folktales to set out acceptable, viable and pragmatic standards of living that are in conformity with their unique but diverse cultures. It is historically evident that human societies exist and prosper using the rich heritage of folktales as a whetstone. Dr. Bukar Usman, in his book, Folklore and History: The Twin River of World Heritage corroborates, thus:

“A comparative study of folklces in the Babur-Bura community of North-Eastern Nigeria and literature on folklces in other countries including the U.S., Jamaica, China and Sri Lanka reveals that folklore is a worldwide oral tradition deeply rooted in history. Current studies of folklore as a subject styled as orature have shown the significance of folklore as the earliest school of a child in many communities in the olden days”.3

Therefore, a comparative study of the folktales of different cultures and the re-reading of many Hausa folktales is very relevant. It is pertinent for researchers interested in appreciating the significance of justice and fairness, in curving an ideal society to, as a matter of urgency, not only scratch the surface while focusing attention on folklore, but to go deep beyond its superficial layers. For, deep down its initial layers, are themes not only of morality and moralizing, but also of shaping humans to have impeccable manners in the enclave in which they live. The topicality of folkloric themes, as one might discover, borders on other thematic preoccupations such as: enthronement and entrenchment of justice, fairness, and equity and equality before the law, amongst others. As the paper would soon prove, using selected tales collated in Bukar Usman’s compendium of Hausa tales, Taskar Tatsuniyoyi: Lattafi na Daya Zuwa na Goma Sha Hudu, Hausa tales could still serve as beams against the darkness of injustice despite the threats of modernity and technological advancement the world is witnessing today. Meanwhile, it is the writer’s opinion that in theorizing the discourse of social justice, the re-reading of some of the stories in Bukar Usman’s Taskar Tatsuniyoyi: Lattafi na Daya Zuwa na Goma Sha Hudu is quite appropriate. It is indeed relevant especially if one considers the lessons taught in stories such as the ones in “Marainiya” (‘The Orphan-girl-child’) on pages 6, 7 & 8; “Mugwuar Kishiya” – the stories of a wicked step-mother, 1, 2, 3 & 4; the tale of “Gwaidayara” (pp. 266–273); the story “Dan Agwai da kura” (‘Dan Agwai and Hyena’) on pages 210–313; and so on.

Why folktales matter

Albert Helser cited in Bukar Usman⁴ remarks that, “a sincere attempt to understand native culture is the only fair and effective approach to the native mind.” And the key to unlock the doors of “native culture” or the “native mind”⁵ as Helser would suggest, is embedded in the informal school the Hausas called tatsuniya. Neil Skinner⁶ believes tatsuniya, literally meaning folktales, is one of the earliest traditions of oral narratives in the Hausa land. He also stresses that tales, like oral poetry, are one of the oldest categories of Hausa verbal art tradition. Ahmed cited in Imam,⁷ defines “Hausa tales as a traditional form of communication and entertainment, which are usually performed orally, and in most cases, the performance is mostly conducted by elderly women at night, to captivate the rapt attention of the children listening”.

Many scholars agreed that the narration of Hausa tales is not exclusively the preoccupation of aged, female narrators alone. Khalid Imam points out that the likes of the late Abdullahi Sani Makarantar Lungu were the ones who popularised the performance of Hausa tales on the radio in Kano, with his popular Radio Kano children’s programme: Ta Zo Mu Ji Ta, with other folktales experts such as Abdu Mairiga (an acclaimed professional public tale performer), one among many other male adult narrators. Apart from the female and male adult narrators of tales, it is equally very common to see young girls and boys entertaining their peers with thrilling and humorous tales. The skilful young or teenaged narrators share most of their folkloric stories to their peers at home before retiring to bed, or at the schools and village squares where they play.

It is very rare in Hausa communities, to use village squares as a place for tatsuniya, the few conducted there are usually done before or after the exhaustive hours of performing the traditional, teenage games such as langa, for boys, or ‘yargalagala, for girls. Duve Nakolisa’s observation that, “Tales [serve] as the earliest literature of life’s primary claims to meaning” come to the fore if one critically places the role tales play in instilling morals into children.⁸

This brings us to the question: Why do folktales matter? Fundamentally, folktales really matter, if Nelson Mandela’s recollections aptly captured by Bukar Usmam, in My Literary Journey, are anything to go by. The fact hat the invaluable moral lessons Mandela learnt from listening to folktales as a child, helped in shaping his philosophy of life, is beyond any dispute. These valuable lessons of philosophy took place many

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⁴ Ibid., p. 18.
⁵ What Albert Helser seems to exert here is that folklore aids in the proper understanding of the native culture of all societies since it serves as not only the heart or whetstone of the natives, but as their mirror to rest of the world.
⁸ Like Nelson Mandela, what Duve Nakolisa seems to stress is that the folktale is the first school a child attends in most, if not all, African societies. See: Duve Nakolisa, 10 Qualities of a Highly Successful People, Abuja: Purposewise Publishing Group, 2006, p. ii.
years before Mandela’s formal contact with Western education, which in his view, emphasised individualism, rather than the needed collective effort Africans were known for. Mandela’s mind (based on the account below) could rightly be said to have been shaped early on in the school called folktales. Hear the sage’s nostalgic recollections, thus:

“My mother and sometimes my aunt [tell] us stories, legends, myths and fables […] as I look back to those days, [where] we worked and played together in groups […] I am inclined to believe that those were the experiences that introduced me, at an early age, to the ideas of collective effort”.  

Since life, be it at individual, family or communal levels, is targeted towards making sense and deriving meaning from it, the meaning or meaningfulness of life could best be determined in one’s efforts to live where justice reigns, and to live upholding the sacred ideals of fairness in ensuring the sweet fruits of justice are shared to others. The late Nelson Mandela, unarguably the most respected African statesman ever, was one person that knew what the grammar of oppression and injustice was in its truest sense, having experienced its full might and brute force. Of course Mandela had the misfortune of tasting first hand, the bitterness of oppression and injustice. Nelson Mandela, a sage and man of wisdom, was once quoted as saying: “For to be free, is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others”.

The principle of justice and ideals of fairness demands one to, as Madiba stresses above, appreciate the fact that the true meaning of being free lays in one’s readiness to always strive in the promotion of just causes – causes that lead to the kingdom where justice and freedom are established by all, “in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others”. In many Hausa tales such as “Marainiya”, one could see the sacrifice made by “Marainiya” simply to “respect and enhance the freedom” of the bedridden prince to live and to love what his heart desires. To achieve that, she had to subject herself to the dangers of passing through the many valleys of death on her way to the island of “tsutsotsi masu cin mutum” (‘worms that feed on human flesh’). And she was lucky to survive all the monsters she encountered, and her mission was successful as she saved the precious life of the about-to-die prince. This, to a large extent, goes on to stress that one sure way of enjoying the comforting shade that is provided by the tree of justice, is to readily make the necessary sacrifice to plant and nurture the tree just like the worthy sacrifice made by the protagonist marainiya in wrestling the bedridden prince from the jaws of death, and if this fact is appreciated thanks to Plato.

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10 A Hausa word for any orphan-girl. For more refer to the eponymous tale of “Marainiya” which is used as the title of a series of one of Bukar Usman’s many Hausa folktales from the 2013 anthology series, pp. 6–8.
In the spirit of justice ‘Yar Bora (who was daily molested by her step-mother) ought to have been treated fairly like the privileged ‘Yar Mowa, as Bhandari of J.N.V. University seems to stress in his article ‘Plato’s Concept of Justice: An Analysis’. Bhandari also restates that: “Plato, [didn’t only] offer a very important place to the idea of justice in his philosophy, [but he also]... used the Greek word Dikaisyne for justice”. In light of this, one could say that Plato deliberately used the Greek word Dikaisyne which comes very near to the word ‘morality’ or ‘righteousness’ to drive his point home that morality is the soul of any justice. In the same vein one could submit, as Plato did, that it is always proper to include within it [justice], “the whole duty of man and the whole field of the individual’s conduct in so far as it affects others.” In addition, Plato contends that:

“Heads is the quality of soul, in virtue of which men set aside the irrational desire to taste every pleasure and to get a selfish satisfaction out of every object and accommodate themselves to the discharge of a single function for the general benefit [of all]”.

Therefore, from the foregoing argument, one would be right to assert that the ruins visiting human societies, as the ones witnessed in Athens that caused the death of Socrates and the rot of Plato’s days was, and could be said to be, a resultant effect of the misunderstanding shown by early scholars on what the term justice means in its broadest sense. It is true that in justice, Plato saw the only remedy of saving a society from decay and ruin. Justice, therefore, is the fundamental principle upon which a well-ordered society stands and the absence of it, with all its ramifications, opens wide the gates for rot and decay (like the rot Nigeria witnessed during the hellish decades of military misrule) to set foot in society. Many Hausa tales, without doubt, were narrated to the children to shape their minds in order to appreciate the importance of justice and its multifaceted roles to the survival of a society, and to the prosperity of the individuals living within such a society.

Justice should be seen beyond the simplistic use of force. For justice as Plato argues is that part of human virtue which needs no sword to be upheld and respected as Mandela, Gandhi and Malam Aminu Kano exemplified and canvassed in their critical interventions. To further argue, Plato also postulates that justice could seen as:

“a part of human virtue and the bond, which, joins man together, in society. It is the identical quality that makes good and social. Justice is an order and duty of the parts of the soul; it is to the soul as health is to the body. That justice is not mere strength, but it is a harmonious strength. Justice is not the right of the stronger but the effective harmony of the whole. All moral conceptions revolve about the good of the whole-individual as well as social”.

12 Ibidem.
13 As Plato stressed here the likes of Ghandi, Mandela and Animu Kano, as noted in this paper, equally identified justice as the only soul of the human society.
Leadership as a bridge for the entrenchment of justice and fairness

In many Hausa tales, leadership always occupies centre stage, be it in stories whose characters are humans, animals or plants; or in stories where all mutually coexist. It is very common to have a king, queen, chief, judge, father or husband among the human characters, all performing one basic role of leadership. The lion, the spider, the fox and so on were all tasked to perform similar roles to the human characters in tales strictly dominated by animal characters or in those tales where both human and animal characters mutually co-exist.

Leadership has never been static but dynamic. Its dynamism helps in making it remain not only relevant, but functional, if not effective. According to Alan Keith of Genentech cited by Farakwai, “Leadership [is] ultimately about creating a way for the people to contribute in making something extraordinary happen”. Establishing just leadership ordinarily shouldn’t have been regarded as something extraordinary, but the complex nature of man makes almost everything about leadership extraordinary. A community of humans or a nation bereft of a sound and just leadership that would insist on not shielding justice, freedom and fairness from rape and abuse, is doomed.

In Sahih Muslim Hadith number 846, the noblest of men, Prophet Muhammad says: “The worst of guardians is a cruel ruler. Beware of becoming one of them”. From the foregoing discourse, what one should learn from this authentic and prophetic teaching is that a leader is a guardian of his people and for justice to be established in any society, leadership plays very crucial role. To further support the central place leadership occupies in man’s quest to inhabit an ideal society where justice and fairness saturate its ambience, one can’t fail in pointing out that leadership, whether good or bad, is still a mirror upon which a society is seen, treated and respected by others and by the conscious members living within it. Hence one would be prompted to suppose: “What is responsible for the negative state of world affairs despite all the systems of control in place?”

In an answer to the above question, Alhaji Dr. Yusuf Maitama Sule, the revered and oratorical Dan Masani of Kano would readily say: “If a Muslim congregational prayer spoils, it is the Imam (the leader) leading it that spoilt it”. And in similar vein, Sheik Abdullahi Danfodio cited in Modibbo Ibrahim Yakubun Farakwai’s book, Leadership in Islam states, “A kingdom (the world) can endure with unbelief but it cannot endure with injustice”. Therefore, man’s desire to unchain himself from the
vicious cycle of oppression, which man has been entangled in since Adam, could only be achieved with a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the cycle of oppression and all its related forms. The drive by man, to fully understand what injustice or oppression is or is not could best be seen in quite a number of Hausa folktales, folktales whose major concern is the enthronement of justice and fairness. Such tales include, but are not limited to the tales of “Wani Sarki da Matansa” (pp. 10–12), “Talipaku da Kurciya”, (pp. 120–122) “‘Yan Mata Masu Kamun Kifi” (pp. 38–41), etc. In one way or another, all the aforementioned tales and many others stress the centrality of leadership as it relates to the idea of entrenchment of justice and fairness in society. A good example of this is the popular tale “Na Goma”, a captivating story in which, a father who was blessed with ten sons swiftly opted to establish justice and fairness among his children whom he suspected of stealing. Instead of throwing the stone of blame on all of them, he wisely invited them to join him at the river bank and swear with the river goddess that none of them were culpable in the disappearance of his missing bird. What the tale “Na Goma” puts to the fore is not only the importance of leadership in ensuring a just and egalitarian society, but that fairness demands a leader, as God aptly stated in *The Holy Quran*: Surah 17, verse 24: “To be kind and merciful to his followers…”. And still in that same verse, God commands the Prophet, who is but a mercy to the world that, “Out of kindness lower to them (mankind) the wind of humanity”. Meaning a just and fair leader is but a source of salvation to his people.

From the ample examples referred to in some of the aforementioned Hausa tales of Dr. Bukar Usman, this paper proves that Hausa tales provide a rich reservoir of materials, which if well interpreted and appreciated, could serve as a solid bridge leading human society to achieve egalitarianism where justice and fairness are supreme.

**The art of the folktale as a tool for social justice**

Camara Laye’s *The African Child* and Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and many other fictional and nonfictional works boldly canvass the desirability of fairness and justice as building blocks for an egalitarian society. In particular reference to these two giant African writers, Achebe and Laye laced their works, with graphic pictures of how injustice and other forms of oppression could best be confronted and tamed. Using examples of potent African values to promote social justice, Laye and Achebe, in a similar vein to the popular Hausa tales of *Gizo*, the witty spider, shared thrilling stories to the world, a world that was once deceived to believe Africa had no civilization. In a free, just and egalitarian society, the lives of both humans and animals are held as sacrosanct.

Unlike Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* both Laye and Achebe are of the view that African societies seek to uphold justice and fairness not just among humans but even to animals. For instance in *The African Child*, the protagonist Laye, was sternly

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warned by his mother: “My son, this one (black snake) must not be killed… is your father’s guiding spirit”.21 Camara Laye’s mother here is not only teaching her child not to kill the serpent, but also the morals of establishing justice and fairness to all including animals as one would witness in the tale “Talipaku da Kurciya” (“Talipaku and the Dove”). Driven by the sense of fairness, Talipaku’s life was spared against all odds. Yes a snake is dangerous, but going by the lesson (in Camara Laye’s autobiographical story) Laye’s mother taught him, the snake should be killed only in self-defence. To further support her point, she went on to caution the protagonist Laye that the particular snake was his “father’s guiding spirit” and this goes on to demonstrate that Laye’s family were enjoying the protection and care of that friendly snake. The point to note here is: if social justice is profoundly rooted in society, even sworn enemies, such as man and snake, could be the best of friends and serve as shields to one another. These mutually coexisting opposites are seen in many a Hausa tale.

The atrocious laws and practices that existed (and are still existing in some parts of Africa) were denounced and challenged in Chinua Achebe’s Things Fall Apart. The strong warning and advice sounded out to Okonkwo on the sad but crude murder of a well-mannered, child-slave called Ikemefuna is an example of a miscarriage of justice accepted by one of the barbarous African traditional practices, which was publically denounced by Achebe by way of making the rebellious Okonkwo pay for his crime. The protagonist Okonkwo, who was entrusted with the care of the boy before his innocent blood was shed, was sternly warned not to have a hand in the murder of “that boy (Ikemefuna) who called you father”.22 That warning sounded to Okonkwo was a strong voice concerned with the promotion of social justice in society. The tale “Dogarawa Uku” (“The Three Royal Guards”) tells a story similar to that of Ikemefuna. The tale of ‘The Three Royal Guards’ concerns guards entrusted by the king to take care of his poultry, but their betrayal of his trust is a didactic tale that cautions against haste in passing judgement so as to avoid any miscarriage of justice. The fate that befell Ikemefuna who lost his life due to a miscarriage of justice is by no means vastly different from the one of Gidado, a poor man who was killed on the basis of the false evidence of Dan Funali against him.23

Folktales and literature: Blocks for building an egalitarian society

Imam and Shuaibu, in their co-authored collection of short stories, A Clan of Madmen24, not only decry lawlessness and all forms of human oppressions, but explicitly maintain that it is only the law and through its vigilant eyes one would be saved from drowning in a sea of corruption and insanity. Put differently, the society

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21 This singular exemplary action of Camara Laye’s mother is a justifiable proof that Africans have an age long civilised tradition of extending the olive branch of fairness and justice not only to fellow human and domestic animals, but also to wild species like snakes. See: Laye, The African…, pp. 16–21.

22 Achebe, Things Fall…., pp. 40–43.


24 Khalid Imam and Ibrahim Shuaibu, A Clan of Madmen, 2013.
one lives in is but *A Clan of Madmen* if justice and fairness were not allowed to reign supreme. Lawlessness always paves the way for injustice to set in; and injustice, in all its ramifications, if not controlled, usually hampers man’s quest to live in a free, just and egalitarian society. From Plato to Usmanu ibn Fodio; from Achebe or Ngugi down to Auwalu Yusufu Hamza, man, for justifiable reasons, has always yearned for justice, despite the seemingly inseparable bond and romance with injustice and other oppressive tendencies.

A comparison could be made here about how justice is ensued in settling dispute by leadership in “The Forbidden Fruit” where Na Goma was drowned in a river as a punishment for stealing his father’s birds, while in *A Day and a Half* Dauda resisted Big Boy’s attempt to rob him. And the Ward Head of Tudun Nema who eventually settled the dispute between Dauda and Big Boy, in the end ensured that Big Boy paid for his wrongs as well as realizing that what he did was evil and therefore he made a promise of changing to a better person.

The boy Dauda defied all the life-threats from the bullying Big Boss, simply because of his firm belief that Big Boss has no right claiming what is not his, and to his delight he was finally vindicated when justice smiled at him, leaving the Big Boss with a wounded ear and the shame of defeat to swallow. Dauda’s refusal to submit to Big Boss’s injustice demonstrates that each individual, including the weakest member of society, has a role to play in ensuring justice. Na Goma’s father in “The Forbidden Fruit” was very conscious in avoiding anything that could lead to a situation where the innocent amongst his ten sons was unfairly treated hence he asks each of them to take an oath, while in *A Day and a Half* Dauda’s mother Talele stands firmly against all threats to her life to defend her weak son. In addition to these two stories there are several other tales whose protagonists undergo similar ordeals to Na Goma or Dauda.

Again in *A Day and a Half*, unlike Achebe’s Okonkwo, a male protagonist opted to pay a supreme price for fighting injustice, domination and oppression. In Auwalu Yusufu Hamza’s aforesaid new novel, the fight against injustice was championed by the females. A defiant, fearless and strong-willed female character, Hajiya Fati, serves as a voice to the voiceless. The outspoken Hajiya Fati, at the risk of her personal wellbeing, continues to serve as a bulwark to the poor Talele, a woman whose long-life dreams were almost shattered. Commenting on *A Day and a Half*, Richard Ali believes that, “Talele comes face-to-face with desperation and despair”. Talele’s pains were excruciating due to the hostile pressure she suffered at the hands of her nagging, gossipy and jealous, if not quarrelsome, sisters-in-law. If it was not for Hajiya Fati’s courageous defence of the poor Talele from the assaults and daily insults of the likes of the money-mongering Rabi mai Adashi, her *Casanova* cousin Iro, and Mairo and his jealous wife, Talele’s life would have ended up as nothing but big problem. It is worth noting that Iro is Talele’s wicked cousin and a desperate suitor who was ready to do anything to woo Talele into his harem, since Boka, the chief priest, warned him that his insidious desire to get rich would only come to

fruition after marrying Talele). It compares Talele’s cousin with a flirting brother who wanted to force his sister to become his wife in the tale “Yarinya Kyakkyawa Da Yayanta”. In addition to “Yarinya Kyakkyawa Da Yayanta”, there are many tales whose protagonists face similar ordeals as Talele. A good case in point could be seen in “Jarumin Sarki” (“A Brave King”). In Kammalallen Sharhin Littatta’fan Taskar Tatsuniyoyi, Salisu Ahmed Yakasai points out that the tale ‘A Brave King’ tells a story of oppression and persecution meted out against the wife of a much travelled and brave king, whose newly wedded bride Takitse was maltreated by her co-wives. Takitse and Talele could be said to have shared a similar fate, but both were rescued from the ditch of injustice not just by the fortunes of fate but by the swift interventionist hands of justice and fairness.

**Hausa tales as a mouthpiece for justice and fairness**

In the tales “Yar Sarki Da Ta Saci Dinya” (pp. 110–112); “‘Yan Goma Sha Daya” (168–171) and “Budurwa Mai Neman Ganyen Miya” (34–36) as in U. B. Ahmed’s *Bora da Mowa*, a very popular and classical folktale that tells a moving story of two girls born of the same father but of separate mothers, critical issues of justice, as advanced by Plato, Gandhi and Mandela take centre stage. For instance, one comes face to face with Mohandas K. Gandhi’s idea of what justice is, and should always be. The witty and saintly Mahatma of India’s characteristic but nonetheless provocative statement about justice are painted in these memorable lines, thus: “That action alone is just, which does not harm either party to a dispute”. Raymond B. Marcin in his work ‘Gandhi and Justice’ asserts that:

“There have been instances in Western jurisprudence in which that Gandhian – essentially Eastern – understanding of justice sometimes surfaces. Several decades ago, Martin Luther King Jr., in a groundswell of Gandhian activism, raised that Gandhian understanding of justice to a position of near dominance in Western thought. It may be no coincidence that both King and Gandhi suffered the same fate for their troubles. Conventional understandings of justice are not easily undone”.

**Conclusion**

This paper, with ample examples, establishes that the tradition of the folktale, a reliable tool for planting the seed of morality in society, has helped in more ways than

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28 The argument here stresses that very often women are their own worst foes especially when they have to compete for one thing like a man’s love, etc.
one, in man’s insatiable quest to live in a just, free and egalitarian society. It identifies the significance of sound and just leadership in the establishment of a just society.

Hence man evolves many ways to ensure strict compliance with societal laws or norms. One of such many ways includes, as it should, the use of the proverbial carrot and stick. In a tale “Kogi Mai Cinye Makaryata” (‘River that Drowns Liars’) (280–282), the full force of the stick came to the fore as seen by the enforcing of compliance among the twelve children of a man whose ripe and edible *kadanya* was eaten by his twelfth son. But unlike the fate that befalls the tenth child in the tale “Na Goma” and the similar tale above, the soft hand of fairness which is the aforementioned carrot, could be said to have saved the life of the erred Talipaku who betrayed her friend the dove, by starving Kurciya’s baby in the story “Talipaku da Kurciya” (120–122). Instead of sentencing her (Talipaku) to death, the Chief of Birds tempered justice with mercy by strongly warning her to be of sound character and never repeat the same crime or else he would order her immediate execution. With this, the paper theoretically foregrounds the aforesaid argument stressing that tales could be efficiently used in an advocacy relating to all issues of entrenchment of social justice in our deleterious societies, but the tale “Dogarawa Uku” cautions against haste in passing judgement to avoid a miscarriage of justice.\(^{31}\) The innocent execution of Gidado, based on the false evidence of Dan Funali against him, for an offence he knows nothing about, is clear proof that folktales could tell the true colours of justice irrespective of its intricate nature. So by way of conclusion, this paper calls for a quick return to folklore as the world searches for answers to its mountains of problems caused by injustice and oppression.

\(^{31}\) In contrast to the umpteenth said aphorism that justice delayed is justice denied, the miscarriage of justice visited to the poor Gidado in the tale “Dogarawa Uku” questions the swiftness, sometimes, in the dispensing of justice despite all the visible signs of injustice. So the point here is that caution should always be exercised in matters of justice so as to save the innocent souls.
Hausa Oral Songs as a Cultural Reflexive: A Study on Some Emotional Compositions

Abstract

This paper has brought to the fore an approach to the study of Hausa oral poetry normally referred to here as songs. The paper discusses two major spheres that interface within the Hausa emotional songs: literary and culturally. Some of the literary characteristics of Hausa emotional songs discussed are litany, refrain, orality and aesthetics. Emotional songs in Hausa are observed to have about five distinct stylistic devices such as historicism, reason mentioning, simple oral formalism, lengthy compositions and masterpieces. They also have five major culturally derived themes that form their basis. These include vengeance, depression, love/endearment, bereavement, and other social factors respectively.

Introduction

A poem or song in Hausa is a piece of art work composed in a different writing format or style to prose or plays. There is a clear distinction between the oral poem and the literate poem. This paper refers to all orally composed materials in the form of a poem as songs. A Hausa song by definition is therefore, a piece of art work composed in verse(s) in selected words and rhythms with the aid of traditional and modern electronic instruments to send a particular message that distinguishes itself from prose and plays. As noted by Yahya1, Yakawada2 and Gusau3, the Hausa song has different categories based on its major theme that pass through all the stanza of a particular composition.

Hausa songs categories

There has been a lot of literature on the various types or categories of Hausa songs as distinct from the literate songs here referred to as poems. There are two

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major classes of Hausa singers: court singers and freelance singers. Ibrahim⁴ provides one of the initial literary works on the various categories of Hausa songs, which he refers to as “wakar baka” (literally oral poem). In his book titled *Kowa ya sha Kida* Ibrahim selectively discussed among other things, categories of Hausa singers especially the ‘court singers’.⁵ In his book Ibrahim identified many thematic lineages from which Hausa court singers compose their songs with. Amongst such themes are praise or eulogies, incitement, innuendo, ridicule, begging, admonishment and enlightenment.⁶ The author also classifies Hausa singers and their songs into four categories: court, freelance, guild, and itinerant songs/singers.

Umar⁷ categorizes oral singers in Hausa to include amongst others, court singers, popular singers, guild singers, heroic or bravery singers, and comic singers respectively. The songs composed are also referred to in a similar vein. This classification provides an addition to the major category discussed by Ibrahim and also classifies the singers into two further distinct elements: those accompanied by traditional musical items and those sung without any musical instruments. The first group consists of all songs composed by traditional singers with a specific personality or based on any topic of his choice or that of his master. The second category consists of all songs composed by children and womenfolk in a traditional setting. This category has three basic typologies, specifically work songs, play songs, and folktale songs.⁸

Gusau provided a broader categorization of Hausa songs in addition to the ones mentioned above, where he came up with 22 categories of Hausa songs based upon the major themes. The book *Wakokin Baka a Kasar Hausa*, instead of categorizing the singers into freelance and court singers structurally categorises their artifact and also provides an in depth anthology of the major themes they drive lineage from.⁹

**Emotion defined**

The word emotion is an attribute of mind mainly studied in psychology. It is referred to as a strong feeling about somebody or something. The psychologists use the word to describe an agitation caused by a strong feeling or else a form of disturbance that is caused by a strong feeling. Emotions are usually described as discrete and consistent responses to an internal or external event which has a particular significance for the person or organism. Manifestations of emotions can be seen in sadness, happiness, grief, anger, rivalry, love, hatred, and many more psychological situations

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⁶ Ibid., pp. 1–10.
⁸ Ibid., p. 37.
⁹ Gusau, *Wakokin Baka*...
that interpret the inner condition of a person. Many scholars inclined to psychology and cognitive analyses of human behavior argue that, music is experienced in many different contexts and its significance for human behavior is not always obvious. Music plays an important role in many social contexts such as weddings, funerals, and parties, but its appeal cannot be fully explained by such functions. Music in Hausaland and its accompanying instruments play a greater role in providing social and psychological effects. Music energizes, surprises, soothes, delights and enhances emotional states of its listeners. Research in cognition and neuroscience supports the idea that pleasure and emotions are key motivations for listening to music. Not only does music activate “pleasure centers” in the brain, it can communicate and induce a range of powerful emotions.

**Hausa emotional songs**

The study of emotional songs has attracted contributions from many disciplines as noted earlier. As noted by Konecni earlier studies on emotional songs or poetry were aimed at discussing the relationship between poetry and songs with the emotional state of an audience or the interface between the two. Scholars like Avorgvedo argue that all songs or poetry are the result of an emotional state of a singer or poet thus serving both an internal and external quest.

At present, there exist two polar ideologies on the possibility of music arousing genuine emotions or only a separate class of aesthetic emotions or moods. As noted by Hunter and Schellenberg, few scholars dispute the fact that, listeners of music are emotionally moved by just listening to a song or music. However, many have argued against such an idea that listeners are moved emotionally depending upon certain circumstances. According to Hunter, scholars like Meyer posited that, “affective responses to music consist of experiences of tension and relaxation rather...

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than emotions”. In his argument Konecni is of the opinion that listeners of music react only affectively and not as a true emotional state as theorized by previous scholars like Meyer.

Other scholars still are of the opinion that the elicitation of emotion by music is just metaphorical, as noted by Zangwill. But he too has the opinion that, “it is the main function of all or most music to express emotion, to arouse emotions, or to represent emotions”. The theoretical basis of this paper is the latter part of Zangwill’s assertion that, music represents emotions of individual poets. This shall be expatiated in the latter part of this paper through examples composed by Hausa singers in order to reveal or voice their inner thoughts, i.e. their emotions.

By a way of definition Hausa emotional songs are those songs composed in Hausa under a unique emotional state or with zeal to create an unequivocal unique emotional movement. All cultures of the world have a string of emotional songs usually composed to send an emotional message. Bearing in mind the definitions above it is pertinent to note that an emotional song is composed by Hausa singers in order to expose or express their inner responses to either internal or external events that affect them or the community of which they belong to or are living in. This category of Hausa oral songs have been in existence for a considerable age in Hausaland but, little attention was afforded them by scholars in terms of categorization and analysis prior to the thesis of Satatima. As noted by Gusau this category of songs are composed when events affect the emotion of a singer either positively or negatively. Thus, he reiterates the fact that Hausa singers compose songs in one of the emotional conditions of happiness or sadness.

As noted by Avorgbedor, man is an expressive being, and both his actions and reactions consequently permeate his modes of life and living. Similarly, Hausa singers react to both inner and outer coercive powers in the form of emotions that trigger

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positive or negative responses. These responses can be either action or reaction that will imply some confrontation and/or overtness. As for the singers, this can take the form of composing verses devoted to the prevailing circumstances as a verbal form of reaction or action to a stimulus. In Hausa as in many other societies, individual temperaments, background experiences and projections all affect performances in one way or another as a means of stimulus-response relationship.

All songs composed by Hausa singers under any emotional condition are hereby referred to as emotional songs. They may be a reaction or action against any external or internal force or stimulus. As noted in many societies’, songs of war, love, hatred, vengeance, happiness, sadness and depression are all examples of emotional songs. In Hausa too, these types of songs are categorized accordingly as emotional. Classifying some Hausa songs into this category could be perceived as odd as many of the previous writers, particularly Dangambo, Umar and Ibrahim did not recognize them as a unique class or category among the various categories proposed by them. It is worth noting however, that Gusau highlighted this category but provides little in the way of insight into the category. Yahya however discusses or provides analysis of a ‘rogue song’ by Gambu Fagada, which has been regarded as belonging to an ‘odd’ category in Hausa oral poetry. This arguably denotes that little attention is given to the study and analysis of Hausa emotional songs in terms of distinct categories with distinct composers and content. Hausa emotional songs are songs composed naturally by singers in order to portray to its listener intense emotional conditions of the singer either positively or negatively. Positive emotional compositions in Hausa are those that trigger positive emotions like happiness and joy. While the negative emotions are those that triggers sad moments and sorrow.

Forms in Hausa emotional songs

Categorically speaking, form is here referred to as the general structure of the emotional songs in Hausa. By and large, composing an emotional song is normally triggered by certain social or psychological events. In general Hausa emotional songs are said to have the forms listed below.

1. The litany form. This is a unique form of a particular group of singers in Hausa. As noted by Zurmi, in this type of form the leader of a song group

27 Ibrahim, Kowa…, pp. 1–5.
28 Gusau, Wakokin Baka…, p. 309.
29 Abdullahi Bayero Yahya, ‘In Praise of Thieves an Odd Category in Hausa Oral Poetry’, a paper presented at a Departmental Seminar, Department of Nigerian Languages, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 1996.
does most of the singing with a little or no contributions from others. A typical example here is Ali Makaho and his troupe. Another singer from a similar category is Sani Sabulu Kanoma. Both these famous singers have recorded one or two emotional songs.

2. The refrain form or the chorus type of singers are also a distinct formal type. In this type of song the leader distinguishes between the introduction, body, and a chorus normally repeated with or without any chance of addition. Popular Hausa singers follow this formal arrangement. For example, Dankwairo in his popular “Dam Bakalori” follows this pattern. Also Mamman Shata, while composing his satirical\textsuperscript{31} song of Danliman Uban Ciroma, adopted a similar structural pattern.

3. The orality form. Orality here is the opposite of literariness. Orality means that all the emotional compositions were composed orally not in a written form. This is a typical feature of all oral cultures. In Hausa most activities of the singers are oral in nature. Although in some cases there exists the practice of rehearsal, however the verses are kept in the ‘minds’ of the singers i.e not the form of written lyrics. This is an important aspect that normally distinguishes this category of song from the literate poem.

4. All songs have some form of instrumentation, unless they are sung a capella, without any musical accompaniment. In a typical Hausa community all the songs are composed through the usage of traditional musical instruments. As noted earlier all categories of Hausa singers can compose an emotional song despite a lineage to a particular musical instrument type.

**Style in Hausa emotional songs**

Style is a unique means of distinguishing one form of art from another. According to Mukhtar a style can distinguish a work of art from another by the same artist or from another artist.\textsuperscript{32} With reference to this assertion then, style here refers to those distinctive features of emotional songs that distinguish them from other songs of different categories. I observed the following features as distinctive to the emotional songs in Hausa.

1. Historicism: usually attached to a particular happenings between the singers and their rivals or a consequence of an event in the community. Predominantly Hausa emotional songs portray reasons in the form of history in order to answer as to ‘why’ a song was composed. For example, Ali Makaho has been cited in one of his four major emotional songs dedicated to Sani Dan’indo. In the song “Mu Fatattaki ‘Ya’yun Baki”, literally translated as ‘Lets Drive the Strangers Out’,\textsuperscript{33} he sings as follows:


\textsuperscript{33} Refer to Satatima, \textit{Wakokin Darsashin Zuciya...}, Vol. 2, pp. 323–327.
Hausa Oral Songs as a Cultural Reflexive: A Study on Some Emotional Compositions

Refer to ibid., pp. 323–334, for the full text of the songs. In my interview with one of Ali Makaho’s troupe member Rufa’i Dangyangyan in 2007, he told me that upon their return from a trip to Bauchi somebody deliver to them a satirical song by Sani Dan’indo. Consequently they prepared for revenge; four different songs were composed in retaliation.

The message referred to here is nothing but an insulting song in a cassette composed by his opponent. The song in the cassette put him into a tense emotional condition that elicited his emotional response via a composition of the four songs to avenge what he described as ‘takalar fada’ (provocation) through a provocative song. In a similar vein Mamman Shata in his song of condolence upon the death of Ciroman Gwambe, also recalls how they parted with the deceased Ciroman during the turbaning ceremony of Emir Umaru Kwairanga.

2. Reason mentioning: reasons for composing an emotional song are normally depicted within the content usually for self exoneration and defense. In their bid to exonerate themselves from any blame, especially after a satirical songs, Hausa singers used to apportion blame on their opponents. As an example in his song popularly titled “Danshayi” (literally ‘The Tea Vendor’), Dahiru Kakkabi Jibia has this to say:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hausa</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ina zaman zamana rannan,</td>
<td>As I was just sitting,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sai na ji babban sako,</td>
<td>A strong message was delivered,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da dai na ji sako,</td>
<td>So when I listen to the message,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sai na ce aha!</td>
<td>I exclaimed okay!,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashe wutur rigima ta kunnu,</td>
<td>A war drum is beaten,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashe ta fa sai an shiryu.</td>
<td>I don’t for see its supression in time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kun san abin da yas sa na zage shi? Do you know why I satire (curse) him?
Kuma dai nas sake nak kara, Again I insulted him in my song,
Muka zagai har aji ukku, Again for the third time we insulted him,
Wai don haushi ya sha mai kai, It’s just to avenge and provoke him,
Yai man magana muna wakar, Alas he talks to me he feels bad in despair

Ni kuma in bi gari da dan iska, Then I will curse him at all places I visit,
In dinga fadin halin shege, I shall expose his behavior,
Tunda ya zage mu mun rama, Alas I avenge his curse on me,
Mu da shi dada an yi ba bashi, All is nothing but tit for tat,
Idan kuma mun ji ya kara, Alas he insults me again,
In sake mashi sabuwar launi, I shall compose new satire verses,
Wadda ta dara wagga iskanci. That are more tense and cursing.

3. Simple oral formulaic discourse, ornamentation: the singers try all the time to keep faith with the predominant themes of the songs. More elaboration on certain incidental themes are avoided. The songs also have a great deal of ornamentation through the usage of different figures and ornamentation devices. For example, Sa’idu Faru in one of his emotional compositions,

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34 Refer to ibid., pp. 323–334, for the full text of the songs. In my interview with one of Ali Makaho’s troupe member Rufa’i Dangyangyan in 2007, he told me that upon their return from a trip to Bauchi somebody deliver to them a satirical song by Sani Dan’indo. Consequently they prepared for revenge; four different songs were composed in retaliation.
“Gwabron Giwa Uban Galadima”, made use of alliteration, simile and certain metaphorical expressions as an ornamentation device:

Yaro in takamar salon magana kaka ji, O you child! You want to engage me on poetry!

Ce tsare, tsara, ta fi tsattsame
	tsattara,
Ka tsantsame tsari tsaf ga tsamiya. Then say tsare tsara, then tsattsame, tsattsara,

The sound ‘tsa’ being italicised and repeated here is a typical example of a consonantal alliteration. Their continued repetition in a rhythmic pattern is beautifully attached to the meaning.

4. Lengthy composition: many of the songs in this category are lengthy as compared with others by the same singer. The song of “Gwabron Giwa Uban Galadima” (literally ‘The Great Elephant Master of Galadima’) by Sa’idu Faru falls into this category and it has been one of the most beloved songs he has composed. This song alone is about 50 minutes in length and in comparison with his other songs, it happens to be by far the longest.

5. Masterpiece songs: a masterpiece as noted by Muhammad is a ‘great poem’ or song by a singer. Greatness here refers to popularity and its attractiveness to an audience. With reference to emotional songs they are the ones most admired by audiences. Examples could be said to include “Mai Dadiro” and “Fijo Fikof” by Sani Sabulu Kanoma. The song of Faru, referred to above, also falls within this category. Both songs were masterpieces due to the fact that, they are loved by many listeners whenever and wherever the singers are performing. As noted by both singers, several requests are made by people when they are performing live in certain occasions.

Major themes in Hausa emotional songs

Hausa emotional songs are predominantly composed within the realm of the following major themes, listed below.

1. Vengeance: it is the zeal to take a revenge at all costs that stimulate some Hausa singers to compose emotional songs. A typical example here is Ali Makaho where his thirst or quest for a ‘tit for tat’ become the major reason that led him to compose four emotional songs in Hausa. These songs are “Mu Fatattaki ‘Ya’yan Baki”, “Na Dade da jin Bayani”, “Laisatun Nasare” and “Dan ci-rani a Kano”. All these emotional compositions were meant to serve as an act of vengeance against a similar song by Dan’indo.

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35 Refer to an audio interview with Sa’idu Faru in ODU, ABU 2 AL/4/10-4/12 and ODU, ABU AL4/25 1/12, at Oral Documentation Unit, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

2. Depression: is the emotional state of incapability or inability to perform any purposeful activity. Here certain conditions affect the singers and render them disabled. This theme is manifested in the following form:

Abin da yas sa har nai mai waka,
An yi noma an shuke dawa,
An gama noman fari,
Ni ga ni gida a kofar daki,
Matan gida kowa na aiki,
Ni ga ni kwance a kofar daki
Na yi fushi nai cizon yatsa,
Bakin ciki ne yad dame ni.

The reason why I compose for guineaworm,
Work in the farmland has already began,
Both first and second tillimg completed,
Here I am in the frontage of my bedroom,
All family members including my wives are in the farm,
Here I am in the frontage of my bedroom,
I certainly got angered by this guineaworm,
I was saddened by its attack on my foot and body.

- Superiority/ inferiority complex depression: this is the situation that keeps a singer in a depressed condition due to fear or an inability to perform a task. An example of this is illustrated by the singer Sa’idu Faru, who was at an early stage of his apprenticeship, when his father was supposed to attend an event. At that time Faru, despite his relatively young age, decided to represent his father. This situation led him to compose his popular song, “Gwabron Giwa Uban Galadima”.

- Depression due to illness or a serious accident: the depression described here refers to the inability of a person (singer) to execute or perform certain obligatory or essential tasks, due to emotionally driven events like accidents or illnesses, memorably captured in one instance referring to the effects of an insect bite. All these have been the stimuli to trigger emotional songs. Sani Sabulu Kanoma, during the early stages of his career, composed a song on “Kurkunu”, literally ‘The Guinea-worm’. Similarly his accident in a Peugeot pick up van forced him to compose his popular “Fijo Fikof” song.

3. Love and endearment: love and endearment are distinct emotional conditions that have lured Hausa singers into composing emotional songs. Haruna Uji’s “Jummai” and “Balaraba” songs are worth mentioning here. Similarly the joy of having a new social life after the construction of the Bakalori Dam in the 1980’s endeared Musa Dankwairo and this emotional urge led him to compose his popular song “Aikin Dam ya fi Gaban a yi mai Wargi” (literally ‘Dam Construction is Gigantic’). Initially in a protest like pattern, Dankwairo spoke of the dilemma his people found themselves in at the beginning of the Dam’s construction. The people protested that they had lost everything as there was no proper compensation paid to the people whose farmlands were expropriated by the government.

4. Bereavement: it has been of intense emotional distress to lose a friend, a close ally, a master or even a reknowned kinsman. The psychological situation
resulting from a death has compelled many Hausa singers to provide an honorary song to commemorate their bereavement. Many Hausa singers of different categories compose innumerable songs on this theme. Popular examples include “Allah Jikan Ciroman Gwambe” by Mamman Shata, and “Allah Jikan Sarkin Magana” by Musa Danbade. Another example is the song of Sarkin Taushi Katsina, “Gwabron Giwa mai Cika Daji”, which he composed after the assassination of Sir Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto, Northern Nigeria’s first Premier.

5. Social or cultural factors: reference is made here to the fact that the Hausa community regard the marrying of a divorcee by a person close or near to the former husband as an unforgivable insult of the highest order. It was the reason why Muhammadu Bawa Dan’anache composed his satirical song “Dan’ali”, written as a reaction to his pain when his divorced wife married a friend in Dan’ali town. The same reason compelled Mamman Shata to compose a popular song “Danliman Uban Ciroma”, in order to avenge the insult he felt when a judge married his former wife.

Hausa culture also abhors any act of disrespect to an elderly person in its community. Bearing this cultural norm in mind, popular Hausa singer Bage Dansala Argungu did not engage in a physical assault on a suspected female thief who encroached on his farmland. However, in order to react to the emotional turmoil he felt as a result of the theft Bage Dansala composed two popular songs exposing the crimes of the suspected woman in his town. The songs were “Yarkala Barauniya ta Sace Hatsi” (literally ‘The Gleaning Thief’) and “Mai Hakorin Tazgam Matankoli”.

Cultural implications of the songs

The term culture refers to the totality of both the physical and abstract lives of particular people. Mukoshi in his analysis of the emotional symbolism of an oral poet describes culture as a,

“total pattern of human behavior and its products embodied in thought, speech, action, and artifacts dependent upon man’s capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations through the use of tools, language and systems of abstract thought”.

38 The Dan’ali town referred to here is the one situated in Rabah Local Government Area of Sokoto State, Nigeria.
Hausa emotional songs or poems are always in conformity to the societal values. It is a typical characteristic of human culture to feel angered and more so happy. These two socially derived instincts are motivated by one’s culture. The narrative discourse of Sani Sabulu in his song “Fijo Fikof”, about a motoring accident, is justifiably worthy of narration. Similarly, in Hausa there exists an adage that says, “ramuwar gayya ta fi ta gayya zafi” which literally means to avenge is more painful than to initiate any action. This cultural trait influenced Ali Makaho in composing four different oral songs to avenge the aforementioned satirical poem by Sani Dan’indo. The oral poets are always reflective of the society to which they belong. Generally, music requires patronage to improve and to survive. The Hausa oral poet through his music and songs helps to maintain the cultural values and preserve certain socially derived traits that in turn build society. From the aforementioned song “Fijo Fikof”, Sani Sabulu tries to relate to his audience the qualities of perseverance and patience, crucial in trying times such as the aftermath of a serious accident.

The Hausa society maintains a great emphasis and significance on condolence. To be bereaved is natural, and to deliver consoling words offering condolence in the social sphere is paramount. Thus, we can adduce that the Hausa oral poets teach a great lesson to a widespread audience on the theme of ‘condolence’, the subject matter of many songs.

Another social value or relevance of the Hausa, emotional song is the issue of acknowledgement of certain common diseases that affect the riverine areas of the Hausa lands where water borne diseases guinea-worm are prevalent. In his composition of “Song of Guinea-worm” Sani Sabulu berates those that do not feel or consider guinea-worm to be a threat to life. In this composition major symptoms of the disease and its effects are highlighted in order to enlighten people on the need for proper hygiene throughout the environment. Of course this may be contrary to other cultures and people like the Igbo, whose songs always reflect festive periods, ceremonies and burials.42

Conclusion

It has been of great importance to note that earlier studies on the various categories of Hausa songs were unjustly silent, by not showing an awareness of the category of ‘Emotional Songs’ as an inherent and distinctive class of its own. The paper has highlighted as pivotal the accident experienced by Sani Sabulu which instilled the emotion of fear in him and thus triggered a vital composition that was presented to listeners in resonance with the position of Zangwill.43 The songs of vengeance issued to rivals, as exemplified by the songs of Ali Makaho, were however a result of the


emotion of anger. As posited by Thompson and Quinta, “music is experienced in many different contexts and its significance for human behavior is not always obvious”. Similar emotional incidence may not elicit any response when they befall on another person. The paper, bearing in mind this assertion by Thompson and Quinto (2010), provides an outline of the major formal structure of the emotional songs in Hausa. Also discussed are the major styles depicted by such categories of songs, in addition to the general themes the songs are usually composed about. It has also been suggested that cultural influence greatly affects the composition of the selected songs.

44 Personal discussion through an e-mail with Konecni on 5/6/2013.
46 Ibidem.
Language Use Construction in Discourse: Exploring Youth Identities in Hausa Rap Music

Abstract

This article explores Hausa rap as a type of popular culture for the 21st century, which not only reflects the multilingual, multi-ethnic base of Hausa youth, but also constitutes an active and dynamic site for the youth to encourage the formation of new, hybrid identities in discursive practices. The article is qualitative in approach as such; examples were drawn from lyrics of the Hausa rap singers to highlight the context of their discursive practices in representing their identity. Fundamentally, this article adopts systemic functional linguistics (SFL), using the concept critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach as a mode of data evaluation.

Introduction

The present article identifies with discourse analysis (DA) as one of the key practical approaches to the study of popular music, particularly Hausa rap music. It explores the context of social construction of youth identities in Hausa rap. Basically in Hausa rap, singers draw from both Hausa and English, using whichever language they found appropriate to a particular situation in their language construction.1 This makes approaches to language use in the musical rhythm, to be grammatically functional.2 In view of this, the present article explores Hausa rap beyond grammatical approaches but rather in functional perspectives. Therefore, the present article was framed within the theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) from the basis of a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach in investigating Hausa rap in order to identify how youth and their music reproduce and resist societal and political manifestations in their lyrics.

Problem statement

Nigeria is a country blessed with various cultures having over 555 spoken native languages which indicates the multilingual character of the nation. Among their speakers, the Hausa/Fulani constitute 29%, the Yoruba 20% and the Igbo 17% of the country’s population, whereas the remaining one-third makes up the 34% belonging to other ethnic groups. Therefore, the elegance of the Hausa language has given rise to issues in contemporary music, particularly the popular music that plays a central role in the lives of young people. This is certainly obvious in Northern Nigeria, where rap music has been popularised among the youth and serves as an avenue to signify their identity and a forum to reveal their ideas within their understanding.

In a similar context, studies done in the area of language use relate to social issues with a strong emphasis unfolding in the cultural study of language, and is compatible with a deeper sensitivity to critical social issues. In justifying these claims, it was further argued that the approaches to CDA and the justification of SFL allows a musical discourse to be interpreted as social and functional practice; which represents specific means of social environments. However, the present article found that there is a crucial need to explore how far language use relating to youth identity is critically functions in Hausa rap music. Basically, exploring the language construction of the Hausa rap genre will help in revealing Hausa youth’s social identities in order to facilitate the thoughtful voices of the youth in order to be more contributory to fields of knowledge.

The following are the research objectives of the present article: (1) to explore the strategic discourse practices with relation to youth identity in Hausa rap; (2) to identify the factors that influences the social construction of language among Hausa rap singers signifying their discursive identity.

The following are the research questions of the present article: (1) what is the strategic discourse practice in Hausa rap and how does it relate to youth identity; (2) what influences the social construction of language among Hausa rap singers signifying their discursive identity?

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4 Perhaps, it might be the hidden idea behind various scholars including Professor Rose Merry Beck, in her work ‘Urban Languages in Africa’, Africa Spectrum, Vol. 45, No. 3, 2010, pp. 11–41. In addition with Professor Tope Omoniyi in his study, ‘Hip-hop through the World Englishes Lens: A Response to Globalization’, in World Englishes: Symposium on World Englishes in Popular Culture, Jaimie S. Lee and Yamuna Kachru (eds), Vol. 25, No. 2, 2006, pp. 195–208; and so on, both affirm that music is a global language that can reach across all races and religion citing examples from Kenya and Nigerian rappers’ identity exhibition respectively.


Fundamentally, a literature review involves systematic identification, location, and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem.\textsuperscript{7} Research within the perspective of rap music has driven the attention of various scholars around the globe. Basically, language use construction as identified by various scholars refers to the context of language in relation to real world problems.\textsuperscript{8} In reality, the variation of interest among scholars has resulted in the analysis of rap music in general to have been observed from the various perspectives which are certainly of different dimensions.\textsuperscript{9}

Approaches to language use are diverse and complex, which can be analysed or studied from different perspectives.\textsuperscript{10} As such, approaches to language use in rap music are dynamic, which are rich in imagery and metaphor symbolising social change in the voices of youth. In addition, with global viewpoint, the effects of rap music on global culture have generated the attention of various researchers interested in the music analysis from different fields of endeavour.\textsuperscript{11} As such, the analysis of rap music arises out of varieties of disciplines including linguistics, sociology, psychology, discourse analysis, anthropology, etc.

For instance, a study of hip-hop culture in young urban Black Americans showed authenticity of language use and other aspects of identity such as race, as well as class differences in global (and particularly American) rap music. More importantly, the researcher was interested in finding out how local hip-hop scenes use language to express their identities. The findings show that the expression of thoughts in hip-hop is so personal, that it tends to be grounded in local or regional syntax, dialect, slang and vernacular. The researcher also found that the revelation of identity in discourse construction could be based within the practitioner’s unique situations,

which can be understood by others in similar situations if they understand the verbal references, analogies, illustrations and other uses of lyrics as the message.

In addition, similar trends were noted in another study, which examines Hausa rap genres within the approach of critical discourse analysis, which stems from the critical theory that sees language use as a form of social practice. The researcher argued that the intersection and interrelationships between languages and social interaction can be attributed with a CDA approach; particularly in analysing Hausa rap music. Thus, the findings indicated that Hausa rap music shapes language use towards issues concerning societal and political dominance in Nigeria, particularly on issues that are pertinent to youth within the northern region. However, the present article is different from the studies reviewed above because the current article examines the language use construction in the Hausa rap genre and it will contribute in revealing the youth’s social identities in expressing their thoughts, feelings, and alienation.

The conceptual and theoretical framework: Methodological perspectives

To begin with, the methodological approach adopted in the present article is a qualitative analysis of sampled Hausa rap singers, particularly of Lil’T, Kano Ryderz, Ziriums, and Prince Zango in deriving data mainly from the Hausa rap lyrics signifying the issues that require clarification which are pertinent to youth identity.

In the broadest terms, research frameworks either theoretical or conceptual in a particular study are constructed in a number of different ways depending on its research objectives, questions, and hypothetical perspectives in relation to variables of the study. Principally, this article is on the view that a conceptual and theoretical framework functions in research in order to identify the starting point of the research problem. Based on the fact that a theoretical framework describes a phenomenon integrated into a concise statement or question while developing a particular study. On the other hand, the conceptual framework of a study signifies the formation of basic ideas, designs, plans or strategies based on giving facts which can be explained in the written or visual presentation either graphically, or in narrative form.

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It is important to mention that, the conceptual framework of the present article is based within a critical discourse analysis (CDA), which broadly deals with the critical analysis of language in its contexts of use, which evaluates the language above the level of the sentence either in spoken or written forms. This study provides approaches to CDA from language use found in Hausa rap lyrics as a form of social practice which systematically reflects crucial awareness of singers and their role in society. More importantly, the study provides a context for interpreting Hausa rap lyrics from the critical issues that ultimately resist social inequality into useful practice.

Consequently, the present article was framed within the theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) in investigating the Hausa rap lyrics in order to identify how the youth or singers reproduce or resist societal and political manifestations in their lyrics. This is due to the fact that, SFL reflects the relationship between language and the context in which it is used in spoken or written configuration in rhetorical forms. Practically, this study ascertains with SFL in exploring the functional and rhetorical forms of language use, as well as in discovering the critical issues concerning youth identity found in Hausa rap lyrics.

The theoretical basis of SFL functions in the spoken and written stratum of context and contributes to the social construction of language use for literacy education. This is because of the fact that SFL is a functionalist theory which has developed, combining purely structural information with overtly social factors in a single integrated narrative. In relation to this, this study relates Hausa rap lyrics to language use to symbolise youth identity found in the lyrics having both social and personal cognition of the singers. Hausa rap singers employ language mediums in systemic form which can be interpreted in a way that SFL affirms that languages evolve within social groups and is multidimensional in nature.

Establishing youth identity and social construction of discourse in Hausa rap

Globally, rap is a musical form which is often created by a specialised ‘beat maker’, and elements of ‘turn tabling’, in which portions of material created by other
performers are creatively recombined and used to frame the lyrics.\textsuperscript{22} Usually, the studies done in the perspectives of rap music in the African context bear witness to researchers justifying their experience by regarding it as a global tradition that owes core expressive features to a precise western mainstream.\textsuperscript{23}

Classically, in Nigeria it was affirmed that rap music as popular culture has a relatively recent history that gained popularity in the 1990s.\textsuperscript{24} In reality, in northern Nigeria, Hausa rap songs, composed predominantly among the youth, became more accepted and popularised in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.\textsuperscript{25} Hence, the Hausa rap singers composed their songs either in groups or individually. They employ hip-hop beats in singing the lyrics; using varying degrees and mixtures of their native language Hausa, English and Pidgin English.

Typically, native Hausa youths trying to model themselves within the conventions of global rap singers, have framed their native identities to reflect their admiration. As such, Hausa rap singers structured their ideology in a specific way in order to reveal their identity. They mixed-up traditional culture with foreign ethics, and modified their language in creating a new scene of music in Hausa popular culture. In addition, they advocated the voicing of their opinions with the aid of the internet\textsuperscript{26}; particularly through social media networking, YouTube, and the use of Bluetooth etc., in transmitting messages to their audience. These and various other attributes played a key role in heavily differentiating Hausa rap songs from the traditional Hausa oral songs. Therefore, various scholars agreed that social construction frames a global culture in rap music\textsuperscript{27} learned, and serves as a behaviour\textsuperscript{28} that sums up the knowledge and beliefs of the youth.

In light of this, the present article affirms that Hausa rap music reflects the hybridity and the multiplicity of linguistic media, also along with cultural allegiances among the natives. This is because, as declared earlier in this paper, Hausa rap music has become one of the latest ‘hip-hop’ communities in northern Nigeria to begin grappling with the ideas of hip-hop culture, its genuineness, and linking themselves to a broader

\textsuperscript{23} Beck, ‘Urban Languages…’
\textsuperscript{24} Omoniyi, ‘Hip-hop through the World Englishes…’, pp. 195–208.
\textsuperscript{25} Professor Sa’idu Muhammad Gusau’s \textit{Wakokin Baka a Kasar Hausa: Yanaye-Yanayensu da Sigoginsu} [Hausa Oral Songs: Their Types and Features], Kano, Nigeria: Benchmark Publishers Limited, 2008, p. 354, reveals the historical foundation of Rap music as well as the emergence of Hip-Hop culture among Hausa youth. In his book, Gusau affirms on Hausa rap songs does not refer to a birth of new genre, but rather a sub-genre of Hausa oral composition where youth express their feelings and discuss about the societal issues within their own rationale. In addition, he added that Hausa rap songs can be attributed partly from the mainstream of Hausa popular culture that already exists. It has has earn its place in the spectrum of the Hausa music scene portraying Hausa modern cultures and history in a wider view. He also believed that Hausa rap singers borrowed culture heavily from the western cultures, and the instrument they use are modern related not the ones Hausa oral singers are familiar with.
\textsuperscript{28} Campbell, ‘Rapping Gender and Violence? Addressing Violence…’, pp. 1–70.
global hip-hop community. The Hausa rap singers attempt to define authentic hip-hop music and culture; in order to establish mechanisms for the maintenance of hip-hop authenticity within global perspective.

Categorically, Hausa rap singers’ naming identities borrow heavily from the Nigerian national hip-hop scene; for instance the likes of 2Face; Innocent Uyah Idibia, Nigeria, JJC/Skillz; Abdul Rasheed Bello, UK-Nigeria, Lagbaja; Bisade Ologunde. In addition, they borrow heavily identities from the American music scene with the likes of Nas; Nasir Jones, USA, Puff Daddy/P.Diddy/Diddy; Sean Coombs, USA, 2Pac; Tupac Amaru Shakur, USA, Dr. Dre; Andre Young, 50 Cent; Curtis Jackson, etc.29 Hausa rap singers also construct such kinds of name tagging, which are interpreted in nature and can be used to understand their mode of social practice. In the present article the naming culture is further elaborated upon in table 1.

Table 1. Hausa rap singers’ hip-hop name tagging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No.</th>
<th>Hip-hop name</th>
<th>Proper name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>MixterBash</td>
<td>Idris Bashir Abubakar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ziriums</td>
<td>Nazir Ahmad Hausawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Dr. Pure</td>
<td>Saifullahi Idris Musa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Nomiiss Gee</td>
<td>Aminu Abba Umar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Yaro2K</td>
<td>Yahaya Sabo Abubakar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Abokina X'Dough</td>
<td>Ahmad Babajo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I.Q</td>
<td>Abubakar Nasidi Muhammad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Golden Brickz</td>
<td>Hamza Umar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Lil’T</td>
<td>Tijjani Mustapha Danbatta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Funkiest/Funky Mallam</td>
<td>Ibrahim Baba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Daddy Fresh</td>
<td>Jamal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Volcano</td>
<td>Muhammad Salisu Nasidi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>X'Dogginit</td>
<td>Iliyasu Achimugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Double Trouble</td>
<td>Nuraddeen Abubakar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>D’Flecks</td>
<td>Abdul Kabala Ghana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>BMW</td>
<td>Hamza Umar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>MM Haruna</td>
<td>Haruna Mu’azu Muhammad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>DFlex</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Naza &amp; NigNash</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Prince Zango</td>
<td>Adam A. Zango</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 See Omoniyi, ‘Hip-hop through the World Englishes…’, pp. 195–208, for comprehensive analysis regarding name tagging among the Nigerian and American hip-hop singers.
As the case may be, some of these Hausa rap singers are graduates, some are still studying at university, others are at the colleges, and some are even school drop-out. As such, their musical lyrics share experience in accordance with their level of exposure and education. However, there is one key issue in particular in which they unanimously share, and that is the use of ‘artistic licence’ through which they express themselves, reveal their identities, and through which they publicly voice their feelings more importantly to their listeners or followers. Similar trends were noted concerning the construction of youth identity in Hausa rap songs in which the singers relate to issues pertinent to northern Nigeria and the country at large.

The singers’ voices their personalities on matters concerning ethnic and religious barriers, the rate of unemployment in the country, frequent marital divorce and other affairs concerning deprivation in the northern region, including adultery and fornication, AIDS, drug abuse, corruption, bad politics, etc., are often found in Hausa rap music. More precisely, Hausa rap music brings into play language use in order to share social representation and opinion based on cognitive influence in discourse which is governed by the collective action of the groups. This argument can be further supported by an example from the song of “Life” composed by Abaje featuring ALAN WAKA; and in their lyrics they reflect on bad governance and politics in Nigeria, they voice their malady and yearning for God’s intervention by saying:

CHORUS
Rabbana (God) fight for us! Rabbana (God) relieve us!
From the venom of a cobra, the curse of a tiger,
From the hands of the shameful-good-for-nothing politicians,
A-pull them negatively, hunt them mentally, depend me!
I hate to see my society in agony, life! life!
Stop all the sufferings! And make a better Nigeria!
What a Life! Life! Life! Lets get back to our valuable senses!
Our leaders are over drunk with power steering clear out of truth!
With their decayed hearts they have allowed the masses to be suffering, Oh God!
Abaje featuring ALAN WAKA, “Life”

Essentially the lyrics above reflect on the social power abuse, dominance and inequality that enact within the Nigerian system of governance in which they show their resistance. This goes with the affirmation that the CDA confirms, specifically the freedom of challenging power and dominance that exists in society or in governance by those who are oppressed. They are oppressed not only by the lack of good governance but they are also demoralised by a lack of patronage, particularly from the government.

In circumstances, various Hausa rap singers actively introduce a variety of themes into their lyrics signifying the extravagances on the part of the politicians and other...

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government officials that allow various issues and problems to survive in Nigeria particularly in the more peripheral areas. Yet, they firmly believe that Hausa rap will continue to develop and they will keep on voicing their feelings, opinions, observations, yearnings, and identities both nationally and internationally, until they are heeded. Likewise, they aspire on a possible future by striving hard to be acknowledged, particularly by the different foreign global media, with the hope and assumption of having foreign sponsors.

In fact, culture in general and its effects on music and composition serves as an important turning point in the history of Hausa rap. Albeit, it is important to note that Hausa rap music has always been about cultural expression and not necessarily concerned with the proper use of language. The basic interest of Hausa rap singers is to help their listeners or viewers, regardless of where they are, to hear and see the social, educational, political, economic, and often religious situation in which the artist dwells. For instance, Kano Ryderz (K-Ryderz) lived in a rugged area in the Kano state of Nigeria, popularly known as Brigade Quarters. They have grown within the locality of Kano and experience nothing other than maltreatment from the government making their locale one of the most underdeveloped in the state. Hence, they compose a song “Everyday inside Difficulty” and excerpts from the lyrics read as follows:

LEAD
The tough life in this country has permeated everywhere confusing us,
The poor are constantly suffering, where’s the country’s wealth?
The big shots have stolen the lot, there is hunger everywhere!
And they know it! Rulers! Please pity the people!
Having bricks houses! Ours are made of mud and collapse during the rains!
They keep the leadership amongst themselves only!
When you are fearless, they ostracize you!
No school! No education! No drugs in hospitals! No social development!
They are heartless, and refused to help!
See! We have lots of natural resources! Why should we be suffering! Suffering!!!
Don’t forget the big fat cats, with massive pot bellies,
Are the ones who stole the wealth of our nation!

Kano Ryderz, “Everyday inside Difficulty”

Therefore, to better comprehend how Hausa rap songs developed in hip-hop culture among Hausa youth there is a need to understand that in the early 21st century, many of the Hausa youth taught themselves how to rap by imitating the lyrics, mannerisms, and gestures of the hip-hop artists they were hearing, particularly American hip-hop artists; primarily 2Pac, MC Hammer, the Notorious BIG, Puff Daddy, LL Cool J and R-Kelly, to mention but a few. They listened to the rap cassettes, repeatedly until they could mimic the English lyrics and which they later on could relate to their own experience.

To a certain extent, Hausa rap singers do not mind differentiating between the American artists, but they are rather more interested in the projection of the words
until the rhyming and flow of the song is captured by the ears of their listeners. In due search of meaning and viable feeling to their songs, they mostly begin by mimicking the songs composed by an American rap artists and those of their Nigerian counterparts, on discotheque floors and during various social events such as finishing secondary school, graduation from university, and so on.

This was further influenced by the advent of the CD audio player and video digital devices as well as the acquisition of cable satellites channels from where Hausa youth clearly observe and ‘tune-in’ to American hip-hop artists. Subsequently, the global media flows of the internet facilitated by Bluetooth; popular social media accounts including, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube; blog pages such as Arewa Vogue, Hip-Hop Empire; television stations with the likes of Arewa 24, Star Times; FM radio stations especially, Freedom Radio in Kano, Cool FM in Kano, Wazobia FM in Kano, Rahama Radio in Kano, and so on; heralded the need for Hausa rap music scene to establish its own kind of hip-hop culture and rap music genre.

Extensively, in Hausa native society, rap songs are considered to be voices of youth culture as well a way to express the reality of living. In addition, Hausa rap music embraced the hip-hop culture as a framework to develop their own ideas pertinent to African lifestyles. Nazir Ahmad Hausawa popularly known as Ziriums or Nazir Khan or Dantala released the Hausa rap album, *Nod Your Head*, and an extract from one song’s lyrics reads as follows:

**LEAD**

Hey! do not dance; you know they banned it!
The governor of our city one day banned it!
If you hear a good beat, just nod your head alone!
Yeah! If you have heard a good beat, just nod your head alone!

Ziriuums, “Nod! And Wobble Your Head All Alone”

Needless to say Hausa rap singers encounter lots of economic difficulties and as such the avenue of releasing albums in accordance with hip-hop culture is somewhat closed. As a result they rely heavily on the availability of internet, radio channels and Bluetooth devices. Even so, and contrary to the government, their lyrics immediately became a sensation all over the northern Nigeria and in many ways, set a high standard and ‘raised the bar’ for future Hausa rappers. The government perceived the nuances and aggravation of the Hausa youths to be greatly westernised, which was perceived as working to exploit the traditional

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culture and moral values. As such Hausa rap singers’ have faced difficult situations including imprisonment by an overbearing government. In retaliation Hausa rap music responded with vulgar language, unusual in the culture of Hausa rap singers. For example, Ziriums retaliated with a song “This Is Me”, in which the singer affirms:

LEAD
I’m hustling like motorcycle taxi driver, night and day, until the morning,
In the time of the cool, rains and in the hot season, and in the night,
It is hip-hop that I love! I will never retire! Will never get tired!
Cause I’m rolling like a tire! Go on go on all you hip-hop guys!
You hip-hop boyz, wealth comes to an end, power passes away!
Road cut off! If you are going to say something, tell the truth!
Allah, much less hasn’t given me body strength,
To go out to meet you and huddle you up,
But, Allah made me a sharp mouth, sharper than a blade, aha!

Ziriums, “This Is Me”

Moreover, in his own version of the song “God Damn It” Lil’T composed lyrics in a way much more characteristic of many popular American rap songs. Mostly, Hausa rap singers develop their lyrics reflecting the Hausa cultural, social, and ideological positions. Yet, Lil’T demonstrates his agony in a vulgar language; even though these wordings are prominent in the rap music they hear from the United States. An extract from the lyrics is illustrative:

LEAD
Nigeria is 50, why we no see any good thing?
Why waste so much on golden anniversary?
When Naija no get common electricity!
We dey produce fuel we no get refinery!
When Naija no get common electricity! Why bomb no go blow for FCT?
Our education no authority? No respect for the living!
Nor the dead can see, this no be Naija wey our heroes build!
Politicians na dem get money today, we go vote for dem,
We go still dey follow dem, why be dat way? Me I no feel tell!
Servant and master na who go ring bell? Yallabai?
Help me! I need some food, my wife is pregnant and my child is sick,
My landlord wanted me out of my suits, please help me! Help me oga!
God damn it!

Lil’T, “God Damn It”

From a documentary conducted by CNN on Hausa rap music in northern Nigeria, Johnson and Piracha reveals that the concept of message assertion in Hausa rap music comes up again-and-again in their songs. By virtue of this fact, they placed emphasis on the fact that their songs reflect the social function of the music and
language use is the significant vehicle for transmitting meaning effectively. But the chiefly negative role played by the government provoked Hausa rap music into conveying messages in their songs with a far stronger voice.

As an example of this, Prince Zango popularly known within the Kannywood film industry was found entering the domain of rap music. In his song “Adam Zango Oh Yo-yo” he revealed his anger with government policies which he believed to be unjust. The singer was found saying:

**LEAD**

I will sing a song about that horrible servant,  
*Jackass*, who hides behind the façade of Islam,  
Some Islamic teachers are pious, while others are just Shamans,  
Some beards are honourable, while others are just Billy-goat’s beard,  
Well Barau (thief), you have arrested me and locked me up,  
In the end you jailed me, and I’m happy for it,  
This is not Allah or His Prophet’s jail sentence,  
Nor it is ordained by Islam, Barau (thief),  
If it is your jailing, well command the judge to incarcerate me,  
Or slit my throat, or shoot me, or in the end totally condemn me.

*Prince Zango, “Adam Zango Oh Yo-yo”*

Clearly, Prince Zango seems unappreciative of the imposition of governmental course of action; and as such he prefers to use the medium of hip-hop culture to portray his readiness to jump right from the proverbial ‘frying pan into the fire’. Thus, in Hausa rap music history the periods of the 21st century have played a significant role in testifying the role of youth and their identity in discourse and social construct. Prince Zango further added this to his repertoire:

**LEAD**

Oh! Allah we beseech you; we will not forgive this injustice,  
Allah, we will not allow this; Allah punish my tormentors,  
The government has arrested me; Allah please arrest them,  
The government has locked me up; Allah please locked them up,  
The government has jailed me; Allah please jailed them in the hereafter,  
And reward my patience!  
Eh! The song, does not refer to any specific person,  
If it describe your behaviour listen, and stop,  
The world is a scary place; a novice is not used to it,  
Even an expert has to learn to endure it.

*Prince Zango, “Adam Zango Oh Yo-yo”*

Fundamentally, within the discursive field of Hausa rap music due to the anguish of the singers aimed at the government officials, different perspectives on language use have arisen from the complex weave of contemporary music and life as experienced by Hausa youth. Primarily, youths employ the domain of Hausa rap
music to establish their identity. Thus, in the same song “This Is Me” composed by Ziriums; the Hausa rap singer relieved his anguish by saying:

LEAD
Let’s meet there in the day of judgment!
Where you will suffer the loneliness of your father!
No police to escort you! No Siren! You’ll see a terrible go-slow!
There to the side the angel of hell with a rod of thorns,
If you make a mistake, he’ll give you a stiff beating,
The joints in you will give testimony,
That day there will be no P.A.! No lawyer!
If you are to say something, utter the truth!

Ziriums, “This Is Me”

It is pertinent to understand that, rap music culture allows youth to construct their identities in an avenue that might not be freely available elsewhere; and language use in a musical context will provide material for considering the nexus of popular music, language choice, and the social creation of an identity for Hausa youths.

Conclusion

Hausa rap lyrics often speak directly to social and cultural issues pertinent to the northern youth and the country at large. The present article explores the Hausa rap genre within the approach of the CDA, which stems from a critical theory of language use. Consequently, the approach to CDA recognizes institutionalized forms of dominance, which, for the current article, ties into SFL that sees language use as a form of social practice. The paper focuses on the lyrics of the Hausa rap genre and the intersections and interrelationships between language, discourse, speech and social interactions.

It was made clear in the article that Hausa rap singers’ uses hip-hop culture to explain their anger and questioning of government policies. Hausa rap singers use music as a medium of communicating ideas, emotions and feelings, taking the music beyond the simple notion of a good time, by illuminating the problems faced by Hausa society. The songs released to date so far, all emphasize problems faced by Nigerians at large.

By and large, the presented extracts from the songs have arisen when artists, whether they are Hausa rappers, film actors and actresses, traditional oral singers, etc., being formerly detained as a result of government guiding principles. Furthermore, such influences have forced Hausa rap singers to completely lose their faith with the government and instead of following their traditional cultural flow of modest youth music; they have sought an extreme western portrayal of youth identity and the use of unsympathetic language in hip-hop culture.

As a result, the flow of language use in Hausa rap songs is employed as a means of social construction and a complex means of communication, depending on the ability of the singers in expressing their ideas, hypotheses, emotions, desires, and all
other things needed to be expressed in the music. To sum up, youth identity and social construction of discourse in Hausa rap songs took on increasingly deviant dimensions in the last few years due to miscommunication and misperceptions between the government and the youth where each side tried to institute its base. To a certain extent this is so due to the fact that language use is significant in register formation, and it explains the kind of message intended to be passed, which is fuelled by language ideology.

In conclusion, there have been researches conducted within the domain of applied linguistics concerning approaches to youth identities, particularly in those areas of critical discourse analysis, narrative analysis, conversation analysis, corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and so forth. Therefore, the present article contributes partly to the theoretical studies concerning social issues in applied linguistics, as well as the contribution of discourse features into understanding Hausa rap lyrics as a type of popular culture.
The Political Economy of Poster Production, Distribution and Consumption in Northern Nigeria

Abstract

This paper investigates the process of production and consumption of visual media in Northern Nigeria. It looks at the political economy of posters, using the Aeron political economy approach of researching cultural products. This paper identified and investigated the cultural industry on the macro level as an industry. The researcher attempts to link cultural outputs to the religious, industrial factors that shaped the organizations and industries which produce culture. It discovered that posters have, to some extent, sprouted parallel audiences alongside mainstream media and have its unique form of distribution most often on the streets and markets in urban Nigeria.

Introduction

This paper looks at the political economy of posters in Northern Nigeria using Aeron’s political economy approach of researching cultural products. The paper seeks to identify and investigate the process of production, distribution and consumption of posters in the region. The main goal was to investigate cultural production on the macro level as an industry because; it is assumed that the conditions of production shape cultural content. The paper therefore links cultural outputs to the economic, industrial and political factors that shape the organizations and industries which then produce culture.

As one of the foremost examples of modern art and design today, posters and stickers are displayed publicly throughout the world, so becoming part of our cultural language. As a result, poster artwork often goes on to become iconic, defining eras, movements and visual trends. For instance, Osama Bin Laden’s jihadist posters, Che Guevara, the lone protester, the Eiffel Tower, the tilting Titanic, the holy Ka’aba, and the collapsing World Trade towers provide some classical examples. In Nigeria, the political posters of Sir Ahmadu Bello Sardauna, NEPU mobilization posters the cult of Sheikhs posters are all widely recognized.

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2 Sir Ahmadu Bello Sardauna was the Premier of Northern Nigeria 1955–1966.

3 NEPU is the abbreviation for Northern Elements Progressive Union, the first political party in Northern Nigeria, founded in Kano in 1950.
Media political economy

The political economy of media has been constituted as an academic field in the age of mass media, which are characterized by linear forms and one-way flows of communication, where content is being distributed from a small number of producers to a large number of recipients. Critical political economists follow Marx in shifting attention from the realm of exchange to the organisation of property and production, both within the cultural industries and more generally. They do not deny that cultural producers and consumers are continually making choices, but point out that they do so within wider structures.

The political economy approach was built on a premise that uses a critical approach in studying the dynamic nature of the economic structure, the ideological content of the media, and the nature of the operation of the media industry. It is interested in the ownership and control of the media, and pays attention to the linkage of the media industry with the economic and political system.

The classical Political Economy Theory which has its roots in the Marxist class analysis holds that the class which has the means of material production also has control at the same time over the means of mental production so that, thereby generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it... In so far, therefore, they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they among other things regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are ruling ideas of the epoch.

It is within the above confinements that this paper examines how political, social and economic factors shaped the content, production, distribution and consumption of religious posters in Northern Nigeria.

Studies on posters

Academic work on posters and stickers as a medium of mass communication in Africa, particularly in Nigeria remains comparatively new and has developed within rather confined discursive paradigms. Even though, there has been a substantial scholarship on the role of African media in facilitating and in some cases impeding democracy within the context of a growing culture of media pluralism and freedom on the continent, much of these scholarly enquiries have been limited to traditional mass media and to some extent new media, with not

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7 See: Murdock and Golding, ‘Capitalism, Communication…’
enough attention being paid to visual media forms such as posters. The primary attribute of posters as a medium of communication is its nature which enables it to be embedded in the public space. Unlike electronic forms of communication which target people in the isolation of their own home through computer or TV screens, posters reach people through their constant and open display in a shared spatial environment. It was posited that, this intrinsic spatial dimension has two implications that have been neglected. The first concerns directly the message that interactive participants attempt to communicate through posters irrespective even of its precise content, this message is a direct function of at least two spatial variables: (1) the location of any poster in its common space, and (2) the relation of any one poster to other posters in the same space. The second implication concerns the variety of formats that posters can take, and requires us to extend the universe of posters from just regular-sized official posters, to the entire range of visual elements that the interactive participant display publicly in common spaces.

Based on the foregoing, there are, then, four necessary and sufficient defining characteristics of posters.

1. Spatial dimension. Individual advertisements are intended for display in public (or in private, but publicly observable) spaces.
2. Physical support dimension. Poster communications have a print support prior to their display in public.
3. Static visuals content dimension. Their content is restricted to use of static visuals.
4. Temporal dimension. The public display of individual advertisements is intended to last for at least some time in that space.

Consequently, a shorter definition of “poster” was given as: “any static visual material designed for posting in public (or private, but publicly observable) spaces for a longer period of time”. This definition has two immediate implications for the study of posters, both of which warrant additional discussion.

**Political economy of poster production**

Part of the debate within critical political economy focuses on issues of ownership and control of the media. Having power in or control over media is argued to impact upon the capacity to determine or influence the contents of the media products and...
any meaning carried by them. This has grown out of a strictly Marxist perspective which states that the class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control, at the same time, over the means of mental production.

A critical political economy looks at the intentional action (by owners, editors etc.) and structural constraints (such as resources of time and money), at each level of the production process.

In Namibia, the production of posters were first geared towards liberation movements and trade unions as noted by Henrichsen et al., the overall visual construction of the shop facades was adapted to local conditions, turning both shops into particular visual reading sites of modern African consumerism outside the settler towns. These locations (a township, a homeland) were not simply replicating the public visual reading sites of Windhoek’s settler centre but used and appropriated features in local contexts.\(^\text{13}\)

However, in Iran, posters were produced by the authorities and they served as a powerful visual tool for inciting socio-political rebellion and military conscription, the poster has experienced brief but significant bursts of production during periods of revolution and war. The production of Iranian posters is not done by individuals, rather, the authorities commissioned artists to come up with the type of posters they want.

The production of Iranian posters raise questions about which artists, willingly or not, were involved in poster-producing ventures, which Iranian organisations used them and to what ends. Although one might assume that the posters were the result of an Iranian ministry working collaboratively with artists sympathetic to the war and/or ‘committed’ to the Islamic Republic, the situation is much more difficult to untangle.\(^\text{14}\)

However, in Ghana, poster making and selling is considered a lucrative business for those involved in the chain of this cultural production – producers, distributors and vendors. The typical life span of a poster does not normally exceed one month. Posters as a medium of communication in Ghana are regarded as an alternate form of news production which cater largely for the under-educated who cannot read and understand newspapers.\(^\text{15}\)

From the foregoing discourse, it is therefore clear that the production, distribution, and consumption of posters, even though linked to an urban context, to modern technologies and to capitalist modes of production and consumption, at the same time reflects the dominant social, political and economic ideologies within which they are produced.


Methodology of data collection

This paper employed both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. Under qualitative method, in-depth interviews were conducted with six major producers of posters purposely selected from Kano, Kaduna, Gombe, Sokoto and Lagos, all states in Nigeria. Kano, Kaduna, Gombe and Sokoto were purposely selected based on the field data generated in Kano and Kaduna between January and December 2013. Table 1 provides the data collection summaries. The states selected for the in-depth interviews were purposely selected because of their higher percentages in terms of poster production and consumption.

One visual media producer each from the states of Kaduna, Gombe, Sokoto and Lagos, and two from Kano were selected for the in-depth interviews. The rationale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Distributed</th>
<th>Returned</th>
<th>Sold</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adamawa</td>
<td>14,900</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>14,729</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>21,150</td>
<td>1,194</td>
<td>19,956</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>1,560</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1,449</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borno</td>
<td>9,050</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>8,630</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gombe</td>
<td>31,500</td>
<td>2,075</td>
<td>29,425</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigawa</td>
<td>15,200</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>13,930</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>43,550</td>
<td>2,104</td>
<td>41,446</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kano</td>
<td>43,850</td>
<td>1,176</td>
<td>42,674</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katsina</td>
<td>22,900</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td>21,780</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kebbi</td>
<td>10,850</td>
<td>1,585</td>
<td>9,265</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogi</td>
<td>8,700</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>8,151</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwara</td>
<td>7,170</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>6,940</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasarawa</td>
<td>8,800</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>8,032</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>24,750</td>
<td>1,730</td>
<td>23,020</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>8,900</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>8,730</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sokoto</td>
<td>36,600</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>35,675</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taraba</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>10,415</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yobe</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>6,771</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamfara</td>
<td>18,550</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>17,250</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>346,080</td>
<td>17,813</td>
<td>328,267</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for the selection was two folds. Firstly, the states were mainly dominated by Hausa Muslims who are the major producers and consumers of the visual media under study; secondly, based on the data from table 1, they are the major visual media production and/or consumption centers in northern Nigeria.

Lagos was purposely selected for this study to represent the Hausa’s in the diaspora coupled with the fact that most of the production materials and experts of the visual media producers are in Lagos.

In order to investigate the consumption of patterns of visual media products in the area of study, thousand questionnaires were distributed in nine out of the nineteen northern states. The selected states are Adamawa, Bauchi and Gombe from the north east; Kaduna, Kano and Sokoto form the North West; and Nasarawa, Niger and Plateau from the north central. The questionnaires were distributed within the selected states using a proportionate stratified sampling technique which can be used to include strata with sizes based on their proportion in the population. 16

Based on the data generated, the paper clusters the responses into various categories to obtain a macro picture of the political economy of cultural production.

**Historical antecedents of poster production in northern Nigeria**

Most of the respondents of the in-depth interviews did not know exactly when poster and sticker production and marketing become established in Northern Nigeria. However, all of them unanimously holds the view that the first genre of posters to appear anywhere in Northern Nigeria were the Islamic posters that portrayed the pictures of the prophets (such as Prophets Adam, Noah, Solomon [Sulaiman], Joseph [Yusuf], [A.S] etc. ) and those of the disciples of prophet Muhammad S.A.W (such Ali Bin Abi Talib, Hassan and Hussain). A respondent stated that, the subject matter then was that of heroism, devotion etc. Gradually these early posters paved the way for the Qadiriyya and Tijjaniyya Sheikh’s posters such as Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani, Ibrahim Inyas, Abdulkadir Jailani, Sheikh Nasiru Kabara etc. Initially the production was of poor quality and it was in black and white, but with the advancements in technology, they became sophisticated and were produced in colors and larger sizes, and until today the same template is being used to produce all these posters which can now be seen. 17

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16 The proportionate stratified sampling technique was adopted for this study because; the population is composed of several subgroups that are vastly different in number. Thus the number of participants from each group is determined by their number relative to the entire population. See: Roger Wimmer and Joseph Dominick, *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*, U.S.A: Wadsworth, 2010 for Proportionate sampling techniques.

17 An interview conducted with a poster producer, Muhammad Ali at Kurmi market, 10 July 2013; an interview conducted with Sheikh Sharif Bala Gabari, who used to be in business 30 years back, first as Qur’anic calligrapher and later as a publisher and seller of Islamic books at Kurmi market, 17 July 2013.
Table 2. States sampled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Distributed</th>
<th>Returned</th>
<th>Sold</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Sampled States</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North-Eastern States</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adamawa</td>
<td>14,900</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>14,729</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>Adamawa</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>21,150</td>
<td>1,194</td>
<td>19,956</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>Bauchi</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borno</td>
<td>9,050</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>8,630</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gombe</td>
<td>31,500</td>
<td>2,075</td>
<td>29,425</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>Gombe</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taraba</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>10,415</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yobe</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>6,770</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>5,075</td>
<td>89,925</td>
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<td></td>
<td>275</td>
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<td>North Western States</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigawa</td>
<td>15,200</td>
<td>1,270</td>
<td>13,930</td>
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<td>Kaduna</td>
<td>43,550</td>
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<td>191</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sokoto</td>
<td>36,600</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>35,675</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>Sokoto</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamfara</td>
<td>18,550</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>17,250</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>191,500</td>
<td>9,480</td>
<td>182,020</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>554</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benue</td>
<td>1,560</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1,449</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kogi</td>
<td>8,700</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>8,151</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwara</td>
<td>7,170</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>6,940</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasarawa</td>
<td>8,800</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>8,290</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>Nasarawa</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>24,750</td>
<td>1,730</td>
<td>23,020</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>8,900</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>8,730</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>59,880</td>
<td>3,598</td>
<td>56,322</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>346,380</td>
<td>17,113</td>
<td>328,267</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some of the respondents maintained that these categories of posters were first imported from Egypt and as a result of trans Saharan trade between the Hausa people and the Arabs. They maintained that, “it is not possible to say precisely when these posters were first seen in Hausa lands, but all of them hold that, they are the first set of posters to penetrate Hausa lands and were imported by Hausa merchants from Egypt between the 1930s and 1940s, a time when trans-Saharan trade commenced between the Hausas and the Arabs. Later on, they were reproduced here in Kano locally”.

Based on the above responses, this study therefore holds the view that the business of posters and stickers in Northern Nigeria is more than 60 years old and was initially a result of the trans Saharan trade between Hausa merchants and Arabs in Egypt.

The traditional processes of poster production

Poster production in Nigeria is considered as a kind of underground activity managed by people with very little perceived knowledge and majority of those involved are primary and secondary school drop outs. This background therefore has inevitably influenced how posters are designed and produced in this country.

All the six producers interviewed narrated the same process of traditional poster production. For instance, A. A. Mutunci mentioned that it is not possible for him to highlight all the processes involved because it is not something that is documented, it has more to do with intuition as opposed to any rational processes.

Two of the respondents stated that, “before, we use liquid gum to stick the selected pictures and images on cardboard paper before taking them to printers in Lagos”. The process was more tedious and time consuming as everything was done manually. He further added that, “the difficulties in poster and sticker production processes largely depend on the type of posters or stickers one is producing or the kind of message one is trying to send”. They summerized the traditional process poster and sticker production thus, “The first step is to get the pictures and images you need, for instance, if your intention was to produce a poster about Hausa film stars, the first thing you had to do was to establish contact with them. Some of them will come to you asking you to produce something about them, others would have to be approached with extensive negotiations and sometimes payment was necessary and all of these factors depended upon the popularity of the actors/actresses. Sometimes, a film star would come to you asking you to promote him or his production company. Now we can see that it is a two way process, sometimes we buy from them and sometimes they pay us”.

However, poster and sticker production to some extent is determined by the type or category of poster one intends to produce. Most of the producers interviewed

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18 Interviews conducted with Muhammad Ali, Sheikh Sharif Bala Gabari and Bala Labaran at Kurmi market, 10, 12 and 17 July 2013 respectively.
19 An interview conducted with a poster producer, Aliyu Abbas Mutunci at Abubakar Rimi market, 15 July 2013.
20 An interview conducted with poster producers, Aliyu Abbas Mutunci and Amadu Nagogori at Abubakar Rimi market, 15 July 2013.
agreed that it is easier to produce international football stars posters than it is to produce a Hausa film stars posters because, you don’t need to establish any contact before you produce a posters of football stars, all you need to do is to get the pictures of the stars or team you want and that is all.21

**ICTs and facilitation of the poster production processes**

All the six producers interviewed agreed that Information and Communication Technologies have a tremendous impact on poster and sticker production processes. For instance, one respondent maintains that, computers have greatly reduced their task in that, there are many types of software that aid design (such as VDraw, Picasa, Posterazor, Quark Xpress, Adobe PageMaker, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Corel Draw, etc.) and ease the entire process of designing and producing posters and stickers. He further stated that, “Now that the technology is available and affordable, we use computer designing software in planning and designing our posters. When we finish the artwork, the layout and the design on our computer, we then copy it on a flash drive (memory stick) or compact disk (CD) and take it to other people for colour separation, then from colour separation to plating and finally to the printers”.

Another respondent reveals that “the quality of the posters are now improved and the cost of production has decreased as a result of the various technologies they are using”. He further stated that “instead of travelling four hundred kilometers for colour separation in Kano, all we do is to either copy everything on either compact disk or external hard drives and send them or by using a commercial bus, to Kano”.22

Similarly, a respondent maintains that “information and communication technologies did not only facilitate or ease the poster and sticker production processes, they made us as producers, more prudent, imaginative and at the same time productive”. He cites examples such as during the 2011 Gubernatorial election in Kano when he produced a poster that shows Buhari and Kwankwasa together. He further stated that, “I produced the poster because of the discussions that were going on at that time in Kano that Rabi’u Musa Kwankwasa asked his supporters to vote for him in the Gubernatorial general election and vote for Buhari of the CPC in the presidential general election as opposed to Goodluck of the PDP. Actually, I got all the pictures and images for the poster from my photo bank and using design software, then I doctored all the pictures and images and came up with the poster”.23

Conclusively, it is imperative to mention that, even though information and communication technologies have impacted greatly on the entire processes of poster and sticker design and production, the majority of the producers are not computer literates and have employed the services of IT experts to facilitate the layout and design their posters and stickers.

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21 An interview conducted with the Vice Chairman, poster producers and sellers associations of the Gombe branch, Haruna Adamu at Gombe central market, 27 March 2013.

22 Ibidem.

23 An interview conducted with a poster producer, Nura Muhammad at Abubakar Rimi market, 15 July 2013.
Sourcing the materials for the posters

The materials required for poster production generally encompass two aspects; the communication aspect, that is the message that the producer wishes to impart across, and the medium aspect, specifically the type of poster or sticker one needs to produce. The medium aspect also takes into account the size and the quality of paper, the colours to be used and the quality of the printing machine.

The respondents mentioned that they used to source pictures and images from media houses, the journalists themselves and most often from international newspapers and magazines. But now with the availability of the internet, experts are paid to conduct the internet searches and download all the pictures and images that are needed. For instance, Haruna Adamu mentioned that, “it is based on the category of poster one needs to produce. Let me cite an example with a Hausa film artiste. If we want their photos, we contact them, arrange and sometimes even pay them after which we go to a photo studio to have their pictures snapped”.24 He further mentioned that, in their line of work apart from producing Hausa Film star posters, they also have to regularly contact close associates of some Islamic clerics before producing their posters. He specifically mentions that, “before producing posters or stickers of some Islamic clerics, we meet their associates or disciples who wish to see that the photos of their Sheikhs kept in circulation. Followers’ of Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya are the major sects that patronize the posters of their clerics. The number of copies you produce is solely your responsibility as a producer, but we are always careful not to produce something that might go contrary to their beliefs”.25

Another respondent stated that “Apart from the Hausa film stars, for all the rest of the posters we get their materials (pictures and images) from either international magazines or we download them directly from internet websites which is even easier and costs less”.26

As for other categories of posters or stickers, Haruna Adamu stated that they “use MasterCard to buy authentic and quality pictures from internet websites. The pictures we buy are of higher quality than those we get for free in terms of resolution and graphics”.27 This indicates that producing other categories of posters and stickers are easier and cost less than producing Hausa film stars posters because, with the former one has to seek the consent of the principal actors of actresses and sometimes one has to pay them.

The aforementioned discourse so far highlights two basic methods of sourcing materials for poster or sticker production; the first is by participating in the event or establishing contact with the principal characters. The second method is by downloading

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24 An interview conducted with a poster producer, Haruna Adamu at Gombe Central Market, 27 March 2013.
26 An interview conducted with the patron of the Poster Producer’s Association, Kano branch, Amadu Nagogori at Abubakar Rimi market, 15 July 2013.
27 Ibidem.
all the necessary materials from the internet either through subscription or from free websites.

**The basic process of consumption**

The data for addressing this objective was generated through the use of questionnaires and the resultant data was presented and analyzed using the tables below.

The data in the table 3 reveals, that males in the age group of 27–32 were the major consumers of posters in the study area and by cross-tabulating the two variables of age and gender with how the consumers perceive posters, the paper found that of the dominant responses, 343 out of 887 look at posters as sources of information. However, the data also reveals females in the age group of 21–26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of information</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15–20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21–26</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27–32</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32 and above</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>85</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entertainment medium</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15–20</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21–26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27–32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32 and above</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational instrument</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15–20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21–26</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27–32</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32 and above</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political tool</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15–20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21–26</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27–32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32 and above</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
regards posters as entertainment medium while a more insignificant number of males in the age group of 21–26 perceive posters as a political tool as well as educational instruments.

The data in table 4 reveals that, regardless of the category of poster and the reason why people prefer or focus more on a specific category, Muslims were found to be the major ‘consumers’ of posters in the study area and this is obviously not unconnected with the fact that Islam is the dominant religion in the area. The figures in the table indicate that, the dominant responses came from those who like religious themed posters because of their content. Other respondents stated that they like political posters because of their content. By cross-tabulating the theme of religion with two variables of category of posters, specifically what that the respondents like and why they like that category. This paper found that poster consumers in the study area like or ‘consume’ posters because its content. The paper also recognized the significant role that Islam, which is the dominant religion in the area of study, had played.

The data in table 5 reveals that, Hausa people, who were also the major ethnic group in the study area, are the major ‘consumers’ of posters. The data shows that, out of the 887 respondents, 619 were of a Hausa ethnic background of which 156 stated that they liked religious posters most. But a cross-tabulation of the two variables of ethnicity and age with the category of posters that consumers like most reveals,

Table 4. Religion. Which category of posters do you like most? What is the main reason you like this category of posters?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the main reason you like this category of posters?</th>
<th>Which category of posters do you like most?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion Islam</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion Islam</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others choose it for me</td>
<td>Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion Islam</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5. Age group/ethnic group. Which category of posters do you like most?
Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which category of posters do you like most?</th>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 15–20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 21–26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 27–32</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 33 and above</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 15–20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 21–26</td>
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<td>Age group 27–32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 33 and above</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 15–20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 21–26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 27–32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 33 and above</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Stars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 15–20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 21–26</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 27–32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 33 and above</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 15–20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 21–26</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 27–32</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 33 and above</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 15–20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 21–26</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 27–32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group 33 and above</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that people aged 33 years and above prefer religious posters, whereas those aged 27–32 prefer political posters. The 15–20 aged group like musical posters and people in the age group 21–26 like both film star and educational posters.

Based on the aforementioned factors, the paper concludes that, even though all the major ethnic groups in the area of study ‘consumed’ posters, the Hausas were found to be the major consumers and as was the case with the way religious factors played a role in table 4, it is also directly connected with the fact that Hausa people are the major ethnic group in the study area.

An observation of the data in table 6 reveals that the majority of the respondents look at posters as sources of information. A cross-tabulation of the two variables of ethnicity and the age and the highest level of school attended, with how the respondents look at posters:

**Table 6. Ethnic group. What is the age and highest level of school attended? How do you look at posters? Crosstabulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of information</th>
<th>Ethnic group</th>
<th>The highest level of school attended</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you look at posters?</strong></td>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entertainment medium</strong></td>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational instrument</strong></td>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political tool</strong></td>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Igbo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
perceive posters in the study area, results in data showing that, majority of the Hausas with higher education qualifications look at posters as sources of information while those with just secondary level qualifications view them as an entertainment medium and a more insignificant number that attended primary school only regard posters as a political tool.

The data also illustrates similar patterns of perceiving posters by other two ethnic groups – the Yoruba and the Igbo. The data also shows that the majority of those that attended higher educational institutions look at posters as sources of information, whereas those with secondary school backgrounds view posters as an entertainment medium while those with just a primary background tend to perceive them as a political tool.

Based on the aforementioned factors, this paper therefore concludes that, the level of education has a direct bearing on how consumers, regardless of ethnic background, look at posters in the study area.

**Conclusion**

This paper has made an attempt in identifying the political economy of posters in Northern Nigeria by investigating production, distribution and consumption patterns and has also attempted to link cultural outputs to the economic, industrial and political factors that shape the organizations and industries which then produce culture.

The paper concludes that posters have, to some extent, sprouted parallel audiences alongside mainstream media and have their unique form of distribution most often on the streets and markets in urban Nigeria. The locus of production in the northern part of the country is Kano and Kaduna while Lagos dominated the southern part. But these posters are distributed and sold to vendors in other cities in the country. The production of posters in Nigeria is controlled by a small group of businessmen who own printing presses. Kano and Kaduna serve as the nerve centre of poster production and distribution in the north. In Kano, the centre of production and distribution is the Abubakar Rimi Market while in Kaduna the centre of production and distribution is located at Abubakar Gumi Market.

Poster making and selling is a lucrative business for those involved in the chain of this cultural production; specifically the producers, distributors and vendors. However, the poster cycle is short. Depending on the type of poster, they generally do not last beyond two months during which a vendor can sell more than 3,000 copies at a hundred percent profit. The peak of the period of sales occurs soon after an event has happened or when the news story unfolds.

Another advantage of the poster that this paper has discovered is the fact that the gate-keeping process that determines what is fit to be printed is less hierarchical than in the mainstream media and involves complex interactions at the level of poster production and consumption. To be socially relevant, a poster producer requires an eye for news events already in the public domain and an ear to the ground for conversational topics among potential audiences. This is because the decision of what makes the final cut from the plethora of news stories available to the poster-
makers is often predicated on feedback from vendors, agents and customers. It is this group of people that constantly makes suggestions to the producers as to what news subjects they would like to see amplified in the posters. Thus, although posters’ story ideas come from conventional media sources, readers and vendors are directly implicated in the material production; their suggestions and feedback mostly determine what is next to be produced. All these processes are directly or indirectly involved in shaping the consumers into the producers of the content they consume.

To summarize, the paper has tried to offer a critical contribution to the growing literature on the creative cultural industries in northern Nigeria by focusing on the relations between the cultural producers, the cultural consumers and the cultural products.

1. The political economy of posters and stickers production is a process that is profitable, acceptable and represents an old trade that has evolved over a long period of time. Poster/sticker production was initiated by the casual importation of posters from the Middle East, particularly from Egypt. The initial posters were those of Qur’anic/Biblical figures that depicted the various scenes and settings of the Abrahamic world. These were followed by posters that depicted the struggles in the Muslim world, particularly during the initial Muslim communities of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). When the Sufi brotherhoods became established in the 1950s, various drawings of the main proponents of the brotherhoods – based in Algeria, Morocco and Iraq – started appearing. Subsequently, these diminished however and their Black African representatives started taking a more prominent role – leading to what can be labelled as the “Cult of the Sheikh”. Within this cultural ideology, prominent Sufi sheiks, particularly Sheikh Ahmad Bamba and Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani became the new poster figures in the 1960s – followed in the 1990s and 2000s by more and more sheikhs as they became increasingly prominent.

2. It is interesting to note that contemporaneously the posters sold in the 1960s depicting the various scenes and settings of the Abrahamic world would no longer be acceptable in the Hausa-Muslim environment because many people are now aware that all the Islamic sects have agreed that it is prohibited to draw or picture any of Allah’s prophets. The Shiites however, allow this in their doctrine. Evidence of this was provided when the cartoons and pictures of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that have been produced by someone in a faraway location sparked a violent reaction in Kano. Also, the video film made of Prophet Yusuf (AS), which was banned by the Kano state Hisbah Commission provides another testimony that printing a poster depicting an image of a Prophet of Allah with his wife nude, as in the case of Prophet Adam’s and Eve (AS) poster, is not practicable.

3. It was discovered that the relationship between the first generation of posters/stickers imported from Egypt and the contemporary ones being produced locally are not beyond that of adaptation and appropriation. The only features
that make the locally produced posters distinct from the imported ones are
the cultural aspects, the environment/background, the people depicted and
the technology involved.

4. As it is with all other sectors, technology has had a tremendous impact on
the process of the production and distribution of posters and stickers. The
availability and affordability of technology allow the poster producer to use
computer design software in the planning and designing of posters as opposed
to a more traditional processes. The use of storage devices such as flash
drives, compact discs etc. also facilitate the transfer of the finished artwork
for plating and colour separation, something which was previously impossible.
The Beginnings of the Boko Haram Rebellion from a Micro-level Perspective

Abstract

The article describes the beginnings of the Boko Haram rebellion from a micro-level perspective, including local conditions and personal interests. It analyses the context of the creation of the movement, the nature of its two main leaders – Muhammad Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau, as well as local conditions that pushed their followers into the violent conflict with the Nigerian security forces. It also presents Boko Haram’s ideological basis in the form of Muhammad Yusuf’s concept of religious reform. Moreover, the article describes the influence of the leaders’ personalities on the changing profile of the group.

Introduction

The insurgency in north-eastern parts of Nigeria has lasted for over six years, during which it has caused more than 11,000 deaths\(^1\) and displaced more than a million Nigerians.\(^2\) The gravity of the unrest of the Boko Haram movement has grown to such an extent that in the beginning of 2015 Nigeria was pushed by the African Union, to engage neighbouring countries into the regional military initiative to fight the rebellion. The scale of the unrest in north-eastern states of the country leads us to question the roots of the Boko Haram insurgency. Analyses of the motives of their activity would broaden the perspective of understanding and interpretation of religious reformism in northern Nigeria, a trend initiated by Usman dan Fodio’s 19th century Jihad, and popular in this area especially during the era of independence.

Comprehensive analyses of the causes of a violent conflict involves the use of various perspectives in order to describe the conflict as a coherent system composed of different actors, motivations and external influences. Justino, Brück and Verwimp constructed a micro-level theory of the causes of violent conflicts, as opposed to

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\(^{1}\) According to the Nigeria Social Violence Project, under the auspices of the Johns Hopkins University Africa program. Other statistics are even higher. See the Nigeria Social Violence Project database: http://www.connectsaisafrica.org/research/african-studies-publications/social-violence-nigeria/ (accessed 25 June 2015).

a macro-level perspective. While macro-level narratives explain the large-scale causes of the conflict, like national and international political processes, national security issues, regional rivalries etc., a micro-level perspective is based on analyses of people’s attitudes, choices and behaviours, their interactions with local institutions, as well as the private interests of prominent participants of the conflict. The micro-level perspective involves the particularly individual motivations of the leaders of insurgent groups, which determine the nature of the movements.

Although extensive research has been carried out on the problem of the current northern Nigerian insurgency, most of the scholarly studies concentrate on the macro-level analyses, describing security issues and examining the recent events in this part of the country. There are only a few studies concerning the selected issues of a micro-level approach, especially Boko Haram’s initial conflict with the local police. Moreover, no single study exists which adequately and exhaustively covers the micro-level factors that played an important role in the process of shaping the perilous ideology represented by Boko Haram. This paper is an attempt to investigate the micro-level factors that determined the emergence of the Boko Haram movement. What should be stressed explicitly, is that it is not the aim of the paper to excuse any person involved in the Boko Haram rebellion, especially the movement’s leaders or their destructive ideas. The main objective is to present the motivations that led the group of young radically-oriented people to found the organization that brought such unrest to north-eastern Nigeria.

I have based my research on the analysis of selected primary sources, which are the speeches delivered by the two main leaders of the Boko Haram movement: Muhammad Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau, available in the form of audio and audio-video recordings in the Hausa language. I have also used several reports provided by Hausa Islamic organizations, individual analysts and press agencies. Moreover, in the article I quote secondary sources in English, some of them by Nigerian authors.

Rebellion in theory

The present analysis of the causes of Boko Haram insurgency will be based on the general debate on the factors and circumstances that bring about rebellions and collective violence. Charles Tilly in his work *From Mobilisation to Revolution* describes rebellion using the term “revolutionary situation”. The concept of a revolutionary situation is based on Tilly’s complex definition of revolution – the

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notion that is understood as resultant of two distinct but concurrent phenomena, i.e. revolutionary situations and revolutionary outcomes.

Tilly defines a revolutionary situation as “the presence of more than one bloc effectively exercising control over a significant part of the state apparatus”, based on Leon Trotsky’s words from 1965:

> The historical preparation of a revolution brings about, in the pre-revolutionary period, a situation in which the class which is called to realize the new social system, although not yet master of the country, has actually concentrated in its hands a significant share of the state power, while the official apparatus of the government is still in the hands of the old lords. That is the initial dual power in every revolution.\(^6\)

The rebellion is understood here as a kind of pre-revolutionary form which may, but does not have to, lead to the revolution. Only when combined with the revolutionary outcome, understood by Tilly as “the displacement of one set of power holders by another”, does it result in a so called “successful” revolution.\(^7\)

Tilly expanded Trotsky’s idea of dual power and built upon it an essential notion of multiple sovereignty, described as a situation when, “a government previously under the control of a single, sovereign polity becomes the object of effective, competing, mutually exclusive claims on the part of two or more distinct polities”.\(^8\) Multiple sovereignty is caused by the following factors:

1. the appearance of a group or a coalition of groups, that advances exclusive alternative claims to control the government currently exerted by the members of the polity;
2. commitment to the claims by an important segment of the society, which is usually successfully activated in the face of prohibitions or contrary directives from the government;
3. unwillingness or inability of the government to suppress the group and the commitment to its claims.\(^9\)

These factors compose the proximate cause of the revolutionary situation. Their appearance indicates the emergence of a new group that will form an alternative polity. According to the first of the above-mentioned factors, Tilly drew attention to the elements that are necessary to create an acting group. He focused on four main components that when combined, create a collective action:

1. interest, understood as a gain or loss that results from a group’s interaction with other groups;
2. organization, which means the special aspect of a group’s structure that directly applies to the group’s ability to act on its interest;

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\(^7\) Tilly, *From Mobilization...*, p. 193.

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 191.

\(^9\) Ibid., p. 200.
(3) mobilization, understood by Tilly as a process of acquiring collective control over the resources needed by the group to conduct the action (i.e. everything that may be usable in acting on the interest, like weapons, goods, votes or labour power; it should be stressed that mobilization does not deal with the resources under individual control of the members of the group, but with the resources available for the whole community to act on collective interest);

(4) opportunity, which could be described shortly as a relationship between the group and the world around it; while changing, the relationship can threaten the group’s interests or provide new chances to act on this interest.\(^\text{10}\)

The first three components combined let us describe the group’s capacity to act, but not to explain why a group rebels. Incentives and intents find their place in the notion of opportunity, which is strictly connected with the “polity model” in Tilly’s theory. The polity model allows us to understand the group’s relations to other groups, especially to a government. While analysing the causes that make a “ready to act” group finally engage in action we should take into consideration Tilly’s polity model, composed of repressions/facilitations, the broad notion of power and threats/opportunities.

While struggling for power, two (or more) parties influence each other’s behaviour. The influence might be placed within a continuum from repression to facilitation. Tilly defines repression as “any action by another group which raises the contender’s cost of collective action”, while facilitation is described as an action which lowers that cost.\(^\text{11}\) This kind of influence can be focused on two different components of the other group’s activity: on its mobilization (e.g. hampering communication inside the group, making the access to weapons or recruits difficult or impossible, arresting or killing leaders) or directly on its collective actions (e.g. raising penalties for the participation in the insurgency, fighting with the other group in the battlefield). It is assumed that governmental repression (rarely facilitation) is the most common type of influence as part of the repression/facilitation analyses, however other kinds of groups are not excluded. According to Tilly, the extent of repression or facilitation depends of two distinct factors: the scale of the action taken by the group and the power the group holds. To make it clear, the repression is less likely in case of weak groups and small-scale actions.\(^\text{12}\)

The second component of Tilly’s polity model deals with the power understood as an extent to which one group’s interest prevails over the others with which it is in contention or conflict. Defined in this way, the power of a group is relative. It depends on the other group’s character (e.g. whether the opposite party is a government or not), on its interests and its abilities to act on its interest (it is important here to distinguish between interests only articulated by a group and those which can be actually acted upon), as well as on environmental interactions. Tilly stresses

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\(^\text{10}\) Ibid., p. 7.

\(^\text{11}\) Ibid., p. 100.

\(^\text{12}\) Ibid., pp. 100–115.
that while measuring power it is important to decide what period we do exactly take into account, because a group that has had less power for the last ten years might have more power today and no power tomorrow, depending on environmental interactions.¹³

The last element of the polity model constructed by Tilly concerns opportunities and threats. This element is a two-sided one. On the one side we have an opportunity understood here as the extent to which other groups are vulnerable to the claims of a given group, if these claims support the given group to act upon its interests. On the other side of this component we have a threat understood as, “the extent to which other groups are threatening to make claims, which would, if successful, reduce the contender’s realization of its interests”.¹⁴

The polity model, composed of repressions/facilitations, power and threats/opportunities, lets us assess these interactions between a given group and other groups of the society which are proximate causes of the outbreak of rebellion. In the case of analysing the Boko Haram rebellion, the polity model deals mainly with interactions with the police, security forces and other representatives of the government. Beyond the interactions described through the polity model, in the initial phase of the Boko Haram rebellion the crucial role was played by the interests (especially those of the leaders of the movement), which will be presented below.

Confusions about “Boko Haram”

The organization known as the Boko Haram movement, in fact describes itself with the name *Jama’at ahl al-sunna li-l-da’wa wa-l-jihad ‘ala minhaj al-salaf* (The Community of the People of the Sunna who Fight for the Cause [of Islam] by Means of Jihad according to the Method of the Salaf).¹⁵ The official name was adopted by the current leader of the group, Abubakar Shekau, in 2010. It indicates the importance of the Sunna and Jihad. What is specific, the concept of Jihad appears here in its narrow interpretation as a Lesser Jihad, which in a simplified way means an armed struggle for the purity of faith.¹⁶

The phrase ”Boko Haram” originated from a nickname given to the organization by journalists on the basis of public perception of the movement’s activity. The organization itself does not use this name as it considers it as simplifying its program. Many scholars dispute the meaning of the phrase “Boko Haram”. The confusion regards the proper translation from the Hausa language, i.e. whether to acknowledge the correctness of the meaning, “Western education is forbidden for Muslims” or

¹³ Ibid., pp. 115–119.
¹⁴ Ibid., p. 133.
“Western civilization is forbidden for Muslims”. We notice no purpose in the dispute since the movement does not identify itself with the nickname. In spite of everything, the term “Boko Haram” is used in the present article while referring to the group, because of the popularity of the nickname, which completely excludes the recognition of the movement while using the real name of the group.

There are many different opinions on the beginnings of Boko Haram. Discrepancies concern the exact time of the creation of the movement, as well as the founder’s identity. Several authors argue that the group appeared for the first time in 1995 under the leadership of Lawan Abubakar, while others maintain that it was formed by Muhammad Yusuf (who is also referred to as Ustaz Muhammad Yusuf and Muhammad Yusuf Maiduguri), between 2002 and 2004, when he founded an Islamic centre located in the Ibn Taymiyya mosque in Maiduguri, north-eastern Nigeria.

We maintain that the creation of the Boko Haram organization was a gradual process which evolved from the mid-1990s, when a group of radically-oriented young Muslim thinkers was formed, up until 2003, when Muhammad Yusuf for the first time clearly opposed his former teacher Ja’afar Mahmud Adam, causing serious disquiet among his fellow Muslim theologians. During this process the group was a kind of loosely-knit formation repeatedly reshaped, which is corroborated in the literature by the plurality of the terms used to describe the organization in the first phase of its existence: Yusufiyya, Taliban, Nigerian Talibans, Shabaab Muslim Youth Organisation, Al Sunna Wal Jamma (sic), Ahlulsunna wal’jama’ah hijra and others.

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The ideas of Boko Haram based on the teachings of Muhammad Yusuf

In spite of the multiplicity of the theories related to Boko Haram’s emergence, one can rest assured that it was no later than in 2002 when Muhammad Yusuf became the main leader of the still loosely formed organization. Up until 2003 the group concentrated on shaping its ideology, which was built on the conviction that the Nigerian society needed religious reform. Muhammad Yusuf’s ideas were based on two main pillars. Firstly, he rejected the modern type of education, promoting rather traditional Islamic teaching, i.e. gaining knowledge in Qur’anic schools and studies at Islamic universities. Secondly, he held that secular government is illegal under the rules of Islam, therefore any form of cooperation with the authorities, e.g. employment in public sector or even adherence to the secular law, makes people non-believers (Hausa: kafirai).

Yusuf based his rejection of modern education mainly on the theories laid down in the book al-Madaris al-alamiyya al-ajnabiyya al-istimariyya: tarikhuha wa makhatiruha (Global, Foreign and Colonialist Schools: Their History and Dangers) by the Saudi Wahhabi scholar Bakr Ibn Abdullah Abu Zayd. In his book, Abu Zayd expressed the view that modern secular education was introduced into Muslim societies as a measure to control the colonized territories. According to Abu Zayd, this introduction was planned as a conspiracy to spoil the morals of Islamic societies from within, especially by the promotion of Western lifestyles and the destruction of traditional Islamic cultures.26

Muhammad Yusuf developed Abu Zayd’s ideas, accusing Western-type schools of mixing sexes and disseminating knowledge inconsistent with Qur’anic teachings, especially Geography, Biology and Astronomy. He maintained that some fields of knowledge taught in secular schools are unacceptable for Muslims. He rejected Geography, inter alia, because it contains a theory of precipitation, whereas according to Qur’an (23:18) God says: “And We send down water from the cloud according to a measure, then We cause it to settle in the earth, and We are indeed able to carry it away”.27

Yusuf’s rejection of the secular nature of the state derives from teachings of Salafi scholar Ibn Taymiyya, who preached the renewal of Islamic thought and practice, and the necessity of Muslims’ adherence to the Sharia as the only acceptable source of justice. Inspired by his ideas, Muhammad Yusuf opined that any form of legislative, judicial or executive state function, based on the secular constitution instead of Sharia law, should be rejected. This was the mainstay of his opposition towards the Western-style secular nature of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and its


constitution, as well as to democracy and partisan politics, which, according to Yusuf, enable non-believers to rule. In his conception, anyone who adheres to the secular law or subjects themselves to institutions created by the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a non-believer.28

The teachings of Muhammad Yusuf are deeply reflected in ideas propagated by Boko Haram and Abubakar Shekau. The main rules of the movement have not been gathered in any official document yet.29 They are only presented selectively during the speeches and interviews delivered by Boko Haram leaders and members, which are published mainly in the form of popular video movies. However, principles of the movement were aptly captured by Muhammad Auwal Nuhu Allemawy in a book Akidun boko haram bisa ma’aunin ahlussunnah waljama’ah (Boko Haram Ideas Perceived by the Muslim Community).30 Allemawy describes five pillars of the Boko Haram program, which are articulated below.

1. Secular governments are not based on God’s law and as such they should be perceived as governments of unbelievers. Thus, it is a religious duty of Muslims to fight these governments and replace them with Islamic ones.

2. Since a government is not an Islamic one, it is prohibited for every Muslim to work under this government because working for it stands for supporting it and sympathizing with it. Those who sympathize with unbelievers become unbelievers too.

3. Secular education offered by modern schools contains several non-Islamic theories, therefore it is prohibited for every Muslim to access it. Gaining non-Islamic knowledge stands for corroboration and hence becoming an unbeliever. Most of the modern schools do not distinguish between males and females, which is also prohibited in Islam. That is the other reason why Muslims are not allowed to undergo education in such conditions.

4. Democracy with its rules of holding free and fair elections is a political system created by unbelievers, thus it is based on pagan theories that contrast Islamic law. These pagan theories are perceived as including: the lack of distinction between males and females, the idea that a simple majority of citizens elects a ruler, the possibility of a woman becoming the leader of a country, the deep division between politics and religion. These are the factors that make a person an unbeliever, regardless if he chooses a leader or is to be chosen as a leader in democratic elections.

5. Since the secular government is led by unbelievers and living under such a government makes people unbelievers, every Nigerian becomes an unbeliever and should be forcibly oppressed.31

29 According to my information.
30 Muhammad Auwal Nuhu Allemawy, Akidun boko haram bisa ma’aunin ahlussunnah waljama’ah [Boko Haram Ideas Perceived by the Muslim Community], n.p., 2014.
31 Ibid., pp. 45–46.
These five pillars, presented here from the perspective of the Boko Haram movement in a form that reflects its ideology, laid the foundations for the later rebellion.

**Muhammad Yusuf’s activity**

Opposing secular education, Muhammad Yusuf got involved in preaching activities to popularize his interpretation of Islam. He and his followers developed a detailed educational program. They conducted lectures, lessons and meetings promoting precisely selected Islamic literature, like Tafseer of the Qur’an by al-Bukhari, Tafseer by Ibn Katheer, *ar-Risalah* by Ibn Abu Zayd, *Kitab al-Tawhid* by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and *Majmu’at al-Fatawa* by Ibn Taymiyya, just to mention a few of the most popular works. The group concentrated their teaching activities in four main locations in Maiduguri, the biggest city of the Borno state. Every Saturday and Sunday in the mosque founded by Muhammad Yusuf called Markaz Ibn Taymiyya or Masjid Yusuf, they organized lessons and lectures. As an orator and charismatic preacher, Yusuf managed to gather a considerable group of devoted followers. Every Friday the most popular preachers of the organization delivered Tafseer in the local district of Unguwar Doki. In Masjid Mafoni (Mafoni Mosque), once or twice a month Boko Haram gave general lectures. In Masjid Fizan (Fizan Mosque), Muhammad Yusuf gave regular sermons and lessons. When he was absent, other preachers substituted for him. During this time, Yusuf used to travel all over the largest northern Nigerian cities introducing *da’awa* (preaching activities) in order to call the young Muslims to prepare for Jihad. According to Ahmad Murtada, Yusuf succeeded in mobilizing numerous followers of his movement in the biggest cities of the northern states: Gombe, Adamawa, Borno, Yobe and Buta, although he was less successful in conveying his ideas to the residents of Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and the remaining parts of Jigawa state.

Until his death in 2009 Muhammad Yusuf was engaged in preaching activities and dogmatic disputes with other Islamic teachers, especially those representing the new middle-class Muslims who stressed the necessity of a modernization of Islam. Most of his opponents represented the ‘Yan Izala movement which became active in northern Nigerian cities in the early 1980s by popularizing modern forms of education integrating traditional Muslim teaching with curricula patterned on Western schools, in other words an absolute opposite to the Boko Haram ideology. Some authors point out that in 2007 Muhammad Yusuf purportedly commissioned

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33 Several lectures delivered in Markaz Ibn Taymiyya are to be found on the YouTube channel, for example Yusuf’s Tafsir of Qur’anic surah *al-Imraan* delivered in September 2008: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXXX5-49TtA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXXX5-49TtA) (accessed 15 June 2015).


35 Which is a part of Jigawa state.

36 Ibid., p. 7.
the murder of his former teacher and main opponent in dogmatic disputes, Ja’afar Mahmud Adam.\textsuperscript{37}

**Growing disdain for the police**

While Muhammad Yusuf occupied himself with teaching and preaching activities, his followers became involved in a conflict with local police officers. The problem occurred in 2003 in the region of Yusuf’s birthplace, i.e. the Kanama village\textsuperscript{38} in the Yobe state near the border with Niger, the area where Yusuf found his strongest support. A group of his fellows founded a camp in the rural landscape in a remote location. The place was safe enough to be defended if necessary, since the camp was located between a forest and two bodies of water.\textsuperscript{39} This apparent withdrawal from society was later interpreted by some analysts as the group’s first Hijra.\textsuperscript{40}

In December 2003, shortly after establishing the camp, the group came into conflict with the Kanama village community over access to a local pond and its accompanying fishing rights.\textsuperscript{41} After the police were called, they came to investigate the problem but were successfully repelled by the group. During the fighting two villagers and one policeman died. Whilst exacting revenge, Boko Haram attacked the police station, stole ammunition and arms and burnt down the building.\textsuperscript{42}

Since this initial confrontation, the following five years bore witness to regular petty struggles between local police officers and Yusuf’s followers. This period of constant conflict and long-lasting tension between Boko Haram members and the police seemingly confirmed the group’s later rejection of secular state authority and its dislike of the representatives of federal powers, including police officers, civil servants and local government leaders.

In 2009, Boko Haram’s disdain towards local authorities was intensified as a result of new regulations issued by the state government in Bauchi, prohibiting Muhammad Yusuf and his followers from preaching in public and recruiting new members. The law was passed because of numerous security reasons. The state government assessed the growing Boko Haram popularity in the biggest cities in the northeast of the country and feared possible religious unrest and outbreaks of violence.\textsuperscript{43} In the same period the Borno state passed a new law which made the wearing of motorcycle helmets obligatory. This move was interpreted by Boko Haram members, who were


\textsuperscript{38} To specify, Yusuf was born in the Girgir village in the Jakusko district, south of the Kanama village. See: Onuoha, ‘The Islamist…’, p. 56.

\textsuperscript{39} Mohammed, ‘The Message…’, p. 12.


\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., p. 16.

\textsuperscript{42} Umar, ‘The Popular…’, p. 127.

\textsuperscript{43} Onuoha, ‘The Islamist…’, p. 58.
regularly riding motorcycles, as being a direct aim at subduing their activities. On 11 June 2009, their rejection of the new regulations brought about violent clashes between the group and local police. A major skirmish came about during the funeral of one of Muhammad Yusuf’s followers who had died in a car accident.44 Whilst taking part in the funeral service, participants did not wear helmets whilst riding their motorcycles. The police officers admonished them, but the Boko Haram members consistently refused to adhere to the new regulations, manifesting their contempt towards the secular authority represented by the police. This open defiance of government orders brought about a violent confrontation that resulted in 17 Boko Haram members being shot, although there were no fatalities. The injured were consequently hospitalized at the Teaching Hospital of Maiduguri University.45

After this incident, Muhammad Yusuf released a video addressed to the Federal Government of Nigeria, in which he declared the war on the secular authorities. The movie entitled Budaddiyar Wasika ga Gwanmatin Tarayya (Open Letter to the Federal Government)46 called on Boko Haram members and followers to join an armed struggle against the secular structures of Nigeria. Muhammad Yusuf based this first war declaration not on the basis of religious reasons. Rather he accused the police (representing the secular state) of violating his group’s human right to assembly.47

The conflict with Nigerian security forces

The first major clash between Boko Haram and the Nigerian police began a couple of weeks later, on 26 July 2009, after the attack on the police station in Dutsen Tashi in the Bauchi state. The attack was carried out by Yusuf’s followers as a response to the arrest of several Islamic leaders suspected of cooperating with the group. During the next four days across north-eastern Nigeria, there was heavy fighting between Boko Haram members and national security forces. Yusuf’s followers attacked police stations and several churches in the Bauchi, Borno, Yobe and Kano states.48 As a reaction to the unrest the federal government deployed some additional police divisions in the Borno state and commanded joint operations of the military and police under the coordination of special security task forces “Operation Flush” which were already

44 As Virginia Comolli indicates, there is a theory that participants of the funeral were about to bury a member of the group they themselves had killed. See: Virginia Comolli, Boko Haram: Nigeria’s Islamist Insurgency, London: Hurst, 2015, p. 53.
48 For more detailed information see for example: Onuoha, ‘The Islamist…’, pp. 58–59.
based in Maiduguri. Security forces stormed the main bases of the movement, killing more than 800 suspected sympathizers of Muhammad Yusuf and left 3,500 more people displaced.\(^{49}\) At this stage of the conflict, all of the killings were summary executions performed on residents of the areas where Boko Haram had their main strongholds, some included wealthy men, who were suspected of financing the insurgents, as well as relatives of the members of the group. Among the victims killed by the security forces, there was Alhaji Baba Fugu, Yusuf’s 72-year-old father-in-law, who appeared at the police station for interrogation.\(^{50}\)

On 30 July 2009, the last day of the massacre, Muhammad Yusuf was found hiding in his father-in-law’s goat pen. He was taken into custody and interrogated by the police. During the interrogation, Yusuf was accused of storing explosives, materials for bomb production and arms at his house. He defended himself by explaining that these were indispensable means to protect himself from the threat of the police and the army. Muhammad Yusuf also openly pointed to Abubakar Shekau’s being his first deputy.\(^{51}\) A few hours after this discussion he was summarily executed by the security forces. His body was displayed on the streets of Maiduguri to encourage the taking of photographs, in order to convince the participants of the clashes that he was actually killed. In August 2009, the UN Human Rights Council set up a committee to investigate the circumstances of Yusuf’s and hundreds of others’ deaths, as well as to call account the police officers responsible for the July 2009 massacre. However, it has not published its findings, so no accusation has been brought in this case to this day.\(^{52}\)

**Abubakar Shekau’s influence on the Boko Haram profile**

After the crisis, Boko Haram went underground and regrouped. It re-emerged in the second half of 2010 under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau. At the same time, the profile of the organization changed. Since then Boko Haram has adopted many terrorist tactics, i.e. car bombings, suicide bomb attacks and large scale abductions. The group also started trying to imitate the symbolic domain of Middle Eastern terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda and later ISIS.\(^{53}\) During the first half of 2015 the process gained momentum when Abubakar Shekau published very sophisticated and


\(^{51}\) The recording of Muhammad Yusuf’s interrogation performed several hours before his execution is available in the Hausa language at the YouTube channel: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePpUvfTXY7w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePpUvfTXY7w) (accessed 21 June 2015).


technically advanced movies modelled on ISIS recordings, commanding brutal executions and decapitations, and finally pledging allegiance to the Caliphate created in Iraq and Syria by al-Baghdadi. 54

This apparent reversal in Boko Haram’s profile can be derived from the temperamental differences between Muhammad Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau. The former was engaged especially in the theoretical interpretation of Qur’anic law and in the propagation of his vision of radical Islamic reform, mostly by preaching and teaching. Abubakar Shekau is perceived as a person using the organization to realize his own ambitions related to gaining popularity in the media, shocking public opinion across the world, as well as searching for recognition by global terrorist networks including ISIS and al-Qaeda. 55

Shekau’s appearances in popular videos regularly published on the Internet brought him the notoriety of an emotionally unbalanced and unpredictable person leading his organization according to his unstable moods. Actually, his means of expression and personal culture have caused confusion regarding his serious approach to the religion itself and to the activities of the organization. This assumption may be corroborated by the most vivid fragments of the movies released by the group. In a popular video published in January 2012 after a deadly attack in Kano, he declared that he, “enjoys killing people just as he enjoys killing chickens and rams”. 56 In September 2014, after an alleged assassination of Shekau, he unexpectedly appeared in a movie firing an anti-aircraft gun on the back of a pick-up van and screaming the Islamic creed. 57 Earlier, shortly after the abduction of more than 200 girls from a dormitory in Chibok in April 2014, Shekau released a video containing his sermon and a commentary on the latest kidnapping. The movie illustrates his unstable nature. His speech is composed of threats and insults on the one hand, and religious incantations on the other. During the speech he scratches himself intensively below the hip, which may be perceived as unbecoming in the case of trying to deliver a sermon. What is more, while speaking about the abduction Shekau appears to be laughing:

“Twelve-year-old women will be married, as well as nine-year-old girls, just like was Aisha, […] the wife of Prophet Muhammad, who was married at nine. […] Now you can see the calamity of pagans in this world. [laughing] God is great […] Let’s obey God. You are going to die in sadness! And we will obey God. […] You pagan peasants, your children have been caught [and] enslaved [laughing]. When you

54 For an exhausting description of Boko Haram’s brutal practices based on the witnesses testimonies see, among others, already quoted reports by Ahmed and Eckel, ‘Jini da hawaye…’. The authors provide detailed information about massive executions committed by members of the group on civilians and attach various source materials.


bring your daughter to modern school [...] [laughing] Like I said, young people gain the modern education. [...] Let’s gain the modern education. Girls, [you should] be married now. Go and gain the modern education, you bastards, [but remember that] I caught your daughters [scratching himself intensively]. I will sell them on the market [laughing]. There is a market where one can sell people. God [...] ordered me to sell them out. Yes, I will sell the girls”.

Boko Haram’s promise to retaliate

In the analysis of the motivations of the Boko Haram rebellion the conviction of Abubakar Shekau and his followers for conducting a revenge mission should be highlighted. During the July 2009 massacre more than 800 people were left dead with no judicial trial, most of them suspected of following Yusuf’s radical views. Yusuf himself, who was perceived by his group of followers as a defender of the poor and a leader who will bring the change to north-eastern Nigeria, was openly shot dead by the police. What is more, in the opinion of the Boko Haram members he was humiliated even after his death, by his assassinators displaying his body on the street. These developments caused a ubiquitous sense of injustice brought about against the group of his followers by the Nigerian state representatives. After the killings, prominent members of the organization decided to take revenge on the murderers, as well as on those who were represented by the killers. The group that decided to seek vengeance was headed by Abubakar Shekau, the former deputy of Boko Haram’s murdered leader. At the beginning of July 2010, a year after the massacre, Abubakar Shekau released a video, in which he promised to avenge his acquaintances death:

“[They] attacked us. They opened fire in the place we were learning. Definitely we will conduct Jihad on the way of God and Prophet. Now we are going to take revenge for the death of our Muslim brothers who were assassinated. This is a matter very close to [my] heart. I will continue [the revenge] until my death. I will do it the way they did it”.

Furthermore, in a video released on 13 May 2013, Shekau announced that the abductions perpetrated by the group across north-eastern Nigeria were also committed as part of the revenge mission: “We have caught the girls because our wives and children were detained”.

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He referred to the aftermaths of the July 2009 massacre, when Nigerian security forces imprisoned many people suspected of having connections with the insurgents. According to Onapajo and Uzodike, the group pronounced a death sentence on the governors of north-eastern Nigerian states blaming them for the assassinations of Boko Haram members. This statement was also held by Anayo Adibe, the lawyer of the late Alhaji Baba Fugu (Yusuf’s father in law) and his family. Anayo Adibe, in an interview given in September 2011, claimed that Boko Haram violence is an effect and symptom of the injustice done to the members of the group in the past. Moreover, the group co-founder, Aliyu Tishau, announced in the media that the mayhem unleashed on Nigeria is a result of the authorities’ operations:

“Government should rebuild houses, mosques and schools demolished in Bauchi and Borno states. Government should not interfere in the genuine worship of our group and ensure justice for all. If these are not in place, I predict that the Nigerian situation may become like what is happening in Somalia”.

Conclusion

The outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency in north-eastern Nigeria and its growth under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau were caused by an overlapping of various factors. This article analysed the emergence of the movement and the determinants of its rapid growth until 2010 from the micro-level perspective, including the characters of the leaders of the group, their interests and attitudes, as well as external relationships with other groups in society.

The main factors that caused the outbreak of the Boko Haram rebellion in north-eastern Nigeria could be described as environmental interactions. Beyond the obvious culpability of the Boko Haram side, the long-lasting conflict with the police and security forces also resulted in a few episodes that have been interpreted by the movement as repressive factors. One of these episodes was the July 2009 massacre, which allowed the leaders of Boko Haram to develop a theory from which they sought a revenge mission. This episode, as well as others quoted in this article, has been used by the leaders of the organization to strengthen the motivation of its members by convincing them to fight an apparently just war against oppressive security forces, and therefore serve the purpose of strengthening the organization.

Essentially fundamental to the actual power of the Boko Haram movement are its interests, especially the individual pursuits as represented and demonstrated by the two main leaders of the group. Muhammad Yusuf and his personal will to put into effect his radical proposition of Islamic reform afforded him the support of a

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numerous group of deeply devoted followers, ready to sacrifice their own individual interests to act on collective gains, which have resulted in the growth of Boko Haram power in the long-term perspective. Abubakar Shekau’s individual interest to gain popularity and the reputation of an unbalanced, unpredictable leader of a dangerous Jihadi organization, allowed the group to gain power by threatening the actors that fight against and oppose the group. These components of the strength of the organization, although occurring in the initial phases of the insurgency, still influence Boko Haram’s power and therefore hinder the effective suppression of the rebellion.
Student Unrest in a Nigerian Tertiary Institution: Exploring a Gender-Specific Action

Abstract

This paper explored a gender-specific protest in which only female undergraduates protested. Applying the grievance-deprivation, efficacy, and identity protest models, the study explains why the female students mobilized through their hall of residence associations to protest and ask for their needs of adequate water and electricity supplies in the female hostels of the university.

Introduction

In the last two decades, student protests in Nigerian Universities have been on a steady increase to the extent that it has almost become a permanent culture in the academic system.¹ The prevalence of student protests accompanied by violence and the vandalism of properties has attracted the attention of scholars across different disciplines with the main focus being directed at understanding the reasons why students engage in protests and its consequences, and any possible solutions regarding management of the problem. Findings from the studies² conducted on students’ protests highlight multiple causes, consequences and management styles for dealing with protest depending on the situation that generated the protest.

In spite of the intriguing findings that have emerged from studies³ conducted on student protests in Nigeria, all the studies investigated student protests as a composite

issue consisting of both male and female students as actors in the protests. These studies have been criticized in that they have projected student protests in Nigerian tertiary institutions as male-dominated. Such ‘skewed’ studies may send the wrong signals giving the impression that male undergraduates in comparison to their female counterparts constitute the major actors in protests while female undergraduates merely play a passive role. None of the studies focused on gender-specific protests involving only female undergraduates for reasons associated with poor reporting and documentation of female undergraduates’ protests, which has resulted in little or no available data for research; and the assumption that female undergraduates’ protests constitute no threat to the academic community and therefore issues relating to female undergraduates can easily be solved.

Notwithstanding the paucity of data on protests by female undergraduates in Nigeria, other studies on women protest such as – the Aba Women’s Riot of 1929, the Tax Protests of 1938, the Oil Mill Protests of the 1940s, the Abeokuta Women’s Revolt of 1946, the Calabar Women’s Revolt of 1956, the Warri Women’s Protests of 2002, the Ekiti Women’s Naked Protest of 2009, and the Kaduna Women’s Protest 2015 – conducted outside the university community in Nigeria, are all indicative of women having been politically active in organizing themselves to protest against government policies considered inimical to their social, political, and economic well-being. For example, the Aba Women’s Riot of 1929 was an organized action that involved around ten thousand Igbo market women who organized themselves into

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4 Ibid., p. 156.
5 Ibid., p. 11.
a formidable front to express their dissatisfaction against the colonial administration for imposing a seemingly obnoxious tax on their income. The Igbo market women protested that the income tax should be cancelled and demanded that the Warrant Chiefs, who were the local officers representing the colonial officers, be removed with immediate effect. The women’s protest yielded the desired result as the colonial administration gave them written assurances that they would not be taxed. In the same vein, the warrant chiefs were relieved of their appointments.

Between 1946 and 1947, in Nigeria’s old Western Region, it was the turn of the Abeokuta Women Union (AWU) who organized themselves and embarked on what is today referred to as the “Abeokuta Women’s Revolt”. The revolt was a response to the policies being executed by the Sole Native Authority (SNA) administration, headed by the monarch and symbolized by the “Alake of Egba land”, and the British colonial officers. The most significant grievance of the Abeokuta’s women was the imposition of arbitrary taxation that made it compulsory for women to pay income taxes, water rates, as well as provide money for market supervisors. The women considered this as double taxation and that the burden fell too heavily on their shoulders. Worst still, the women had no representation in governance.

Embittered, the women organized and marched to the palace of the “Alake of Egbaland” – Alake Alaiyeluwa Ademola II – chanting militant songs that sent signals that they were dissatisfied with the SNA administration and demanded change. The revolt lasted until the AWU forced the Alake to abdicate the throne in 1948 and the SNA administration was abandoned while four women were appointed into positions in the new administration.

Other women’s protests mentioned above were sparked by the Aba Women’s Riot of 1929, and clearly evident are the tactics and methods utilized to protest against policies that were perceived as detrimental to women’s well-being. For instance, Adebayo reported that over time, women have imitated tactics from previous protests to ‘drive home’ their demands. Thus, in light of such protests, women have dressed in traditional clothes, smeared their faces with paints, wrapped their hair with fern leaves, carried sticks with leaves of young palms wrapped around them, chanted traditional war songs, and in extreme cases, have even stripped themselves naked.

In contrast to the studies conducted in Nigeria, previous studies overseas have investigated female undergraduate protests. Findings suggest that female undergraduates’ experiences differ from that of their male counterparts. Hence, some issues not considered problematic by male undergraduates had propelled female undergraduates

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to protest and express their grievances, as exemplified in the case studies of female undergraduate protests in Sudan, Scotland, China, Malawi, etc. In the foregoing context, female undergraduates reacted to issues directly affecting their sexuality, personality, and social well-being.

In spite of how instructive the studies conducted in both Nigeria and overseas are, they cannot provide adequate explanation for protests involving female undergraduates in Nigeria because the latter overseas studies, though focused on female undergraduate protests, were conducted in environments that have a different socio-cultural setting from Nigeria, while the former focused on women who were not undergraduates. This gap renders it difficult to understand the dynamics in students’ protests involving only female undergraduates in Nigeria.

This study reflects on the 2010 female undergraduates’ protest that occurred in a tertiary institution in south-western Nigeria. The protest witnessed young female undergraduates from different backgrounds and Faculties, joined together in one union to pursue a common cause that threatened their fundamental human rights as students. The female undergraduates’ protest was a great departure from previous students’ protests where male undergraduates were often the leading protagonists; rather it was female undergraduates who constituted the major actors who took their destiny into their own hands to resist the unjust treatment that had been meted out against them.

On 5 April 2010 I arrived at an institution that was to serve as a case study, where I was a Visiting Lecturer to the Department of Sociology. It was about 7.30am in the morning and I was rushing to meet up with a class scheduled to start at 8.00am. As I approached the university gate, I observed that there were several vehicles in a long queue, waiting to gain entry into the university. Many of the passengers were already out of their vehicles, and were trekking into the university premises in order to be on time for their resumption of work. Suddenly, my attention was drawn to the chanting of a group of protesting students. I observed that the students protesting were female undergraduates numbering around 400. Surprisingly, there were no male undergraduates among the protesters.

Following this observation, I became curious to know the reasons given by the female undergraduates for protesting in the manner they did. Why did the male undergraduates not participate in the protest? What strategies did the female undergraduates employ in conveying their grievances? What are the sociological

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interpretations of the strategies used? What are the implications of the protest on the university and on the students? And how was the protest managed?

**Method and materials**

The data used for this study has been sourced from a recent exploratory study conducted about female undergraduate protests in a tertiary institution in south-western Nigeria. In order to maintain the anonymity of the respondents, the name of the tertiary institution under study is not disclosed. The study adopted a qualitative research design. The methods used for the collection of data were based on Observations (non-participant), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Discussions (KIDs), and In-depth Interviews (IDI). Both the FGD and KID sources specifically sought to ascertain the factors that propelled female undergraduates to protest; the reasons for male undergraduates not participating in the protest, the methods/techniques utilized during the protest, the implication(s) of the protest, how the protest was managed, and the extent to which the protest was successful. The IDI source contains questions relating to an episode concerning water delivery, specifically as to why tanker truck drivers delayed supplying water to the female undergraduate hall of residence. Ten FGDs – consisting of between seven and 10 participants per session – were held with purposely selected female undergraduates in their second, third, fourth and fifth years of study. All the respondents selected were accommodated in the female hall of residence; have resided in the hall of residence for at least one year, and showed willingness to participate in the study. Additionally, two KIDs were conducted with female undergraduate executives such as the President or Public Relations Officer of the female hall of residence assigned to sensitive issues, whose roles are vital towards ensuring peace and orderliness. Altogether 94 female undergraduates participated in the FGDs with two taking part in KIDs. Thus, from the female hall of residence, 96 out of the 161 female undergraduates participated in the study. For additional information, one in-depth interview (IDI) was conducted with the Director of Works, and another two IDIs were held with the tanker-truck drivers.

While the discussions and interviews were on-going, efforts were made to ensure that participants in each session were homogeneous in terms of their level of study. This allowed the participants to express themselves freely. Also, participants’ consent to have their voices recorded was requested and granted – which gave the respondents confidence that the discussions and interviews were purely for academic purposes. Apart from convincing the participants through verbal discussions that the facilitators/interviewers were learning from them and not testing their knowledge, the participants were also encouraged to choose the setting for their discussions and to ask the facilitators questions. The FGDs were conducted in locations and spaces free of the watchful eyes of lecturers, the threat of sanctions, and the influence of non-participating on-lookers and gate-keepers.

The FGDs lasted between 59 and 65 minutes while the KIDs lasted between 25–29 minutes.
The data collected was audio-taped, sorted, and later transcribed with the help of field assistants. Data was analyzed using manual content analysis – reporting verbatim the responses of participants where necessary. In spite of the fact that the study design was qualitative, effort was made to quantify some variables such as age, grade level, religion, and marital status.

Findings and discussion

1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

There were 96 respondents that participated in this study. The small size of the sample is a reflection of female enrolment into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Their ages ranged between 15 and 34 years. Succinctly, 12 were aged younger than 19 years, 64 were aged between 20 and 24 years, 17 were between 25 and 29 years, and one was 30 years old. The age distribution is indicative of the fact that the respondents are youths. Thirty-four of the respondents were in their second year, 33 were in their third year, 26 in their fourth year, and three in their fifth year. In terms of the respondent’s distribution by Faculty, 34 were from the Faculty of Science, 23 were from Social and Management Sciences, 32 were from Arts and Education, and seven were from Law. The religious affiliation of the respondents indicated that more Christians (90) than Muslims (6) participated in the study. A plausible reason for the observed variation may be that the study was conducted in an area dominated by Christians. The majority (93) of the respondents were single while just three were married.

2. Factors engendering female undergraduate protest

In my quest to ascertain reasons that propelled the respondents into protesting, I asked the respondents to mention any reasons that may have sparked demonstrations. Findings from the FGDs and KIIs reveal that a lack of water in the hall of residence constituted a major factor that instigated the female undergraduates to take action. According to the respondents, they reported that prior to their protest, university tanker-trucks had been supplying water to their halls of residence on a daily basis; but, in the last three months preceding the protest, they had observed an erratic change in the pattern of water supply. The increasingly erratic nature of water supplies to the hall of residence meant that the previous daily supply had been cut and water was then only being supplied every other day. In many cases, the respondents reported, water was being supplied at irregular times – e.g., eleven o’clock in the morning – when actually, the respondents were in dire need of water for use in the early hours of the morning. The respondents further submitted that the unavailability of water rendered life difficult for them in the hall of residence given that they could not take baths regularly; flush the toilets; wash their cooking utensils and clothes; and most importantly, have water to drink. Further reports from the respondents added that the lack of water hampered the cleaners efforts to clean the toilets and bathrooms. The major implication of this was that the rooms in the female undergraduates’ hall of residence became uninhabitable due to the malodorous smell emanating from the toilets. The water crisis reached its peak when water was not
supplied for three consecutive days, leaving the female undergraduates in a very unpleasant situation that made their life miserable and quite unbearable. An excerpt from one of the FGDs reads thus:

“Living in the female undergraduate hall of residence has been terrible because of the irregularity in the supply of water during the past three months. As a result of this, we were faced with grave difficulty in getting water to bathe, to wash our clothes, cups, and even to drink. The lack of water also made it impossible for the cleaners to clean the toilets and bathrooms in our hall of residence. Life became so unbearable for us, as such; we had to cry out through the protest, to show that we are not satisfied with the condition of things”. (female undergraduate, 3rd year).

Another participant in the FGD submitted thus:

“We female undergraduates demonstrated because there has been acute scarcity of water in our hostel because the university tanker drivers seldom supplied water to our hostel. When water is supplied to our hostel, it is done at odd hours such that one would need to miss out on classes/lectures. For example, in one of the instances, water was supplied to the hostel around 11.35am when we ought to be in class”. (female undergraduate, 3rd year).

Yet, one of the interviewees in the IDI retorted in this manner:

“Female undergraduates seem to be consistently deprived of certain amenities that make life uncomfortable for them. Imagine being deprived access to water for use in our hall of residence. The incidence started a few months ago and the female undergraduates’ representatives wrote at least three ‘letters of request for intervention’ to the Students’ Unit, complaining about our ordeal and requested that the situation be ameliorated in order to better our lives. Surprisingly, what we got as a reply to our request for intervention was that water was not supplied to the hall of residence for three days at a stretch. At this point, we lost our patience; we were left with no choice than to react against the insensitivity of the officers in charge of water for our needs. So, we protested”. (female undergraduate, 5th year).

Similar responses were heard from the majority of the respondents.

Further findings from the FGDs and IDIs revealed that another major reason why the female undergraduates protested was the lack of power supply (electricity light) to their halls of residence. According to the respondents, there had been incidents of power outage in their hall of residence for about two months and this became worrisome for them given the challenges they faced due to the power cuts. The respondents reported that as a result of the power outage in their hall of residence, they found it difficult to study at night and this has created tension for them particularly as their examinations were just a few weeks away. The respondents also lamented that the outage of power made it impossible for them to iron their clothes, boil water, and cook food. As a means of coping the respondents said they resorted to the purchase of candle sticks for illumination, and kerosene for boiling of water and cooking. Such
contingency measures apparently came at exorbitant prices. The implication, according to the respondents, was that it had had a telling effect on their living allowance, rendering life quite difficult. Excerpts from the FGDs conducted include:

“We demonstrated because the University Management did not provide our hall of residence with electricity for several weeks. This poses many challenges that threatened our livelihood and existence on campus”. (female undergraduate, 2nd year).

Another excerpt reads thus:

“There was power cut in our hostel for almost three months and this gave birth to a plethora of problems. First, we had no light to see in the night, hence, to study was hard. Second, we could not cook because our electric burners became non-functional. Thirdly, the lack of light made us vulnerable to attacks from robbers and rapists in the night. And fourthly, we had to spend deep into our upkeep to buy kerosene to use in our stoves for cooking. Painfully, we informed the authorities about our situation and they persuaded us to exercise patience, and that they would attend to our problems soon. The agony of living increased by the day as no assistance came to our rescue. Therefore, we took our destiny in our hands and marched as a group to challenge the ill-treatment meted out to us”. (female undergraduate, 4th year).

The majority of the respondents aligned with the aforementioned submissions. Given the two major reasons that the respondents outlined which served to engender their protest, the questions must be asked as to why the university tanker drivers did not supply water to the female undergraduate hall of residence. And more directly, why was there power outage in the female undergraduate hall of residence for such a long time? Also, why was there no earlier response to the letter of ‘request for intervention’ submitted by the female undergraduate representatives to the Student Unit?

The IDI conducted with the tanker-truck drivers showed that the short fall in the supply of water hinged on two factors. Firstly, the interviewee (driver) reported that the university borehole from where the tanker-trucks use to load water was damaged and so they had to resort to other alternative sources – e.g., river, boreholes on the outskirts of the university. Secondly, the driver also reported that the tanker-truck was mechanically faulty and needed to be fixed. Efforts on the driver’s part to repair the tanker-truck in order to meet the delivery deadline were rendered unsuccessful because of the lengthy bureaucratic processes entailed in getting funds released in order to purchase the spare parts needed for the repair of the tanker-truck. This ‘bottle neck’, according to the complaining driver, constituted the major reason in prolonging the delay in the supply of water to the female undergraduate hall of residence. One of the claims reported by one of the tanker-truck driver reads:

“The female students are just putting the blame on us (drivers) and making it look as if we are not doing our job properly. The blank truth is that the submersible machine pumping the water from the borehole is spoilt. About the same time, the
water-pump of the tanker-truck spoiled. So, we were faced with the problem of the borehole and the tanker. As such, we could not supply water to the female hostels. We even tried to get the things fixed but, as it were, the normal document protocol has to be followed and this delayed the necessary repairs". (tanker driver).

In contrast to the report by the tanker-truck drivers, the female undergraduates refuted the claim of the tanker-truck drivers, arguing that if the borehole and tanker-truck were indeed faulty, what explanation could be provided for the fact that an adequate supply of water to other departments/units in the university was unaffected, and in particular, the male undergraduate hall of residence? Accordingly, the female undergraduates claimed that the tanker-truck drivers intentionally refused to supply water to their hall of residence as a means of punishment for spurning their sexual advances. Further claims suggested that in order to ‘prove’ to the female undergraduates that the drivers were ‘in charge’, they (the drivers) diverted water supplies to other units including the male undergraduate hall of residence, at their own expense. This, in the view of the female undergraduates explains why the male undergraduates did not participate in the protest. The foregoing discourse is captured from one of the FGD sessions thus:

“...There is the need to understand the basis of this problem. Before the scarcity of water supply and power outage to the female hall of residence, there was some little disagreement between us and the drivers, tanker boys, and electrical technicians on sexual relation issues. We received several unwanted sexual advances from the drivers, tanker boys, and electrical technicians in different forms such as verbal and symbolic sexual advances. But we refused their sexual advances and incurred their wrath, hence, the diversion of water to other units and the male undergraduates’ hall of residence”. (female undergraduate, 4th year).

Apart from the reasons that the respondents provided for why the male undergraduates did not participate in the protest, I observed that there were also other reasons. Firstly, unlike the female undergraduate hall of residence which is located inside the university premises, the male undergraduate hall of residence is located outside the University with its own borehole, tanker truck and generator. These operated independently of each other and, this seemingly accounted for the adequate supply of water and power to the male undergraduate hall of residence, given that the borehole, tanker, and generator were functional compared to the ones in the female undergraduate hall of residence.

The foregoing discourse could be said to generate the following questions. If the male undergraduate hall of residence had a functional borehole, tanker-truck, and generator, why was the tanker assigned to the male undergraduate hall of residence not used as an alternative to supply water to the female undergraduate hall of residence where water was in dire need? Also, how did other units/departments in the university have water for use if both the borehole and tanker inside the university were faulty?

Findings from the IDIs conducted with the Director of Works confirmed that the tanker-truck and borehole inside the university were actually faulty and that an alternative means to get water was put in place. According to him, the tanker-truck
driver in the male undergraduate hall of residence was directed to supply water to the units/departments and the female undergraduate hall of residence inside the university. An excerpt from the IDI conducted with the Director of Works read as thus;

“It is a fact that the borehole inside the university premises developed some problems, and that the tanker also broke down. Notwithstanding, the needed step was taken to ensure that water was supplied to all the units/departments, and the female undergraduate hall of residence.”

The female undergraduates in the FGD sessions further reported that the power outage experienced in their hall of residence was at two levels. The first level was the public power supply generated and distributed by the Nigeria Electric Power Authority (NEPA), now known as Power Holdings Nigeria Plc. Power from this source had been erratic over the years, and Nigerians were wary about relying on power from this source. The second level concerns the internal power supply which is generated by the University Plant; to provide power in the university every night between the hours of 7pm and 10pm. It was the failure in the second power source supply that aggrieved the female undergraduates because they argued that they suspected that the electrical technicians and the tanker drivers had connived to make life difficult for them in their hall of residence given that both the tanker drivers and the electrical technicians who work in the Plant room do so under the auspices of the Department of Works.

Drawing from the submission of the Director of Works, I suspect that this explains why other departments/units in the university continued to receive an adequate supply of water. I also suspect that within this scenario, the tanker-truck drivers tactfully directed the tanker driver from the male undergraduates’ hall of residence to units/departments where water was supplied, thus neglecting the female undergraduate hall of residence on purpose. I suspect that both the tanker drivers and the electrical technicians played a complementary role to each other in order to victimize the female undergraduates. Such circumstances could be perceived as a form of “gender war” whereby the tanker drivers technically unleashed hardship on the female undergraduates as a punishment for not accepting their sexual proposals. This subtle act, though injurious to the female undergraduates, constitutes a means by the drivers to maintain a “male hegemony” that propagates male domination over females. This ‘male hegemony’ makes it possible for the tanker-trunk drivers to ‘hide’ their actions made ostensibly under certain ‘obvious’ circumstances – e.g., with regards to the tanker-truck that ‘broke down’ and the borehole that was ‘faulty’ – thus, shielding them from being detected and punished.

3. Techniques used in the protests

The data I collected relating to this theme was through the method of (non-participant) observation, a situation that enables observations of protesters without actually participating in the protest. During the protest, I observed that the female undergraduates employed several techniques to express their grievances to the university authorities. First, I observed that the university gate, the lecture rooms and the University Library were kept under strict lock and key. These acts in my view served different purposes.
The closure of the university’s gate was intended to reduce the number of vehicles into university’s premises, thereby reducing the number of workers that would make the deadline for the resumption of work in the offices. The class rooms were padlocked to prevent lectures from taking place; and the University Library was shut down to prevent students from going inside to study. Generally, the last two actions (the locking of the lecture rooms and the University Library) was a strategy employed by the female undergraduates to ensure that they had numbers on their side to reflect and strengthen the cohesiveness of their protests. Some of the protesters carried empty buckets and cups in one hand, while in the other hand they held sticks which they used to hit the buckets and cups. I felt the empty buckets and cups were meant to be symbolic of the fact they had no water to take care of their domestic chores. The sound that comes from the buckets or cups when hit with the sticks could be interpreted as symbolizing an “emptiness in life” – had there been water in the buckets when hit with the sticks, the sound produced would be deep and “bass-like” – a symbolic indication of life. The majority of the protesters were dressed in red clothes; others held red flowers, mimicking ‘blood’ and symbolically conveying the message that their hearts were ‘bleeding’ from the injuries sustained from the ill-treatment meted out to them by the tanker-truck drivers and electrical technicians. More significantly, the red colour used by the female undergraduates could be interpreted as depicting the presence of danger and the need for wariness. All the protesters wore their hair untidily; some folded one leg of their trousers up, some had their blouses torn, whilst others wore night-gowns, displaying more sensitive parts of their body. These actions could be interpreted as depicting instability and disorderliness. It is important to also comment that the wearing of night-gowns that showed more sensitive parts of the protesters’ bodies was probably not about displaying their sexuality; rather, it could be interpreted as conveying a different message, that under their skin, they are merely human and as such should be regarded as equal with the male gender.

Finally, the protesters chanted militant songs that conveyed their agitation to the university authorities. The militant songs served as a catalyst that motivated and energized the protesters, and gave them hope that their struggle would ultimately prove victorious.

A critical analysis of these techniques reveals that the respondents utilized verbal, physical, and symbolic techniques that are non-violent, in order to canvass their demands. Similar techniques have been reported in previous studies.18

4. Implications of the protest

All the responses from the FGDs and KIIIs conducted with the female undergraduates agreed that one major implication of the protest was that it brought the activities of the university to a standstill, and caught the attention of the authorities. For example,

lecturers could not hold lectures with students since the lecture rooms were padlocked. In the same vein, the students were idle as they could not access the library to study or complete their class assignments. The most pronounced sense of inconvenience was felt by the students from the Faculty of Science, who could not gain entry into their laboratories. The implication for such students was that they had to cancel experiments and re-commence at a later date. Generally, there was a loss of five working days which proved costly in financial terms for the university.

Socially, the protest brought about a sense of belonging and togetherness among the protesters that fostered a strong group cohesiveness and integration that made them view themselves as one.

As a result of the protest, the university authority assembled a four-man committee to look into the matter and make recommendations. The committee comprised of two males and two females, with one of the females as the Head of the committee. The female undergraduate representatives were invited for discussions. In the meeting, the representative for the female undergraduates reported their experiences over the months and made requests for immediate change. According to the report from one of the KIIIs conducted with a representative of the female undergraduates, the committee asked them to be calm and that their matters would be looked into without delay.

An excerpt from theIDI reads:

“The committee invited me and three other executives of the female undergraduate hall. In the meeting, I explained to the committee members how we have been living without water and light. I told them that we have written letters to complain about the situation before it got worse but no response was received. Therefore, we demonstrated against the marginalization of our persons, and demanded for equal treatment. In response, the chairperson of the committee, comforted us with soothing words and advised us to be calm. We were assured that the situation was going to change before the day ended. So we retired to our hall of residence to convey the outcome of the meeting to others”. (representative of the female undergraduates)

Additional findings from the FGDs showed that whilst being addressed by their representatives about the outcome of the meeting, held with the Committee assembled to look into the protests, the female undergraduates sighted tankers heading towards their halls of residence to supply water. The committee representatives however did not finish addressing the female undergraduates, as the young women dispersed in jubilation, rushing into their rooms to picking up containers for water, and chanting on top of their voices, “We have won!”, “We have won!” One of the participants in the FGDs recounts thus;

“We were still listening to the report from the meeting held with the university authority when one tanker surfaced, another followed and were coming to our hall of residence. Nobody could wait for the end of the report considering the level of our excitement that the protest was a huge success. We all scattered and ran into
our various rooms to collect our buckets and plastic containers to fetch water. Our hall of residence was beclouded with songs of victory”. *(female undergraduate, 3rd year).*

Interestingly, the success of the uprising remained persistent in the months after the uprising.

**Conclusion**

Though the data collected for this study is limited to self-reported experiences of female undergraduates and tanker-truck drivers; the study has raised cogent issues that may be useful to future research initiatives in the neglected area of female undergraduates’ protests in tertiary institutions. Further studies could explore other methods such as using quantitative techniques with a large sample size of respondents to test bivariate and multivariate relationships among variables.

This present study is unique because it has shown that female undergraduates could organize peaceful protest aimed at expressing their dissatisfaction about issues bordering on their welfare, which previous studies did not adequately elucidate particularly as it relates to Nigeria. Most studies in the recent past portrayed males as the leading actors in social protests. Such studies are usually male-focused in their approach – emphasizing male superiority. Apart from that, the present study also indicates that although both males and females may be exposed to similar conditions; their perception and how they experience social conditions differs from one another. This variation in gender perception and experience of issues constituted the catalyst that propelled the female undergraduates to protest against what they considered inimical to their well-being.

Finally, this study has extended the grievance/deprivation, efficacy, and identity protest models. It has shown that a group perceived belief of being deprived of their rights, followed by the belief that group-related problems can be solved collectively, whilst maintaining the necessity to protect their identity, may all be deemed crucial in explaining female undergraduate involvement in protests. As such, apart from group features, which may increase the zeal to protest, other characteristics that can aggravate the perceived level of deprivation-efficacy-identity thus leading to protest should all be managed. An implication of the findings in this study is that as University Management continues to provide accommodation for female

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19 Adeyemi, ‘Causes, Consequences…’, pp. 158–159.
undergraduates, efforts should be geared towards providing adequate amenities in order to curb the necessity for protest.

Therefore, this study concludes that the female undergraduates were conscious of the threat which the lack of water and power outage (orchestrated by the tanker-truck drivers and electrical technicians) posed to their social status. Female undergraduates can mobilize themselves through their hall of residence associations, using indigenous techniques to protest and protect their social rights; and the success recorded in the protest is a signal that female undergraduates constitute a formidable and organized group to be reckoned with.
Ways of changing society vary from one society to another. A dominating paradigm has always been formulated as a reflection on the contrasting paradigms of violent and nonviolent means of changing society. The struggle for liberation through nonviolent means has been a favoured and desirable strategy for changing society for quite some time. This text edited by Bartkowski, aims at shedding light on how nonviolent means have been used in several case studies worldwide. The book is divided into six parts. The introductory chapters by the editor presents two issues, the first of which deal with nonviolent struggles in terms of identifying actors in the same ideological framework where network building becomes essential in mobilizing people to engage in nonviolent struggle. Mobilizing people calls for collective identity as defined by interests and techniques for achieving objectives, and also defined by the central techniques as shared amongst its members. The research is good at highlighting its weaknesses which are fully expressed as, “future research will do well to gather ethnographic data on the activities of nonviolent movements to better capture the intricate work of framing identities and tactical choice of choosing methods that reflect nonviolent resisters’ biographies and collective identities” (p. 43).

The first part dwells on Sub Saharan Africa focusing on the case studies of Ghana, Zambia and Mozambique. The Ghanaian case study highlights-how nonviolent resistance was used in the struggle to achieve independence noting that, “non-violent resistance in Ghana can trace its roots to the political traditions of governance” (p. 51). After espousing the various actors and actions undertaken it finally concluded that, “there was the grace to accept compromise in certain situations as well as the determination to go the harder way of strikes and imprisonment when sacrifice was required” (p. 64). The Zambian case study focused on the nonviolent strategies that were used in the fight to dislodge colonialism, illuminating the culmination of the struggles, the actors involved, and the actions undertaken as well as the environment that necessitated nonviolent strategies. The Mozambique case focuses on the period 1920s–1970s and considers the various instances of peaceful resistance prior to the armed struggle that emerged in the later years. It concludes that, “academics and
activists alike will do well to use Mozambique, so apparently simple a story of armed victory, to understand the complexities involved in truly radical transformations. Through strikes and songs, newspapers and petitions, and organizations that grew in numbers beyond the Portuguese abilities to contain them beyond any armed structure … have been consistently shown the power of the civil society” (p. 101).

The North African and Middle Eastern experiences of nonviolent resistance are outlined in part two and dwells on the case studies of Algeria, Egypt, Iran and Palestine. With regards to Algeria, the strategies and organization that were at the center stage of the non-violent resistance are illuminated against a backdrop of the violent means that were seen as the only way of dislodging colonialism. This is justified given, “the severity of socio-economic disruption caused by the colonial regime and the harsh conditions of French colonization of in Algeria” (p. 121). The case of Egypt traces the history of revolutions ultimately dwelling on the 1919 revolution and highlighting the actors and strategies adopted. It concludes that, “the events of 199 and 2011 point to a new trend of increased use of strategic nonviolent actions” (p. 138). For Iran from the onset the author noted that, “nonviolent resistance has played an influential role in Iranian history since the late nineteenth century, in particular challenging unjust rulers and their subservience to foreign interests” (p. 143). The author concludes that, “from 1890 to present, many Iranians have seen nonviolent action as a tactical choice” (p. 158). The final section in this part concerns the case of Palestine, which in a similar vein to Algeria, highlights nonviolent resistance in the struggle to achieve statehood against a backdrop of armed struggle. It ultimately concludes that, “the historical record continues to reveal the paucity of efforts to strengthen the influence of Palestinians who advocated civil action as opposed to military strategies” (p. 175).

Part three dwells on the case studies of Asia and Oceania. The first case study of Burma highlights the Burmese experience with regards to nonviolent action, with the author noting that, “between 1910 and 1940, the people of Burma discovered and employed a wide variety of civil resistance techniques, including the development of mass mobilization organizations, coherent campaigns and constructive programs” (p. 195). In the case of Bangladesh the author explains how nonviolence was instrumental in the struggle for independence. With regards to West Papua the author traces the experience in civil resistance from the 1920s up to 2012 highlighting the actors and methods utilized, and finally noting that, “Papuan civil resistance also draws on continuous traditions of nonviolent resistance that stretch back to at least the 1850s and it relies heavily on indigenous and cultural frames as well as Christian narratives” (p. 231).

Part four presents case studies from Europe. In the case of Hungary the author offers an analysis of the Hungarians’ experience with nonviolent resistance, noting the history, the motivations and key individuals involved. The second case study deals with the Polish experience in the reconstruction of the Polish nation from 1900 to the 1960s with the author illuminating on how nonviolent strategy ensured national and cultural survival and successfully politicized masses. The last European case
study of concerns Kosovo in which the author traces the experiences nonviolent resistance against a backdrop of violence, concluding that, “failure to respond adequately to a civil resistance campaign is likely to be repeated elsewhere until international powers are prepared to act on the recognition that nonviolent struggle – even with secessionist goals – is an appropriate reaction to persecution and is far more desirable than armed struggle and the negative consequence that flows from it” (p. 293).

The last part dwells on experiences from the Americas. The case of the United States deals with the experiences from the period 1765–1775, in which the author alludes to decade of nonviolent resistance. The author focuses on the dynamics of the nonviolent struggle, finally noting that, “these campaigns of civil resistance spanning ten years displayed impressive self discipline, used largely improvised strategies until the very end, and achieved serious gains” (p. 314). The second chapter in this section outlines Cuba’s execution of nonviolent strategies as they struggled for autonomy and independence in the period 1810–1902, in a century heavily dominated by violent strategies. In conclusion the author notes that, “the gradual, but effective, nonviolent approach to national autonomy produced a stronger post-independence democratic base” (p. 334).

In conclusion the editor justifies the importance of the book as a collection of case studies and maintains that the work, “noted that civil resistance often remains unexamined by researchers and historians because ordinary people who engage in civil resistance are seen as weak and lacking political power” (p. 339); and, “that civil resistance is on the cusp of becoming a self-standing scholarly discipline equivalent in importance to peace, conflict resolution, or security studies which a few decades ago had no serious institutional presence in academia” (p. 352). As such this book is widely recommended to students, academics and practitioners in the field of peace and conflict studies.

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10. Ibid., p. 186.

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