



Making the World Safe for Patriarchy: Trump and the Zombie Apocalypse

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ABSTRACT

Both Donald Trump in the White House and zombies in American fiction, movie, and television serials, highlight changes in American social structures, especially marriage and childbirth. Instead of a critique of such structures, however, the zombie genre largely reinforces traditional norms. To be sure, Trump himself is not a zombie, although his followers are often represented the living dead in American political cartoons. What is the connection between the two? In the first place, zombie fiction can be viewed as culturally conservative in orientation, because of its emphasis (whether intentionally or not) on the traditional nuclear family. Second, zombies, almost by definition, do not have a leader, except that the genre deliberately toys with this theme in one recent television series. This paper discusses the two themes – crowds that become like zombies and leaders who create zombie-like followers – in the context of the genre's overall conservative critique.

KEY WORDS: Donald Trump, marriage and childbirth, violence and sacrifice, zombies

*And what of the dead had not speech for, when living,
They can tell you, being dead: the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.
(T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding")*

Introduction

The focus of this paper is on two American television series, *The Walking Dead* (2010-present) and *Z Nation* (2014-2018). Both function as conservative cultural critiques, the purpose of which is two-fold: First, to restore the traditional patriarchal family to prominence, and, second, to assert that a nation of patriarchal families should be led by a narcissistic autocrat, prefiguring the rise of Donald Trump.

This is contrary to the popular assumption that the world of the zombie apocalypse is synonymous with the collapse of traditional social structures and systems of meaning. Here the contrary hypothesis is advanced. The traditional patriarchal family is restored and a form of dictatorship created. A ritual of sacrifice serves to re-affirm traditional institutions and to reconstruct the post-apocalyptic world. *The Walking Dead*, for example, is a form of cultural revanchism masquerading as a fantasy of world annihilation. *Z Nation*, on the other hand, takes up the theme of leadership and the social replacement of the citizen public with a conception of "the crowd" and its deranged and autocratic leader.

The return to "traditional" values is the leitmotif that underpins much of the zombie genre, especially in its American versions. It should come as not surprise that the question of how to exert leadership over such a movement figures prominently in the genre. *The Walking Dead* considers this question, even though it prefers to concentrate on the theme of blind obedience to an instinct or urge. We are drawn into a world in which social action is not mediated by thought, and in which conscious intentions can be dispensed with. *The Walking Dead* creates survivor communities in which family values figure prominently, but that is only possible against the backdrop of zombie behavior that knows neither purpose nor aim. But the real question centers on the issue of leadership, since a leaderless society, no matter how regimented, cannot serve as model for the conservative reconstruction of social relations. A hybrid persona is therefore required – someone who is both automaton himself and a leader of automatons, and who thereby points the way to post-apocalyptic social transformation. Donald Trump functions in precisely this role. The role is reflected in the character of "Murphy" in *Z Nation* – a half-human, half-zombie hybrid who communicates with zombies

via telepathy and wants nothing more than to create a whole world of zombie hybrids he controls and directs.

Zombies and Classical Crowd Psychology

The Zombie arrival is usually heralded by epidemic disease that kills the majority of the population, and leaves the rest either as zombies or their human prey. *I am Legend*, *28 days later*, *28 Months Later*, and of course *The Walking Dead* and *Z Nation* – these and many more constitute only the best known and most recent representatives of the usual plot development (McGINN 1995). Where does the notion come from, that the earth must be depopulated in order to make way for the new world to come? The *Book of Revelations* is the *locus classicus*:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea (21:1).

And I John saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband (21:2).

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away (21:4).

After the destruction, only a few will remain to witness the coming of God upon his Throne. There will be no people who are “fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars” (21:8). The world will be nearly empty. Then God shall then “make all things new” (21:5).

However, the annihilation described in *Revelations* is not the only model of transformation available. Another model exists: The French Revolution. Arguably, no event looms larger in the Western historical imagination unless it is the Fall of Rome, and both produced new social orders from bloodshed and horror. Given that word “apocalypse” itself means a tearing away of the veil, and thus a revelation of what is true and eternal, the religious resonances of the genre trademark “zombie apocalypse” should not surprise us. Like *Revelations*, the tumultuous end of the *Ancien Regime* and long before that, the barbarian overthrow of Rome itself, were both seen as world-historical events that marked sudden ruptures of the old. The Paris insurrection in 1789 was unforeseen, but once begun, it consumed the nation like a conflagration. It ended only when autocracy was restored, first by Napoleon, and then

resumed, on and off, from 1815 through the Bourbon Restoration, by Louis Philippe, and finally by the Second Empire of Napoleon III that culminated in the ignominious defeat by Prussia in 1871.

Gustave Le Bon had small regard for the republican sentiments, and from his vantage point, a century after the French Revolution, he condemned the entire period as exemplary of crowd rule. Le Bon thought that Rousseau was to blame: The philosopher represented the best and the worst of the Age of Reason, on the one hand speaking grandly of mankind's nobility and on the other of the need for the violent overturning of the established order (LE BON 1980). Lesser men are inclined predominantly to revolutionary revolt, claimed Le Bon, and thus inevitably end up producing the disasters to which every revolution is subject. Le Bon believed that the crowd is always to be feared. Like Edmund Burke, he subscribed to the view that only a constitutional monarchy, guided by established tradition, could save modern nations from destructive revolutionary excitements.

Le Bon crystalizes in a single concept, "the crowd," everything that organized societies in the West should abjure. There is something just as bad the crowd, however: "...something very like a dictatorship" (LE BON 1980:73). But can the term "dictator" apply to any of the stock figures that inhabit the zombie genre? A zombie dictator, after all, is a contradiction in terms, for to be a zombie in the first place means to lack the very qualities that would make leadership possible. As an unthinking crowd, and lacking conscious intention, zombies can only do so much. They are prone to drowning, or falling off cliffs, or simply having their legs cut out from under them – literally. From *The Walking Dead* we learn that the only sensate capacities they retain is the ability to smell and hear, and these capacities lead them to the uninfected humans they will kill and consume.

Yet to interpret the zombie against the theoretical background Le Bon supplies yields interesting results. Let us consider the history of crowd psychology. Published in 1895, Le Bon's *The Psychology of Crowds* captured the temper of the times. With the growing density of urban life, rapid industrialization, the universal male suffrage, and the rise of the labor movement, observers turned their attention to *la foule*, "the crowd." Trained as a medical doctor, Le Bon discovered what he claimed were the sources of crowd psychology: The millions of Europeans who, churned up and spat out by the great movements of the day, had been ripped from their rural traditions and values. Drawn to cities, they became the stuff of *la foule*: A mass shaped by simple ideas, ones that conjured the specter of global conspiracies (usually involving Jews), the sway of an economic elite and the prospect of unlimited immigration from non-Anglo-Saxon nations. These ideas, he observed, circulate inside

crowds just as microbes do inside a human body, infecting all within their reach. Against this new strain of microbes, the tools of logical analysis offer the weakest of protections.

The consequences, said Le Bon, could be catastrophic. If not quite the walking dead, the infected individuals in Le Bon's schema are reduced to the status of beasts. "By the mere fact that he forms part of an organized crowd, a man descends several rungs in the ladder of civilization. Isolated, he may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd, he is a barbarian – that is, a creature acting by instinct" (LE BON 2002:83). Unlike the freelancing zombies in television drama *Z Nation*, however, these particular creatures require a leader, a charismatic figure who, adept in the art of public relations, seeks simple ends: To win power for the sake of power – or, rather, to maintain an elite of winners over the mass of losers.

Le Bon observed that crowd members are consumed by a near-religious fervor. As with the fiercest religious sect, so too with the modern crowd: Its commonly held convictions "assume the characteristics of blind submission, fierce intolerance, and the need of violent propaganda." The crowd's leader is "acclaimed as a veritable god," holding sway over its imagination by "devising new formulas as devoid as possible of precise meaning," thus taking on whatever meaning the follower invents. At the same time, the leader destroys his rivals with claims devoid of substance: "By dint of affirmation, repetition, and contagion" the crowd's leader affirms that his opponent is "an errant scoundrel, and that it is a matter of common knowledge that he has been guilty of several crimes." Almost as an afterthought, Le Bon concludes: "It is, of course, useless to trouble about any semblance of proof" (LE BON 2002:79).

To his bourgeois readership, Le Bon offered a diagnosis of the troubled state of France's contemporary social health. France had been wracked by a series of crises, beginning with the collapse of the major banks and stock market in 1882, stretching through the rise of nationalist, anti-Semitic, and anti-republican movements, like the Boulanger Affair of the late 1880s. This was followed by political conflagrations such as the "Panama scandals" of 1892 and a rash of anarchist bombings and assassinations through the early 1890s, all of which were eclipsed by the Dreyfus Affair. The present age certainly appeared, as Le Bon declared, to belong to the crowd.

The "crowd" is the perfect template for the zombie hordes that invade the public psyche in the early 21st century. That should not surprise us. Le Bon was reacting against the unprecedented crowd dynamics that temporarily abolished the French monarchy and permanently put an end to rule by aristocrats. But Le Bon went further, and wrote his next most famous book on the insanity of the European mobs in the days leading up to the First World War. If Le Bon did not address public media, it was because the discipline he created

Charles W. NUCKOLLS

Making the World Safe for Patriarchy: Trump and the Zombie Apocalypse

– crowd psychology – had not yet matured. This job fell to Edward Bernays, Freud’s nephew, and the author *Public Relations* (1945), and of the still popular *Crystalizing Public Opinion* (1923) and *Propaganda* (1928). It was Bernays who convinced women to take up smoking – then considered unladylike – by linking cigarettes to female emancipation, calling them “torches of freedom.”

Just why the public’s imagination turned to animated corpses at the end of the last century is beyond the scope of this chapter (see HALBERSTAM 2020; LAURO 2017; LEVINA – BUI 2013; SCOTT 2020). There was no stopping the steady proliferation of zombie books, comics, movies, and television shows. The public was (and remains) insatiable, much like the biting and chewing creatures that fascinate them. Along the way, questions of zombie physiology and brain function have been considered, including the question of whether or not the undead retain dim memories of their existence prior to “turning.” A small number of television shows considered this possibility, and expanded on it, e.g., the British *In the Flesh* (2013-2014); the French *The Returned [Les Revenants]* (2012-2015); the Australian *Glitch* (2015-2019); and the American *Resurrection* (2014-2015). Apart from these (mostly) foreign serials, the American versions have all steered clear of exploring memory and the continuity of self. The premier zombie series, *The Walking Dead*, is a case in point. The series devoted a couple of early episodes to an experiment designed to imprint on the mind of an old man dying of cancer certain spoken words and phrases of music. Once “dead,” would his zombie self, returned to life, exhibit recognition when prompted by cues? Interestingly, the audience never finds out, since one of the series’ principle characters (“Angela”) reacts to the suddenly energetic old zombie by putting a knife through his head. Surely the reason is obvious. The implications of making zombies even dimly self-aware would suggest the possibility of cure. It would almost certainly reduce (or cast doubt on) the wanton violence with which they are dispatched by living humans. As we shall see, violence is essential to sacrifice, the sacrifice through which the survivor group reconstitutes itself on the basis of traditional and patriarchal institutions.

Despite its ten-year run, *The Walking Dead* never once returned to this question, preferring to cast the dead in their non-cerebral role as forever unsatisfied consumers of flesh. Steven Zani and Kevin Meaux contend that this renders them a “blank template” (ZANI – MEAUX 2011:99) onto which we graft all sorts of American anxieties, including the fear of rising rates of senile dementia, especially among aging Baby Boomers. Still, the issue of consciousness cannot be escaped, since transforming the undead into a crowd that can be led (and thus manipulated) by an autocrat remains crucial to their deployment as a trope for the right-wing Republican movement under Trump. The problem is addressed, however, in

another television series, *Z Nation*, almost unique in the genre, not just for its mordent sense of humor, but for inventing the figure of the zombie *manqué*.

Leading the Unthinking Crowd

Z Nation begins several years a virus has killed most humans. In the days before the unexplained catastrophe, the character known as “Murphy” was an inmate at a naval hospital who became the unwilling subject in a government-sponsored experiment on a possible vaccine. Murphy was the only subject to survive the injection. Then he was exposed to zombies, who proceeded to bite and attack him. He survived, his body covered with bite-mark scars. Scientists concluded that his blood contains antibodies that are the last and best hope for a vaccine. But the facility was overrun before further tests could be done.

Shortly after, Murphy begins to mutate into some form of hybrid between zombie and human. His skin sheds and his body turns blue, and he seems to be able to control and even hypnotize the zombies he encounters. Murphy discovers that his saliva renders ordinary humans immune to zombie bites, but makes them susceptible to mind control. Until then, the survivor group only knows of Murphy’s importance to the development of a vaccine, and they try to escort him to government laboratory in California. Murphy, however, makes this difficult, since in addition to being half-human, he exhibits strong tendencies to narcissism and greed. When he rejoins the group after each selfish jaunt, he is sheepish and contrite, but only briefly. Invariably he embarks on another mad escapade, seeking gratification on his own terms. Yet he has not turned into a full zombie and still remains in control of himself. There are many twists and turns in the plot over the five years of *Z Nation*, and along the way Murphy falls in love with a mysterious woman (later killed) and conceives a child, whom he leaves under the protection of a farmer couple whom he converts into hybrid zombies. Later we will see why matrimony and childbirth are foregrounded, again and again, in American zombie fiction. What stands out is the acknowledgment that zombies possess minds, and these minds can be manipulated by a man who is one of them, but whose skin color (among other things) marks him as different. Will he use this power for good, to help the survivor group dedicated to saving him, or will turn even more into a zombie narcissist?

The fact that Trump supporters are sometimes represented in public media caricatures as mindless clones, without intelligence or conscious awareness, comes as no surprise. Political opponents usually represent each other as witless dupes. Opponents found Trump’s weird mind control over his adoring legions incomprehensible. His cinematic counterpart is the

Charles W. NUCKOLLS

Making the World Safe for Patriarchy: Trump and the Zombie Apocalypse

half-zombie Murphy. Trump's legions were the same people who heard him declare that he could "stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot someone and I wouldn't lose any voters" and cheered him on. Many said they would die for him, and that turned out to be no exaggeration. Newspapers in early 2021 reported on a nurse, somewhere in the northern Midwest, who tearfully explained that she had offered to set up a telephone call between a patient on the brink of dying from Covid-19 and members of his family. The patient refused, because, he said "I don't have Covid; Trump said it was only the flu." This is reminiscent of the 2017 zombie horror film *Bushwick*. The film begins like a lot of zombie flicks. An unsuspecting couple is walking through a subway station in the working-class neighborhood of Bushwick in Brooklyn. The station is eerily empty. They hear gunfire outside. The boyfriend goes out to investigate, and the audience knows from the conventions of zombie films that this is a bad idea. No need for a spoiler alert: He dies. The girlfriend ventures out to find the residents of Bushwick fighting an invading horde. But it is not a horde of zombies, even though they are committed to the same relentless violence. The invasion force turns out to be a right-wing paramilitary bent on securing the secession of Texas and most of the South from the United States.

The usefulness of the zombie trope explains its power of endurance. They fall into the category George Lakoff calls "pathological stereotypes" (LAKOFF 2016). It might seem that this would prove serviceable only on the political left. After all, to call somebody "zombie-like" is hardly a compliment. This is not the whole picture, however. From audience surveys, we know that the genre is just as popular on the political right as it is on the left. There must be aspects of zombie-hood that conservative extremists not only admire, but actually seek to emulate. What are these aspects? Just before the 2020 election I interviewed several members of this community, to get their take on the zombie genre. All agreed zombie films were great fun. Then one man – a white man in his 40's – said, "and you know what, I like zombies because zombies get things done." He was joking, but there was a hint of gleeful admiration in his remarks.

The logic behind this observation is found in the unswerving power of mindless zombies to accomplish the one thing that is their special talent: Total destruction. Zombies do not exist without destroying the world and forcing the survivors to rebuild it. Years ago Americans heard the advisor to President George W. Bush, Grover Norquist, say that the goal of the Republican Party was "to shrink the government down to the size you could drown it in a bathtub." Trump became popular because of his promise to uproot and destroy the established order, even if it meant casualties. The old order must be obliterated in paroxysms of violence that Trump and his followers explicitly endorsed, especially in the period leading up to the January 6, 2021, capitol insurrection. It is small wonder, then, that Trump's supporters

identify with the zombie mission to destroy and remake the earth. Only one element is missing – a Murphy-like character who is not as crazed as the people he manipulates, who is a liar, and who acts out narcissistic fantasies of domination and control. That role, of course, has been assumed by Donald Trump himself. There is even a resemblance in skin color: The greater Murphy's power to control zombies become, the more extreme the color of his skin. Many have noted the same thing in Trump: He begins as a man whose skins appeared soft and pasty white in the early years to one whose skin now shines with brilliant orange luminescence. Murphy is blue, but apart from that, the two are surprisingly similar.

To say that Trumpism owes some of its symbolic power from the zombie apocalypse is to say that the latter functions as model for concerted action. It is not that most people, conservative or otherwise, want to die and come back to life as unthinking automatons. Yet the immersing of oneself in a group possesses a certain appeal, a fact recognized repeatedly, from Gustave Le Bon to Hannah Arendt. The same theme is developed in anthropological studies of religious movements that pass through periods of doctrinal conformity and periods of ecstasy (see WHITEHOUSE 2004.) We are forced to conclude that the undead as a trope for political action functions as more than a metaphor of disparagement in the liberal rhetorical tool-box. Zombies are also a model for the group whose purpose is established by the fanatical leader – one who is able to translate his own narcissistic fantasy into group political action (COLLINS – BOND 2011).

Trump, Zombies, and the Conservative Cultural Critique

The Trump movement, however, depends on zombies for more than this, since it prepares the world not only for destruction but also for replacement by something the movement considers better. *Zombie* shows put into play that most ancient of conservative shibboleths, the nuclear family. *Zombies*, in fact, serve as a conservative cultural critique of everything conservative America believes is wrong with the modern family: divorce, feminism, delayed or absent childbirth, etc. To restore the family to its supposed ideal requires a world made anew, one which the zombies create by attacking (and then eating) the opposition. Now enters a theme that is basic to the Christian worldview: the importance of sacrifice. Let us recall that in zombie fiction personal vengeance is almost completely absent. In the first episode of *The Walking Dead*, when a man tries (but fails) to shoot his zombie-wife, she eventually ends up biting and killing their son, and the husband goes insane. This is intended to suggest the moral dilemma in killing someone who is known and loved, and (more importantly) to foreshadow the child sacrifice that later serves as means for reconstructing social solidarity on the basis

of reproductively fertile marriage. But for the most part “walkers” (the term used in the series for zombies) are not known to the people who stab them, run over them, or decapitate them. This is critica to their function in performing sacrifice. In this respect they resemble the victims of vicarious violence in tribal societies. But victims of violence in this sense must stand in for a group if the violence against them is to be considered a vicarious sacrifice. Do zombies qualify?

Clearly, zombies do not stand in for groups of other zombies. Killing them is no different from killing any other dangerous predatory creature. But the fact that zombie-killing goes beyond mechanical expediency or the need for self-preservation is absolutely striking. A zombie that is stabbed fifty times, and is already “dead,” does not have to be stabbed fifty more times in order to get the job done. And yet violence of this magnitude is commonplace in *The Walking Dead*. The “extra” violence, as it were, could be the direct result of the fact that zombies function as sacrifices, and stand in for someone else – possibly the survivor group itself, now that it is riven by internal dissension. The group requires the sacrifice of innocents in order to restore internal harmony.

In his studies of ritual sacrifice, René Girard showed that victims of group violence often function as “scapegoats” (GIRARD 1976, 2007). A society previously held together by structures of differentiation and mechanisms of retaliation finds its viability threatened by escalating vengeance of all against all, often aggravated by famine, pestilence, military threat, or disorder. Does this not resemble the United States today in all its partisan rancor? In order to mitigate internal tensions and the threat of intra-group violence, a group will select – or someone actually volunteer – to serve as a receptacle for the group’s own pent-up hatred. The victim is then sacrificed with ceremonial violence. Something about the scapegoat’s marginality makes the execution appear fair to the perpetrators. The scapegoat is then seen as noble sacrifice, even a savior figure, since the violence against him or her ends the spiral of internal violence and brings peace. Then the group returns to homeostatic balance – at least for a while.

Not all zombies serve equally well for this purpose. Random zombies converted from ordinary adults – usually because they have been bitten by other zombies – function only as a mundane mechanism of sacrifice. Killing them with wanton violence confirms the social solidarity of the survivor group, and that’s fine, as far as it goes. But best sort of victims, the ones whose violent extermination best serve the solidarity-reinforcing function of sacrifice, must (if the Girardian hypothesis is correct) be defined as innocent even through their status as zombies makes killing them necessary. Here one recalls the child “Sophia” in the second season of *The Walking Dead*. Sophia is a little girl who wanders off and is later discovered

Charles W. NUCKOLLS

Making the World Safe for Patriarchy: Trump and the Zombie Apocalypse

in a barn full of zombies who must all be shot, assembly-line fashion, as they emerge from inside. She is now a zombie, but visually bears only a few marks of her transformation. Sophia is still more childlike in appearance than zombie, thus making her the ideal sacrifice on behalf of the group. She is still, partly at least, a member of the survivor group, and as her mother looks on, we see the group respond to her presence both with dread and loving recognition. An innocent victim always makes the best sacrifice. The shot is fired by the leader of the group, a former sheriff, and this serves two functions. First, the sheriff acts in the role high priest to perform the group's most perfect sacrifice, its own child. Second, the killing serves to solidify the group, which had, up this point, been on the verge of disintegration through internal competition. The group now shares participation in a sacrificial killing – they are all to blame – and the internal divisions diminish in due proportion.

Does the conservative critique offered by Trump depend on the sacrifice of victims? During the 2016 election season a Trump rally that did not involve violence against someone was a rare thing. For the most part, the victims were identified as “liberals” and “lefties,” and beating them up made the Trump audience experience a sense of self-righteous victory. On the other hand, the victims were still classified as Americans, and thus, in an ordinary sense, doing them harm might violate the group's ethical norms. But that is not the issue. Americans innocent of everything except speaking their own minds must be assaulted and removed for the good of the nation, and for Trump, the leader. In other words, it is a sacrifice that had to be made, and making it excuses participants of moral responsibility. The effect was to identify opponents and weaken them, but also, more importantly, to show that group members were willing to commit heinous acts of violence even against members of their own society. This is the logic of sacrifice.

Violence that goes beyond merely exterminating zombies affirms the solidarity of the group by stressing their difference from the beings they kill, and also by confirming them members of the same group. But communal vengeance is not necessarily sufficient to create the cohesiveness the group requires, especially when that quality is constantly put at risk by the selfish designs of individual group members. Vengeance is not enough in a drama as thoroughly steeped in Christian values as the average television zombie show. *The Walking Dead* requires stronger sacramental medicine.

To be rendered complete, violence must transform itself into the sacrifice of innocence. More than that, the sacrificial victim must resemble the people who are scarifying her. “The true distinction,” as Girard puts it, “between the sacrificeable and the non-sacrificeable is never clearly articulated” (GIRARD 1996:83). That is why Sophia is not hacked or bludgeoned,

but shot cleanly with a bullet to the head. She is “like us” and her execution must take place with a minimum of violence. Sophia’s killing marks the transcendence of vengeance through the redemptive logic of sacrifice and into a sacramental rite that can restore the institution of marriage, and with it, the conservative image of the good society.

How do we know that the sacrifice of innocence serves the purpose Girard said it should – that is, to prop up the social solidarity of a group whose internal tensions threaten to destroy it? Consider the social dynamics of the zombie survivor group in *The Walking Dead*. Up to this point the group has lost members and its leader, the sheriff, has barely withstood a powerful challenge to his authority. They have lost their place of refuge – a farmhouse – after it is overrun by a “herd” of walkers. The survival of the group is in doubt. Killing more zombies will not exorcize the demons that haunt the group and threaten it with disintegration. Something else is needed, and the solution is in keeping with the traditional Christian view of sacrifice. Recall the moment, not long before Sophia is killed, when the sheriff finds himself in an abandoned Christian church. He and his fellow searchers are drawn to the church because somehow the church bell is still ringing every hour (they later discover it is on an automatic timer). They do not find Sophia – she has already been bitten and turned into a zombie – but they do find a large crucifix, and Rick prays to the image of Christ. This is the only time in the first four seasons of the television series we observe a major character involved in an act of Christian prayer. The fact that Christ has been revealed in *this* episode, and as part of a request to redeem childhood innocence (in the character of Sophia,) suggests that the two are related symbolically. In other words, the young girl and Christ are perfectly innocent, and their sacrifice means more than simply a restoration of group solidarity. Indeed, that is the whole point: vengeance as a cure for declining social solidarity can *only* take the group so far before the powerful logic of Christian redemptive sacrifice – the sacrifice of the perfect innocent – is required to fully redeem the solidarity of the group. Killing, but not vengeful killing, does the job, and it is the logic of Christian sacrifice that serves as the model.

Zombies and Restoration of Marriage: How Zombies Remake Society According to the Conservative Model

In *The Walking Dead*, forgiveness between husband and wife turns out to be critical to the restoration of marriage as an institution. Trump himself, oddly, was seen by the Christian right as the savior of traditional institutions. In fact, marital reconciliation – in its most traditional form – is a fundamental objective of the zombie genre and of conservative politics in general. This might seem surprising. Despite decades of critique and the decline of

matrimony as a social practice, the conservative Christian ideal of marriage persists. *The Walking Dead* presents the case for its restoration. But how can zombies perform this function? Zombies themselves are notably devoid of matrimonial features or sexual inclinations. In their standard cinematic form, zombies cannot kill or be killed without extreme violence. To kill, a zombie must bite, although whether or not it can orally ingest its victim is unclear; some zombies do not possess any body parts or appendages below the level of the neck. Even when zombies are still in possession of whole bodies – with the ability to walk, run, and use their hands – they remain incapable of sexual violence. There is no such thing as a male zombie with an erection, or, apparently, a zombie who can commit rape. Nor do we find female zombies described as victims of sexual assault. Whatever else zombies may do, or have done to them, sexual crimes are notable by their absence.

In *The Walking Dead*, a small group of people led by a former sheriff make their way out of Atlanta and through the Georgia countryside, trying to escape the walkers. The political organization of the group is interesting. It begins as an ostensibly democratic body with decisions reached through consensus. As it gets smaller – there are many deaths through zombie depredation and attacks by other human beings – the democratic forms wither until finally the sheriff declares (with his face aglow from a campfire) that the group is no longer a democracy, but a patriarchy led by one man (i.e., the sheriff). The series suggests that reduced to its essence, a kind of primitive patriarchy, society can and should be rebuilt. The zombies themselves have made the world safe for patriarchy. Not surprisingly, the same thing is said, in all but name, about American democracy under Trump. But how is this to be brought about?

Earlier, the sheriff and his wife, Laurie, had been separated at the beginning of the apocalypse. When he finds her, she is already with a group that includes the sheriff's deputy. Rick (the sheriff) does not know that Laurie and deputy have been sexually involved with each other, and it comes as a surprise to both when Rick turns up having survived the zombie-packed streets. The deputy is not pleased, and over the course of several episodes gradually hatches a plot to eliminate his rival. But Rick kills him first – and then kills him again when he (the deputy) turns into a zombie. All seems right with the world. And yet we find a troubling disquiet in the relationship between Rick and Laurie. He cannot forgive her for her sexual indiscretion, even though it was committed in ignorance of his own survival. She cannot forgive him for killing her former lover, and for not forgiving her. Their marriage formally redeemed, the two are more estranged than ever, and this (the series suggests) puts at risk the restoration of society in the post-apocalyptic world. The fact that Laurie is pregnant (with whose child is never clear) provides scope for marital repair.

Marital redemption, it turns out, *is* a function the zombies perform, on behalf of the American conservative movement that identifies itself with traditional institutions. Zombies make forgiveness possible by enabling husband and wife to restore marital sexuality and its approved product, childbirth, to their traditional positions as core constituents of American social structure. Rick and Laurie are forced, slowly but surely, to recognize their marital relationship as central to the survival of the group. They are, after all, the sole married couple in the survivor group at this point in the development of the plot. And for a social structure defined by marital sexuality to be restored, Rick and Laurie must prove that marriage works. There is no way to do that in the American cultural scheme of things without the birth of a child. This is consonant with the Trump Republican rejection of abortion. Does Trump himself really care? It makes no difference. His political movement is inconceivable without an anti-abortion stance. The reigning zombie motif on American television serves only to strengthen this motif.

The contrast to productive marital sexuality is the zombie. Zombies are perverse because they privilege the alimentary over the sexual, and thus subvert the primary symbolic importance of marital sexuality and childbirth. Pregnancy and birth are not alimentary processes. They stand in opposition to a zombie morality that defines action solely through consumption – that is, through proper or improper ingestion. But that is not to say that the two symbols are always clearly opposed. Sometimes, it is by deliberately juxtaposing radically divergent symbols that the preferred or dominant symbol receives motivating power. Pregnancy/birth is a case in point. As an extension of the primary symbol of marital sexuality, childbirth must be maintained as a distinct point of meaning, in order to preserve marriage as the fundamental building block of the social order. But *The Walking Dead* makes this essentially Victorian point by setting it side by side with something that looks like the product of virtuous sexuality but is something else.

A full belly is not easily distinguished by appearance alone from pregnancy. In fact, for a long time the two were considered related – as in the belief, still current in parts of the United States, that a woman may become pregnant by eating certain things. *The Walking Dead* makes the contrast explicit. After Laurie is dead, her half-deranged husband encounters a zombie with a peculiarly distended belly in near proximity to the place where his wife died. This is the first fat zombie we have seen. Rick repeatedly stabs the monster, not in the head, where it can do the most good, but in the stomach. Does he believe the zombie has glutted himself on his wife's remains? The episode fails to make this clear. The point seems to be that the full stomach of the zombie represents improper ingestion – a kind of false image of pregnancy. Laurie's distended belly represents the triumph of marital sexuality – a triumph of the gestational over the alimentary, of correct reproduction over evil consumption. It is

Charles W. NUCKOLLS

Making the World Safe for Patriarchy: Trump and the Zombie Apocalypse

true that we do not know for sure if the sheriff, Laurie's husband, is the biological father. But the film makes it clear that socially the child will be considered his, and this is all that is necessary to confirm the overriding importance of marriage as the fundamental constituent of the good society.

The process is not complete, however, until husband and wife are restored in forgiveness of each other. This is what the conservative agenda requires. Forgiveness is represented as a thoughtful (almost mystical) coming to terms of Rick with his own guilt at having failed at reconciliation while his wife was still alive. The issue is complex because there remains the troubling possibility that Laurie was impregnated by her lover (the deputy), and not by her husband (the sheriff). But Laurie dies in childbirth. Her death "solves" the problem and, paradoxically, restores the sanctity of marriage. Rick eventually comes to terms with his failure earlier to accept his wife, no matter what, and regardless of who the actual father of her baby is. Laurie herself is now utterly ethereal and without corporeal passions. She appears to Rick as a disembodied voice over a dead phone line and as a ghost who finally extends her hand and gently caresses Rick's cheek. Two things make martial redemption possible. One is the birth of the child, a daughter, who stands in for Laurie and forces Rick to choose life over death and guilt. The other is Laurie's ghostly existence as a phantom produced by Rick's own guilty conscience. The reproductive power of marriage to restore society is maintained, and the survivor community (although much diminished and under threat) can continue. Even in *Z Nation*, the half-zombie Murphy, manages to impregnate a normal woman and produce a child, thus partially redeeming himself and setting the stage for leadership of the zombie "community." Morality is thus established by defining what should go into and what should come out of the body.

In *The Walking Dead*, a woman leads the way by asserting, through pregnancy and childbirth, that marital fertility wins out over simple consumption. But it is left to the husband to complete the process, by forgiving himself and his wife, and by doing so reclaiming the superior status of martial reproduction over individual consumption as a foundation for society. Only the man can accomplish this, strengthening the sense in which the conservative zombie apocalypse must result in the return of patriarchy (KUMAR 1995).

The Walking Dead is fundamentally a commentary on key social structures, presented in surprisingly traditional forms, and at a time when the conservative movement under Trump was gaining strength. This fact is critical to our understanding of the moral economy of zombies. From David Schneider we know that sexual intercourse is the paramount symbol of the marital relationship in American culture (SCHNEIDER 1980). The fact that this symbol remains a fixed point of reference in the post-apocalyptic world suggests that

monogamous marriage itself transcends the apocalypse, just as Trump, we are told, transcends the importance of party. A key purpose of the Trumpian apocalypse is to restore marriage and the power of marital reproduction to serve as a principle identifying symbol for the Trumpian social order. In zombie films, interestingly, we find remarkably little experimentation with alternative relationship structures, like polyandry or group marriage. The ideal of monogamous marriage remains remarkably intact, even in the case of the thrice-married Trump, and one that the struggle for survival only serves to intensify.

But, again, we come back to the question: Why zombies, or rather, why do they serve so effectively as the background against which to reconstruct the conservative movement's ideal of "traditional" marriage? The zombie apocalypse is useful because of it pits the overwhelming atavism of the zombies against the formation and maintenance of marriage, the primary traditional bond in American kinship. The symbol of selfish atavism is individual consumption, and zombie fiction reduces consumption to its fundamental essence: Eating. The threat is that of alimentary individualism, a thing that zombies typify, since they are perfect consuming machines and nothing else. Only living humans can get married. It seems like a simple enough point, but think what a difference it would make if zombies were shown acting in pairs? It would be funny – a fact not lost on the makers of zombie spoof films (e.g., *Warm Bodies*) which deliberately undo the usual horrors of the undead by linking the life after death the search for romantic happiness. And then there is the more recent social phenomenon in the United States of "zombie theme weddings" – but this subject, however fascinating, would take us too far afield.

Conclusion

The Trumpian movement, as understood by its adherents, proclaims that current problems can be solved by a return to traditional social structures and practices. The "problem" presented in the American television series, *The Walking Dead*, is that zombies have nearly ended human society. But the problem is also the solution. Destruction must precede the struggle to rebuild (BALAJI 2013). The people who are left must somehow cope, and do so, slowly and with setbacks, by attempting to reconstruct the society that unrestrained individualist consumption has almost destroyed. Trump, of course, promised to do the same, and in way, he led the way (almost) to his own apocalypse with the attempted coup. Sacrifice and kinship are basic to this process. The first functions to relieve the survivor community of its divisive internal tensions by choosing a sacrifice – a young girl whose obvious innocence makes her the perfect substitute for the group itself. In killing her, they do, in a sense, mortify

themselves, but the sacrifice of her innocence (like that of Christ's) renews the community's sense of purpose. They must now, in the words of one character, live their lives "for her," as her death becomes a monument to their own desire to rebuild society.

A society renewed on the basis of child sacrifice – a form of vicarious violence against itself – can be rebuilt using the kinship structures known to have withstood adversity in other crises, from disease to natural disaster. The post-apocalyptic world – with its strongly Trumpian overtones – seeks to return to the conjugal ideal as the basis for beginning again. The fact that it performs this function is another indication of the television series' implicit cultural conservatism. Of course, to redeem marriage it must be carefully refurbished. This means getting rid of the elements that in American society are usually thought most inimical to marriage: selfishness and its correlate, infidelity. *The Walking Dead* fixes all this, and resurrects marriage by grounding it in the fundamental importance of reproduction. Is it ironic that a president with a history of extramarital affairs leads the conservative movement to restore "traditional value?" Perhaps. But it is surely significant that the only child born in the first two seasons of the television show is the child of a couple whose marriage has been nearly destroyed and then redeemed through the mystical powers of matrimony – powers, the show suggests, that transcend even death. Trump is also redeemed by means of same process – marriage to a loyal and faithful (albeit foreign) woman, and the birth of a son. Whether or not he ends up leading people into the redemption of the post-apocalyptic world remains to be seen. It might depend on whether or not the apocalypse, in American political terms, has already happened – or is yet to come.

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Charles W. NUCKOLLS

Making the World Safe for Patriarchy: Trump and the Zombie Apocalypse

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Alone in the Country of the Catholics: Labrador Inuit in Prague (1880)

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ABSTRACT

The ethnographic shows of the end of the 19th century responded to an increased hunger for the exotic, especially among the bourgeois classes in Europe and North America, and to the establishment of both physical and cultural anthropology as scientific disciplines with a need for study material. At the same time they served as a manifestation of European superiority in the time of the last phase of colonialist thrust to other continents. "Scientific colonialism" reached also to regions without actual colonial or imperial ambitions, as the story of Labrador Inuit who visited Prague during their tour of Europe in November 1880 will prove. The reactions of local intellectuals and the general public to the performances of the "savages" will be examined in the context of the Czech and German nationalist competition and the atmosphere of colonial complicity. Thanks to the testimony of a member of the group, Abraham Ulrikab, supplemented by newspaper articles and other sources, it is possible to explore the miscommunication arising from the fact that the Inuit were members of the Moravian Church, professing allegiance to old Protestant tradition in the Czech Lands and cultivating a fragmented knowledge of Czech history and culture.

KEY WORDS: ethnographic shows, history of anthropology, Labrador Inuit, Abraham Ulrikab, Moravian Church, Czech Lands, 19th century

Introduction

In autumn 1880, a group of eight Inuit (or, as they were commonly denominated at that time, Eskimos¹) from Labrador set out for a tour through Western Europe, after being hired by Johan Jacobsen, impresario of the Hamburg entrepreneur Carl Hagenbeck. Passing through Hamburg, Berlin and Prague, they staged scenes from everyday life in the North, drove dog-sleds, paddled kayaks and even speared live seals obtained exclusively for that purpose, receiving enthusiastic responses from plentiful audiences. They also underwent repeated examinations by physicians and anthropologists and produced handicraft “souvenirs” for private and public collections. However, after leaving Prague for the German cities of Frankfurt, Darmstadt and Crefeld, they one by one succumbed to a sudden illness that was finally identified as smallpox. The last of the Inuit died in Paris in January 1881.

The sequence of events is well known and the unhappy history of the Inuit group has already been reflected upon by historians and anthropologists. One reason is the existence of unusually rich repertoire of primary sources. Not only was this ethnographic show documented continuously by the press and reflected upon in scientific articles, but the impresario Jacobsen and one of the Inuit, Abraham, kept diaries (JACOBSEN 2014, ULRİKAB 2005). Abraham’s text especially represents a rare testimony.² The fact that the physical remains of the Inuit were after their death deposited in the museums in Berlin and Paris, and have so far not been repatriated, makes the study of the case the more topical.³

The present article aims to explore in more detail one part of the story, the two-week stay of the Inuit in Prague, and to use it as a stepping stone for more general considerations regarding the attitude of the inhabitants of the Czech Lands towards the faraway lands. Debates about

¹ When quoting from the primary sources, I will leave this version of the ethnonym in the original version, even though in standard scholarly writing of today it is not acceptable.

² Abraham wrote in his native Inuktitut; after his death the diary was shipped back to Labrador, where one of the Moravian missionaries translated it into German. The original was lost, but the German translation was preserved in Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. It resurfaced when Canadian ethnologist James Garth Taylor published a brief outline of the story of the eight Inuit in Europe (TAYLOR 1981). For other testimonies of the participants of ethnic shows see HERBSMEIER 1994; GOUAFFO 2013.

³ In June 2013, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and French President Francois Hollande signed a memorandum on “Canada-France Enhanced Cooperation Agenda” and also professed a commitment to “work with the appropriate authorities to help to repatriate Inuit bones from French museum collections to Canada”. (RIVET 2014:19) But so far the repatriation was not put into practice. As well as the publication by Rivet, there is also a recent documentary film, *Trapped in a Human Zoo* (2016, CBC Television).

the “margins of colonialism” have been going on for some time already in various national and regional historiographies in those parts of the world, both in and out of Europe, that were not directly involved in colonial expansion. That colonialism was not just a bilateral relationship between the metropole and the subdued (overseas) region may seem self-evident. However, the specificities of the ways in which certain groups of Europeans have constructed their identity/identities based on an encounter, real or imagined, with the non-European “Other” in the absence of an actual colonial enterprise deserves further exploration.

The commercial exhibitions of “savages” in Europe and North America throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries are nowadays often seen by historians as an effort to legitimize and celebrate the dominance of specific European nations, or Europe as such, over the rest of the world. This interpretation, however, provokes a need to explore the specificities of ethnographic shows in regions and societies that for various reasons lacked, or lagged behind in acquiring, colonial possessions even though their inhabitants were certainly informed about, and sometimes profiting from, the colonial endeavours of other nations. Besides, the unique coincidence of the “savage” Inuit in fact professing allegiance to the ancient Protestant denomination, the Unity of Brethren (Moravian Church), established in the 15th century in the Czech Lands, and the way this fact was – and also was not – reflected by the Czechs themselves, will be discussed.

Colonial Aspirations and the Inuit Performances

The phenomenon of ethnographic shows or human zoos of the end of the 19th century was a response to the increased hunger for the exotic, especially among the bourgeois classes in Europe and North America, and at the same time to the establishment of physical and cultural anthropology as scientific disciplines with a need for study material. By offering their performers to renowned scientists as objects of study, the exhibitors added importance and value to the events and elevated them beyond mere commercial ventures. Last but not least, the shows were a manifestation of the European sense of superiority in the time of the last phase of colonialist thrust to other continents, an occasion for formulating notions of racial and cultural differences. And what is important, they offered a chance of symbolic

Markéta KŘÍŽOVÁ

Alone in the Country of the Catholics: Labrador Inuit in Prague (1880)

“domination” over faraway regions as well as to the inhabitants of those parts of Europe that could not have actual colonial or imperial ambitions.⁴

This was also true of the Czech Lands.⁵ Landlocked, their inhabitants scarcely participated in overseas explorations and exploitations. Still, there were numerous and varied “colonial fantasies”⁶ and taste for the exotic developed towards the end of the 19th century. Already in 1878 the Hagenbeck company had brought a Nubian group to Prague; the show was covered extensively by the local press and apparently enjoyed high attendance (HERZA 2018:172-178). An exhibition on South Africa, organized in 1880 in Prague by the physician Emil Holub also provoked a great response, even though this only exhibited stuffed animals and mannequins in native costumes arranged in scenes that allowed a glimpse of “real life” in Africa, and not live entertainers (ŠÁMAL 2013). Holub in fact, during his lectures accompanying the exhibition voiced the conviction that Czechs should aspire to colonial settlement in Africa, “*for their benefit and that of the natives*” (ROZHONĚ 2005:64-65).⁷

There was one specificity in the attitude towards the non-European natives that came to the fore in the Czech Lands, brought about by the nationalist competition of this period. The Czech Lands were, from at least the Middle Ages, inhabited not only by the speakers of Czech, one of the Slavic tongues, but also by speakers of German. These “Bohemian German” (Deutsch-Böhme; the surname “Sudeten-Deutsche” came only later) developed their own specific identity, considering themselves a group apart from other Germans. After hundreds of years of the relatively peaceful coexistence of Czech and German speakers, in the second half of the 19th century the birth of nationalist sentiments caused an ostentatious

⁴ For ethnographic shows in general, see BLANCHARD – LEMAIRE – DEROO 2012; the specific case of Carl Hagenbeck as leading protagonist of these appears in AMES 2008.

⁵ The names Czech Lands/Lands of the Bohemian Crown denote the regions of Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, historically ruled by the kings of Bohemia and from 1526 incorporated into the Habsburg monarchy. In 1918 these lands became, together with Slovakia and Ruthenia, parts of the new Czechoslovak Republic. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, the words “Czech” and “Bohemian” were often used as synonyms in English-language texts, while the phrase “Czech Lands” did not exist during that time; it is a product of the effort of present-day historians to grasp the territorial-social-cultural integrity of the region (for the various toponyms see DICKINS 2011; for the history of the Czech Lands see PÁNEK – TŮMA 2018).

⁶ The term “colonial fantasies” was coined by Susanne Zantop with respect to German society before it entered imperial and colonial competition (ZANTOP 1997); while the Czech case was in some respects different, the basic features of the directly and indirectly formulated notions of civilizational superiority and the somewhat “natural” right of colonial dominance were very similar to the German case.

⁷ For the Czech “colonial fantasies” in general see LEMMEN 2013.

political, economic, social, and cultural separation of the two camps. Each produced its own literature, theatre, music, and scientific discourse; both sought self-identification via the stereotypic images of others – models to follow, or deterrent examples to be despised (HOUŽVIČKA 2016; COHEN 2006). Of course, these two groups did not encompass the whole of the population. There was certainly a great number who felt nationally indifferent, even though by the very end of the century when, following what were known as the Badeni ordinances (1897) that put the Czech and German languages on an equal level as official languages of Bohemia, the population of Prague especially was drawn into the clashes of popular nationalism (GLASSHEIM 2005:74-75). Before the 1890s, it tended to be the upper and middle classes who consciously formulated their national allegiance.

In their effort to prove they could qualify as a fully-fledged and civilized nation, and especially that they were capable of competing with the Germans in every field of intellectual and cultural activity, the Czechs pursued scientific research, established terminology, and published or translated specialized treatises. Interestingly enough, similar ambitions were manifested by Bohemian German scientists. Germans had actually begun to lose the upper hand in politics and economy in the Czech Lands from the 1880s, a fact resented and widely commented on by its representatives. Thus, they also struggled to prove their high intellectual status – not their parity with the main body of German culture and civilization, but rather the fact that even though they pertained to it, they were a group apart (ASCH – SURMAN 2012).⁸ It is against this background of nationalist intellectual competition that we have to read the beginnings of scientific interest in non-European lands and peoples and also the popular responses to the ethnographic shows and exhibitions in general, and the reactions of the Prague public to the Inuit performances in particular.

Arriving in Prague on November 12, 1880, the Inuit were accommodated for two weeks with Kaufmann's Menagerie, another popular show that exhibited various kinds of exotic animals to paying audiences. Jacobsen wrote in his diary for November 15, 1880: "*Arrived in Prague in the evening. In Prague, our Eskimos were in Kaufmann's Menagerie. [...] The working time for the Eskimos was from 11 to 12, 3 to 4, and 6 to 8 o'clock in the evening. Visitors (numbers) in Prague were not bad, only that staying in a menagerie is anything but comfortable – after all, you are dealing with menagerists. [...] Since the Eskimos had never been shown in Prague before, the interest was quite strong. The press especially showed a*

⁸ See e.g. the case study of a Bohemian German amateur archaeologist Julius Nestler from Prague in the first decade of the 20th century (KŘÍŽOVÁ 2017).

lively interest in us” (JACOBSEN 2014:61). The newspaper articles gave the performers magnanimous epithets such as “*our guests from the North, who honoured Europe by their visit*”.⁹ But their accommodation in between the cages and their display to the public on a podium constructed originally for shows with elephants¹⁰ manifested clearly that they were in fact perceived as barely elevated above the beasts. The menagerie was allocated an undeveloped area “*beyond the old Horse Gate*”, that is, beyond the upper end of present-day Wenceslaus Square, roughly on the site where only few years later the imposing edifice of the National Museum was to be built.¹¹

As in Berlin, where the show stopped before arriving to Prague, the highlight of the stay was a staged hunt. A live seal had been brought from Holland, released into a pond in the park not far from the menagerie and the Inuit were told that they could have it for food if they caught it with a harpoon. The event was amply commented on in the newspapers, and Abraham also made some notes in his diary: “*Have caught a seal in Prague in a pond, while there were enormously many people, yes indeed countless. When I harpooned it with the seal harpoon, everybody clapped their hands greatly like the eider ducks. When I was done with it, the voice makers sang greatly with violins, drums, trumpets, and flutes*” (ULRIKAB 2005:45; also JACOBSEN 2014:61). The newspaper reporters commented more eloquently, describing the “*frolicking*” of the seal and the complicated manoeuvres of the three kayaks before the final blow was struck. But the reports also assumed a mocking tone, hinting at the deep cultural difference between the protagonists and the spectators, especially when announcing the aftermath of the hunt: “*In the evening a celebratory feast will be held, with the main course consisting of larded seal roast. Bon appétit!*”¹²

The principle of the ethnographic show was to create among the paying audience the illusion of realizing one’s own research, of the exploration of peoples unknown and hitherto unseen by Europeans. The notion of authenticity (*das Echte*) was the central idea around which the Hagenbeck shows evolved – therefore it was important that whole families were hired to

⁹ Národní listy 17-XI-1880, p. 3 (most of the newspaper articles that will be quoted were anonymous and without headings).

¹⁰ “The Eskimos were invited from their residences to the elephant-podium and here introduced to the public”, reported Prager Tagblatt on 23-XI-1880, p. 2.

¹¹ The location given in the advertisements in Národní listy, 15-X-1880, p. 4.

¹² Národní listy 28-XI-1880, p. 3. The seal hunt was described in a very similar way in Prager Tagblatt, 26-XI-1880 (Beilage), pp. 4-5; reports from the daily performances for example in Prager Tagblatt, 17-XI-1880, p. 5, Prager Tagblatt, 19-XI-1880, p. 4, Národní listy 17-XI-1880, p. 3.

Markéta KRÍŽOVÁ

Alone in the Country of the Catholics: Labrador Inuit in Prague (1880)

perform, to bolster the claim that real everyday life was exhibited (AMES 2008:71). In Prague as elsewhere during their show, the “exploration” of the Labrador performers by eager visitors was massive, and even more stressful to the Inuit, not used to crowded spaces and intimate communication with unknown people, than to some other groups. Abraham complained in his diary, precisely in the part dedicated to the stay in Prague, of a constant stream of curious attendees who were entering the habitation and disturbing the privacy of his family even at times in between the performances, to such extent that “*to talk to each other was impossible because of the many voices*” (ULRIKAB 2005:45). At the same time, the impresarios in their informative brochures and verbal commentaries to shows, as well as the newspaper articles, identified beforehand what the visitors should look for, building on the already established clichés and stereotypes of the specific non-European ethnic groups. Lamentably, we do not have any testimony of how the visitors themselves saw the Inuit, as was the case of some later shows (KRÍŽOVÁ 2020), but the images imparted by the newspaper articles both in Czech and in German were explicit.

Of the stereotypes attached to the “guests from the Far North”, the most often reflected upon was their alleged filthiness. An article in one of the social journals, aspiring to give the readers a general “ethnographic overview” of the Inuit in Labrador, asserted: “*The Eskimos never wash their cooking vessels. This work they delegate to their dogs. Those of them who themselves somehow are aware of their own filthiness make things even worse; as when entertaining a distinguished guest, they lick the piece of meat to be served to him, to deprive it of blood and filth from the pot. To fail to accept thankfully would make one discourteous and impolite. [...] Their dress is covered with grease, filth and swarming with vermin.*”¹³ The article continued by explaining that this lack of cleanliness was in fact caused by the lack of water especially in winter months; but the filthiness was duly noted also in the case of the Inuit visiting Prague who could not complain of the unavailability of water.¹⁴ *The “ugliness” of the Inuit, men and women alike, was accentuated and explicitly compared with the European standard of beauty, even though at times the “deepest state to which humans can fall” was ascribed to the everyday merciless fighting for survival in the extreme conditions of the North.*¹⁵ *Interestingly, while the term “Eskimo race” was sometimes used in the*

¹³ Světozor 26-11-1880, p. 570.

¹⁴ Prager Tagblatt, 17-XI-1880, p. 5.

¹⁵ For example, the Prager Tag-Blatt, 10-XI-1880, pp. 1-2, announced the visit of “exotic guests” but soothed the readers by stating that, unlike the visits of Goethe or Casanova to the city, these would not present any “danger” to their wives and daughters.

Markéta KŘÍŽOVÁ

Alone in the Country of the Catholics: Labrador Inuit in Prague (1880)

newspaper articles,¹⁶ the description of physical characteristics was mostly brief and apparently without interest, or looking for similitudes rather than differences: “If their coarse black hair was not long and nicely combed, they would look like tanned Hungarian gypsies”, stated one of the Czech articles.¹⁷ In contrast to other performers, for example the black Africans “observed” by the Prague burghers some time before and after (HERZA 2016b), the physical difference of the Inuit was mostly ascribed to cultural rather than biological terms.

One “ethnographic observation” made repeatedly by journalists and passed to the readers to verify was the Inuit style of clothing, especially the fact that female dress almost did not differ from male.¹⁸ And while the two families visiting Prague were composed of one man and his wife and children, the periodicals paid attention to the Inuit practice of polygamy and even polyandry, in a tone piquing the reader with respect to the moral principles of the times: “A strong or skilful man might have more than one woman; a beautiful or reasonable woman more than one man. Sometimes they borrow women for some time, a practice that renders advantages not only to one party.”¹⁹ But there were also similarities seen and commented on, among them the fact that the Inuit apparently loved their children just as tenderly as their “civilized” counterparts.²⁰

Of course, the culinary preferences of the Inuit were also “explored” by visitors and journalists alike. The latter commented enthusiastically that the Inuit enjoyed Central European food – beef, rice, potatoes, and especially the Prague beer.²¹ Even though the adherence to beer-guzzling was at the time criticized by those Czech intellectuals who styled themselves cultured and progressive, for the majority of the Czech as well as the German-Bohemian population, beer-drinking remained an important national auto-identification marker. It was also an instrument of social interaction, as it preponderantly took place in restaurants and pubs, and was thus of great importance in the process of national revival (NOVOTNÝ 1997).

¹⁶ F.e. Prager Tag-Blatt, 10-XI-1880, p. 1.

¹⁷ Národní listy 17-XI-1880, p. 3.

¹⁸ Národní listy 17-XI-1880, p. 3.

¹⁹ Světozor 26-11-1880, p. 571.

²⁰ Národní listy 17-XI-1880, p. 3. However, the ethnographic article in Světozor 26-11-1880, p. 571, did not fail to mention in detail Inuit infanticide.

²¹ Prager Tagblatt, 17-XI-1880, p. 5.

In line with the dominant imperialist discourse of nascent anthropology, the Inuit, old and young alike, were described as childlike, immature. And while newspaper reports noted the manifest “cheerfulness” of the performers, the general message passed on to the readers and visitors of the shows was not only that of an extremely primitive culture, but also of a culture doomed, “*apathetic and incapable of a fight for existence, destined to perish according to Darwin’s well-known theory.*”²² In all this there is no marked difference between the reports in Czech and German-Bohemian periodicals. It was never even implied in the commentaries that, in reality, the two men who consented to bring their families to Europe did so on their own initiative, in an effort to ensure a better life for themselves and for their offspring, and that they proved repeatedly their courage and enterprising spirit by facing the unknown and threatening cultural clash. Instead, they were seen as the passive objects of external manipulation. When the newspaper articles wrote of “self-sacrifice” and “strenuous toil”, they attached these epithets to Hagenbeck and Jacobsen, who “*in spite of all obstacles and at great financial cost*” brought the Inuit to Europe and thus made it possible for the Prague burghers to see them.²³ The fact that the Inuit were “doomed”, made the Prague performances the more attractive, as the spectators had probably the last opportunity to see them. Also, even though this was not stated openly, the image of the vanishing race presented an important mirror image to bolster the self-assurance of Czechs and Germans in the Czech Lands, who both thought of themselves as predestined to magnificence.

Brethren in Faith and Their Enemies

While advertised as “savages unspoiled by civilization”, the Labrador Inuit in fact had been in contact with European explorers and traders for at least two centuries; their material and spiritual culture, social organization and mentality adjusting to trade as well as to armed clashes with various groups of white people. And what was even more important, five of the eight performers in Prague were Christians, members of a very specific church community that had its roots in the Czech Lands – the Moravian Church, or Unity of Brethren. It was established in the 1720s in Saxony, in the newly founded town of Herrnhut, by religious refugees from Moravia who claimed to be direct successors of the community of believers that arose in response to the Hussite wars of the 15th century and was known as the Unity of

²² Národní listy 17-XI-1880, p. 3.

²³ Prager-Tagblatt 12-XI-1880, p. 4; Národní listy 17-XI-1880, p. 3.

Brethren.²⁴ Immediately after its establishment, the Moravian Church launched a massive expansion, founding towns not only in many countries of Europe, but also in North America, and organizing them on the model of Herrnhut. At the same time, missions began among native groups in Greenland, the Caribbean, Pennsylvania and Ohio, South Africa and India (HAMILTON – HAMILTON 1967).

By the 19th century, the Moravian Church had developed into a broad network of *Ortsgemeinen* (i.e. settlement congregations) and missionary stations across all the known world. Even though the religious enthusiasm abated somewhat in the course of time, the Church maintained its doctrine and its specific lifestyle. While participating eagerly in local economies, often transforming the mission stations even in far-away regions into booming artisanal and commercial centres, and communicating with people of various languages and cultures, the Moravians preserved their distinctiveness as a group, though ceremonies, festivals, use of specific codes, and the awareness of a specific, shared history. In this history their establishment in the Czech Lands, and the teachings of the famed bishop of the original Unity of Brethren, the philosopher Jan Amos Komenský/Comenius, assumed a prominent place in this history (MURPHY 1995).

The work in Labrador was begun by the Moravians in 1771 as an enlargement of the already existing mission stations in Greenland, by founding the first mission station, Nain, and later Okak (1776), Hopedale (1782) and Hebron (1830). It was precisely in Hebron that the family of Abraham was recruited by Jacobsen in 1880. During the late 19th century additional mission stations were established so that the Moravian influence extended along the entire Labrador coast between Hamilton Inlet and Ungava Bay. By the second half of the 19th century most of the Inuit inhabitants of Labrador embraced the Moravian faith, with the exception of several hundred who lived in the north. From the beginning of their work in Labrador the missionaries combined evangelical objectives with very lucrative trade (WHITELEY 1966).

In order to attract and then anchor the Inuit to the newly founded communities, the Moravians had to acquiesce to their demands for manufactured products, food items and raw materials – on which the Inuit were already dependent after a century of contact with the Europeans.

²⁴ The members of the church that was established in Herrnhut referred to themselves originally as “brothers” and “sisters” and to their religious community Brüdergemeine (Unity of Brethren), which was the German translation of the Czech denomination of the original church – Jednota bratrská or its Latin version Unitas Fratrum; however, from the 1730s in the English-speaking world, the denomination “the Moravian Church” prevailed (LEMPA – PEUCKER 2010:21).

Moreover, by supplying the desired goods, the missionaries undermined the authority of the traditional leaders and assumed an important position in native hierarchies (LORING 1998: 207-209). As the economic survival of the missions depended on the export of traditional produce, such as fish and seal blubber, the Moravians did not encourage the Inuit to change their lifestyle.²⁵ Nevertheless, the missionaries had in their discourse accentuated to the extreme the dichotomy between the orderly, hard-working, cheerful converts of their mission villages and the “heathens” – the dirty, unkempt, feral, wandering Inuit hunters of the north of the Labrador coast. In fact, they presented the two groups almost as two different “nations”. This image was then taken over by travel accounts, often taking the information from Moravian writings. It was also presented in the published commentaries to the 1880 show.²⁶

Jacobsen had originally planned to employ only “true savages” – even though, as was explained above, the culture of the non-mission Labrador Inuit had also been deeply changed since the 17th century – but could not persuade more to accompany him to Europe. He thus forced the family of Abraham to stage “primitive” life. For example, as the Moravian yearly report mentioned in 1876, the Inuit in Hebron no longer lived in igloos or sod huts, but in wooden houses with stoves: “*The walls are papered with bright colours and adorned with pictures, and each house has its clock, mirror, and petroleum-lamp. [...] The clothing, too, has become European.*”²⁷ During the European tour, however, Abraham, Ulrike and their children had to live in the replica of the primitive hut and dress in furs, albeit with European-style underwear they could not be persuaded to remove.²⁸

But the fact that some of the performers were Christians and “civilized” could not be disguised, so it was instead accentuated to bring more diversity to the show. To make the contrast even more prominent, the head of the second, “pagan” family, by the name of Terriniak, was presented as shaman (*angakok*). This cultural differentiation brought about another feature of the show to be appreciated by the spectators. As one of the Prague

25 One of the letters sent from Hebron and published in the inner journal of the Moravian Church, the Periodical Accounts, explained: “If we educate the Esquimaux youth after our fashion, we are sure to deprive them of the ability to procure their livelihood, in the only way that seems appointed for the dwellers of this coast” (Periodical Accounts 2 (1847), p. 123).

26 Such contrast between Christian and heathen Inuit for example in anon. 1871.

27 Report of the missionaries in Hebron, reprinted in the internal newsletter of the Moravian Church, Periodical Accounts 30 (1876), pp. 146-147.

28 The woollen shirts protruding from the seal furs worn by the performers were noted by Frankfurter Nachrichten, 3-XII-1880, quoted by RIVET 2014:50.

Markéta KŘÍŽOVÁ

Alone in the Country of the Catholics: Labrador Inuit in Prague (1880)

journalists wrote, “*the outer appearance and facial expression changes when the Eskimo renounces the vagrant life and becomes a settled citizen working under the protection of a missionary. The difference is so marked that no one would for a second hesitate to guess which of the Eskimos in the menagerie of Mr. Kaufmann is heathen and which is Christian.*”²⁹ For the entertainment of the visitors of his igloo at the menagerie, Abraham would write his name on a piece of paper and give it away. He could draw pictures, play the violin and spoke some German and English. All these strange talents of a “savage” astonished the visitors.³⁰ Even more important was the religious devotion of Abraham and his family. In fact, Abraham was motivated for the journey to Europe not only with the promise of payment that would enable him to repay his debts and those of his late father, a debt to the Moravian store in Hebron (ULRIKAB 2005:3-5). He was also curious to visit the places of which he heard during sermons and in the mission school, and to meet some of the Moravian missionaries he knew who had since retired. He was promised a visit to Herrnhut in the end of his tour; this visit was in the end not realized due to the attack of smallpox. But even during the show’s visit to Berlin several members of the church, including the missionary Elstner who used to work in Labrador, visited the family and invited them for a church service.³¹

It is not clear what the Inuit converts specifically knew about the Czech Lands. None of the missionaries at the Labrador stations was of Czech origin (since the 18th century, the membership of the Moravian Church had grown in various parts of Europe) or familiar in any way with the region. They all spoke German or English as their mother tongue. But the Church continued to celebrate the death of Jan Hus, the famed church reformer of the 15th century (on July 6),³² and the birthday of Comenius (March 28). Moreover, it seems that the Inuit, as well as other Moravian converts all over the world, were imparted the image of a mythical cradle where the Unity of Brethren came to existence. Three decades after the unfortunate tour of Abraham and his family to Europe, Czech tradesman Jiří Jaeger found employment at the mission stations of the Moravians in Labrador. In his autobiography he remembered the enthusiastic welcome from the Inuit and the questions they asked “*about the*

²⁹ Národní listy 17-XI-1880, p. 3.

³⁰ Světozor 26-11-1880, p. 570; Prager Tagblatt, 19-XI-1880, p. 4.

³¹ The visit was amply reported by the Moravian missionaries themselves (Periodical Accounts 1881, p. 523), and by Abraham (ULRIKAB 2005:7).

³² For this personality see FUDGE 2010.

Markéta KŘÍŽOVÁ

Alone in the Country of the Catholics: Labrador Inuit in Prague (1880)

motherland of Jan Amos Comenius". Jaeger was also asked to speak in Czech, "so that the Eskimos knew the language of the great father of nations" (JAEGER 1963:20).

At the same time, however, the story of the Unity of Brethren before the rejuvenation in Herrnhut in the third decade of the 18th century was that of oppression and persecution, and the Czech Lands were described to native converts all over the world as being the stage of this persecution, as land inhabited by the enemies of the true faith. Already in Germany, Abraham felt the sense of superiority of a true believer over those not yet enlightened. "Some *Kablunat* [= strangers] laugh at us, but this did not make us tired, as their souls are also to be laughed at," he noted in his diary while in Berlin (ULRIKAB 2005:26). Still, the plans to go to Prague unsettled him, and during the whole stay he was tense and frightened: "I am writing in Prague here far away, in Austria, in the country of Catholics, in a big city. We are here for two weeks, inside a big long house. To go out is impossible, so that we may not be caught by the Catholics. With a little voice [we] sing and pray to get help from the Lord, so that nothing happens to us through the Catholics, because they are always asking if we are believers; we are unable to deny and claim it constantly while we wonder if they will do us harm. Yes indeed, because everything is to be feared here, we feel that we need a lot of help" (ULRIKAB 2005:45).

As could be imagined, the visitors of the performances certainly had no vile plans with regard to the Moravian Inuit. For the Czech national revival of the 19th century, whose protagonists celebrated the "traditional" Czech culture in contrast to the German one and at the same time promoted the re-establishing of state sovereignty, "liberation" from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the remembrances of the original Unity of Brethren and the tradition of clandestine Protestantism acquired a very important role. Although the preponderant majority of the inhabitants of the Czech Lands indeed professed the Catholic religion, the opposition to it in the discourse of the Protestants of the 17th and 18th centuries was presented as a fight against Habsburg "oppression" and thus perceived positively by the patriotic Czechs of the 1880s.³³ However, the founders of the renewed Unity of Brethren were German-speaking, while the Czech Protestant emigrants at the same period founded other communities elsewhere in Germany. Therefore, the story of this particular settlement did not fit into the story of Czech

³³ The image of the clash between Protestantism and Catholicism as the principal theme of the history of the Czech Lands, and the inherently democratic spirit of Protestantism, was central in the foundational work of both Czech historiography and Czech nationalism, see e.g. PALACKÝ 1867. The image of Comenius in 19th century Bohemia and Moravia analysed in ŘEZŇÍKOVÁ et al. 2014.

history as it was constructed in the 19th century.³⁴ Contact with the Czech Lands on the part of Herrnhut was minimal throughout the 18th and most of the 19th century. Only in the 1870s several “choirs” (*Choren*) – the basic congregations of the Church – were established, mostly in German-speaking regions of Bohemia and Moravia, but these remained marginal as far as the number of members went, as well as the interest of the public.³⁵ With regard to the Inuit show, the Czech media did not mention even once the fact that the mission from which Abraham’s family came was that of the Moravian Church. Had they known it, the Czechs would certainly be interested in what the “savage” actually knew of the famed history of Czech Protestantism, but probably not welcome them as “brothers” of the same faith and shared heritage of one specific historical period.

Czech-German Competition and the Inuit Bodies

As was already mentioned, an interest in the non-European lands and their inhabitants had arisen in the Czech Lands too since the middle of the 19th century. From the 1870s the Náprstek Museum (Náprstkovo muzeum), an institution of distinctive origin and history, had constituted a centre for such proto-ethnographic research of the Czech community, while the German-Bohemians communicated with similar institutions in Vienna, Leipzig and Berlin.

The Náprstek Museum, founded in 1874, was originally devised as an industrial museum, similar to that in Kensington (today the Science Museum in London). Through documenting scientific and technological progress in the world, it was to assist Czech industrialists, at this period still marginalized by their German competitors, to develop their skills (MAJER 1994:16). However, from the beginning the industrial collections were supplemented by exotic souvenirs from all over the world. The founder of the museum, Vojta Náprstek, a Czech patriot enthusiastic for progress in both technical and social areas, brought some from his visit to North America in 1848-58. Further exhibits were supplemented by other Czech travellers and tourists. They were partly integrated into the collections as demonstrations of early developmental stages of various arts and crafts and as documentation of the progress which supposedly liberated Europeans, and especially women, from the bondage of

³⁴ Herrnhut was described as an exclusively “German” town for example in the popular article by František Augustin Slavík “Ochranov (Herrnhut)”, *Světozor* 6-XI-1874, p. 535.

³⁵ In 1910, in the general census of Austro-Hungary, only 1013 persons in Bohemia and Moravia professed allegiance to this particular church (NĚSPOR 2010:215).

Markéta KŘÍŽOVÁ

Alone in the Country of the Catholics: Labrador Inuit in Prague (1880)

exhaustive physical labour, and freed their minds for intellectual pursuits. But as the numbers of such artefacts increased, the original conception of an industrial museum was seriously disturbed, being transformed into a rather hybrid institution, the more so because “primitive” displays from Bohemia and Moravia were also included (such as embroideries and laces, under the denomination “Works of our Mothers”) (SECKÁ 2011:211-213). Still, what developed in this setting can, with a certain exaggeration, be termed the initial phase of Czech anthropology, even though parochial, restricted in scope, lacking theory and developed in a haphazard manner.

What is extremely interesting in the context of the present text is the fact that Náprstek was in contact with Herrnhut. Ever since the 18th century, the various exotic “souvenirs” that were brought from the missions were deposited in central institutions of the church. The most famous of these early collections was deposited in the college at Barby and later transferred to Niesky, also in Saxony. The objects were used as demonstrations in the process of preparing further missionaries and probably also for promotion of the mission work among the general public, to attract benefactors and influential patrons. Under the impact of the general increase in interest in anthropology and natural sciences in the course of the 19th century, there were efforts to “professionalize” the collection. In 1878 out of the initiative of several prominent residents of Herrnhut, namely the apothecary Bernhard Kinne, the archivist Alexander Glitsch and the congregation elder Johannes Theodor Dobler, an association for the establishment of the museum was formed and efforts started to assemble the existing collections, acquire new ones from the mission fields and organize them for the display (MEIER 1978:5).³⁶ Of course, the goal of the museum was not so much scientific, as promotional, a fact that was admitted and even accentuated in the correspondence of its founders. The ethnographic collections were to evoke the exotic settings of the mission stations and mitigate to the visitors the conditions of work of the brethren there.³⁷

Apparently, the circular letter sent in 1879 by the would-be museum association to the Moravian missions in America, Africa and Asia was enthusiastically responded to, because in the next year, besides the fact that the museum halls indeed were opened in the “House of

36 Only in 1901, however, did the museum obtain its own building. Since 1975 the Völkerkundemuseum Herrnhut constitutes part of the Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden. See also NIPPA 2003.

37 This was how the aim of the mission was explained in a second circular letter sent to mission stations by the museum committee. (Rundschreiben an die Brüder auf den Missionsstationen mit der Bitte um ethnographische Gegenstände zur Erweiterung der Sammlung, s.d. (1880), Archiv der Brüdergemeine, Herrnhut, fund Museums-Verein Herrnhut, box 1, no. 3).

the Brethren” (Brüder-Haus) in Herrnhut, it there were also sales of the surplus displays, the profits taken over by the mission enterprise. This procedure is documented also in the two letters that were preserved from what apparently was a more extensive communication between Vojta Náprstek and Alexander Glitch (in March 1880. Glitch in these letters offered Náprstek some items from a “bazaar”, brought from the missions in Jamaica, Surinam and also Labrador. In the end, Náprstek bought such objects as model of a kayak made of walrus ivory, one coat of fur and another of cloth, and a leather bag.³⁸ Apparently, they were to serve precisely as examples of “primitive technologies” and attractions to visitors of the Prague establishment, without any allusions to the heritage of the old Unity of Brethren shared by the authors of the objects and the Czechs who came to see them displayed. In contrast, the visit of the Moravian Inuit in Prague did not rouse much interest in Náprstek and the associates of the museum.

There was one important aspect in which the Náprstek Museum differed from the nascent anthropological museums elsewhere in Europe and North America. These commonly included human remains among archaeological and ethnographical exhibits, while the founder and the affiliates of the Náprstek Museum, perhaps because of its original concept as an industrial museum, never demonstrated any interest in physical anthropology. Also, unlike their contemporaries in Germany and France, they did not actively seek the ethnographic shows in order to “study” the natives. While such performances were indeed advertised, also in Prague, as educative events, they apparently ignored them or maybe saw them as a vulgar, popular pastime (we found no reflection of any involvement in these in the detailed diaries and notes of Náprstek and his wife, while they commented on numerous other social and educational events taking place in Prague).³⁹

There were some Czech physicians who visited ethnographic shows.⁴⁰ There also had been some research in physical anthropology going on in Czech academia, mostly focusing on bolstering Czech national identity by proving the biological existence of a specific “Czech

38 The letters by Alexander Glitch to Náprstek, dated on March 7 and 11, 1880, in the Living Registry of the Náprstek Museum [Živá registratura NpM], fund Spisy dárců NpM, file Herrnhut. I am thankful to Gabriela Jungová, the curator of the North American collection of Náprstek Museum, for making me aware of the existence of this connection between Náprstek and Herrnhut.

39 On Náprstek's diary and that of his wife, see SECKÁ 2016, SECKÁ – ŠÁMAL 2014.

40 For example, Filip Herza mentions the official interest of the Association of Czech Physicians in the freak show Kosmos that came to Prague in 1901. On the occasion of the event was organized a special meeting in which the leading representatives of Czech medical science took part (HERZA 2018:165).

Markéta KŘÍŽOVÁ

Alone in the Country of the Catholics: Labrador Inuit in Prague (1880)

type”, distinct from but essentially equal with (or even superior over) the German population in the Czech lands. Together with ethnological research that brought proofs of cultural equality, such research was to give material proofs to further the aspirations of Czechs to independent statehood (GRÉGR 1858, cit. in HERZA 2016a:72). In 1904 Jindřich Matiegka was named the first “professor of demography and anthropology” at Charles University, pursuing further the research that, however, mostly did not extend to non-European anthropology. This area was left to the German scientists well into the 20th century (ŠKERLJ – BOŽEK 1952).

As to the Inuit in 1880, they were, as was a general custom of the time with the performers at the ethnographic shows, also subject to anthropometric and medical investigation. In Berlin they were examined by the most prominent protagonist of physical anthropology of the times, Rudolf Virchow, who conducted a detailed physical and cranial measuring, asked questions about the eating habits of both families, and tested the ability of adults to count, and their colour perception.⁴¹ On November 7, 1880, an extraordinary meeting of the “Berlin Society of Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory” (Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte) was held at Berlin Zoological Garden in the presence of the Inuit. Rudolf Virchow gave a lecture in which he shared the results of his previous research on them (VIRCHOW 1880). Two weeks later, the same procedures were repeated in Prague, undoubtedly as part of the abovementioned effort of German-Bohemian intellectuals to prove their equality with their colleagues in Germany. Before the performances for the public started, on November 16, the professors of Charles University in Prague, Edwin Klebs and Carl Toldt, examined the Inuit. They also subsequently gave a public lecture on their findings.

The Prague physicians simply stated that they considered both Inuit families to be ideal representatives of a “primitive race”.⁴² It is interesting that the conclusions reached by Rudolf Virchow were much more complex. After comparing the “heathen” and the “Christian” family, he considered their differing abilities to be products not of innate racial inferiority, but rather the lack of opportunity to develop intellectually, caused by the harsh climate (BAEHRE 2008).

Characteristically, the lecture on the Inuit that took place in Prague was held for the “Society of German Physicians in Bohemia” (Verein der deutschen Ärzte in Böhmen), thus excluding

⁴¹ Article published in the Charlottenberger Zeitung (2-XI-1880, p. 2) reported the examination took place on October 28, 1880.

⁴² Prager Tagblatt, 21-XI-1880 (Beilage), p. 5.

the Czech intellectuals.⁴³ The fierce nationalist competition in Bohemia and Moravia effectively blocked any cooperation between the intellectual leaders of the two national groups.

The journalist of German-Bohemian (and also of Jewish) origin, Egon Erwin Kisch, described the absurd consequences: *“The average German avoided any contact with the [Prague’s] half-million Czechs other than strictly demanded by business. He never lit his cigar with a match from the Czech School Fund, while a Czech never used a match from the little box with the imprint of the German School Association. No German would let himself be seen in the Czech Citizens’ Club, while no Czech was ever caught in the German casino. [...] If the Comédie Francaise or the Moscow Art Theater [...] gave a guest performance in the Czech National Theatre, the German press of Prague ignored it utterly”* (KISCH 1941:80). Thus once the anthropological examination was taken over by German physicians, the Czech specialists in the same field in fact could not involve themselves (unless they wanted to jeopardize their social position in patriotic circles). As was explained above, in the 1880s the competition did not affect the lower classes and the sphere of popular entertainment so fundamentally. Kaufmann’s Menagerie apparently pitched camp on neutral ground, so that both Czech and German visitors came to see the show and both Czech and German newspapers commented on the performances.

The Náprstek Museum also did not buy any of the artefacts that Jacobsen brought from Labrador, or those produced by the Inuits during their exhibition, to add to the recently acquired objects from Herrnhut. Only later, the Labrador collection increased considerably, thanks to the donations from the already quoted Jiří Jaeger, who worked for the Moravians in 1914-20. Also, there were contributions from Vojtěch Schuck/Suk, an anthropologist from Charles University who carried out his investigations in Labrador in the 1920s (KLÁPŠŤOVÁ 2015). This lack of interest in acquiring exotic artefacts from the 1880 show can be seen as another proof of the contempt among the circles of the Náprstek Museum for ethnographic “spectacles” that, however, suited the inclination of the general public, Czech and German-Bohemian alike.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 5.

Conclusion: The End of the Show

Given the popularity of the show in Prague, it is not surprising that several Czech and German-Bohemian dailies also commented on its disastrous ending. The more so, because the funerals of the first two victims in Darmstadt and Krefeld turned into another type of ethnographic spectacle, as thousands of onlookers gathered at the cemeteries and observed how the Inuit would express their grief and how they would dress. In his diary Jacobsen noted that “[in Darmstadt] *the burial took place at 4 o’clock in the afternoon. It had been advertised among the public by the registrar’s office, and on our arrival at the cemetery, we therefor found several thousands of curious people, who had come to see the burial*” (JACOBSEN 2014:63).⁴⁴

When in Paris smallpox was identified as causing the deaths, the gaze of German and French physicians turned to Prague as a possible source of the infection – even though originally it was supposed that the disease could have originated from the “antiquities” Jacobsen dug up at the cemetery near Hebron and demonstrated during the shows (JACOBSEN 2014:31). But such theories were soon abandoned. Indeed, in the last months of the year 1880 Prague suffered from unusually heavy smallpox epidemics (KŘÍŽ – BENEŠ 2010:34). This the Czech and German-Bohemian newspapers did not deny; but that Prague was marked as “proverbial source of contagion” by the Paris physician Léon Colin⁴⁵ provoked indignant responses from both. At the same time, the journalists made use of this amply commented on case to call on the “proper authorities” to act for the improvement of housing and hygienic conditions in the poorer quarters of Prague and to advocate the beneficial effects of vaccination that at this period was not yet accepted by all medical practitioners in the Czech Lands. In line with the previous descriptions of the “filthiness” of the Inuit, the articles also emphasized the beneficial effects of regular hygiene for preventing the spread of infectious diseases.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Descriptions of the funerals in *Brünner Zeitung* 24-XII-1880 (Beilage), p. 1179; *Mährisch-schlesischer Correspondent* 24-XII-1880, p. 4; summary of the deaths of all Inuit in *Moravské noviny* 25-I-1881, p. 3.

⁴⁵ The presentation of Léon Colin on the disease, with Prague identified as the place of contagion, was done in front of the Academy of Medicine (*Académie de Médecine*) in Paris and subsequently published in *Gazette Hebdomadaire de Médecine et de Chirurgie* 18:8 (25-II-1881), p. 116.

⁴⁶ *Prager Tagblatt* 9-III-1881 (Beilage), p. 5; *Časopis lékařů českých* 9-IV-1881, pp. 233-234, 16-IV-1881, pp. 249-250.

During the months when the Inuit travelled through Europe, only one text – published in *Magdeburg Zeitung* on October 21, 1880 – voiced some doubts on the use of zoological gardens for the exposition of human beings, and on the practice of such expositions in general.⁴⁷ The article was discussed in German intellectual circles, and it seems it did not express the majority opinion. At least, Virchow in his lecture on November 7 reacted to it indignantly and defended the current practice of ethnographic shows being done “on behalf of science” (VIRCHOW 1880:270). None of the Czech or German-Bohemian media even hinted at such considerations. It needs to be taken into account that both ethnic groups in the Czech Lands not only aspired to become equal to the most dominant European nations, and were themselves feeling real or imagined contempt towards them, within the general worldview that could be termed “Orientalism” in the widest sense (WOLFF 1994). Thus, they consciously followed the western European way of presenting the “primitives” as inferior to themselves, in order to elevate their status symbolically. While Czechs and German-Bohemians themselves only seldom actually visited foreign lands, and certainly could not dominate their inhabitants, they developed what Ulla Vuorela has termed (for her case of Finland) “colonial complicity”. They joined in the hegemonic discourses, in derogatory perceiving, constructing and stereotyping “otherness” in the broad context of modernization, nationalism, and restructuring of power relations in the global context (VUORELA 2009:19-20). A scientific examination of the “savages” and their humiliating exploitation as showpieces helped them to manifest such dominance.

There were some specific groups of non-Europeans that were admired and constructed as virtuous heroes by the Czechs – for example, the North American Indians.⁴⁸ But, during their brief visit Prague in 1880, the Labrador Inuit were pushed into the stereotype of the savage Others. The characteristics attached to them by the press – filthiness, ugliness, lack of rationality – bolstered the self-esteem of readers, increasing their awareness of the contrast between savagery and civilization, as well as the bourgeois ideals of orderliness and rationality. The image of a dying nation did not arouse the sympathy of the spectators, who would project into the pitiful remnants of a once mighty people their own fears of being run over by an enemy nation, but rather bolstered the happy prospect of their own progress. The

⁴⁷ Quoted by RIVET 2014:60-61.

⁴⁸ Czech poet Josef Václav Sládek in the 1870s implicitly compared the natives, pushed out of their homes, impoverished and forcibly acculturated, to that of Czech migrants to America, forced by material need to leave their homeland and struggling to maintain their language and culture in an Anglophone environment (see the poem “On the Graves of the Indians” in SLÁDEK 1875:34-35).

conscious ignorance of the fact that at least one of the two Inuit families shared the intellectual heritage of the Czech Reformation gives further proof to the self-styling of the Czechs, who sought in the “primitives” a counter-image of themselves. The physical examination that replicated the research done in Berlin by the most prominent of German anthropologists confirmed the ability of their Prague German-Bohemian pupils to stand up to international competition and at the same time represented a partial victory in the competition with their Czech counterparts. Altogether, the reactions to the “guests from the Far North” testifies to the collectively voiced ambition of inhabitants of the Czech Lands, both Czech and German speaking, for colonial expansion, even when they lacked any real possibility for any economic or political aspirations in this respect.

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Markéta KRÍŽOVÁ

Alone in the Country of the Catholics: Labrador Inuit in Prague (1880)

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Alone in the Country of the Catholics: Labrador Inuit in Prague (1880)

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Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore agriculture in modern-day Uaxactún, Petén, Guatemala. The results are based on two types of data – spatial and anthropological. Spatial data are represented in the visualization of recent agricultural features (Milpas) visualized from orthophoto maps, processed in QGIS 3.10.1. Anthropological data were obtained during July and August 2019 in the Uaxactún, as a part of the Regional Archaeological Project of Uaxactún (Proyecto arqueológico regional Uaxactún – PARU). 18 respondents had taken part in the research. The research was conducted by semi-structured interviews and participant observation. To list finds – the average Milpa dimension was described, most interesting crops and agricultural techniques were described, and a model of the local agricultural year was provided. The key find is that, even if one could interpret recent Uaxactún agriculture as traditional, the drives and motivations of the farmers are modern, capitalistic, and monetary oriented.

KEY WORDS: Uaxactún, agriculture, traditional agriculture, swidden agriculture, milpa, pepitoria squash, maize

Introduction

Uaxactún is one of the most famous and well-studied ancient Maya cities. This city has almost one century of archaeological research and brought a lot of breakthrough discoveries.

The use of LiDAR technology brought to a rediscovery ancient Maya commoners and the problem of ancient agricultural practice (GARRISON – HOUSTON – FIRPI 2019). Especially in this context, Uaxactún is more interesting than many other ancient Maya cities – there is a modern community still practising traditional agriculture in Uaxactún.

Modern Uaxactún was studied well, but mostly from a particular point of view. But let us say that descriptive (“old-style”) ethnography of local agriculture to help us understand traditional agriculture in this ancient Maya site is missing. The aim of this paper is to provide results of the research made to explore agricultural practices in modern-day Uaxactún.

Site

Uaxactún is located in northern Petén on the edge of Petén central plateau (called simply *montañas* /hills/ by locals) and the lowlands (*bajo*). Most of the surrounding land is covered with jungle and secondary forest. Soils consist mostly of Lithic Leptosol, Pellic Vertisol and Haplic Vertisol (GARDI et al. 2014:72). Annual rainfall is about 1000-1499 mm (DURO TAMASIUNAS et al. 2005:11) and evapotranspiration is higher, 1640-1780 mm annually (DURO TAMASIUNAS et al. 2005:17). The average temperature is also rather high, 25,5-28 °C (DURO TAMASIUNAS et al. 2005:14). Natural sources of water are, aside from the seasonal water bodies such as *arroyos* (creeks), mostly small ponds – *aguadas*. Also, there was a well dug, but underground waters with a high content of calcium are not suitable for drinking.

Modern Uaxactún is a small community of maximum of 1200 people¹. It dates back to 1913 (MORLEY 1916:341), when there was built a *chiclero*² camp. Uaxactún grew in importance in 1926 when an airport was built, and the village turned into a centre of *chicle* production. Things changed in the mid-1970s, when the chicle market started to decline (DUGELBY 1998:162). In 1990 Maya Biosphere Reserve was created. Nowadays the local economy is based on the harvesting of non-timber resources such as *xate* (*Chamaedorea ernesti-augusti*, *Chamaedorea elegans*, *Chamaedorea oblongata*), ramon nuts (*Brosimum alicastrum*), and

¹ According to the census from 2014 there are 769 inhabitants, the number 1200 was given by locals in 2019 (PODOLINSKÁ-ČISÁRIK 2015:549). This estimation takes note of the fact that a lot of people in Uaxactún do not live there “officially”.

² *Chicleros* are gatherers of natural gum (chicle).

mentioned *chicle* (*Manikara* genus) organized by Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Management and Conservation Organization (*Organización de Manejo y Conservación – OMYC*).

Based on the research from 2014 realized by Tatiana Podolinská and Dominik Čisárik, around the 35,54% of the population works in agriculture, making agriculture the most popular profession in Uaxactún (PODOLINSKÁ-ČISÁRIK 2015:553). Interestingly during my research respondents tend to claim that the majority of Uaxactuneros make their living by harvesting *xate*³.

As I already mentioned, Uaxactún lies in Maya Biosphere Reserve, close surroundings are clarified as Multiple Use Zone (*Zona de uso multiple*), allowing locals to use the land for agriculture and non-timber harvesting. Politically Uaxactún is a part of Flores municipality.

Data

The research area was set to overlap a LiDAR polygon examined by PARU. The area has 16 240 ha. Orthophoto data were obtained from the Bing Maps service, aerial photos were taken in December 2014.

Anthropological data were collected during July and August 2019 in Uaxactún. 18 respondents had taken part in the research. All were male, 15 in productive age and 3 were seniors. 4 respondents did not provide relevant information and 5 were workers in the PARU. 10 were recommended as *bien graneros* (good farmers) by other PARU workers and 3 respondents were met by accident.

Methodology

Spatial data were processed in qGIS 3.10.1. Agricultural features were identified in orthophoto and visualized into vector form. After that, they were classified into four categories – *new milpa*, *milpa*, *orchard-milpa*, and *guamil*.

³ According to Podolinská and Čisárik just around 2,75% of the population work as *xateros* (PODOLINSKÁ – ČISÁRIK 2015:553).

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)

These categories were set partly on local terminology. A *milpa*⁴ in Uaxactún means slash-and-burn swidden field. A *guamil*⁵ represents a secondary forest, growing in a place where the previous *milpa* was. Category *orchard-milpa* is a researchers' invention, it represents a piece of land where fruit trees are cultivated, in local terminology it is called a *milpa* as well.

Features classified as a *new milpa* showed recent work such as felled trees, burning grass or cleaned ground. There were 129 identified features. Features classified as the *milpa* showed similar spatial patterns as the *new milpa* but lacked marks of recent work. There were 116 features identified. The trickiest feature was classified as an *orchard-milpa*. Feature in this category was identified solely because I had visited its site during my field research since it was almost invisible from aerial view. The *Orchard-milpa* is a space where fruit trees are cultivated. There has been only one feature identified. Features classified as the *guamil* were close to the *milpa* and *new milpa* features showed spatial similarities and were overgrown with secondary forest. There were 86 features identified.



Figure 1: *Ortophoto base with visible features.* Source: Bing Maps 2014

⁴ The word *milpa* is borrowed from Nahuatl *milpan*, from *mil-li* which means cultivated land or field (KARTTUNEN 1992:147).

⁵ The word *guamil* is borrowed from Nahuatl *quammilli* - reed, arrow, dart, pole (SIMEON 1992:401), it is related to *cuahu(i)-tl* - tree, arrow, point, staff (KARTTUNEN 1992:58) and previously mentioned *mil-li*.

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)

Figure 2: *Visualised features.* Based on Bing Maps 2014

Anthropological data were obtained with a combination of a participant observation and semi-structured interview. Participant observation took place during visits of the respondents' *milpas* or households. Interviews were aimed at methods of cultivation, processing and storage of specific plants – maize, squash (*pepitoria* and *ayote*)⁶, beans, *xanthosoma*⁷, cassava, sweet potato, chilli pepper, pineapple, chayote, banana, sugar cane, and tobacco. Additional questions were asked on respondents' opinions about which crop is the most important, which pest is the most dangerous, where the ideal place to build the milpa

⁶ *Pepitoria* and *ayote* are local names for several cultivates of *Cucurbita*. The term *pepitoria* (*Cucurbita pepo*) is used for squash cultivated exclusively for seeds, but the term *ayote* could also represent squash cultivated for its flesh, most often *Cucurbita argyrosperma*. However, both terms could be synonymic in some contexts, and in Uaxactún there is no clear distinction between them.

⁷ See part Crops and Plants.

is and what environmental conditions are showing a suitable place for *milpa*. Also, opposite questions were asked: which natural conditions are showing that the place is not suitable for the *milpa*. To reflect the trust of the individual respondents were made a few additional questions concerning hemp cultivation.



Figure 3: Plain view on "orchard-milpa". Source: Bing Maps 2014

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)

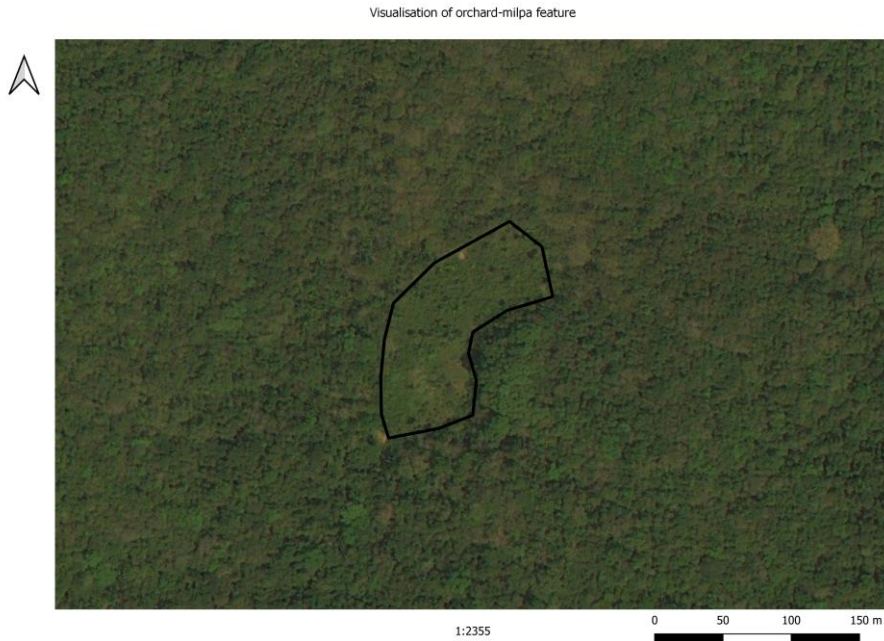


Figure 4: *Visualisation of orchard-milpa feature.* Based on Bing Maps 2014

Contemporary Agriculture

Agricultural Areas

One can easily, merely by observation, define agricultural areas in Uaxactún.

Milpa

First and the most well-known element is the *milpa*. In Uaxactún, the term *milpa* refers to a field. More specifically, to a field used in extensive, slash-and-burn agriculture. The term *milpa* could also be used with the meaning of *maize*. So the *milpa* in Uaxactún should mean

an extensive agriculture field mostly used for maize cultivation. And indeed, maize is a crop that could be found on every *milpa*.

However, since Uuxactún lies in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, the classical slash-and-burn agriculture was modified. As respondents claimed, each farmer has under concession one bigger piece of land, but use only 1/10 or 1/12 of it as the *milpa* at the time. This depends on the nature of slash-and-burn agriculture since soil fertility cannot be preserved for a longer time. The *milpa* has to be moved from time to time to secure a harvest. The exact period of time for moving depends on the type of crop, but in general, it seems to vary from one to four years. According to one respondent, it is possible to cultivate maize on one spot even for twelve years in a row. After moving, the soil needs time to regain fertility. According to another respondent, time can vary from two to three years. Ideally, after moving through all the land under the concession, the soil should regenerate into full fertility. This practice shifts extensive agriculture more to a particular form of the two-field system of land rotation.

Analysis in qGIS shows us dimensions of *milpas*. Since it was easier to determine their borders, only *new-milpa* and *orchard-milpa* elements were used to measure the dimensions of the *milpas*. However, some *new-milpas* could represent particular extensions of recent *milpas*, or in other words, they are parts of the elements in the *milpa* category.

It is possible to say that the dimensions vary significantly (mean 10475 m², ± sd 8061 m²; median: 7810 m²). One may assume that the median will be similar to dimensions of *manzana* (local unit of area equal to 7056 m²), but our data showed that the median and one standardized *manzana* are significantly different ($p < 0.001$).

Five features in the *new-milpa* category are substantially large (31932,329 m²; 33072,347 m²; 33452,124 m²; 34397,434 m²; 42749,825 m²). There is a possibility that in some of these cases borders separating two neighbouring *milpas* were not visible. Also, logging could be taken in mind, since it is hard to make clear distinctions from the orthophotographic data.

Interestingly, it seems that *milpas* are not constructed in *bajo*, they could be found in the mountains or dominantly on the mountainsides. Non-suitability of *bajo* is given by the fact that the *bajo* turns into a swamp during the rainy season, making plants not only rot, but also inaccessible.⁸

⁸ I am grateful to Milan Kováč for underlying this information.

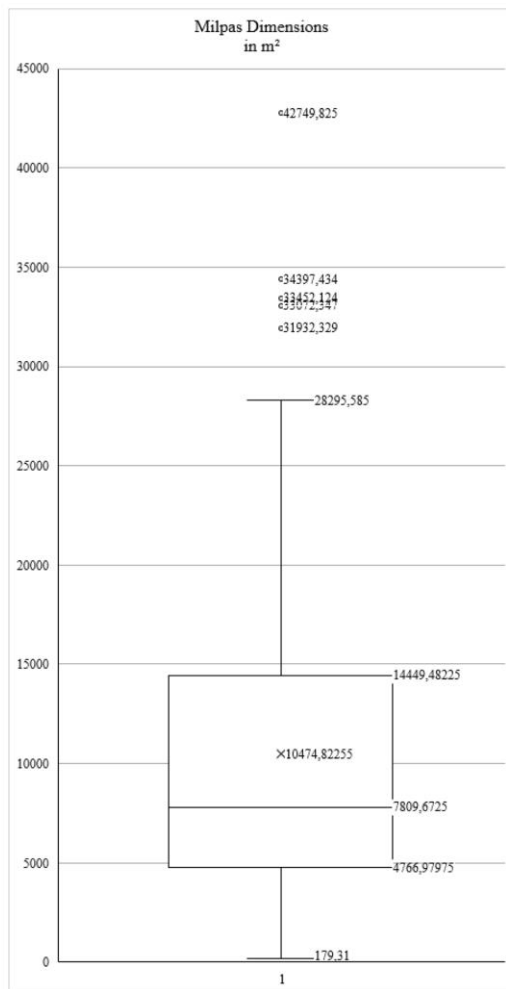
Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uuxactún (Guatemala)

Figure 5: Graph showing dimensions of “new-milpa” and “orchard-milpa” objects in square metres

Guamil

Neighbouring to the each *milpa* lies a *guamil*. The term *guamil* refers to a secondary forest growing in former (or future) *milpa*. Locals do not understand the *guamil* to be a forest (RAHDER 2014:383), *guamil* is a piece of land that has to be burned once in a while. The land one holds under the concession is mostly covered by the *guamil*. The *guamil* under one's concession is referred to as someone's belonging.

On the orthophoto 1101652,597 m² of the *guamil* were identified, making it 33% of estimated agricultural land. However, based on the respondent's information, it should be ten times larger than the *milpas*. Considering the nature of agriculture in Uaxactún, the *guamil* has to be significantly larger than land used as the *milpas* and the used method requires some modifications to show more precise data.

Garden

The *milpas* are not the only place where plants are cultivated. Each house in Uaxactún has a small garden to grow fruit trees (sapote, avocado, orange, etc.) and small vegetables such as chilli pepper, tomatoes or chayote. Some cultivated plants, tobacco for instance, are used for ethnomedical purposes. In most cases, gardens I had visited in Uaxactún were not very productive, there were just a few plants and trees in each. An exception was the house garden of one respondent. There was tomato, cidra, small orange trees, sweet potatoes and herbs (mint for instance).

Obviously, it is also possible to find decorative plants in the gardens of Uaxactún – cotton bush for instance.

Free Spaces

The agricultural production also requires free spaces. In the case of Uaxactún, this free space is partly represented by a former airstrip in the centre of agglomeration. Free spaces are used for drying and processing the crops. During my stay in Uaxactún, there were always some farmers letting nylon canvas with layers of squash seeds left to dry under the sunlight.

Individual Household

Last but not least, there is the individual household. Individual households represent places for storage of crops and fruits. There is a corner in each house where few sacks of maize or squash seeds lie.

Interestingly, when you ask locals how they store some crops the answer is mostly negative: “*We do not store it since there is no one to buy it*”. The idea that something should be stored in any kind of *bodega* (warehouse) is related to the subsequent sale of the product. Most dominant warehouse in Uaxactún is clearly *Bodega de xate* (*Xate Warehouse*), a place where *xate* palm is stored, processed, packed, and exported.

Crops and Plants

In modern Uaxactún, a large spectrum of plants is cultivated. In the *milpas*, the most dominant crops are maize and *pepitoria* squash. Maize (*Zea mays* spec.) is represented by several species. There could be found tall plants of native *petenero* maize, but more dominant are new commercial hybrid species of maize, among Uaxactuneros known as H3 or H6. Another distinction of maize subspecies is based on its colour – during my stay several respondents asked me what type of maize is in my country, white or yellow? One respondent, knowing that maize in my country is yellow, noted appreciatively: “*Maíz amarillo está lleno de vitaminas*” (Yellow maize is full of vitamins). The dominance of maize species is visible also in language, the word *milpa* bears a second meaning “maize”. But interestingly maize is not considered to be a very important plant – it’s purely for local consumption. It cannot be sold, and it cannot make any money. Most of the respondents claimed: “*Maíz sólo se come*” (Maize is only for eating). The fact that maize is the base of everyday meals or children strolls each day from house to mill with bowls of corn in their hands as an inseparable part of Uaxactún scenery does not count. The importance is measured only in financial gain. And this brings us to another plant – *pepitoria* squash.

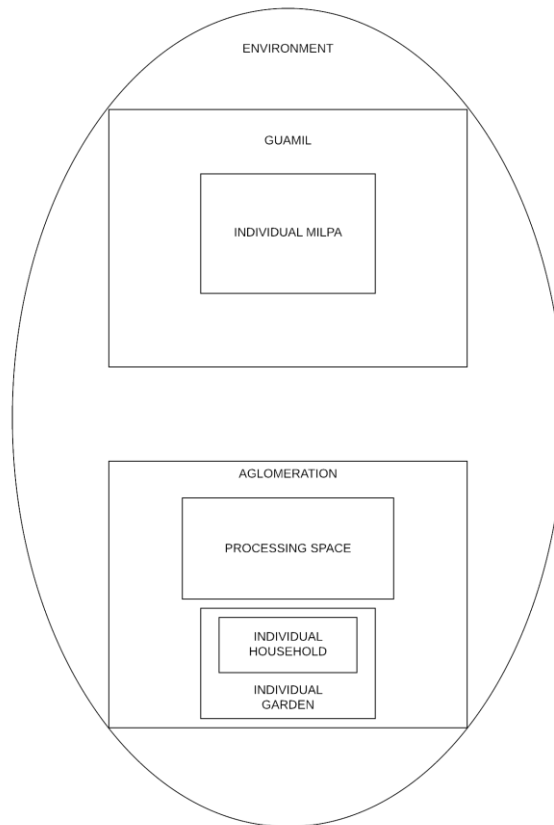
Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)

Figure 6: Hypothesised structure of Uaxactún agricultural space

Pepitoria squash (*Cucurbita pepo* spec.) is the second most dominant plant, almost always alongside maize. *Pepitoria* is cultivated for its seeds (*pepitoria* flesh is not eaten) widely used in local and, more importantly, in Mexican cuisine. Thus, *pepitoria* seeds can be sold. And this makes it popular among the locals and important for the local economy. During my stay in Uaxactún, there was no *milpa* without *pepitoria*. Some *milpas*, among which was the *milpa* of the wealthiest man in Uaxactún, were planted only with a combination of maize and *pepitoria*. One respondent claimed that one extraordinary wealthy harvest of *pepitoria* seeds produced enough money to buy his motorbike.

Another plant I must mention is beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris* spec.). Traditionally it should represent an inseparable part of maize and squash cultivation, forming together a system similar to the *three sisters' agriculture* described in Northern America (PARKER 1969:27). Beans also represent an important part of the Mesoamerican diet. Thus, it is surprising that only two respondents mentioned beans spontaneously. During the visits of respondents' *milpas*, I did not see any beans. One respondent was complaining that the beans he planted shrivelled and died due to the extraordinary dry weather.

Typical root crops are sweet potatoes, cassava and *xanthosoma*

Sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*) are widespread among the *milpas* in Uuxactún. In the local environment sweet potatoes grow like weeds. Sweet potatoes do not require any care at all, farmers rather need to protect other plants from their spreading. One respondent used to cultivate them in his house garden but he had to rot them off since they overgrew everything else in his garden. Aside from their weed potential, sweet potatoes are with their low growth, vital spread and high amount of tubers popular in Uuxactún. One respondent described them as “*Pura papa. Muy rica*” (Pure potatoes. Very tasty) and similar claims were mentioned also by other respondents.

Cassava (*Manihot esculante*), is a most traditional Mesoamerican crop. Uuxactuneros differentiate several types of it, based on the colour of sprouts and young leaves – white (*yuca blanca*), brown (*yuca cafesa*), red (*yuca roja*). Interesting are attitudes toward the cassava – in most of the cases, participants did not mention it spontaneously, but it could be found in the majority of *milpas*. One participant alone mentioned cassava as an important plant – he was a young Kekchí Maya. The same participant valued mostly root crops – sweet potatoes, *xanthosoma*, cassava, and additionally chayote.

Xanthosoma (*Xanthosoma* spec.) is known and cultivated, but not much reflected, nobody except previously mentioned Kekchí farmer consider *xanthosoma* to be important in any case.

Typically, could be found also sugar cane, banana tree or pineapple in the *milpa*.

Sugar cane (*Saccharum* spec.) is very common. It is planted in almost every *milpa* forming a small island of tall greenness. Since sugar cane survives annual burnings, and it is a durable plant, it is easy to identify the former *milpa* by its presence in the forest. Sugar cane is not for sale. It is also for local consumption like maize, but it is considered to be important. One respondent, young *xatero* farming just for his own needs, considered sugar cane to be the most important plant he cultivates. Why? Because of its richness, he claimed. Sugar cane

represents a cheap, home-grown treat one could give to hungry children. Its sweet juice could give energy and hydration during hard work on the field. And to ease troubled minds and to make way for suppressed emotions out, sugar cane could be fermented into the alcoholic drink – *chupiate*⁹ *de caña*.

Banana trees (*Musa spec.*) - or rather a several subspecies of banana trees - are also very popular. These plants could be found not only in the *milpas*, but also in the gardens and near the houses. The economic potential of bananas in Uaxactún is low, that is why there is not any banana tree monoculture. Some locals sell home-grown bananas in the form of choco-banana or as a part of ice cream in the streets of Flores, near Tikal or in the camps of archaeological projects to make some extra money.

Pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) is typically planted in the *milpa* as well as in the gardens. Only one respondent mentioned that pineapple should be planted only in the garden, since Uaxactún is full of thieves and the *milpa* is not safe enough for this fruit. Pineapple is eaten like a fruit, used on the top of ice cream, or, thanks to its sweetness, fermented into *chupiate de piña*.

Interestingly, even if it is possible to find chilli pepper and tomato in most gardens in Uaxactún, almost no one mentioned them during the interview. Does it mean that the Uaxactuneros do not consider them to be important?¹⁰ Or do not consider them as plants suitable for *milpa* since the main topic of every interview were *milpas*? It is hard to say. One respondent claimed that there is no point in planting chilli peppers since there is plenty of wild chillies all around, but this information was not confirmed by others.

In some gardens and *milpas* also onion and chayote (*Sechium edule*) could be found, but the situation is similar to tomatoes, these plants were not much reflected in the interviews. Just one respondent – the young Kekchí again, mentioned chayote spontaneously. And another one mentioned onions spontaneously when he was lamenting that they are small and dry due to the atypical weather.

⁹ *Chupiate* refers to the naturally fermented juice of different kinds of fruits. *Chupiate* is also the cheapest homemade alcoholic beverage. Occasional drinkers should be aware of its potentially laxative and emetic effects.

¹⁰ Chilli pepper is not as important in Guatemalan cuisine as for other Mesoamerican culinary traditions, however, it is still used, and not only as spice but also for medical purposes. In this context, as an example, could serve a few big chilli pepper bushes near the house of *curandero* (traditional folk healer) in Uaxactún.

Fruit trees such as coconut, mandarin or lemon could be found almost on every *milpa*. Fruit trees are also an inherent part of every camp of *xateros* or *chicleros* located deeper inside the forest. Avocado trees could be found mainly in the house gardens and camps, few or none in the *milpas*. One respondent, who is also one of the leaders of the Uaxactún community, claimed that fruit trees, especially citruses are the most important part of agriculture in the village. Why? Because planted in higher numbers they could provide enough fruit to be sold and to make Uaxactún a better place to live. However, fruit production does not seem to be significant in Uaxactún.

In the researcher's interest were also tobacco and hemp

Some respondents claimed that tobacco (*Nicotiana* gen.) is not growing in the Uaxactún, since there are not suitable conditions for it. Others claimed the opposite. And two respondents cultivated tobacco in their home gardens during my stay. Tobacco plants I had seen were not planted in any wider bed. Just a few, one to four, plants were planted near the house. One respondent claimed that he grows tobacco not for smoking, but for medical purposes – a top leaf of tobacco, heated on the stove could be used to heal the flu. One participant, denying that the tobacco grows in Uaxactún, recommended dried leaves of *guarumo* tree (*Cecropia obtusifolia*) as a suitable supplement.

As I mentioned before, the question concerning hemp (*Cannabis* gen.) was intended to survey the attitude of the respondents toward the researcher. Some respondents denied that the hemp is growing in Uaxactún, finding interesting explanations for their claims – that the natural conditions are rough to this plant, or that the Uaxactuneros are “finks” by nature and one doing anything illegal is never safe from the police. One respondent, who, according to rumours, is a well-known drug-farmer and dealer, denied that he knows anything about the mentioned plant, and that there is no marijuana in the broader region. Another respondent, a former consumer and present-day dealer provided more information. Hemp is planted deep inside the *guamil*. The ordinary *guamil* is extremely dense, one could hardly see through it, and walking across the *guamil* is almost impossible. Another thing is that the *guamil* is considered to be one's personal belonging, so others do not visit it frequently. These hemp plantations in the *guamiles* were confirmed by another respondent. Another one, a very trustworthy looking elderly man, spontaneously said that he had a hemp field hidden somewhere in the mountains, far from his *milpa*. If the local cannabis is meant to be sold or if it is entirely for local consumption is hard to say. A person whom I have no reasons not to

Jakub ADÁMEK

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)

trust claims that cannabis from Uaxactún is cheap and of low quality.¹¹ Also, locals do not separate male and female plants, so the final amount of active substances is low. For these reasons, I tend to believe that cannabis from

Lastly, some industrial crops could be also found growing in the *milpa*. During the construction of the *milpa*, farmer ordinary left palms of *Sabal* genus untouched as a reservoir of leaves for roofing.

This list is far from being complete, a wide spectrum of other crops, bushes and trees have some, more or less significant, role in Uaxactún agriculture. But a complete list of everything one could find growing in the *milpas* would be unnecessary long for our topic.



Figure 7: Proud farmer showing his pepitoria squash. Photo: author

Jakub ADÁMEK

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uuxactún (Guatemala)

NATURAL CONDITIONS FOR MILPA						
Participant	Suitable			Non-suitable		
	Type of terrain	Type of soil	Other factors	Type of terrain	Type of soil	Other factors
E1						
N1	Bajo when is hot weather, Mountains when is cold.	Tierra calisa Tierra negra			Tierra calisa	
G1	Bajo when is hot weather, Mountains when is cold.	Soft, with sand contain (arrefiosa)			Tierra calisa	
T1						
M1	Flat terrain, or in canyon	Tierra negra	Where maxan grows		Tierra colorada Tierra calisa	Gravel and stones in soil
A1	Plain	Tierra colorada Tierra arrefiosa				
R1	Plain at the mountains	Not too wet	Natural drainage is important		Too wet soil	
V1	In canyon or in bajo	All soil near Uuxactún is fertile	Enough of rain			
F1	At mountains	Tierra negra				Stones in soil
V2	At bajo	Tierra negra Tierra gris	Enough of rain			Stones Gravel Where Ramon grows Near archaeological structures
C1	Plain	Tierra negra				Stones
E2	In bajo region	Tierra negra	One need machines to be successful			Animals
O1	In bajo	Tierra negra	Good soils are in mountains Where maxan grows		Tierra colorada Tierra calisa	
L1	At the foot of mountains, or near forest	Tierra negra, with little of clay	Soil covered with dust Where maxan grows			Cracks in soil
A2	At bajo	Tierra negra	Enough moisture Enough sunlight		Clay, muddy soil	

Techniques and Tools

Looking solely at the agricultural tools and techniques it is possible to affirm that agriculture in the Uuxactún is almost entirely traditional. Uuxactún is an isolated place, it is almost impossible to bring there any machines that could be used in agriculture. Another thing is that Uuxactún is located inside a biosphere reserve, and agricultural intensification is not much desirable. The economic situation of Uuxactún inhabitants is also not favourable to any investment.

The techniques connected to the *milpa* agriculture start with looking for the right place to build the *milpa*. Interestingly, opinions on what place is ideal differ noticeably. More interesting is that the respondents tend to describe an ideal place to be similar to a place where their *milpas* are.

In most of the cases, ideal soil is the black soil (*tierra negra* /vertisol/). It is also the most dominant soil in the region. Limestone soil (*tierra calisa* /eroded limestone dust/) is in general considered to be infertile. It could be typically found near archaeological structures, and it seems that only one plant, the ramon tree, prefers this type of soil. Other soil types are classified solely by the colour – grey soil (*tierra gris*), red soil (*tierra colorada*), brown soil (*tierra cafesa*), etc. The suitability of other soils is lacking consensus in local knowledge.

Interestingly, some respondents considered cigar calathea¹² plants (*Calathea lutea*) to be a factor showing the suitable soil.

After finding the right spot it is necessary to clean the future *milpa* from trees and weed. The sole tool for this work is a machete. The machete is an essential and personal tool that Uuxactunero use every day, from cleaning the *milpa*, cleaning the path through the forest to gather *xate*, cutting grass in the garden, crafting simple tools, building wooden constructions, and much more. The machete is one thing no one steals if it lies somewhere unguarded. According to respondents, longer machetes are better – they are heavier, but they allow to cut plants and weeds without bending the back too much. It is also safer to kill a snake with a longer blade than with a shorter one. Shorter machete should be better in combat or to clean a profile in the survey trench.

After manual cleaning, fallen trees and slashed weeds are left some time to dry under the

¹² Leaves of cigar calathea were used to make packages of any kind, nowadays are used just to pack tamales.

Jakub ADÁMEK

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uuxactún (Guatemala)

sunlight, set on the fire, and burned. Contrary to the European view toward burning as a mean of fertilization (KOVÁČ 2019:205; DEMO et al. 2001:15; URBANCOVÁ 1975:758), according to the respondents the *milpas* are burned as a means of cleaning and destroying pests such as caterpillars and beetles. In general, there has been little information about using any fertilizers. Two respondents use monkey tamarind (*Mucuna deeringiana*)¹³, and one of them mentioned the usage of leaves of the quickstick tree (*Gliricidia sepium*)¹⁴ as an intentional fertilizer. Also, as an “unintentional” fertilizer could be understood already mentioned ash. Also, the *milpas* are usually covered with green compost from cutting weeds and processing the crops.



Figure 8: Cleaned place for future milpa. Photo: author

¹³ Monkey tamarind, known as *frijol de abono* (literally *manure bean*) in Uuxactún, could be used to fix nitrogen level in low-fertility soils.

¹⁴ Quickstick, known as *Madre de cacao* (literally *mother of cacao*) in Uuxactún, is a quick growing tree planted to stabilize the soil in the swidden agriculture systems, in the broader region it is used as a shade tree for cacao and coffee trees, or to fix the nitrogen level in soil.

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)



Figure 9: *Controlled burning to enlarge recent milpa.* Photo: author



Figure 10: *Compost from pepitoria.* Photo: author

Jakub ADÁMEK

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uuaxactún (Guatemala)

After the spot is cleaned, it is time to sow plants. For this purpose, a farmer needs just a pointed stick to poke holes in the ground¹⁵, and an upper part of a plastic bottle to hold the seeds. The stick is made only for this one purpose in the *milpa*, cut from young trees all around. The farmer will poke holes in one *abrazo* distances (“hug” – the margin between two stretched arms, like for a hug) and place seeds from the bottle tied to his belt. The stick and the bottle container usually stay in the *milpa*, since they are made in the place with no investment, there is no need to keep them.



Figure 11: Farmer posing with his tools – pointed stick, machete and bottle. Photo: author

¹⁵ Personally, it was quite shocking to discover that it is much easier to dig a hole in a vertisol with a pointed stick than with a shovel.

Jakub ADÁMEK

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)



Figure 12: Agricultural tools lying unguarded. Photo: author

After the seeds are sown all the farmer needs to do is just to visit his *milpa* for cleaning the grass and weed, and to scare pests eventually. The cleaning still requires a machete while some of the farmers use weed spray combined with pesticides.¹⁶ Green waste from cleaning stays in the *milpa* forming new compost, or if the pile of slashed weed is big enough it could be burned to make additional ash.

The protection of the *milpa* from the pests and animals is fully an individual affair.¹⁷ Some *milpas*, usually located near the Uaxactún agglomeration, have fences to be protected from horses wandering freely through the village. Other farmers are placing poisonous baits to kill raccoons and coatis, one of the respondents described these baits as eggs with injected poison.

¹⁶ One respondent admitted that he uses pesticides and traits of weed spray were visible only on some *milpas*. According to some rumours weed sprays were distributed to some inhabitants as a bribe to vote for the "right" candidate in the municipal election.

¹⁷ As pests were mostly considered raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), coati (*Nasua narica*), peccary (*Pecari tajacu*), paca (*Cuniculus paca*) and birds.

Another strategy is to place scarecrows. One respondent claimed that used nappies are the best way to scare a raccoon. Some *milpas* are protected by knockers – wooden boards resonating loudly after being beaten with the back of a machete blade. And lastly, the farmer could still guard his harvest with a gun in his hands.



Figure 13: *Highly repaired personal gun.* Photo: author

When the *milpa* is about to bring its fruits successfully, it is time to harvest and process crops. Most of the plants are just picked and brought in the house, no special processing is present.

The crops that do not have to be dried or to be processed by any special way are stored and eaten in the house of a farmer. The exceptions I had found are maize, *pepitoria*, beans, chilli pepper and hemp.

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)



Figure 14: Farmer moments after return from *milpa*. His rifle is still ready. Photo: author

When the maize is ripe, or semi-ripe, it is time to bend (*doblar*). The farmer will break fibres in the maize stem a few centimetres under the ear of corn with the back of a machete blade. The weakened stem is bent the way the corn ear is hanging downward. And sometimes the upper part of the plant above the ear is cut as well. Overlapping maize leaves protect the corn ear from the rain like a roof. The unusual position of corn ear is also a way of protection against birds, coatis and raccoons. Some respondents claimed that bent (*doblada*) maize could stay on the *milpa* for six months (!).

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)



Figure 15: Hungry pizote looting trash can in Tikal. Photo: author

Maize is also stored in the houses, even if there is no special room for this purpose. In houses it is easy to see sacks of maize staying in one corner.

Pepitoria is collected in one place in the *milpa*, usually near a small shelter. The bigger *milpas* could have more shelters, and naturally, more remote *milpas* have bigger ones. Squashes are cut with a machete in half, seeds are extracted on the nylon blanket. The skin with *pepitoria* flesh is left to rot in the *milpa*. Extracted seeds are brought to the house. Next day, they are placed in a thin layer on a nylon blanket again, and let to dry under the sunlight. Dried seeds are packed in sacks and stored in the house.

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)



Figure 16: *Ripe maize ready for harvest.* Photo: author



Figure 17: *Milpa after doblar.* Photo: author

Jakub ADÁMEK

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uuxactún (Guatemala)

**Figure 18 -19:** Photo: author

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)



Figure 20: *Pepitoria* processing. Photo: author



Figure 21: Farmer drying pepitoria seeds at the former airstrip in Uaxactún. Photo: author

Jakub ADÁMEK

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)

As I already mentioned, I did not witness beans cultivation or processing during my stay in Uaxactún, so all information is obtained through interviews. Ripe beans are left on the stem to dry. Then they are collected on a nylon blanket, or a construction similar to a table, standing on a nylon blanket. Dried bean husks are beaten with a stick until beans fall out. Beans are afterwards packed in sacks and brought in the house.

Chilli pepper is also dried on a nylon blanket in the sunlight. Afterwards, it is stored or grounded.

The only plant that seems to be processed otherwise is hemp. As was mentioned before, hemp is growing hidden in *guamil*, or in the mountains, far from unwanted eyes. When it is ripe, the farmer will let the plants to dry on the plantation and to reduce its smell. Afterwards, it is collected and brought to the house and hung under the roof to dry completely. That the hemp is dry enough is shown by its seeds falling off the hanged plant. If this change is made by a demand for privacy during hemp processing, or as a way to reduce the loss of active substances is hard to say. But still, it seems that the hemp plant brings agricultural innovations in Uaxactún.



Figure 22: Packed maize is ready to be brought home. Photo: author



Figure 23: *After the work.* Photo: author

Agricultural Year

Even if the agricultural techniques seem to be more or less coherent, the agricultural year differs from respondent to respondent. In general, it is possible to say that the agricultural year is formed by two cycles based on maize and *pepitoria* squash cultivation.

The *Milpas* should be set on fire from March to May. The exact date for the annual burning is mutable, the most important factor is the weather, more precisely the amount of rain. According to some respondents, the first plant which should be sown is sweet potatoes, but more important is the sowing of the *pepitoria* squash. *Pepitoria* is sown after the *milpas* are cleaned (burned) and when the weather secures enough moisture. Some respondents sow maize together with squash, other respondents sow maize some time (from a few days to a

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uuaxactún (Guatemala)

few weeks) after the sowing of squash. It is important for the agriculture that squash produces its leaves before maize starts to sprout. *Pepitoria* leaves secure shadow and moisture for young maize plants. Both plants should be ripe on so-called dog days (*canícula*), a few weeks of dry and sunny weather, ordinary taking place from July till the second half of August.

Harvest starts during the dog days. Right after harvest it is ideal to sow *pepitoria* and maize again. After the dog days, the rainy season starts again. The second harvest is from October until December. Again, the main factor is the weather, which nowadays is rapidly changing, and the type of used crops. alternative is sowing beans after the second harvest, filling the agricultural gap from December to February.

Other plants do not seem to be fixed on a specific date this precisely.

A partially independent cycle is formed by beans cultivation. Some respondents are sowing beans together with squash and maize, others not. The

Even if presented agricultural cycles show some level of cohesion, it seems that there are several agricultural strategies in Uuaxactún, each reflected to be normative by its user. To illustrate this, see the tables below.



Figure 24: Photo: author

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uuaxactún (Guatemala)

DATE OF SOWING														
Participant	Maize	Peplotia Squash	Bean	Sweet Potato	Chilly	Maizal	Pineapple	Maxan	Sugar Cane	Cassava	Banana	Soyote Squash	Tobacco	Marijuana
E1	April-August	April-August	November	April-August	-	May	May	May-August	May	-	-	-	-	-
N1	22 nd of April-August	22 nd of April after 24 th of August	1 st April, 22 nd of August	22 nd of April	-	April	22 nd of April	15 th of May	-	22 nd of April	April	-	-	April
G1	March-August	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
T1	April-August	April-August	April-August	April	-	-	August	December	-	June	-	April-August	April-August	Anytime
M1	May	April	September/October				August/September			March		April		
A1	22 nd June					March						April		
R1	3 rd of May (before May 1 st) November	April	20 th November	Anytime		August				August		3 rd of May (before May 1 st) November		
V1	10-15 th of May October	March-August	September/November	May		March/April	February/March	September		March/April		10-15 th May		
F1	April/June-October	April/June-October	October	April	April/May	April				April/May		April/June-October		
V2	May/April	May/April	November/December	March, June, July, August		March, June, July, August	June after carulla			March, June, July, August		May/April		
C1	May	May/April	June-December	May		May				May		April		December
E2	April/May-25 th of November	April/May	20 th of November	When is hot weather		In summer				March/April		April/May, 25 th of November		
O1	May (before rains)	May (before rains)	December	March		March		August (when it rains)		April		April		
L1	When pepitoria produce leaves	15 th April	November	Anytime						Anytime				
A2	April	April	November	October		September/October				September/October		April		
F2	11 May - 20 July	April	15 th October	May		August/September				August/September				

Jakub ADÁMEK

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uuxactún (Guatemala)

DATE OF HARVEST														
Participant	Maize	Peplonia Squash	Bean	Sweet Potato	Chilly	Maizal	Pineapple	Maxan	Sugar Cane	Cassava	Banana	Ayole Squash	Tobacco	Marjuana
E1	August - November	August - November	February/March	August - November		February/March	June	August - November	Anytime					August - November
N1	3 months after the sowing	August	3 months after the sowing	22 of April		April	22 of April	24 of August		22 of April	August			After 6 months
G1	April - October													
T1	August - October	40 days after sowing	August - October	August			August	December		June		3 months after sowing	1-2 months after sowing	Month after sowing
M1	September	August	3 months after sowing				August / September			Anytime		September		
A1	August													
R1	August - September / February	August - September	February - March	Anytime		Anytime				February		November		
V1	August - February	August	January	August		August - September	June	Anytime		August - September		August		
F1	August - December	August	December	August	July	August				August		August		
V2	Depend on type of maize	June - July	February	After four months		After three months	After one year and two months			After six months		June - July		
C1	August	August										June		When the weather is good
E2	August	August	After three months							Anytime		August		
O1	August	August	February (when is rainy and not too weather)	June		March	October			July		September		
L1	August	July - August	July	Anytime		Anytime				Anytime				
A2	August	August	February	May		April - May				April - May		October		
F2	August	August	January - February	December										

Conclusion

The agricultural space of Uaxactún is vast. Economical distinction understood through *milpa* spatiality could be visible. Visualization and measurements of *guamil* require better methods than the one used in this paper.

Agriculture in Uaxactún could be interpreted various ways. Using (1) agricultural techniques as the main feature for definition - modern Uaxactún's agriculture would be traditional. Using (2) its space, the *guamil*, understood as personal ownership and as the space in which *milpas* "wander" every two years - the agriculture ceases to be extensive. It seems that this agricultural strategy to be rather close to an extended variation of two-field agriculture known from pre-modern Europe. And lastly, using (3) crops preferred by Uaxactún's farmers - the agriculture would be "capitalistic", oriented mainly on monetary profit. No traits of barter economy were observed. The most preferred crop (*pepitoria* squash) is not consumed locally. Locally consumed crops are not reflected as important, only one respondent did not share the view "*Maíz se sólo come*". Crop, plant, product, etc. are interesting only if they could be exchanged for money.

It seems that there are several agricultural strategies in Uaxactún, each reflected to be normative by its user. It is even possible to affirm that Uaxactuneros does not make a difference between personal state and general state of the environment. For instance, when I asked my respondents whether there was tobacco in Uaxactún the answers were mostly negative. However, the answer "*No hay tabaco en Uaxactún*" (There is no tobacco in Uaxactún) in reality means "*I do not cultivate tobacco*". The same principle is valid with other crops – cotton, *ayote* squash, *xanthosoma*, etc. The same is possible to say about the dates of sowing and harvesting, as well as about the description of the ideal spot for the *milpa* (most of the respondents described their own *milpa* as the ideal one). It means that any information can be taken just as a personal experience of a particular participant.

The origin of these strategies may be connected with the region of origin of a particular family or respondent. Well, this is a complicated topic that needs another research, but in general, Uaxactún is a "young" community. Most of the inhabitants have families in the far regions of Guatemala¹⁸. And several respondents also referred during the interview to their fathers. Agricultural knowledge is transmitted on a generational base – from father to son mostly.

¹⁸ During the Guatemalan Civil War (1960-1996) Uaxactún represented an isolated refuge for many people from the many regions of the country. Nowadays some consider Uaxactún to be a specific type of criminal refuge, where one could outrun the law and criminal past.

There are some agricultural courses provided by WCS, of course, but my respondents referred solely to the course dedicated to apiculture and few others dedicated to forestry. Knowing that the history of modern Uaxactún could be traced to the very beginning of the 20th century, it is possible to theorize how many generations the community needs to produce something as an agricultural lore. Based on this research, century does not seem to be enough time for such process.

Interestingly, these strategies do not seem to be shared among families. Not because they are “family secrets” in any sense, but because they are simply not interesting topics. Why? Because the economy of Uaxactún is oriented on harvesting of non-timber resources, partly also on seasonal work on archaeological excavations, not on agriculture. Agriculture is just a supplement. A way to save some money on food, not something one should dedicate his life to. Also, the inhabitants of Uaxactún live under concession, therefore they do not own their houses and fields. Why should anybody invest time and energy into anything rented? Activities oriented on making a financial gain are the better strategies, especially when anyone cannot be sure for how long he will own the concession. With money a person could move away, without any significant loss. An economy based on agriculture and barter trade would nail the people to the soil and would make it hard to move from Uaxactún in case of emergency.

Discussion

Since there are just a few anthropological studies from Uaxactún, it is hard to compare my results. Observed system of land rotation is well-known, and its variations were described (REINA 1967:7-8; HARRISON 2001:76; NIGHT – DIEMONT 2013:46-47).

Nature defender identity of Uaxactuneros described by Julie Gibbings (GIBBINGS 2007:273-274) probably affected obtained information – for instance, all the participants except two denied that they used any fertilizer whatsoever. Was this information true? Or was it something Uaxactunero would say to a gringo visiting Uaxactún? Agreeing with Gibbings and seeing *nature defenders' identity* to be a political adaptation, let me illustrate what I mean with the following anecdote. When I arrived to the Uaxactún as just-another-gringo everybody was saying basically the same thing: *Breathe deeply and taste how clean air we have here. Look around at the untouched forest. Be aware, wild animals are all*

around.¹⁹ On one hand, I believe that Uaxactuneros take part of this discourse seriously, but on the other hand, wild untouched nature is something tourists and policymakers want to find in Petén. I also believe that the researcher in Uaxactún is also part of local policies. Why so? A part of investments in Uaxactún is made thanks to WCS and archaeological projects (PARU most notably). Policies are simply engaged in the protection of nature and culture, and the researcher is part of these policies. So the obtained information could be easily understood also as a political statement.

Interesting is comparison with Podolinská and Čisárik finding that 35,54% of the Uaxactún population have agriculture as a profession, and that this profession is also prevalent (PODOLINSKÁ – ČISÁRIK 2015:553). I do not believe that 5 years could change demography in any radical way, especially in a place as isolated as Uaxactún. The question is then how much reflected is agriculture in Uaxactun discourse? I believe that answer is *not so much*. This non-reflection could produce the proclamation “*Cada uno en Uaxactún es xatero*” (Everybody in Uaxactún is *xatero*) I heard quite often. This proclamation was often used by respondents as a certain type of excuse and as a way to blame other Uaxactuneros for the supposedly poor condition of local agriculture. In this case the proclamation could be read as “*They are (just) xateros, and therefore they know nothing about agriculture*”. On the other hand, some respondents were deeply worried by the anomaly dry weather and consequential agricultural losses, so agriculture has to be reflected somehow. Another interpretation of “*Cada uno en Uaxactún es xatero*” proclamation could stem from the reality that agriculture does not seem to be an interesting topic for discussion in Uaxactún. In this case observed proclamation could reflect non-sharing of agricultural knowledge. A combination of two previous interpretations could lead to the idea that agriculture belongs to the private sphere in Uaxactún and does not pierce into public discourse.

Another way to take a closer examination of non-reflecting the agriculture in Uaxactún discourse could be provided by major economic changes during the last century, bringing a shift to the monetary economy in general (CANCIAN 1992:82-83; GREENFIELD 1999:94, 107; GASKIN 2003:262-223;). In this case Uaxactún’s non-reflection of agriculture could be a trait of the major regional and global socio-economic changes. Uaxactún as a young

¹⁹ These sentences represent “compressed” displays of *nature defenders’ discourse* in Uaxactún, forming an informal but still “official” representation of the Uaxactún community as an ecologically friendly village in the middle of untouched jungle. However, as Julie Gibbings noted, this self-representation and observable state of local nature are two different things (GIBBINGS 2007:269-270).

community was built by hired forest workers (*chicleros*), or to be more precise, founding the modern Uaxactún was maybe driven by earliest shifts leading to major economic changes – by early shifts from agricultural production to the monetary economy.

The tricky part is the observed non-sharing of agricultural knowledge in Uaxactún. Taking economical ideas aside, it is possible to see continuity with ancient Mesoamerican society (KOVÁČ, personal communication 22.01.2020). Anyway, since the agricultural techniques in Uaxactún are more-or-less traditional by their basic principles (slash-and-burn), and could be also interpreted as pre-Columbian in one or another way (extensive swidden agriculture), this idea is interesting. However, I believe it could be more valid for Kekchí inhabitants of Uaxactún than for non-Maya inhabitants. Also, this interpretation would be more plausible if the research would take place in an exclusively Maya community, settled on one place for a longer time than only for four generations. I am personally still more convinced that economic reasons are prevalent in this case. But for clarification, additional research is necessary.

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Unfortunately, traditions of academic writing and duty to protect personal data do not allow me to add all the respondents making this small piece of writing possible as main authors. But let us say that the one real author of this paper is the Uaxactún community personally. All my contribution was nothing but an ear willing to listen and a hand willing to type.

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Jakub ADÁMEK

Maíz sólo se come: Contemporary agriculture in Uaxactún (Guatemala)

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Pre-Hispanic Nahua Slavery

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with pre-Hispanic Nahua slavery. Based upon an examination of Nahua perception of slavery/slaves, Nahua forms of slavery (apart from the slaves destined for sacrifice there were slaves destined for work) and the social and legal position of Nahua slaves (destined for work) the author concludes that the Nahua institution traditionally called "slavery" is different from its counterparts known from the history of Occident. Except for slaves destined for sacrifice to the gods which are discussed only briefly in the article, the Nahua slaves (i.e. the slaves destined for work) had a certain degree of personal freedom and certain rights. Becoming a slave at birth was possible only exceptionally and the enslavement of persons was in many cases (even if not in all cases) only temporary. The treatment of Nahua slaves – compared to the living conditions of their counterparts in many other world cultures – was significantly better, more humane. This can be seen from the fact that the master was entitled only to his/her slave's labor and not to slave's life, health, family members or property, as well as from the fact that the slave could obtain freedom in many ways, not only by the manumission made by his/her master. Although slaves were considered a kind of both physically and mentally "less perfect" individuals who were "dirtied", that is, morally tainted and dishonored by their enslavement and its reasons (mainly a delinquent behavior, i.e. non-payment of debts or perpetration of certain crimes), they were not systematically excluded from the wider society formed by free persons and they lived with their families in their houses and neighborhoods.

KEY WORDS: Aztec Empire, essential features, Nahua Culture, pre-Hispanic era, slavery

Introduction

The Nahua¹ term *tlacohтли* (pl. *tlacotin/tlatlacotin*) was translated by the authors of colonial written sources, created after the Spanish conquest of Aztec Empire² in the 16th and 17th centuries, as a “slave“ (*esclavo, siervo*). It was motivated, *inter alia*, by the intention of some authors to prove that slavery existed already in pre-Hispanic society and thus to support the introduction of certain forms of Indians’ forced labor in colonial society. This labor resembled slavery in such a considerable extent that von Mentz (2007) has aptly denoted them “semi-slavery“ (“semiesclavitud“).

On the other hand, the authors of colonial sources were aware of the fact that the translation of the term *tlacohтли* as “slave“ is not entirely appropriate, as Nahua slavery (*tlatlacolizтли*) differed to a large extent from the medieval European notion and forms of slavery, with which they were familiar.³ Based on *Las Siete Partidas* (*Seven Parts*), the most important source of

¹ Nahuas, sometimes referred to as Aztecs, were the dominant native culture of Mesoamerican area called “Central Mexico“ (Valley of Mexico and its surroundings). There were about twenty Nahua ethnic groups (SMITH 2012:4) residing in their autonomous city-states (*alteperme*; sg. *altepetl*), most of which became part of the Aztec Empire.

² Aztec Empire existed from the second quarter of the 15th century to 1521 in approximately present-day central and southern Mexico (except for certain areas there, e.g. the Mayan areas). It reached an area of about 278.852 km², but only the area of about 40.000 km², including the central zone of the empire (the Valley of Mexico with an area of about 7.000 km²), was systematically administered. The empire had a population of five to six million, with about a million of them living in the central zone of the empire (FARGHER – BLANTON 2007:867-868). The empire had three cooperating centers, which were the neighboring and allied Nahua city-states of Tenochtitlan, Tezcoco and Tlacopan (all were located in central part of the Valley of Mexico), of which Tenochtitlan became the most important over time.

³ For example, according to the Franciscan friar Toribio de Benavente Motolinía, “*The making of slaves among these natives of New Spain is very contrary to the nations of Europe ... and it still seems to me that those who are called slaves (in Mexico) lack many conditions to be properly slaves*“ (“El hacer de los esclavos entre estos naturales de la Nueva España es muy contrario de las naciones de Europa... y aún me parece que estos que llaman esclavos (en México) les faltan muchas condiciones para ser propiamente esclavos”) (MOTOLINIA 1970:170). Bartolomé de Las Casas, a Dominican, bishop and official protector of Indians appointed by the Spanish Crown, has also emphasized a specific nature of Nahuas’ and other Indians’ pre-Hispanic slavery: “[t]his term slave, among the Indians does not denote or mean what among us; because it does not mean but a servant or person who has some more care or some more obligation to help me and serve me in some things that I need. Being an Indian slave... was very little less than being a son [of the slave master], because the slave had his house, property, wife and children and he was enjoying his freedom like other free people, his neighbors, unless he had to work in his master’s house or on his master’s field or to do other similar things for him that were done but in certain periods of time and many of them but occasionally, and all the other time he had for himself and enjoyed it for himself just like free people did. Beyond that, the masters treated such slaves very softly, as if they owed them nothing. And thus, beyond comparison they were freer than those who were called

Peter VYŠNÝ

Pre-Hispanic Nahua Slavery

law in Castile at the time, with considerable authority in colonial Spanish America, the said notion and forms of slavery (*servidumbre*) can be briefly described as follows: The slavery was seen to be the most evil and despicable thing in the world after sin because it was contrary to the natural freedom with which every human being was endowed by God, which, however, did not prevent Castile or other medieval countries from practicing slavery, albeit to a limited extent. To become a slave was possible by being born from a slave woman (whether the father was a slave or was a free person, was irrelevant), by voluntarily selling himself into slavery in order to pay debts (the creditor became the master of the enslaved debtor), or by being captured in a just war waged by Christians in order to defend and spread their faith (in the concrete, the enslaved ones or *cativos* were non-Christian warriors, captured by Christian warriors). In principle, the slave status was lifelong, however, there were several ways in which a slave could be released (a slave could be given freedom by his master and moreover the slave could obtain it by himself, for example, if he denounced the commission of certain crimes against the king or married a free person). An essential feature of a slave was that he lacked personal freedom and was subject to the power of his master (who was a free person). Such power was extensive, but not unlimited – the master could not arbitrarily kill the slave or punish him too harshly (physically). The main task of a slave was to work for the master. If a slave acquired a certain property, this property belonged to his master automatically. Although a slave was juridically a thing that pertained to the fortune of his master (i.e. a slave was not a subject but an object of law), he had certain minimum of rights, namely: the right to the protection of his life and health and to the good treatment by his master – a slave oppressed by his master could complain to a judge who could sell him to another master; the right to marry with both a slave or a free person; and the right not to assume responsibility

serfs. And this is also very clear and very notorious, especially to the clergymen who have penetrated the languages and dealing with this matter, with diligence they have inquired it and got well acquainted with it" ("...este término esclavo, entre los indios no denota ni significa lo que entre nosotros; porque no quiere decir sino un servidor o persona que tiene algún más cuidado o alguna más obligación de ayudarme y servirme en algunas cosas de que tengo necesidad. Por manera que indio ser esclavo de indios era muy poco menos que ser su hijo, porque tenía su casa y su hogar y su peculio y hacienda, e su mujer e sus hijos y gozar de su libertad como los otros súbditos libres sus vecinos, si no era cuando el señor había menester hacer su casa o labrar su sementera, o otras cosas semejantes que se hacían a sus tiempos, y muchas de cuando en cuando, y todo el demás tiempo tenía por sí y dél gozaban para sí, como personas libres. Allende de aquello, el tratamiento que los señores hacían a los tales siervos eran blandísimo e suavísimo, como si nada les debieran. Y así, sin comparación eran más libres que a los que llaman los derechos originarios y ascripticios. Y esto también es clarísimo y muy notorio, en especial a los religiosos que han penetrado las lenguas e de industria lo han inquerido y bien sabido tratando desta materia") (LAS CASAS 1552).

for e.g. damage caused by acts performed by the slave while working for his master according to his orders (see LAS SIETE PARTIDAS 1555: Qvarta, Partida, titulos V, XXI-XXIII).

Not only the authors of colonial sources but also modern researchers were aware of the fact that pre-Hispanic Nahua slavery deviated from the standard occidental understanding of slavery (see SHADOW – RODRÍGUEZ 1995). For example, Moreno (1931), Vaillant (1941) and Bosch García (1944) considered its rather humane character to be an important specificity of Nahua slavery. Other researchers, such as Katz (1956), Castillo Farreras (1996 [1972]) and Hicks (1974, 1976), pointed out that the number of *tlatlacotin* was relatively low, that slave labor was not the basis of the economy, that in most cases the slave status was not a lifelong one, that *tlatlacotin* were not deprived of personal liberty in full and were not separated from their families, nor have they been systematically excluded from the wider society, etc. Other researchers, such as González Torres (1985) and Clendinnen (1991), took a closer look at slaves who were not destined for work but for ritual execution, that is, they were sacrificed to the gods. Last but not least, Ana Luisa Izquierdo (1984) has examined the pre-Hispanic slavery in a broader Mesoamerican context, since this institution existed not only in Nahua society, but also in other Mesoamerican native societies, for example, in Maya society.

Since pre-Hispanic Nahua slavery corresponds only to a limited extent to the occidental concept of slavery outlined above, which the authors of colonial sources and, to varying degrees, modern researchers have used as a general frame of reference, it is necessary to begin the present article on pre-Hispanic Nahua slavery by reconstruction of its authentic notion, which I will try to do, without any claims of completeness, in the article's first part. In the next part of the article, I will examine the forms of Nahua slavery, while also dealing with the social and legal position of slaves. However, I will only very briefly mention the situation of slaves destined for sacrifice to gods, focusing in more detail on other category of slaves, those who were destined for work. In the conclusion, I will summarize the essential features of the pre-Hispanic Nahua slavery. The exposition of the article's topic is preceded by a brief note on the nature of the sources processed in the article.

A Note on Sources

Besides the secondary literature, the article is based on selected colonial written sources. The credibility and informative potential of these sources are limited by various factors (for more

details see e.g. VYŠNÝ 2019:37ff.). For the purposes of the present article, it is sufficient to mention but two typical attributes of the sources.

First, the sources have a hybrid nature. Such a nature of the sources (individual sources are characterized by it to varying degrees) stems from their foundation on both indigenous (Nahua) and Spanish (European, Christian) terminologies, concepts and political, legal, economic, religious and cultural traditions, as well as on their syncretic forms (see e.g. LEVIN ROJO – NAVARRETE LINARES 2007; ROMERO GALVÁN 2011). It follows that the source representations of slavery, like those of other institutions of pre-Hispanic Nahua society, may be distorted as well as inaccurate and incomplete to some extent, since the authors of the sources have extensively described the pre-Hispanic Nahua culture in terms of their own, i.e. Spanish (European, Christian) culture. In addition, the authors of colonial sources who were not Spaniards, but Nahuas (Nahua elites or authorities and scribes of Nahua local self-governing communities) introduced the pre-Hispanic Nahua society not only from perspective of their own, i.e. Nahua culture, but also in the light of Spanish (European, Christian) culture, or rather in the light of their (mis)interpretation of this dominant culture. Last but not least, colonial sources involve translations of various Nahua words, expressions or terms into (Castilian) Spanish and vice versa which are more or less problematic (e.g. too much simplified) in many cases (see e.g. CASTILLO FARRERAS 2010). Thus, so-called *double mistaken identity* can be attributed to the source texts, including those that inform about slavery. *Double mistaken identity* is a phenomenon related to the postconquest Nahua culture, identified and studied by James Lockhart (1985; 1992), who defines it as follows: “[e]ach society/culture [i.e. the Spaniards and the Nahuas] approached the other in a similar fashion, manifesting relatively little interest in the other side’s internal structure, apparently expecting it in some way to mirror its own. The unspoken presumption of sameness showed itself above all in the way each used its own categories in interpreting cultural phenomena of the other. Probably the same principle was at work, on both sides, with all the peoples the Spaniards encountered, but in this case, more perhaps than in any other, similarities between the two cultures reinforced the tendency. At the root of cultural interaction between Nahuas and Spaniards was a process I have called Double Mistaken Identity, whereby each side takes it that a given form or concept is essentially one already known to it, operating in much the same manner as in its own tradition, and hardly takes cognizance of the other side’s interpretation. Each could view Indian town government, the monastery complexes, mural painting, land tenure, and many other phenomena of the postconquest Nahua world as falling within its own frame of reference. Under the unwitting truce thus created, Nahua patterns could continue indefinitely in a superficially Hispanic guise that was sometimes no more than a label. Then, over the centuries, without much

obvious surface change, a rapprochement took place in many spheres, often leading to forms that cannot be securely attributed to either original parent culture, but that were accepted all long as familiar by both. Even when the end result looked more Hispanic than indigenous, the Nahuas, without second thoughts and with good reason, regarded the concept, pattern, or institution as their own” (LOCKHART 1992:445-446).

Second, the sources that inform on pre-Hispanic Nahua slavery in a more comprehensive way mostly refer only to the central zone of the Aztec Empire (roughly the Valley of Mexico) and, in particular, to its first (city-state of Tenochtitlan) and second (city-state of Tezcoco) most important centers. In other words, the sources relevant to this article do not concern explicitly the entire area of the pre-Hispanic Nahua culture (approximately the Central Mexico composed of the Valley of Mexico and its surroundings). However, it is possible, at least to some extent, to reconstruct upon these sources such essential features of slavery that could in principle be shared virtually by all Nahuas. This is due to the fact that many source data are generalized and thus may cover implicitly the pre-Hispanic Nahua culture as a whole. Moreover, the pre-Hispanic Nahua slavery, although it may have differed in some details in specific Nahua localities and regions, seems to have had much the same nature in the entire area of the pre-Hispanic Nahua culture (cf. e.g. BERDAN 2014:190-191; LOCKHART 1992:99-100) which thus allows us, at least partially, to examine this slavery using sources explicitly related mostly only to the central zone of the Aztec Empire.

Nahua View of Slavery

The noun *tlacohtli*, i.e. “male slave” (*esclavo*) or “female slave” (*esclava*), is made of root *tlaco* and suffix *-tli*. The same root can be combined with the suffix *-tl*, but the word *tlacotl* has a completely different meaning than *tlacohtli*, to wit: “spear” (*jara*) or “stick, rod” (*verdasca*) (CASTILLO FARRERAS 2010:58).

The root of the expression *tlacohtli*, i.e. *tlaco*, can be translated as “half, middle, center” (*mediano, que ocupa el centro, que está a la mitad, en medio*) (KARTUNNEN 1992:260). Following Castillo Farreras (1996:119-121) we can deduce that Nahua *tlatlacotin* were perceived as people located, so to speak, between the two strata of Nahua society, a tiny elite class (*pipiltin*) and the mass of commoners (*macehualtin*). Related to this situation of *tlatlacotin* was a belief that Tezcatlipoca, an important, ubiquitous and omnipotent Nahua

god, also known as Titlacahuan (We are his slaves),⁴ did not “ridicule“ of the *tlatlacotin*, that is, he did not influence, whether in a positive or negative sense, their destinies, as he arbitrarily was doing with those of *pipiltin* and *macehualtin*. In addition, Tezcatlipoca was believed to protect *tlatlacotin*, his “beloved children“, from ill-treatment by their masters and anyone else, although he probably did not provide them protection permanently, but only once every 260-day calendar cycle (*tonalpohualli*), around the day called *ce miquiztli* (one-death), associated with a special worship of Tezcatlipoca (cf. SAHAGÚN 2001, I:327-328). Castillo Farreras (1996:121) explains the said attitude of Tezcatlipoca towards the *tlatlacotin* by their mutual neutral or peaceful relationship – Tezcatlipoca gave or owed the *tlatlacotin* nothing and the slaves did not owe him anything. In contrast, *pipiltin*, as well as the rich merchants (*pochteca*), owed Tezcatlipoca because he had given them considerable wealth, while also providing *pipiltin* with political power (military and civil offices). The god could therefore monitor their behavior to see if they were handling the property and power they had been given by him properly, and if he was not satisfied with them or he just liked it, he could “ridicule“ of them, which specifically meant throwing them into poverty, depriving them of their offices and the like. *Macehualtin*, like *tlatlacotin*, were not provided by god with wealth or power, but *macehualtin*, unlike *tlatlacotin*, were perceived as a people to whom Tezcatlipoca owes something (although in reality he would give them nothing except if he sometimes would like to do it). Thus, while there was no obligation in the relationship between Tezcatlipoca and the *tlatlacotin* on its either side, in the relationship between Tezcatlipoca and the *pipiltin* or the merchants it existed on the side of the *pipiltin* and *merchants*, and in the relationship between Tezcatlipoca and the *macehualtin* it existed on the side of god.

The word *tlacohtli* is close to the noun *tlatlacolli*, i.e. “sin, fault” (*pecado, culpa, defecto*) (KARTUNNEN 1992:263), which can also be translated as “delict“ or “crime“, since the authors of the colonial sources generally identified sin with crime (see JOHANSSON 2010). These authors followed the contemporary Spanish/European understanding of crime, created under the influence of canon law in the High to Late Middle Ages, according to which a crime was an act directed not only against a specific individual, the injured or killed victim of the crime, but also against the whole society and its internal order which was considered optimal and was guaranteed, as well as maintained by God and the ruler. Therefore, the perpetrators in most cases could not atone for the commission of crimes and their negative

⁴ On Tezcatlipoca see the exhaustive study of Guilhelm Olivier (OLIVIER 2003).

consequences (only) by compensating the victims or victims' surviving relatives. They should (also) be punished so that they provided a symbolical (moral) satisfaction to the society for harms they had caused to it by their crimes. That was achieved by imposing penalties that made suffer the sentenced criminals both physically and mentally, dishonored them, separated them from their families and communities and the like, letting them feel physically that what they had done was wrong. Thus, the affliction of the condemned persons became the standard way to expiate their crimes. That way had a symbolical, moral nature, like in the case of the atonement of sin by the sinner (see e.g. LÓPEZ-AMO Y MARÍN 1956).

Johansson (2010:passim) considers the identification of the Nahua expression of *tlahtlacolli* with the Christian concept of sin inappropriate. *Tlahtlacolli* was not perceived, unlike sin, as an abstract evil in itself, but as a violation of a concrete social/legal norm, having a concrete form perceptible to human senses, for example, the form of material damage. In addition, *tlahtlacolli* could not be atoned for by its remission by divine beings. Therefore, the identification of the Nahua ritual of *neyolmelahualiztli* ("the act of straightening the heart") with Christian (Catholic) confession which occurs in the sources is incorrect. Perpetrators of sexual crimes (e.g. adultery) were punished by death, but they could avoid their punishment performing the *neyolmelahualiztli* ritual or, according to the authors of colonial sources, "confessing themselves", in front of a priest serving in the temple of the rain goddess Tlazolteotl. Such a ritual or "confession" individuals had the right to perform only once in a lifetime whereupon they allegedly practiced it until a later age or at the end of life. However, there was no confession in its Christian (Catholic) understanding in the Nahua society: the task of Tlazolteotl was not, from the position of a divine being, to forgive a sin (after its confession and repentance by the sinner) but to supernaturally absorb the crime, thus eliminating it and its harmful consequences. The Nahuas imagined this activity of Tlazolteotl as the consumption of a crime by the deity. Since they figuratively compared the crime to excrement, it was actually a "ritual coprophagy".

The expression *tlahtlacolli*, not identified with the culturally specific notion of sin and understood as a designation for a delict, is closely related to the word *tlacohltli* not only for linguistic reasons, but also due to the existence of enslaved delinquents as an independent category of Nahua slaves (see below).

The word *tlacohltli* is also associated, although not linguistically (CASTILLO FARRERAS 1996:119), but socially, with the noun *tlacohualli*, i.e. "a purchase, something bought" (*cosa comprada*) (KARTUNNEN 1992:255). Slaves, especially those destined for ritual execution, were traded throughout the Nahua area and beyond it. Thus, the connection between the terms *tlacohltli* and *tlacohualli* is justified.

The Nahua view of slavery can be approached not only by examining the social meaning of the word *tlacohtli* and related expressions, but also in the context of Nahua general understanding of a human being (see GARZA 1978).

For the Nahuas, a human as such was a being inhabiting the terrestrial world, which distinguished him/her from the gods, who existed not only in the terrestrial world but also in extraterrestrial worlds, the heavens and the underworld, which were inaccessible to humans (LÓPEZ AUSTIN 2015:26).

Furthermore, humans also differed from the gods in that they had a dual nature. Their first essence was the body. This essence, which the gods did not have, was material and temporary. In contrast, the second essence of humans and at the same time the only essence of the gods was immaterial (spiritual) and perpetual. This essence took the form of certain supernatural energies (substances), which in the case of humans resided inside their bodies. The main supernatural energies were: the *tonalli* residing in the head of a human and the *teyolia* residing in his heart (LÓPEZ AUSTIN 2015:27ff.; for more details see LÓPEZ AUSTIN 2004). We could roughly compare these energies to what is understood as a soul in the West (also because of their divine origin). On the other hand, Nahuas not only considered them for a soul, i.e. for a part of the human body, but also identified them with various phenomena of the real world. Nahuas explained, for example, sunlight, wind or the spread of a certain smell or odor in the air, as well as childbirth, psychosomatic development and death of a person etc., as processes consisting in a certain actuation, transformation or flow of the respective supernatural energies (see McKEEVER FURST 1997).

Nahuas seem to have considered enslaved people to be physically and mentally "degenerate" or "sick", as they believed that after becoming *tlatlacotin* they lost, at least in part, their supernatural energies (especially the *tonalli* and *teyolia*), which harmed their body, disrupting its internal balance and reducing its functionality. *Tlatlacotin* were thus perceived as people who were biologically less perfect than free people, which justified their subordinate position in society. At the same time, they were considered "dirtied" people, that is people who were morally tainted and dishonoured with their enslavement and its reasons, among which the delinquent behaviour, either non-payment of debts or the commission of certain crimes, was the predominant one. In this context, it is possible to recall the linguistic proximity of the terms "slave" (*tlacohtli*) and "delict" (*tlahtlacolli*), as well as the fact that Nahuas figuratively identified delict/crime with impurity or excrement. Being *tlatlacotin* "dirty" humans, they could be released from slavery and become free persons (at least in some instances) only after they had been ceremoniously bathed in water that "washed away" their "dirt". However, this was not the case for *tlatlacotin* destined for sacrifice who did not gain freedom but cultic

Peter VYŠNÝ

Pre-Hispanic Nahua Slavery

purity, a prerequisite for their ritual execution, by their bath. Freed *tlatlacotin* became physically and mentally normal people again and their moral taint and dishonour disappeared (see LÓPEZ AUSTIN 2004:461ff.).

Last but not least, Nahuas viewed the slave status of a man or woman as his or her predestination (fate), resulting from the fact that the date of his or her birth was, according to the calendar, unfavorable.

There were two basic, concurrent calendar cycles. The first was the civil calendar *xihpohualli* (*xihuitl*) which was a solar calendar. It included 365 days, of which 360 were divided into eighteen “months“ of twenty days each (*veintenas*); the remaining five days (*nemontemi*) of the year did not belong to any “month“, and were considered redundant, unfortunate and dangerous. In each of the eighteen time periods, a different major religious holiday was celebrated. The second calendar had a ritual and divinatory character and was called *tonalpohualli*. It included 260 days. It consisted of two cycles, one comprising thirteen days, numbered 1 to 13, and the other twenty days, which were named after animals, plants, natural phenomena or abstract concepts. Both cycles run in parallel, so there were 13 x 20 = 260 combinations of numbers of days from the first cycle and names of days from the second cycle, which were used to denote individual days (PREM 1990:241-243).

Each of the combinations used to denote days within *tonalpohualli* gave certain characteristics to the denoted days. The day could be (in various respects) favorable or unfavorable, or indifferent. Of particular importance was the nature of the day of birth, on the basis of which the future character traits and life-styles of newborns were predicted. The calendar could reveal via a professional astrologer that a newborn would be rich or poor, would occupy a high or a low social position, would be a good person or a drunkard, gambler, adulterer, thief or other offender, would become a *tlacohтли*, would be sacrificed to gods, etc. (BOONE 2007:29ff.; SAHAGÚN 2001, I:313ff.).

Thus, the Nahuas believed that the fate of each individual is determined by the nature of the day of his/her birth. In addition, they believed that various gods interfered differently in people’s lives and were the cause of various positive and negative phenomena that people encountered during their lives. Consequently, people’s lives were going on according to the will of the gods, which people could not foresee or fundamentally influence. Although people would worship the gods in order to gain their favor and aid, the rituals and behaviors that served to do so would not be effective in every single case (HINZ 1992:55-75).

On the other hand, it can be stated that the Nahua worldview was not completely fatalistic. It was believed that a person with an unfavorable fate can alleviate it significantly (even if not

reverse it completely) by permanent self-control. It means, by suppressing the negative aspects of his/her personality and everyday ethically correct decision-making and actuation, as well as subordinating his/her interests and needs to the interests and needs of society, fulfilling his/her duties, taking proper care of his/her family, etc. (LEÓN-PORTILLA 1993:189-202).

There were also special methods to "improve" the evil destinies of individuals. For example, if a child was born on an unfavorable day, the unfavorable fate that threatened him/her was alleviated by the fact that his/her birth was formally celebrated (the child was washed or "baptized" according to the colonial sources and was given his/her name) on a favorable day (SAHAGÚN 2001, I:356, 361, 571ff.). People who experienced a "bad omen" during their lives, which was considered to be a confirmation of their unfavorable fates resulting from unfavorable dates of their birth, talked about it with astrologers or priests and performed certain religious rituals on their recommendation, while awaiting an "improvement" of their destinies (SAHAGÚN 2001, I: 375-376).

It follows from the foregoing that the Nahuas viewed *tlatlacotin* as a kind of "incomplete" or physically and mentally "less perfect", that is, as "degenerate" or "sick" people. Moreover, the *tlatlacotin* were seen as "dirtied" people, that is, as people who were morally tainted and dishonoured by their enslavement and its reasons, the main one of which was their delinquent behaviour (non-payment of debts or committing certain crimes), figuratively understood as impurity or excrement. On the other hand, as soon as the *tlatlacotin* regained their freedom, for the Nahuas, they became physically and mentally normal people again, and their moral taint and dishonour disappeared.

Tlatlacotin were also perceived as people who did not belong to none of the two strata of Nahua society (*pipiltin* and *macehualtin*). As we shall see in the next part of the article, this, however, did not mean that they were excluded from the broader society formed by free persons. Moreover, they lived with their families in their houses and neighborhoods, with one exception: many *tlatlacotin* destined for sacrifice were foreigners imported to the places of their ritual execution from abroad.

Forms of Nahua Slavery

Among the Nahua the slave status was not hereditary, except for both male and female descendants to the fourth generation and other relatives of executed traitors of the state/ruler⁵ and the institution of *huehuetlahtlacolli*, described below.

Nahua *tlatlacotin* can be divided into two basic categories, to wit: 1. *tlatlacotin* destined for sacrifice to the gods and 2. *tlatlacotin* assigned to work for their masters (see e.g. TRIGGER 2007:157ff.).

The dividing line between the two categories of *tlatlacotin* seems to have been permeable. For example, the *tlatlacotin* destined to sacrifice were not supposed to work before their ritual execution (CASTILLO FARRERAS 1996:124-125), however, the enslaved prisoners of war were sometimes sacrificed several years after their capture, in Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec Empire, sometimes even more than ten years after their capture (CERVERA OBREGÓN 2017:82), on the basis of which it can be assumed that they had done some work until they were ritually executed. In addition, the so-called “incorrigible slaves“ (see below), as well as impoverished or indebted individuals who sold themselves into the slavery, despite of their usual assignment to work, could occasionally end up as human sacrifices to the gods (BERDAN 2014:190).

Slaves Destined for Sacrifice

As mentioned above, I do not deal in more detail with the *tlatlacotin* destined for sacrifice in this article, so I will only give some basic facts about them. The reason I proceed in this way is my opinion that the *tlatlacotin* destined for sacrifice were not slaves in the proper sense, for whom I consider, from a comparative historical perspective, only unfree laborers directly controlled by their masters and systematically working for them. Moreover, the *tlatlacotin* destined for sacrifice were, so to speak, “slaves of the gods”, that is, they were not assigned to work for their human masters, although some seem to have worked for them prior their ritual execution.

The *tlatlacotin* destined for sacrifice were threefold: prisoners of war (*mamaltin*), slaves destined for sacrifice traded within the Aztec Empire (particularly in the marketplaces of

⁵ The treason or *temactecaualiztli* was among the most serious crimes (see VYŠNÝ 2019:208-209).

Tenochtitlan and some other city-states located in empire's central zone)⁶, and slaves given as a form of tribute to, for example, Tenochtitlan by some provinces of the Aztec Empire (see e.g. CLENDINNEN 1991:87ff; GRAULICH 2002).

In the Nahua society, a man who provided a *tlacohtli* to the priests in order they sacrificed him/her thus increased his prestige (the handover of *tlacohtli* to sacrifice was a form of conspicuous consumption). *Tlatlacotin* were bought and offered for ritual execution mainly by wealthy merchants (*pochteca*) (see SAHAGÚN 2001, II:689ff.). They manifested with this that they were able to "nourish the gods" with human victims, which Nahuas and other Mesoamericans considered *condicio sine qua non* of the persistence and "functioning" of the world, in the same way as warriors recruiting from both *pipiltin* and *macehualtin*, who gained individuals to sacrifice on the battlefield. Providing of *tlatlacotin* to ritual execution by the merchants can thus be seen as a demonstration of their efforts to legitimize and strengthen their rather unstable social position: merchants were in disfavor of the elite (*pipiltin*), who saw them a kind of "nouveaux riches" trying to gain the same wealth, power and privileges as these elites had in a more simple way, that is, without the serious risk resulting from frequent participating in military expeditions.

Slaves Destined for Work

Friedrich Katz has estimated the number of Nahua *tlatlacotin* assigned to work to be about five percent of the population (KATZ 1989:277). Although this number cannot be sufficiently verified, it is indisputable that *tlatlacotin* formed rather a small social group with a significant fluctuation of its members (the slave status was not hereditary in most cases) and with a very limited contribution to the overall economy (SHADOW – RODRÍGUEZ 1995:320; SMITH – HICKS 2016:430).

Tlatlacotin worked as servants in the households of their masters doing housework like cleaning, sewing, grinding corn, cooking and the like, and/or they worked their masters' land.

⁶ The *tlatlacotin* destined for work were also traded to some extent. For example, the early colonial censuses of indigenous population of the Cuernavaca area in today Mexican State of Morelos (former pre-Hispanic Nahua city-state of Cuauhnahuac), dating from about 1540, inform that among the members of both elite and commoner families' households existing there were *tlatlacotin* in many cases, including those who were bought by households' heads from merchants who had brought them from abroad (see VON MENTZ 2007:544ff.).

Moreover, they could perform construction work for their masters or carry goods of their masters (KATZ 1956:130-132; VON MENTZ 2007:547ff.).

Tlatlacotin were *macehualtin* of both sexes and any age: there were *tlatlacotin* who were adults in the juridical sense,⁷ as well as such who were not. Besides, *tlatlacotin* were both individuals and entire families. Also *pipiltin* could become *tlatlacotin*, but this was surely rare.

Three categories of *tlatlacotin* destined for work can be distinguished, to wit: 1. debtors enslaved due to their insolvency (debt slavery), 2. persons voluntarily enslaved by virtue of a contract (contractual slavery) and 3. enslaved perpetrators of certain crimes (penal slavery) (VYŠNÝ 2019:157). Let us look at the nature of each of these categories separately.

Debt Slavery. The institution of debt slavery can generally be described as follows: a debtor who failed to pay his/her debt properly and/or on time would convert into a slave of his/her creditor and would work for him/her until he/she has repaid his/her debt; however, sometimes the creditor in stead of using the workforce of the enslaved debtor would sell him/her to a third party. This way of dealing with debtors' insolvency has existed in various historical periods in many world cultures (see e.g. TESTART – JACOBS 2002), including the pre-Hispanic Nahua culture, for which we have more detailed information on debt slavery practiced in the central zone of the Aztec Empire (roughly the area of Valley of Mexico) and particularly in its first (city-state of Tenochtitlan) and second (city-state of Tezcoco) most important centers (see MILLHAUSER 2017).

In the said zone, debt slavery appears to have been voluntary, that is, a debtor who had not repaid his/her debt properly and/or on time did not become a *tlacohtli* to his/her creditor *ipso iure*, i.e. automatically, but only on the basis of his/her special agreement with the creditor, by which the debtor was released from a prison for insolvent debtors (and other delinquents) called *teilpiloyan* (or: *teilpilcalli*) and was handed over to the power of creditor (KOHLER 2002:70, 110-111). Debt slavery thus arose by virtue of an agreement, that is, with the consent not only of the creditor but also of the debtor (creditor's future *tlacohtli*), however, in practice the debtor's conversion into the *tlacohtli* of his/her creditor was not entirely voluntary on debtor's part, since for the debtor to entry into slavery was the only way out of his/her unfavorable economic situation and especially from imprisonment.

⁷ Adulthood in the juridical sense was acquired mainly with marriage. Men used to marry 20 to 22 years old, women used to marry 15 to 18 years old (VYŠNÝ 2019:245).

The benefit of debt slavery to the creditor was that he/she could sell the enslaved debtor to a third party (DURÁN 2002, II:189) – in this case, unlike another case of slave sale (see below), the *tlacohtli*'s consent to the sale was not required (KOHLENER 2002:72-73) – and from the amount received he/she could satisfy his/her claim. However, the creditor could also agree with the debtor not to sell him/her, but to keep him/her as a *tlacohtli*, until he/she has repaid the debt by performing the work assigned to him/her by the creditor.

A large part of the enslaved debtors seem to have been gamblers (for example, the players of *patolli* table game which was very popular among both *pipiltin* and *macehualtin*) who bet – and lost – not only their possessions but also their freedom (or the freedom of their close relatives) (for more details see AGUILAR-MORENO 2007:361ff.). Female prostitutes (*ahuianime*) also used to enter into slavery due to their debts (see e.g. LÓPEZ HERNÁNDEZ 2012).

The debt slavery can be distinguished from the enslavement of persons who failed to pay the tribute (in kind) to the state (after an additional time allowed for them to fulfill this duty had expired in vain), who could end up as human sacrifices to the gods (TORQUEMADA 1969:547).

Contractual Slavery. By virtue of a special contract a free person could sell himself or herself, as well as his/her close relatives (husband, wife, children) into temporary slavery in exchange for pieces of cotton cloth (*quauchtli*) and other premonetary currency (there was no money in the proper sense in pre-Hispanic Nahua society) or various foodstuff. There were three forms of this type of slavery, to wit: 1. self-enslavement; 2. the sale of a child into slavery by his/her parents; and 3. the institution of *huehuetlahtlacolli*.

Self-enslavement. A free person belonging to *macehualtin* could sell himself/herself into temporary slavery (IXTLILXOCHITL 1997, I:386) in order to improve his/her economic situation (and the economic situation of his/her family), which was done by concluding a special contract. This contract was concluded in a certain formal way, which had to be observed – otherwise the contract was invalid. In particular, for valid conclusion of the said contract the presence of at least four witnesses of both parties was required (MENDIETA Y NÚÑEZ 1992:88). These witnesses belonged to *calpulhuehuetque*, the members of council of elders, a self-governing body of the urban district (*calpulli*) in which the contract was concluded. They not only personally testified but also officially certified (and possibly recorded with Nahua writing) the conclusion of the contract, as well as made sure that the amount for which a person was sold into slavery was habitual, being twenty *quauchtli* such an amount (TORQUEMADA 1969:563).

By virtue of the contract we are now examining the future master of the *tlacohtli* paid the agreed purchase price to his/her future *tlacohtli* without delay. As soon as the future *tlacohtli* had used, consumed or invested the received purchase price, which in individual cases could take more than a year, he/she became the *tlacohtli* of his masters and worked for him until he has paid the amount gained by his/her sale into slavery (KATZ 1989:280). The parties of the contract also agreed on specific work to be performed by the self-enslaved person (LÓPEZ AUSTIN 1961:74).

At first glance, it might seem that self-enslavement was identical to debt slavery. However, there was a difference between them. Self-enslavement arose from the decision to become a *tlacohtli* in order to obtain an economic benefit (a loan). Contrary, the enslavement of the debtor was the result of his/her previous insolvency. On the other hand, the contract of self-enslavement and the contract by virtue of which the insolvent debtor was converted into his/her creditor's *tlacohtli* took the same form.

From a juridical point of view, the fact that the person who sold himself/herself into slavery acted both as a subject and an object of the juridical relation established between him/her and the person who acquired him/her as a slave is somewhat embarrassing. In this context, it can be noted that a husband could also sell his wife into slavery and vice versa (DURÁN 2002, II:189), which was a certain solution to this problem: sometimes the person did not sell himself/herself on his/her own, but he/she was sold by another person with whom the former person had a strong juridical relation (marriage).

The sale of a child into slavery by his/her parents. Parents could sell their child into slavery if they were unable to support him/her or if he was "incorrigible" (i.e. unmanageable for his problematic behaviour), but in both cases (certainly in the second case) it seems that only with the permission of the court (ALBA 1949:33). There were probably only male descendants among the "incorrigible" children sold into slavery.

It is possible that the poverty of the family, whatever serious it was, was not yet a sufficient reason to sell a child into slavery, as parents perhaps could only sell (one) their child into slavery if they had more than four children (cf. DURÁN 2002, II:189).

The fate of a child sold into slavery was not irreversible. Parents had the opportunity to redeem their child from slavery as soon as their economic circumstances allowed it (see e.g. DURÁN 2002, I:296-297). They could also free their child from slavery by replacing him/her with his/her younger sibling. Finally, the enslaved child could gain freedom by working off his/her purchase price (VYŠNÝ 2019:159).

Institution of huehuetlahtlacolli. It was based on a contract by virtue of which a family (or several families) provided permanently the other party, a wealthy person, one of the family members as a *tlacohtli*, in exchange for food aid or certain economic benefit regularly provided by this person to the family (TORQUEMADA 1969:565).

The enslaved member of the family remained living in his/her house in the circle of his/her family, meeting with his/her master only when he/she performed certain work for him/her (in his/her master's household, on his/her master's land and the like) (KATZ 1989:282), which, however, he/she was not supposed to do on a daily basis (TORQUEMADA 1969:563). On the other hand, he/she had to work whenever the master ordered him/her.

The obligated family could at any time replace its enslaved member with another one (TORQUEMADA 1969:563, 565). If the enslaved family member died or fell ill and was unable to work, the family was obliged to immediately replace him/her with one of its members (TORQUEMADA 1969:565).

If the *tlacohtli* died in his/her master's house, or if the master seized something from the property of his/her *tlacohtli* without his/her consent, the *huehuetlahtlacolli* ceased to exist (TORQUEMADA 1969:565).

The duration of the contract by which the *huehuetlahtlacolli* arose in individual cases was not limited. Thus, *huehuetlahtlacolli* was hereditary slavery indeed: the obligation of the family to provide a *tlacohtli* passed from generation to generation and, conversely, the right to use the services of that *tlacohtli* passed on heirs of the wealthy person who had concluded the contract of *huehuetlahtlacolli* (SAHAGÚN 2001, II:626).

As the institution of *huehuetlahtlacolli* had expanded considerably over time and burdened a large part of the population, Nezahualpilli, the *tlatoani* (ruler) of Tezcoco, abolished it in 1505 (IXTLILXOCHITL 1997, II:171), soon followed by Motecuhzoma II, the *tlatoani* of Tenochtitlan (TORQUEMADA 1969:565).

The forms of contractual slavery described above for many individuals and families were the only means of resolving their unfavorable economic situation, especially in recurring times of drought and famine. For example, the chronicler Durán states that in the early 50s of the 15th century, due to a serious food crisis many inhabitants of Tenochtitlan left for other places, where “[t]hey sold their sons and daughters to merchants or to noblemen who could maintain them. A mother or father would trade a child for a small basket of maize, and the new owner was obliged to house and feed the infant while the famine lasted. If the parents wished to ransom him later, they would have to pay for all his maintenance“ (DURÁN 2002, I:296-297).

Penal Slavery. The temporary enslaved debtors, as well as individuals sold into temporary slavery became *tlatlacotin* more or less voluntarily (by virtue of a contract) and with the intention to dispose of debts or improve the economic situation of them and their families. In contrast, the penal slavery rested on an involuntary, state-organized and long-term (sometimes even lifelong) enslavement of the perpetrators of certain crimes, that is, this slavery was a type of punishment imposed by courts in criminal proceedings.

The offenders sentenced to slavery were mostly converted to *tlatlacotin* of the victims of their crimes or to *tlatlacotin* of surviving relatives of persons they had killed (MARGADANT 2006:31). The victims or surviving relatives thus obtained a double satisfaction for what they had suffered, to wit: a moral one, as well as a material one (enslaved offenders were obliged to work for victims or their surviving relatives; moreover, they could be sold to third party by these persons).

There were various legally defined crimes punished by enslavement in Tenochtitlan or Tezcoco. However, in Tenochtitlan the judges could also sentence perpetrators of crimes to slavery at their discretion to some extent (VYŠNÝ 2019:144).

Among the concrete crimes punished by enslavement principally were: treason (the enslavement of traitor's descendants to the fourth generation); abuse of power by state officials; public drunkenness (an individual belonging to *macehualtin* caught drunk in public was enslaved; being caught drunk in public second time, he/she was executed); sale of parents' fortune without their approval or wasting inheritance by individuals belonging to *macehualtin*; the sale of not own child into slavery; the murder (the murderer was forgiven by the relatives of the murdered person, thus converting himself into their *tlacohtli* for life instead of being executed); killing a *tlacohtli* of another person (who killed a *tlacohtli* of another person, albeit unintentionally, became a *tlacohtli* to his/her master); less serious theft (however, thieves who did not return or refund the stolen items to their owners were not, in principle, enslaved, but executed; on the other hand, were the stolen things of little value such as no more than twenty pieces of agave, fishnet or boat the thieves were not enslaved on condition they paid a fine); and defraudation (see VYŠNÝ 2019:207ff.).

After examining the forms of slavery, we move on to the social and legal position of Nahua *tlatlacotin* destined for work.

Social and Legal Position of Slaves Destined for Work

The main duty of *tlatlacotin* was to work for their masters. As we will see below, *tlatlacotin* had several important rights as well as more opportunities to gain freedom, but “incorrigible slaves“ and enslaved criminals had the opportunity to gain it significantly limited (cf. DURÁN 2002, II:188), and therefore remained *tlatlacotin* for a long time, or even for lifetime sometimes.

The specific rights and obligations of *tlatlacotin* and their masters can be summarized as follows.

The *tlacohtli* could not be elected to any office belonging to the self-government body of the urban district (*calpulli*), he/she lived in (CRUZ BARNEY 2006:30).

The master was obliged to provide his *tlacohtli* with food, clothing and sometimes accommodation (SCHLENTHER 1975:30). Naturally, he/she did not reward him/her for his/her work, as it was aimed at settling the debt.

The *tlacohtli* worked for the benefit of his/her master either in master’s house to which he/she moved or in his/her own house (ALBA 1949:34). When performing work for the master, the *tlacohtli* was obliged to follow his/her instructions or requirements.

A *tlacohtli* could marry both a *tlacohtli* or a free person and could have his/her family whose members were not *tlatlacotin* of his/her master, that is, they were free persons (KATZ 1989:280).

Movable and immovable property which belonged to a person before his/her enslavement, as well as that which he/she may have acquired as a *tlacohtli*, did not belong to the slave’s master without the slave’s consent (LÓPEZ DE GÓMARA 1997:310). Although it seems obvious that the *tlacohtli* used these assets to speed up the repayment of his/her debt, this did not always have to be the case, as it could often be necessary to leave them to *tlacohtli*’s family members to have something to live on.

Tlatlacotin could have their own *tlatlacotin* whom they controlled independently from their masters (TORQUEMADA 1969:563).

The master’s power over the *tlacohtli* did not include power over his/her life and death. Therefore, if the master killed his/her *tlacohtli*, he/she was responsible for it as if he/she had killed a free person. He/she was also responsible for inflicting bodily harm on a *tlacohtli* (KATZ 1989:280). The masters did not, in principle, treat their *tlatlacotin* disproportionately harshly (CLAVIJERO 2003:310) and apparently did not even force them to perform their duties with corporal punishment.

The master could sell his/her *tlacohtli* only with his/her consent (MENDIETA Y NÚÑEZ 1992:88), except in two cases: first, the insolvent debtor, who became a *tlacohtli* to his/her creditor, the creditor could also sell against his/her will, and the robbed person could do the same with the enslaved thief who had robbed him/her (KOHLER 2002:72-73); secondly, the *tlacohtli* could be sold against his will if he was the so-called “incorrigible slave“.

“Incorrigible slaves“ were probably only male *tlatlacotin*. An “incorrigible slave“ was considered to be a *tlacohtli* who was rebellious, did not work properly or ran away from his master’s house, and who did not change his bad behavior even after his master repeatedly (three times) severely rebuked him in the presence of witnesses. A *tlacohtli* who fell into the category of “incorrigible slaves“ lost some rights. His master set up a wooden or other yoke around his neck and took him to the market, where he sold him. If the sold *tlacohtli* did not improve his bad behavior while being with his new master, the new master could sell him to another person for this reason, who could also sell him for the same reason. However, it is likely that the threat of forced sale sooner or later caused “incorrigible slaves“ to behave as expected, as a *tlacohtli* who was sold three times because of his “incorrigibility“ could end up as a sacrifice to the gods (ALBA 1940:34).

The slave status of a man or woman lasted mostly only temporarily, however, there were three exceptions to this, concerning the institution of *huehuetlahtlacolli*, “incorrigible slaves“ and enslaved criminals.

If a *tlacohtli* died before he had completely worked off or otherwise completely settled his debt, his master could satisfy the remaining part of his claim from slave’s fortune, but in Tezcoco, as well as in Tenochtitlan, since 1505 he had no right to enslave the slave’s wife or descendants (against their will) and force them to work in place of the deceased slave (KOHLER 2002:70-71; LÓPEZ DE GÓMARA 1997:309; IXTLILXOCHITL 1997, II: 171).

Tlatlacotin could gain freedom in the following ways:

A *tlacohtli* had completely worked off what he/she owed to his/her master, or a price at which he/she was sold, or he/she sold himself/herself into slavery, or a price at which he/she was sold to a new master.

The *tlacohtli* repaid additionally his/her debt (its remaining part, respectively), utilizing assets he/she had obtained as inheritance, as a gift or loan (MARGADANT 2006:31). In this way, however, the *tlacohtli* could acquire freedom only if he/she additionally had repaid his/her debt (its remaining part, respectively) before his/her second forced sale took place (ALBA 1949:35).

The enslaved thief, before being sold for the second time, returned the stolen item or paid its value (KOHLENER 2002:74-75).

The slave master died at a time when the *tlacochtli* had already partially settled his/her debt. In this case, not only the *tlacochtli* was freed, but he/she was also released from the obligation to pay the rest of the debt to the heir of his/her deceased master (ALBA 1949:34).

Parents redeemed their child from slavery, to which they had sold him/her because of their serious poverty (ALBA 1949:34-35). However, if parents had sold their son declared "incorrigible" by a court, they probably could not redeem him later (KOHLENER 2002:75).

The slave's master fell into poverty and his/her *tlacochtli* sold something of his/her fortune in order to aid his/her master (TORQUEMADA 1969:567).

The *tlacochtli* had a relationship (and possibly also children) with his female master (a widow) or married her, and vice versa (DURÁN 2002, II:191-192).

A *tlacochtli* was freed by the testament of his/her deceased master. However, if the master did not liberate the *tlacochtli* by the testament, the *tlacochtli* became part of the heritage left behind by the deceased master, that is, master's heir became the new master of the *tlacochtli* (TORQUEMADA 1969:567). It seems that sometimes *tlatlacotín* were killed after the death of their masters (KATZ 1956:129-130).

The *tlacochtli* was freed by his/her still-living master (LÓPEZ AUSTIN 1961:76).

A *tlacochtli* liberated himself/herself by giving another *tlacochtli* to his/her master with his consent (ALBA 1949:35).

The male *tlacochtli* succeeded in trying to escape from the marketplace to which he was entitled if he was to be sold there against his will. Under penalty of enslavement, no one could try to stop the fleeing slave, except for slave's master or master's son. The fleeing *tlacochtli* first ran out of the reserved area of the marketplace, where he deliberately stepped into excrement, and thus dirtied he continued to run towards the palace of the *tlatoani* (ruler), where he informed certain dignitaries that he was a *tlacochtli* on the run. The dignitaries took the yoke off the *tlacochtli*, stripped him naked, washed him from head to toe, dressed in clean clothes and introduced him to the *tlatoani* (DURÁN 2002, II:191). Since the enslavement of a man was seen as making him "dirty" (hence stepping into excrement by the fleeing slave to demonstrate that he was a "dirtied" man), the liberation of a *tlacochtli* had to be an opposite (ritual) action, to wit his cleansing. Once the "dirt" of the *tlacochtli* was washed away, he became again both physically and morally "pure" man and thus a normal human being, as well as a free person (see LÓPEZ AUSTIN 2004:461-464). For its part, the presentation of

the freed *tlacohtli* to the ruler was an appreciation of his combativeness (his brave fight for freedom), which was considerably prized in the pre-Hispanic Nahua society.

A person which had illegally been enslaved could be liberated by a high Tenochtitlan court called *tlacxitlan* (SAHAGÚN 2001, II:663).

It seems that “incorrigible slaves“, enslaved criminals and “incorrigible“ sons sold into slavery could gain freedom only in ways mentioned under points I) to K) (cf. ALBA 1949:34-35).

Conclusion

It is clear from the foregoing that Nahua *tlatlacotin* destined for work have differed to a large extent from the standard Western notion of slaves. In the history of the Occident a slave was little more than a “speaking instrument“ (*instrumentum vocale*). Lacking entirely or (in some instances) almost entirely the legal subjectivity, he/she was juridically an integral part of his/her master’s fortune. From a juridical point of view, it is true, a slave was not a person (a free independent individual who is a subject of law and thus both has and can exercise certain rights), but a thing (object of law) subordinated to his/her master’s extensive power. However, Nahua *tlatlacotin* (those who were destined for work) were subjects of law, although in some contexts (consider, for example, the self-enslavement) they were objects of law at the same time.

Being a subject of law, Nahua *tlacohtli* had a certain degree of personal freedom and certain rights. On the other hand, his/her personal freedom and freedom of residence and movement, as well as his/her right to decide freely on the use of his/her workforce and his/her right to work to provide for his/her family, were restricted, otherwise the *tlacohtli* could hardly work effectively for his/her master.

Likewise, enslaved persons had the legal capacity to perform legal acts, however, in practice they could not perform such legal acts that would prevent them from proper fulfilment of their duties to their masters. The *tlatlacotin* were also responsible (and punished) for their offenses against third parties, not their masters.

It is noteworthy to mention that the descendants of *tlatlacotin* (both sexes) were free. A person could become a *tlacohtli* by his/her birth only if he/she was the son/daughter, grandson/granddaughter or great-grandson/great-granddaughter of an executed traitor or if he/she was born to a family burdened with the contract of *huehuetlahtlacolli*.

In general, the treatment of Nahua *tlatlacotin* – compared to the living conditions of their counterparts in many other world cultures – was significantly better, more humane. This can be seen, on the one hand, from the fact that the master was entitled only to his/her *tlaohltli*'s labor and not to *tlaohltli*'s life, health, family members or property, and, on the other hand, from the fact that the *tlaohltli* could gain freedom in many ways, not only by the manumission made by his/her master depending on master's good will. Although *tlatlacotin* were considered a kind of both physically and mentally "less perfect" individuals who were "dirtied", that is, morally tainted and dishonored by their enslavement and its reasons (mainly a delinquent behavior, i.e. non-payment of debts or perpetration of certain crimes), they were not systematically excluded from the wider society formed by free persons and they lived with their families in their houses and neighborhoods.

Thus, the translation of the Nahua term *tlatlacotin* by the term "slaves" is problematic and even misleading. However, such a translation is common in both colonial source texts and modern professional literature and therefore it would not be useful to replace it with another translation.

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Pre-Hispanic Nahua Slavery

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Taiwanese Identity – Past Factors and Present Circumstances

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ABSTRACT

Taiwan is an island that off the coast of China. To say that Taiwan is a country is to offend the Communist People's Republic of China which claims sovereignty over the island and markets it to the world as a "renegade province" which must be re-united with the mainland, by force, if necessary. For people who know very little about Taiwan and its big neighbour across the Taiwan Strait this may even sound convincing, but the truth is more complex. In 1949 the nationalist government (Kuomintang or KMT) having lost the Chinese Civil War retreated from the mainland; the communists have never ruled the island.

The settling of the Republic of China's government in Taiwan and the era of "White Terror" was another one in a series of historical events that were fundamental in forming the modern Taiwanese identity. Whatever the proponents of "one China" claim, the truth of the matter is that there is a shift in attitudes of the inhabitants of Taiwan in how they feel about themselves (Taiwanese, Chinese or both). This is a crucial fact that will have to be acknowledged in the cross-strait relations. The identity argument as such, is independent of any historical claims. And this Taiwanese identity has been evolving and will continue to do so, shaped by the past and the most recent events like the Hong Kong protests, the pandemic, politics and the military aggression and intimidation by the People's Republic of China. This article will examine these factors in turn.

KEY WORDS: COVID-19 pandemic, cross-strait relations, democracy in Asia Hong Kong protests, military intimidation, Taiwanese identity

Introduction – Historical Perspective – an Overview

Taiwan is an island roughly 170 kilometers off the coast of southeastern China. It has a rich history, though the recorded part is very brief compared to other Asian countries. People have inhabited the island for thousands of years, arriving in migrations from Asia. Eventually, Chinese settlements appeared. In 1622 the Ming dynasty agreed that the Dutch could have Taiwan (for a more important at the time Penghu Island) and the Dutch traders established forts and proceeded to build a colony. There was a brief Spanish incursion and in 1661 a pirate kingdom of Zheng Chenggong known as Koxinga, a return to the Chinese imperial rule after that and then a Japanese occupation and their colonial rule following the Sino-Japanese War and the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Before the arrival of the Japanese troops the Taiwanese made their bid for independence declaring the Republic of Formosa, but its forces were eventually overcome by the Japanese (MANTHORPE 2005).

Taiwan was returned to the Chinese mainland rule when Japan lost in the Second World War. But China has changed a lot during that time. Since 1912 it was called Republic of China and was ruled by Kuomintang (KMT) or Chinese Nationalist Party. They were involved in a fierce civil war with Mao Zedong's communists. Instead of becoming one of the provinces of China it became Republic of China's final outpost when the defeated nationalists of Chiang-Kai-shek and his army finally arrived in 1949. They imposed the mainland culture and Mandarin language on the predominantly Hokkien-speaking majority. The mainland Chinese rulers were often seen as more brutal than the Japanese rule. Even before Chiang-Kai-shek's arrival around 30 000 people were killed in the unrest following the "2-28 incident". The years of the so called White Terror followed.

In 1987 the martial law (which lasted from 1949) was lifted and Taiwan developed into not just into a world's powerhouse producing over 60% of the of the world's computer chips, (with just one company TSMC, holding over 50% of the world market share) (LEE 2021) but also into a unique, vibrant and open society. One in which there is a cultural consensus across the board supportive of a Western-style democratic system of governance and anti-authoritarian (HUANG – LIU – CHANG 2004:160). A society, which despite its different origins, after decades of living together, formed what Taiwan's late president Lee Teng-hui (KMT) (1988-2000) called a "community of shared fate" (RIGGER 2011:430) or president Chen Shui-bian's (DPP) (2000-2008) "shared destiny" (RIGGER 2011:451). A fate, or destiny, over which the issue of China always casts a big shadow.

As Barth pointed out, the formation of a distinct identity is accomplished by the setting of boundaries which set a distinction between members and non-members of the group

(BARTH 1969). The old divisions within Taiwan are giving way to a new boundary between the Taiwanese and mainland Chinese.

Taiwanese Identity and Culture

Although Mandarin is the official language of the Republic of China (Taiwan's formal name) and the KMT regime went to great lengths to implement it after its arrival, it is markedly different from the language used on the mainland.

Besides the accent, and the frequent use of Taiwanese and other dialects to express themselves in different situation, the Mandarin used on the island uses the traditional Chinese characters, not simplified. The Taiwanese also use the original Chinese phonetic alphabet Zhuyin (bopomofo) while the mainland China adopted Roman alphabet based Pinyin.

Instilling in the inhabitants of Taiwan a sense of Chinese identity was of paramount importance to the nationalist KMT government which for the first few decades of its rule was obsessed with the idea of "reunification", for them defined as retaking the mainland from the communists.

The Nationalist Party or Kuomintang (KMT) was a repressive regime. Many of its opponents and detractors have pointed out that it was one more in a series of the colonial rulers which the Taiwanese had to endure. Driven by its ambition to return and retake the mainland, the KMT proceeded to try to dominate and assimilate the Taiwanese society to the ruling party's Chinese origin and world view. They have been successful and have accomplished that through methods of (1) coercion, (2) education, (3) restructuring the social status and (4) creating of a new "pro-Chinese" identity for the indigenous population (CHEN 2008:188). The KMT imposed Mandarin on the Taiwanese speaking majority, while at the same time disallowing the use of Japanese and local dialects in public. Chinese teachers who arrived with Chiang-Kai-shek from the mainland became the school masters and administrators, with the local teachers relegated to supporting roles (CHEN 2008:201). As Chen notes:

"The usual school curriculum included daily flag-raising ceremonies, 5 military training courses, and music lessons on military anthems. Children in the public school system from age 6 to 18 were taught military songs such as 'Fight our way back to the Mainland'. 'I am a Chinese,' 'China will be Strong', 'I love China', and 'The Plum Blossom.' Regular military anthem competitions were held to reward those who can memorize and sing the songs the best" (CHEN 2008:201).

Clearly, KMT did its very best to instill in the new generation of Taiwanese children a Chinese identity. Mandarin in Taiwan was a language that was imposed on the local population, in that the locals were required to learn Mandarin but the new arrivals were not required to learn the languages of the indigenous groups.

The educational system was also very much skewed against the native Taiwanese. As Taiwan became the seat of the Republic of China government, it became, in theory, an ark for all the people of the mainland which had 35 provinces before the civil war. Students admissions to high schools and universities were based on the provincial origin, which ensured more spots for the mainland Chinese at better schools and universities. 'For example, if 35 individuals were admitted to a school, 34 of them would be from provinces in China and only one person would be Taiwanese since Taiwan was treated one of the provinces' (CHEN 2008:203).

Similarly, the KMT also did its best to impose the Chinese culture on the local population. Today, as the author of this article can personally attest, Mandarin is the official and the dominant language in Taiwan, with many younger generations Taiwanese feeling more comfortable with speaking Mandarin than in their once native tongue.

Taiwan today, despite (or maybe because of) its authoritarian past and decades long martial law is now a vibrant, diverse and tolerant democracy. In May of 2019 it became the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage. This open society and its way of life is very different to what goes on on the opposite side of Taiwan Strait. As one of my informers had said, proximity of China is both Taiwan's great misfortune and great luck. The misfortune part is obvious: the constant threat it poses. The luck part comes from having as one looks across the strait, it becomes apparent in which direction Taiwan should never go and which way it should move. Every day, the Taiwanese construct their identity acknowledging the Chinese history, language and culture, but at the same time in direct opposition to China today as embodied by the Chinese Communist Party authoritarian rule.

Taiwanese Identity and Politics

Today the question of identity Taiwanese versus Chinese is an issue that is influenced by Taiwan's uncertain international status. Taiwan is not recognised as a country by most nations - with no official relations, exchange of ambassadors or a seat in international organizations such as the UN or the WHO. That is the matter of theory. In practice, many countries including the United States have *de facto* embassies there. Taiwanese passports are accepted internationally and enjoy a reciprocal generous visa-free stay periods with many

countries and the EU. Amid the coronavirus pandemic the government in Taipei changed the design of Taiwanese passport to emphasize 'Taiwan' and shrunk the 'Republic of China' label (The New York Times n.d.). Although the Taiwan government officials said the redesign was an attempt to disassociate Taiwanese citizens from the citizens of the mainland who faced travel restrictions amid the pandemic, this and the re-branding of the Taiwanese warships is similar to the re-naming of all the state owned corporations which had 'China' in the name during the president's Chen Shui-bian administration (Taiwanese national carrier is still called China Airlines though). Both Chen Shui-bian and the current president Tsai Ing-wen are from the same Democratic Progressive Party which is more pro independence and less pro-unification than the KMT. The passport redesign could also be seen as one more way not just to shore up international recognition of Taiwan but to try to reflect (or influence, depending on your point of view) the national identity. Of course, officials in Beijing, predictably, react angrily to such moves restating their mantra that this would not change Taiwan being an "inalienable part of China" as mouthed by the foreign ministry spokeswoman (BBC News n.d.).

One thing is certain. Taiwanese identity is something that is important for both the internal and external politics and although the Chinese and Taiwanese identity need not to be mutually exclusive especially in cultural sphere, they are becoming increasingly so in the political context and it will weigh in heavily on any future unification with the mainland project.

Taiwanese Identity – Trends

Since 1992 National Chengchi University's Election Study Center has been conducting regular polls on how the citizens of Taiwan self-identify (Figure 1):

Before discussing the information presented in this diagram it is important to note that these surveys were started in 1992 which was the year that the first free and fair legislative elections took place. And that in 1996, the year after which the "Taiwanese only" choice spikes up from 24 to 34 % was the year that the first fully democratic presidential election was held (and it was also the year, in which, the People's Republic of China attempted, for the first time in years to intimidate Taiwan by firing missiles which crossed the middle of the Taiwan Strait).

Taiwanese Identity – Past Factors and Present Circumstances

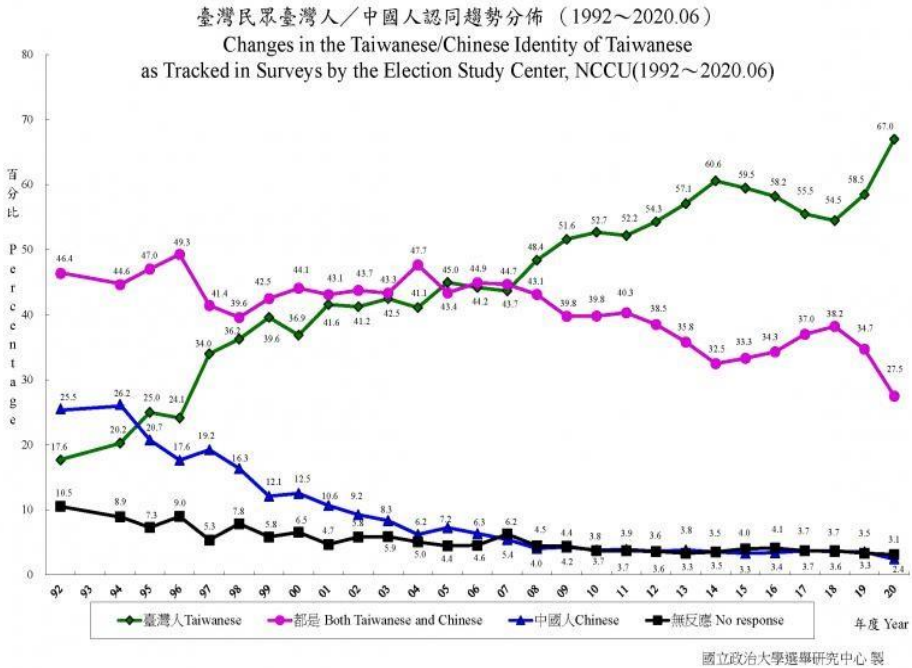


Figure 1: Changes in the Taiwanese/Chinese Identity of Taiwanese as Tracked in Surveys by the Election Study Center. Source: Election Study Center National Chengchi University n.d.

It is interesting to note the trends on this graph. Given the options of identifying as Taiwanese, Chinese or both, since 1992 when the polls were first conducted there has been a dramatic shift in identity over the last 2 decades. In 1992 22.5% of respondents identified themselves as Chinese only, much higher percentage than the 17.6% for Taiwanese only response – 46.4% identified as both Taiwanese and Chinese. In the latest poll of 2020 the self-identification as Taiwanese stands at a record-high 67%, while the Chinese-only identification dropped down to 2.4%. Those who identify themselves as both stand at 27.5%.

It is interesting to note that the Taiwanese-only self-identification has been rising steadily for the entire period and it matched the "both Chinese and Taiwanese" identification in the 2005-2007 period where they both stood at around 45%. The self identification as Chinese only has been dropping for the period under review, from just over 25% in 1992 and reaching 5.4% in 2007.

From 2008 onward the increase in the Taiwanese-only identity seems to be at the expense of the both Chinese and Taiwanese identity choice. No doubt political events that have taken place during that time have had an influence over this identity shift.

The political events formative for the Taiwanese identity in general will be discussed in the next section as well as this author's propositions as to which recent developments might have been influential in the recent shifts in the Taiwanese identity.

Formative Events – Past

Huang, Liu, and Chang conducted a survey of which events in the Taiwanese history were considered formative by both those who identified as Chinese and Taiwanese (HUANG – LIU – CHANG 2004). Both groups were in agreement that the following events were of seminal importance:

The 2-28 Incident (February 28, 1947)

After the Second World War, Formosa (as the island was then known as) was returned to China, then ruled by the nationalist party or the KMT with Chiang Kai-shek as its leader. It happened after five decades of the Japanese colonial rule. Not even full two years later, the local Taiwanese inhabitants revolted. They demanded a greater degree of autonomy, some even self-rule or placing the island of Formosa under UN's international mandate and arguing that China had no more historical claim to Formosa than the Japanese, Dutch or Portuguese (DURDIN 1947). The Formosans have taken over the island and the KMT local representative Chen Yi feigned talks while waiting for the reinforcements from the mainland to arrive. The uprising was then brutally suppressed with horrible atrocities committed and the number of the dead estimated between 18,000 to 25,000 with the official KMT documentation 'lost'. This 2-28 Incident of 1947 when a local elite was physically eliminated, was a formative event for the struggle of the Taiwan independence movement and so in the creation and formation of a Taiwanese identity (FLEISCHAUER 2007).

As Huang, Liu, and Chang note, no matter the self-identification, the 2-28 Incident is viewed by all as both important for the nation and also as unequivocally a negative event (HUANG – LIU – CHANG 2004).

Kaohsiung Incident of 1979 (also known as Meilidao Incident or Formosa Magazine Incident)

On December 10 of 1979, the year when the United States switched its recognition from Taipei to Beijing, during the period of the martial law, the opposition activists associated with the opposition Formosa Magazine organised a rally in Kaohsiung. The organisers, known as the Kaohsiung Eight were arrested after giving speeches. One of those was Annette Lu. She was sentenced, together with the rest of the Kaohsiung Eight to a lengthy, 12-year prison sentence (CHEN 2008). The Meilidao Incident is also perceived as one of the seminal events in the modern Taiwanese history and it is perceived as one of the events that eventually led to a democracy. As Huang, Liu and Chang point out, this crackdown on the freedom of press is judged in itself negatively but not as unambiguously as the 2-28 Incident (HUANG – LIU – CHANG 2004). This is because although the people who took part in it suffered, they also “planted the seeds for democracy”. One of the lawyer’s on Annette Lu’s defence team was an inexperienced maritime law expert Chen Shui-bian (MANTHORPE 2005:15). In 2000 Chen-Shui-bian became the first non-KMT president and Annette Lu became his vice president.

The End of the Martial Law in 1987

The martial law was introduced in 1947. It lasted for almost 4 decades with the KMT insisting it is because Taiwan is under a constant threat of invasion from the communist mainland (MANTHORPE 2005:203). After the 2-28 Incident, the decades of “White Terror” followed where dissenters and people suspected of being disloyal to KMT’s vision of China, were being labelled as communists. Estimates vary, because official records were destroyed, but they go into tens of thousands of victims. Some estimate as many as 90,000 people were arrested during those years with about 10,000 of those actually tried in military courts and about 45,000 simply executed without any process (MANTHORPE 2005:204).

With the end of the martial law the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) could finally be established. The one party state was no more. KMT would no longer be an alien regime but became one of the political parties which would have to compete for votes of the island’s inhabitants in whose hands, the future of the nation would ultimately rest. It is not surprising that this event is especially important from the identity point of view as most of the citizens of the island did not see themselves as “province of China”.

The First Free Presidential Elections of 1996

In March of 1996 the first free presidential election in Taiwan took place. It should be mentioned that this important event was not just an internal, Taiwanese affair, but that it was preceded by the Chinese missile tests which, for the first time since 1949, flew across the middle of the Taiwan Strait (CHUANG 2017). The communist Chinese were worried that that these free elections might be a stepping stone to Taiwan formally declaring independence and decided to use this show of force to affect the vote. This 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Confrontation highlights an important fact about Taiwanese identity. It is not just affected by what the Taiwanese feel about themselves but how they feel about themselves in relation to their big and increasingly powerful, both economically and militarily, neighbor.

Year 2000: The Transfer of Power from the KMT for the First Time

Despite the lifting of the martial law in 1987, it was only in 2000 that Chen Shui-bian has won the popular elections and became the first non-KMT president. The issues of Chinese and Taiwanese identity have been ever present in the campaign and later during his presidency.

Formative Events – Present

The current world and domestic events continue to shape the way the inhabitants of Taiwan identify themselves. I would argue that the following recent events would have an impact on now the Taiwanese view and feel about themselves: Hong Kong protests, the pandemic, local politics and the re-election of DPP president Tsai Ing-wen for the second term and lastly the military aggression and intimidation by the PRC.

Hong Kong Protests

When the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong erupted in 2019, the whole world was watching, but the Taiwanese were watching especially closely. Hong Kong was handed over by the British to Beijing in 1997 and as part of that agreement the democratic rights of the Hong Kongers were supposed to be respected. The so called “one country, two systems” principle, where there would be “one China” but Hong Kong and later Macau (which was handed over by Portugal in 1999) would be Special Administrative Regions of China

guaranteed that they could retain their economic and administrative systems, continue to have their own governments, be able to manage their own legal, economic and financial affairs, including trade with other countries independently. This principle was coined during the negotiations with the British and it was touted as a model for a future unification with Taiwan. This “one country, two system” offer for unification was reiterated by Xi Jinping during the National Day address in 2019. This offer though did not sound like an offer at all, but rather like an ultimatum because it is backed by the threat of a military resolution of the issue which the CCP has written into PRC constitution. As such, this “offer” is unacceptable to the Taiwanese, even to the KMT, who has throughout its history been the proponent of merging with the mainland (although in its early years on the island it imagined it would be the one to retake it from the communists by force). In 1992, when the KMT was in power, it negotiated with the PRC to help establish a strange, cross-strait consensus of in which the parties agreed that there was one China, but with each side having its own interpretation of what that meant.

What the PRC’s president’s “offer” fails to notice or acknowledge are the wishes of the Taiwanese people who have seemingly nothing to gain by being ruled by Beijing and everything to lose as the example of Hong Kong has clearly demonstrated. In less than twenty five years since becoming a Special Administrative Region of the PRC, the Hong Kongers saw their rights, which were supposed to have been guaranteed by the treaty with Britain, being taken away. The massive protests of 2019 were the final throes of opposition after which a draconian security law was introduced.

The Taiwanese watched the events unfold in Hong Kong closely, both the ruling elites and the regular citizens. It provided a voyeuristic peek into the future of Taiwan if it ever agreed to the PRC’s coercive offer. It also provided a clear exemplification of the differences between People’s Republic of China and Republic of China and most probably was one of the factors that served to strengthen the Taiwanese identity at the expense of the both Taiwanese and Chinese one, as evidenced by the aforementioned graph.

The Taiwanese most recent, post-war history and the White Terror era, provides all the experience, still in living memory of many, of what it is like to live under a totalitarian regime. This created a society in which democracy is taken seriously by its citizens.

Covid-19 Pandemic

As the world is over the year into the global coronavirus pandemic, it is almost hard to believe that there is one country on earth that has managed to prevent the disaster from happening and enjoys a pre-pandemic life in what has been dubbed a 'bubble of normality' (QUIN –

CHANG CHIEN 2021). This country is Taiwan. And its success stems from two sources. One is the painful experience of the 2003 SARS outbreak with which, because of its international isolation by the People's Republic of China, Taiwan had to contain by itself. Since that time, there procedures established at the ports of entry like routinely monitoring body temperature of those disembarking from the air planes. The other factor was a distrust of the official statements coming from the PRC. Having been blocked by PRC from the membership in WHO, anything Taiwan could learn had to be second hand from its friends and allies. Based on the information it received from its own experts it sent to Wuhan, Taiwan was the first warn the WHO that the novel coronavirus could most likely transmit from person to person. But, to the world's detriment, it was ignored. The WHO did not acknowledge that fact until much later.

Meanwhile, in Taiwan, the preparation for the possible outbreak moved into full swing in early January 2020. Visas for tourists from Wuhan were cancelled, new production lines for face masks were installed in record time and army used its resources to man them (WANG – NG – BROOK 2020:1342). There were no lockdowns but school holidays after the Chinese New Year were extended by 2 weeks to counter the possible spread. Other measures were introduced too. Everyone using public transport system, the trains and the busses was asked to wear a mask - a measure that is still in effect until today.

The effects of government actions and social compliance speak for themselves. Today, Taiwan has no local transmissions of the disease and the majority of its cases are imported from abroad and caught in the quarantine period of 14 days that the visitors to the island are now subject to. As of writing of this article (end of April 2021), there were a total 1110 cases so far and 12 deaths ("Taiwan Centers for Disease Control" n.d.).

What is important to notice about these measures is that not only they were highly effective, but to be so they have required a high degree of social cohesion and trust in what the government was doing and how. The government did its best to communicate openly with the public and to counter misinformation about the pandemic (WANG – NG – BROOK 2020:1342). In fact the trust rating in the government soared and became one of the factors that helped Tsai Ing-wen get re-elected (NACHMAN 2020). Another important factor, from the identity politics point of view is that this pandemic again helped to underline the differences between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China on the mainland. Taiwan handled the outbreak much better than the mainland, despite being on PRC's doorstep and having the importation risk assessed to be as high as that of South Korea (WANG – NG – BROOK 2020:1341).

It's handling of the pandemic sets Taiwan apart and shows that an authoritarian system is not necessary for combating the outbreak. It also shows that a democracy, whose people can trust the government, is much better at handling a public health crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic. It undermines the CCP narrative that "western values" are not appropriate for Asians and that its authoritarian surveillance state is superior.

The pandemic became another focal point in which the Taiwanese got to compare themselves to the mainland Chinese. It brought into focus the differences between the two sides across the Taiwan Strait.

Second DPP Presidency

In 2016 Tsai Ing-wen became the first woman and a second president of Taiwan to have come from the Democratic Progressive Party, which is more pro-independence than KMT. The Beijing rulers reacted by ending formal direct dialogue with Taiwan, flying bombers around the island and continued efforts to chip away at the few remaining countries which formally recognise Taiwan. During her first term, 7 countries withdrew their formal recognition of Taiwan: Sao Tome and Principe, Panama, Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, El Salvador, the Solomon Islands and Kiribati (Taipei Representative Office Bratislava n.d.).

In 2020 she was re-elected. The election was watched closely by Beijing with the usual military intimidation tactics which included sailing of a newly constructed aircraft carrier into the Taiwan strait in an effort to influence the voters away from the DPP (Reuters n.d.) After the election Beijing vowed to bring down the total of Taiwan's diplomatic allies to zero (Taipei Representative Office Bratislava n.d.). Every election, China becomes an electoral issue and the behaviour of the Chinese Communist Party does not seem to be helping its cause of unification and is only pushing Taiwanese people away and makes them feel more and more separate from the mainland which doubles down on flexing its military muscles and threats. During the most recent electoral campaign Tsai directly acknowledged the threat of the China as an electoral issue and took out a front-page advertisement in a widely circulated Liberty Times: "In the face of China, every ballot has power," accompanied by a picture of Tsai wearing a camouflaged military helmet and jacket (Reuters n.d.). Meanwhile the Australian press reported on the revelations by the self-professed Chinese spy who sought asylum in Australia of how he was ordered to influence the Taiwanese election in favour of the Communist Party preferred KMT candidate Han Kuo-yu, coupled with his revelations of his role in the kidnappings of the owners of the Cosway Bay Books bookstore and whisking them off to the mainland (60 Minutes Australia n.d.).

It makes sense that these developments do not only affect the current electoral decisions but underline the critical differences between People's Republic of China and Republic of China, their core values and the way the the inhabitants of the island feel about themselves, their Taiwanese versus Chinese identity. The results of the survey (Election Study Center National Chengchi University n.d.) show this is what is happening and it is also reflected in the preliminary interviews I have conducted. Younger generations feel themselves to be overwhelmingly Taiwanese. How China looms over not just the politics but on the identity of the Taiwanese can be illustrated by one subject's response to why he feels both Taiwanese and Chinese (with a Chinese identity holding a minority, self-ascribed 20% share). The subject, in his early twenties, said that he feels this way because of the culture and history, but predominantly it reflected a somewhat fatalistic view of the Taiwanese situation that China may be this island destiny and future, and that the United States, whom he described as Taiwan's "sugar daddy" may not always be around or decide to step in to defend the island.

A Taiwanese woman in her fifties identified herself as Chinese only but when pressed further on how she would explain that to a foreigner, who might think she is a Chinese from China (where her parents were from) or from Taiwan, she pondered this question and shook her head "No," she said, "Just Chinese, doesn't matter from where." There is not just a political, but also cultural aspect at play here.

A 2005 informal survey of university students about their identity (Chinese, Taiwanese or both) showed that there is a strong connection between how the question was interpreted and the answered that were given. Those who interpreted the question as "where were you born and raised" tended to favor "Taiwanese" while those who thought the question refers to "cultural and historical background" tended to choose "both Taiwanese and Chinese". That finding suggests that while many Taiwanese recognize their Chinese cultural heritage, their geographical (and by extension political) connection is to Taiwan. Meanwhile, the PRC's rising prominence – both internationally and in Taiwan's economic life – has strengthened the association between "China" and "People's Republic of China" and made it even less likely that Taiwanese will claim a "Chinese" identity (RIGGER 2011:108).

Military Aggression and Intimidation

As was mentioned before, the median line across the Taiwan Strait was not crossed from 1947 until 1995 when the Taiwanese embarked on their journey towards the western-style democracy with the first free presidential election in 1996 approaching. Beijing fired its missiles. Since then things have become much worse.

According to a government report on Chinese People's Liberation Army by the Taiwanese Institute for National Defense and Security Research the incursions into Taiwanese air space in 2020 were the highest since 1996. Chinese craft entered Taiwan's air defence identification zone (ADIZ) on 91 days from Jan. 1 to Nov. 30. Since then, the situation has worsened with almost daily incursions which send the Taiwanese fighter jets into the air each time. It is speculated that China tests Taiwanese defences in preparation for the future invasion, while also wearing down Taiwanese fighter jets, which, like all aircraft have only so many flight hours expectancy. It also keeps the pilots from doing other activities and training that would improve their fighting ability (DW News 2020).

This fact that the Taiwanese democracy is under constant threat of being "liberated" by the Chinese authoritarian regime is always present not only Taiwanese political life but also forever in the minds of the island's inhabitants and is a factor that influences the identity.

Conclusions

With every poll taken since 1992 the inhabitants of Taiwan weigh in more and more on the Taiwanese side of the Taiwanese, Chinese or both, identity question. The poll in May 2020 reached a record high. As past ethnic divisions are becoming less and less important to the younger generations the 'community of shared fate' is becoming a reality. This community has come a long way from the long martial law by the KMT to a democratic and open society, but every time it looks across the Taiwan Strait, it sees another society under an authoritarian rule with values which are not in line with its own. Taiwan has overcome its own horrific authoritarian past under Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT regime and within it, there is a cultural consensus across the board supportive of a Western-style democratic system of governance and anti-authoritarian.

Today, new regional and world developments such as the pandemic and the military intimidation by the People's Republic of China continue to increase the feeling of separate Taiwanese identity.

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Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)



Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

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ABSTRACT

Akyem Abuakwa is one of the largest states of the Akan ethnic group in Ghana. Notwithstanding its size and important contribution to Ghana's development, historians have paid little attention in doing academic research on the health history of the people. Using a qualitative method of research, this paper does a historical study on public health policies in Akyem Abuakwa from the 1850s to 1957. We utilised documentary and non-documentary sources to discuss the various public health policies implemented in Akyem Abuakwa from the pre-colonial era to the colonial era. We examined the impact of the policies on the people of Akyem Abuakwa and the various challenges faced by the British colonial administration in their quest to implement public health policies.

KEY WORDS: Akyem Abuakwa, Ghana, Gold Coast, history, Public Health

Introduction

Preventive health measures should be the utmost priority for any population seeking to achieve good health. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines preventive health measures as “all organized measures (whether public or private) to prevent diseases, promote health and prolong life among the population as a whole” (ADU-GYAMFI – DRAMANI – AMAKYE-BOATENG – AKOMEAH 2017:1-2). The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) also defines public health as the science and art of preventing diseases, prolonging life and promoting health through organised efforts (CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL 2018). Historical ideas, trial and error, and the development of basic sciences, technology and epidemiology influenced the development of public health (TULCHINSKY – VARAVIKOVA 2014:1). The definition and understanding of diseases differs among communities across the globe. This is because of the medical, religious and natural philosophical ideas of the groups, their resources and the changing circumstances in which they lived (BERRIDGE 2016:19).

The earliest explanation to diseases and epidemics among the earliest civilizations were rooted in mythology, superstition, and religion (BOSTON UNIVERSITY: A BRIEF HISTORY OF PUBLIC HEALTH 2018). During the middle ages, explanation to diseases became more scientific even though theology and mythology were inextricably intertwined with the culture and belief systems of the people (TULCHINSKY – VARAVIKOVA 2014:30). In his article “Sanitation, Bath and Street-Clearing in the Middle Ages and Renaissance”, Thorndike reports that, among the many criticisms levelled against the medieval era, three of them were slanderous. They include: first, constant foul smell and filth in towns; second, soap and bath were scarcely known in the medieval Europe; third, there was over-crowding in several of the towns and cities (THORNDIKE 1928:192). He further argued that these accusations from different academics lacked enough evidence.

The physiological school of thought was developed within the medieval period, which maintained that good health as well as fighting illness depended on natural causes thus, health and diseases could not be dissociated from the physical and social environment. This called for the implementation of certain social health policies (TOUNTAS 2009:13). The Cretes for instance have been applauded by Tountas as the earliest civilization to use underground clay pipes for sanitation and water supply. They also created public latrines and introduced the ontological streets system (streets that are perpendicular to each other) to ensure proper spacing (TOUNTAS 2009:15). The bubonic plague that spread across Europe from 1347 to the 1700’s changed the idea of thinking and explaining diseases (GRISSOM 2004:14). During the plague, many scientific theories were developed to explain its causation.

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompok
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

Systematic approaches were developed in the cause of the plague to curtail it. Doctors were clothed from hair to toe including the use of hood and mask in order to protect them from contracting the disease (GRISSOM 2004:52). The preparation of concoctions and decoctions also became very predominant at the time in an attempt to stop the plague. Quarantining and isolation also became very useful as an approach to curtail the spread of the disease (GRISSOM 2004: 56).

In Africa, before colonization, public health policies were in the hands of chiefs and indigenous priest healers. These policies were implemented through certain social control mechanisms like taboos and other related customs (ADU-GYAMFI – BRENYA – EGYIR 2017:3). Many pre-colonial African societies adopted preventive health care strategies to meet the health of their populations. The Khoisan population in South Africa for instance adopted a strategy of moving from their original location or homes to different places to avoid mosquito bites which caused malaria. This protected their population from other environmental related condition and diseases due to the vagaries of the weather. They settled on high mountainous regions especially, during the rainy seasons and returned to their former location when the prevailing conditions were not detrimental to their health and well-being (JANZEN – GREEN 2017:6).

Addae argues that the establishment of permanent settlements in Ghana along the coast marked the beginning of European exposure to local diseases (ADDAE 1997:11). Similarly, Patterson is of the view that the forts and castles became the centre of many illnesses like yellow fever and malaria among others (PATTERSON 1981:33). Tracing the evolution of Western healthcare in Ghana, he stated that the beginning of modern health care in Ghana can be traced to the latter part of the 19th century (PATTERSON 1981:11). Ofosu-Amaah has argued that during the first European contacts in the Gold Coast, the Europeans suffered from several health challenges which called for new strategies that formed the bases of Western healthcare in the Gold Coast since the fifteen century (OFOSU-AMAAH 2005:184-185).

Twumasi reports that the beginning of Ghana's Western medical service extends back to 1844, the period when medical doctors were for the first time posted to the Gold Coast to administer health care to the colonial administration (TWUMASI 1975:62). On the contrary, Alatinga and Williams have reported that, the historical development of Western health care in Ghana began in the 1920's (ALATINGA – WILLIAMS 2014:8). Significantly, the works of Addae and Twumasi also reveal that, the activities of Christian missionaries in the field of medicine cannot be ignored in Ghana's health history. Many Christian missions that came to Gold Coast initially gave little medical training to their missionaries in order for them to deal

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompkeh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

with certain minor illnesses. Many of these missionaries extended their medical knowledge to help the native population. Addae for instance argues that Thomas Birch Freeman, a missionary of the Wesleyan mission of the Gold Coast treated the Paramount Chief of Juabeng with the little medical knowledge he had acquired (ADDAE 1997: 8-11). Addae studied the sanitary conditions of the Gold Coast and concluded that before the 1880s, the towns along the coast were ill-famed for their poor and improper sanitation (ADDAE 1997: 8-11). The insanitary condition led to the outbreak of many diseases which increased European mortality in the Gold Coast. As a result of the increasing European mortality, the colonial administration began to institute proper health measures against diseases which threatened the lives of Europeans.

Twumasi has noted that the causes of many health problems in the Gold Coast were rooted in the environment, poor sanitation, and malnutrition (TWUMASI 1975:349). The harsh environmental conditions notwithstanding, Addae has reported that “it was possible for the Chief of Elmina (Caramansa) and his family as well as some other elders to receive some sort of medical assistance or care from Diego Azambuga at the castle, in order to strengthen their bond shortly after the arrival of the Portuguese” (ADDAE 1997:11). Again, he argued that European doctors like Dr. Pieter and Dr. Paul Isert extended their assistance to the local Africans even though it was not their primary objective. This according to Addae marked the earliest attempt of practicing Western medicine in Ghana.

It is important to note that though Western medicine was extended to the native population during the first phase of European contact with the Gold Coast, their primary concern was to meet the health needs of their subjects. Closely linked to this, Senah has categorized the introduction of Western medicine in Ghana into three phases. He used the term “Medical Apartheid” to refer to the period from 1471 to 1844 which is the period where Europeans received separate medical attention. The second phase was the signing of the Bond of 1844 which marked the earliest beginning of British control on the coast (1844-1900). The Bond of 1844 was a formal agreement made between some Fante chiefs of the Gold Coast and the British government. The bond marked the period when the British imperial power assumed formal control of the coastal territory of the Gold Coast (GOCKING 2005:25). The third phase was the colonial period (1900-1957). This was the period the colonial government took charge of the administration of the Gold Coast (SENAH 2001:83).

Arhinful has argued that “the main aim of the European medical officials in the Gold Coast was first to treat the European officials and other Europeans, followed by the African civil servants in colonial civil service and paid little attention to the native population” (ARHINFUL 2003:32). In 1850, the secretary of state for the colonies Earl Grey proposed a

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompkeh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

direct taxation to supplement customs duties to raise additional revenue for social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, roads and sanitation (ARHINFUL 2003:29). According to Knoll Grey, Earl Grey realised that the direct taxation without regular government in the territory will achieve nothing, so he decided to do so only with the general consent of the chiefs and their people at the coast (KNOLL 1967: 417). In 1852, Governor Stephen J. Hill succeeded in getting some Fante chiefs to form a legislative assembly and a poll tax of one shilling per head was levied on the people in places under British protection in the south (ARHINFUL 2003:30). Part of the tax was used for medical purposes. Arhinfu argues that, the activity did not last as a result of general opposition from the native Fantes. He further argues that health care within this period was not based on out of pocket cost for individuals within the territory of the Gold Coast (ARHINFUL 2003:30). Ofusu-Amaah has also reported that, the abolishment of the poll tax in relation to health care meant that the government had to devise a strategy to finance health services (OFOSU-AMAAH 2005:187). During this period, Western medicine was given much attention by the British colonial administration over traditional medicine and the natives gradually showed interest in same (OFOSU-AMAAH 2005:183). As the colonial administration expanded, it became a necessity to train the natives in the medical field to assist in healthcare delivery.

In 1877, the administrative capital was transferred from Cape Coast to Accra and this marked an important change in Ghana's medical history (ADDAE 1997:86). The Towns, Police and Public Health Ordinance of 1878 was the first official public health policy to be implemented in the Gold Coast in Accra, Cape Coast, and Elmina (ANDERSON – COHEN 2016:55). Inspectors and surveyors were sent to these towns to ensure the successful implementation of the new ordinance (ADDAE 1997:87). This was followed by the Quarantine Ordinance of 1891 and the Dispensary and Sale of Drugs and Poisons Ordinance (ARHINFUL 2003:30-32). In 1909, the Department of Health was created with two sections: the medical and the sanitary divisions. They were in charge of the health needs of the people of the Gold Coast. The colonial administration within this period aimed at disease prevention and also made gains in curative medical practice. European health care policies which also affected Asante and the modern day Eastern Region of Ghana including Akyem Abuakwa became even more pronounced.

Akyem Abuakwa is one of the largest states of the Akan ethnic group. Notwithstanding its size and important contribution to Ghana's development, historians have paid less attention to do academic research on the health history of the people. Major works on the Akyem Abuakwa have been largely centred on the socio-political history of the people with limited attention to their health history. Addo-Fenning studied the origin and evolution of the various

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Domprenh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

Akyem states and how such development impacted the politics of the people (ADDO-FENNING 1988). He again focused on the military history of the Akyem Abuakwa from the 1700's to 1918 (ADDO-FENNING 1998). Gray also studied the legal history of witchcraft in Akyem Abuakwa during the colonial period (GRAY 2000). Ofusu-Mensah also focussed on the mining history of the Akyem Abuakwa (OFOSU-MENSAH 2017). To emphasize, the public health history of the Akyem Abuakwa has received little or no scholarly attention. It is therefore essential to pay particular attention to the health history of Akyem Abuakwa particularly, public health policies since the colonial period.

The people of Akyem Abuakwa as stated earlier belong to the Akan ethnic group and traditionally believe in ancestral worship. They have traditional stools which represent the emblem of their traditional sovereignty. The modern territory of Akyem Abuakwa comprises over 3,120 square miles of land. Its boundaries are marked by river Pra, Asante, New Juabeng and Krobo to the West, Asante Akyem to the Northwest, Kwahu to the North, and Agona to the South. Akyem Abuakwa is an agrarian community due to its large forests. Cocoa farming is the main agricultural activity of the people. However, they also engage in other economic activities including mining, trading and other tertiary economic activities (NYARKO 2018:1-2).

The map below describes the various towns and boundaries of Akyem Abuakwa.

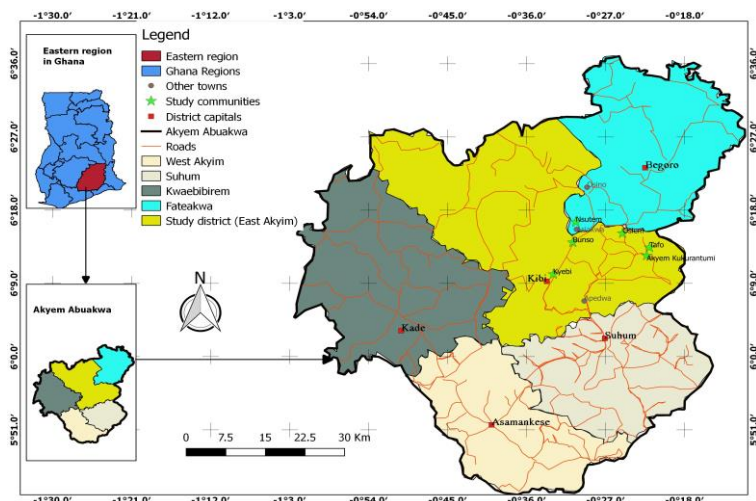


Figure 1: Map of Akyem Abuakwa. Source: Department of Geography and Rural Development, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi 2021.

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompheh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

This paper is based on a qualitative research approach. Information was taken from both primary and secondary sources. Concerning primary sources, data was collected from the Public Records and Archive Administration Department (PRAAD) at the regional (Koforidua) and national (Accra) level to help develop a useful historical analysis and a synthesis of public health policies since the colonial period. Also, several palace officials and the elderly were randomly sampled and interviewed. We deemed palace officials and the aged as the most reliable source of information for this contribution. The key informants were above 60 years old and have firm knowledge on the traditional systems of public health within the pre-colonial period. Secondary data was taken from various published books and journal articles. The books and articles provided information on the various themes including: The History of Public Health in Africa, Evolution of Modern Health Care in Ghana and Public Health Policies in Ghana. Fifty respondents were interviewed for the study. Out of the fifty, six people were palace officials from various towns including Akyem Kukurantumi, New Tafo, Sokodeguaso, Kyebi and Akyem Asafo. To emphasize, these respondents are nuanced in the traditions of Akyem Abuakwa.

The paper is organized into two sections. The first section deals with the introductory concept of the study which comprises the introduction including matters arising from the literature and problematization of the study. The second section is devoted to discussions and narratives on traditional and Western public health strategies and policies in Akyem Abuakwa. Major themes include traditional public health policies of Akyem Abuakwa from the 1850's to 1910. The others include colonial public health policies with sub-themes: Building of slaughter houses as a preventive health care strategy; Infectious Disease Ordinance of 1908; Institutional response as a preventive health care strategy by the colonial administration: The Housing and Town Planning Ordinance, Mosquito Ordinance, Mining Health Areas Act, Forest Ordinance and Reserved Ordinance. The second section also discusses the difficulties faced by the colonial administration in ensuring public health care. From here, we draw a conclusion to the study by highlighting key issues arising from same.

Traditional Public Health in Akyem Abuakwa (1850-1910)

Traditionally, public health was under the directives of the traditional institution. The traditional institutions' primary concern was to ensure the social, economic and spiritual wellbeing of their subjects (ADU-GYAMFI – DRAMANI – AMAKYE-BOATENG – AKOMEAH 2017:4). Arhin has argued that, the establishment of the various traditional rules

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompok
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

in the form of taboos, customs and laws helped to promote sanitation prior to European presence and colonisation (ARHIN 1985:35). The subsequent paragraph brings to light some traditional public health policies enacted by the traditional institutions (chieftaincy) and the British colonial administration. This was enforced by the native authorities including chiefs and headmen.

Taboos

According to Okyeame Obeng, the linguist of the Queen mother, Nana Hemaak Akua Dokuah of the Adonteng division of Akyem Abuakwa, “*taboos have been the most preventive strategy employed by our forefathers to govern or control all spheres of life including health*” (OKYEAME OBENG, personal conversation, 10th February 2020). In Akyem Abuakwa, taboos that were directed towards the improvement of health and environmental sanitation persisted. Obaapanyin Esther Asare, an eighty-two-year-old woman and a member of the Asona Royal family gave an account of some public health taboos in Akyem Abuakwa. She hinted that:

“During the time of our forefathers (Nananom), it was a taboo in Akyem Kukurantumi for one to untidy his or her compound. The rationale behind this was that the town deity Nobuo Kofi was neat and its subjects were expected to do same. Failure to comply meant failure of the deity to meet their spiritual and material needs, and other expectations. Also, it was a taboo to sing while bathing. Failure to comply meant that the person’s mother could face a death penalty. Ideally, the scientific rationale behind this was that these traditional soaps have high chemical contents that can cause harm to the human body when it enters the mouth. Individuals who did not talk while bathing were believed to gain the protection and covering of the deities” (OBAAPANYIN ESTHER ASARE, personal conversation, 10th February 2020).

Opanyin Ofori, an 82 year old retired Agricultural Extension Officer made reference to the role of ancestral spirits in dictating the essence of practicing good sanitation to the natives of Akyem Abuakwa. He hinted that there is a general belief that ancestors and other spirits do visit various households on regular basis. Our informant further reported that, when these ancestral spirits visit an untidy compound, they do not visit same location again. This deprived the household from the benevolence of the deities. If an individual within this period complied with these taboos, his health and well-being was assured (OPANYIN OFORI, personal conversation, 14th February 2020). From this, it can be inferred that taboos served as the guide toward ensuring good health and well-being of individuals within the traditional

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAH – Benjamin Dompkeh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

society. Taboos imposed lower penalties that were nonetheless sufficient to deter individuals from thinking about the option to deviate (FERSHTMAN – GNEEZY – HOFFMAN 2011:1).

Concerning superstition, Opanyin Asare, a member of the Asona Royal family and a retired Agricultural Extension Officer hinted:

“All our customs indeed have strong spiritual backings. Failure to do so attracts some form of punishment from our gods. Therefore, all aspects of life of our forefathers were entangled with spiritual things and this also put fear in the people. It was a taboo in Akyem Abuakwa to fetch water from certain streams and rivers. These rivers, I was told were basically for the gods and not for humans. In Akyem Kukurantumi, there is a river called “plebe”. It was a taboo to fish, swim or fetch water for domestic purposes in this river. The general belief is that, the river belongs to the gods” (OPANYIN ASARE, personal communication, 12th February 2020).

However, our informant hinted that the river contained certain waterborne diseases like elephantiasis and bilharzia (Schistosomiasis) among others. Therefore, to prevent people from being infected by such diseases, their forefathers made it a taboo to prevent people from having access to the river. Any breach of same attracted some form of punishment by the gods (OPANYIN ASARE, personal communication, 12th February 2020). It can also be deduced from the words of Opanyin Asare that the traditional societies understood that, attaching spiritualism to certain social norms and taboos could compel the people to follow such norms. Similarly, Fershtman, Gneezy and Hoffman have posited that “human behaviour is not governed only by rational decision making” (FERSHTMAN – GNEEZY – HOFFMAN 2011:1).

Also, in Akyem Abuakwa, there were traditionally created holidays for workers especially farmers. These traditional holidays are known as *dabɔne* which literally means a strange day (OBAAPANYIN KWOKWE, personal communication, 12th January 2020). According to Opanyin Obeng, during those designated holidays, no one was expected to go to farm. The rationale was that, *dabɔne* was a day for the various town deities and other spiritual forces to embark on certain spiritual operations. It was possible to meet these spirit beings when one goes to farm during *dabɔne*. In the olden days, when an individual breached this rule, he did so at his own peril (OKYEAME OBENG, personal communication, 14th February 2020). From this, it can be deduced that there was a scientific rationale behind the creation of *dabɔne*. It was to ensure enough rest among farmers and also allow the land and sometimes the rivers some fallow period to replenish. Pre-colonial people of Abuakwa believed that working without rest had negative health implications on the body. To buttress this point, our

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Domprenh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

informant, Obaapanyin Esther Asare, hinted that: “*apart from ensuring proper rest among farmers, dabone was established by our forefathers to serve as a day where every household was entitled to embark on general cleaning in various households. The old women have shared that, in their childhood years, they witnessed individuals cleaning their houses during dabone*” (OBAAPANYIN ESTHER ASARE, personal communication, 14th February 2020). According to her, it was not mandatory to embark on a general cleaning during *dabone* but it became a norm in Akyem Abuakwa for each household to embark on general cleaning exercise during that period. This is consistent with the work of Kosoe, Diawuo Darko and Osumanu who argue that *fɔda* or *dabone* was to ensure that farmers and fishermen stayed home within the week to rest and allow some period for the natural environment, animals and fish in rivers and streams among others to regenerate (KOSOE – DIAWUO DARKO – OSUMANU 2019:14).

Traditional Medicinal Approach as Preventive Health Care Strategy

Ozioma and Chinwe argue that, traditional medicine is “viewed as a combination of knowledge and practice used in diagnosing, preventing and eliminating diseases. This may rely on past experience and observation handed down from generation to generation” (OZIOMA – CHINWE 2019:191). This statement is applicable to pre-colonial Akyem Abuakwa since the people used knowledge and experience in diagnosing and preventing diseases. Here, attention is paid to the use of concoction and other traditional herbs which were predominant during the pre-colonial era. This concoction is popularly known in Twi as *dudo*. According to Opanyin Ofori, it was a kind of immune system booster which helped to protect the body from certain diseases (OPANYIN OFORI, personal communication, 14th February 2020). This pre-colonial practice still persists in traditional communities in Africa and Ghana in particular in contemporary times. According to Obaapanyin Esther Asare, in the past, every household had what is called *mukyia* (a local stove used for cooking) in front of their house. The concoction was boiled or heated on the *mukyia* and everyone in the house was expected to drink from a calabash before the start of a daily activity (OBAAPANYIN ESTHER ASARE, personal conversation, 14th February 2020). This concoction consists of a mixture of herbs and bark of trees that were boiled in water. In some places, the pots were placed in front of the house covered with calabash and everyone passing by or entering the house could drink some.

Another important medical practice was *kumkuma*. *Kumkuma* was a traditional medicinal practice in Akyem Abuakwa prior to colonisation. According to Opanyin Ofori, this practice

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAH – Benjamin Dompok
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

was occasional and was deployed when there was an outbreak of an epidemic (OPANYIN OFORI, personal communication, 14th February 2020). During the outbreak of an epidemic, the chief priest with the help of the ‘gong-gong beater’ or the traditional announcer, announced or called for an emergency meeting at the shrine on a specific date (OKYEAME OBENG, personal communication, 14th February 2020). According to Okyeame Obeng, *kumkuma* is a product of a tree known in the Akan language as *nyame dua*, which is also referred to botanically as *Alstonia boonei*. Preparing the *kumkuma* required that the healer made a hole in the trunk of a tree which was placed at the centre of the shrine. The medicine was poured in the *kumkuma* and natives were given the medicine to drink (OKYEAME OBENG, personal communication, 14th February 2020). This was only practiced by the chief priest and other experienced herbalists. According to Obaapanyin Kwokwe, the practice was effective and it prevented many people from contracting certain infectious diseases especially during the small pox outbreak in Akyem Abuakwa. The practice of *kumkuma* had some spiritual meaning (OBAAPANYIN KWOKWE, personal communication, 12th January 2020). The relics of these practices exist in contemporary Akyem Abuakwa. Significantly, some of these practices have been refined to meet the changing trends in society.

Communal Labour as a Preventive Health Care Strategy

According to Asamoah, communal labour is placed within the wider concept of community development which is based on the principle of self-help, felt needs and participation (ASAMOAH 2018:13). According to Opanyin Ofori, communal labour was based on the principle of individual responsibility that metamorphosed at the community level (OPANYIN GEORGE OFORI, personal communication, 14th February 2020). Similarly, Bhattacharyya has reported that, “the principle of self-help rests on a concept of human beings; when they are healthy they are willing and able to take care of themselves and reciprocate” (BHATTACHARYYA 2004:22). They are also productive, more predisposed to give than receive, active rather than passive, and creative rather than consuming (BHATTACHARYYA 2004:22). In Akyem Abuakwa, it was called *oman adwuma* or *asafo adwuma* and it was one of the most effective techniques in ensuring proper environmental sanitation.

Our informant, Obaapanyin Asare hinted that, during the pre-colonial days, rubbers, containers and industrial wastes among others were not common. The only communal activity within this period was ‘general weeding’. In view of this, the chiefs made proper arrangement concerning proper organisation to ensure its effectiveness (OBAAPANYIN

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompkeh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

ESTHER ASARE, personal conversation, 14th February 2020). Opanyin Ofori gave a detailed account on how communal labour was organised during the pre-colonial period. He hinted among other things that, it is the chief's responsibility to conduct communal labour in consultation with his elders and a public announcement on the specific date to carry out such exercise. The chief calls the *mmrantehene* (youth leader) to start initial preparation of mobilising the youth to embark on the exercise. On the stipulated day, the leader of war known as the *asafo akye* leads the people to the meeting place or grounds. The chief then informs the *asafo akye* through the *asafopiti* (the linguist of the *Asafo akye*) concerning the exercise about to be carried out. If the *asafo akye* consents to the chief's decision, it means the exercise can be carried out and if he does not, it means the exercise cannot be carried out (OPANYIN OFORI, personal communication, 14th February 2020). Addo-Fenning has noted that, "the Abuakwa *Asafo Akye* during the late 19th and 20th centuries, enjoyed the confidence and loyalty of their *Asafo* and the people and often acted independently and in defiance of the chiefs" (ADDO-FENNING 1998:14). He opines that, this development was due to the changing circumstances surrounding the socio-political environment of Akyem Abuakwa during the period under review. Formal education played a leading role in changing the socio-political environment in Akyem Abuakwa (ADDO-FENNING 1998:15). According to Obaapanyin Wukubea, there were special groups charged with monitoring and supervision. These people reported indirectly to the chief through the *mmrantehene*. Failure to attend such clean-up campaigns attracted a heavy fine (OBAAPANYIN WUKUBEA, personal communication, 6th 2020). This practice has remained the most effective technique of ensuring proper community sanitation in recent times. This policy of self-help can be integrated into current society to ensure the protection of the environment and proper sanitation in particular.

Colonial Public Health Policies in Akyem Abuakwa (Preventive Health Care Policies)

Building of Slaughter Houses as Preventive Health Care Strategy

The slaughter house policy was restricted to large towns in Akyem Abuakwa including Kyebi (the administrative capital of Akyem Abuakwa), Tafo, Suhum, Begoro, Kade and Kukurantumi (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O 558/311, 1934). The provision was made in accordance with Cap 86 of the Town Act of 1892 sections 24 and section 25 of the Town

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAH – Benjamin Dompok
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

Ordinance Act of 1934 which required the provision of slaughter houses and markets within any region under colonial control (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O/833/33, 1933). Opanyin Ofori gave a detailed account on the rationale behind the building of a slaughter house at Kyebi. He hinted;

“I was told by my grandfather that, there was the development of a large manyanka (slaughter house) especially by the Northerners (Eseremu Fuo). According to my grandfather, upon a visit to the Kyebi market at the time, animals were displayed publicly, attracting flies and other harmful insects. The place had an unpleasant smell, and sometimes most animals were slaughtered in various homes and places and later brought to the market for sale. This made it difficult for the health officers (tankase) to determine the state of health of these slaughtered animals at the time” (OPANYIN OFORI, personal communication, 14th February 2020).

In support of this, the work of Adu-Gyamfi, Adjei and Owusu-Ansah postulates that, the rationale for implementing this policy during the colonial period was to ensure good and healthy living among the Gold Coasters. This was because slaughtered animals were under constant checks by the health officers to ensure that they were in good and healthy condition. Also, they ensured that a clean environment was maintained for mass purchasing (ADU-GYAMFI – ADJEI – OWUSU-ANSAH 2013:227).

In 1934, the Colonial Health Board established the Kyebi slaughter house (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O 558/311, 1934). Under the slaughter house policy, there was the existence of slaughter house regulations under section 20 of the slaughter house ordinance, to ensure proper sanitary and hygienic standards in the respective slaughter houses (PRAAD, Koforidua, New Juabeng Native Authority, 1948). The regulations were as follows:

- No person shall slaughter any cattle or other animals for human consumption in any of the town specified in the schedule to these rules or within the precinct of such towns (Towns in Akyem-Abuakwa) otherwise than in the public slaughter houses.
- No person shall sell any meat not killed in the specified slaughter houses.
- A health officer or any person employed by the native Authority has the sole power to exercise control of the slaughter house to ensure proper sanitation of the place and healthy meat to be consumed.
- Every person who shall make use of a slaughter house or other place appointed for the slaughter of animals shall keep the same in a clean state and shall before leaving

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Domprenh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

briefly sweep and clean all dirt, blood, offal and rubbish and shall wash and clean the slaughter house to the satisfaction of their health officer.

- No person shall be permitted to use a slaughter house or other place appointed for the slaughter of animals until he shall have paid such fee's as may from time to time be fixed by resolution of the Native Authority and approved in writing by the Chief Commissioner to the person employed by the Native Authority to receive the same.
- Any person contravening or failing to comply with any of these rules shall be guilty of an offense and shall be guilty of an offense and shall on conviction to a fine not exceeding 5 pounds or imprisonment not exceeding one month (PRAAD, Koforidua, New Juabeng Native Authority, 1948)

It is important to state that the 1948 Slaughter House Ordinance was a repetition and amendments of the old ordinances concerning same. To ensure that this policy was properly enforced to achieve its desired objective, the colonial administration made several amendments. They included the 1909 slaughter house amendment Act in which section 8 of clause 7 was amended, the 1921 slaughter house amendment act where section 70 of clause 10 was amended and section 5 of clause 17 of 1921 Slaughter house amendment Act was also amended. These amendments were made to ensure that the policies were effectively implemented in Gold Coast and Akyem Abuakwa in particular (PRAAD, Accra, Cap 86 Towns Act, 1892 arrangement of sections). For example, the literature on public health including Adu-Gyamfi, Adjei and Owusu-Ansah among others reveal that, these policies coupled with their consistent amendments promoted the health of the native population during the colonial period (ADU-GYAMFI – ADJEI – OWUSU-ANSAH 2013:4).

Infectious Disease Ordinance of 1908

This ordinance was a general health ordinance for the entire Gold Coast colony and became very useful during the influenza pandemic outbreak. It was enacted by the governor of the Gold Coast Colony with the advice and consent of the legislative council (PRAAD, Accra, ADM.4/1/56, 1927). The ordinance provided for the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases, the settlement of claims for compensation and damages in connection with measures taken to prevent the obstacles of communicable nature and for related matters (PRAAD, Accra, Infectious Disease Act, 1908). The ordinance entrusted into the hands of the Health Department an independent power, the right to adopt emergency measures as might be considered necessary and undoubtedly received the full support of all political

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAH – Benjamin Dompok
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

officers. Under this ordinance, the Director of Health in the various provinces had the sole right to declare an area infected (PRAAD, Accra, No. 454/32, 1932). In a personal conversation with Obaapanyin Esther Asare, she hinted that, in Kyebi and other principal towns including Suhum, Bunso among others, there was the creation of temporal structures where the infected were quarantined and treated to reduce the spread of the disease (OBAAPANYIN ESTHER ASARE, personal conversation, 14th February 2020). We infer that, this came into being as a result of the Infectious Diseases Ordinance that granted power to all health workers to take any action necessary with the support of the colonial political institutions and interest groups.

Institutional Response as a Preventive Health Care Policy and Strategy by the Colonial Administration

As a result of the insanitary condition in Akyem Abuakwa, the colonial administration created a public health institution to help provide remedy to the situation (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O 11/14/205, 1933). The administration created health boards that were hierarchical. These were as follows: the first was the Central Health Board; the second was the Provincial or District Health Boards and lastly the Town Health Boards (PRAAD, Kumasi, C.S.O/14/172, 1933). The Town Health Board was basically the sanitary committee established under the Provincial Health Boards (PRAAD, Accra, M.P No. 1301/1926, 1932). Under the Provincial Health Board, there was the creation of the Akyem Abuakwa Health Board. The Board was responsible for the running of the day-to-day health affairs in the District. The Health Board operated under the directives of the Provincial Commissioner upon the advice of the Senior Health Officer in Akyem Abuakwa (PRAAD, Accra, C.E.P, No. 1053/1428/21, 1932). The Board was made up of the District Commissioner (president), the Assistant Director of Medical Service, the Senior Sanitary Officer (Director of Public Health) and the Provincial Engineer, with other supporting staff (PRAAD, Accra, C.E.P, No. 1053/1428/21, 1932).

Later, executive engineers replaced provincial engineers in Akyem Abuakwa as members of the board (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O/14/172, 1932). Also, the office of the Provincial Engineer responsible for waste management was replaced with the Public Health Department. The Town Health Board was established in various towns within the province and was under the control and supervision of the Provincial Health Board (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O/14/172, 1932). Mr. Esihene, a retired District Chief Executive of East Akyem Municipal Assembly brought to light the Old established towns within the colonial period. He hinted: “when we

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAH – Benjamin Dompren
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

talk about towns within this period, emphasis was made on Kyebi, Kukurantumi, Osiem, Asafo, Akooko, Begoro and Asiakwa. It is possible that Health Boards were established within these towns” (EMMANUEL ASIHENE, personal conversation, 16th February 2020). Adu-Gyamfi, Adjei and Owusu-Ansah have noted that, the Town Health Board was made up of a health officer, sanitary inspector, a secretary, an office clerk, messengers and cleansers. The others included, the latrine and incinerator workers, each with designated functions (ADU-GYAMFI – ADJEI – OWUSU-ANSAH 2013:228).

Significantly, concerning Akyem Abuakwa, the duties of the Akyem Abuakwa Health Board under the Health Board Ordinance were as follows:

- To submit to the central board (at Accra) any policy or scheme which may be initiated in the interest of the public health within Akyem Abuakwa.
- To serve as an advisory body to the central health board upon any scheme or works affecting the public health within Akyem Abuakwa.
- To require the attendance of any official resident within Akyem Abuakwa who may have special knowledge of any matter under consideration.
- To submit a copy of each meeting to the central health board (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O 11/14/205, 1932).

These functions were assigned to the Health Board to ensure that health policies were effectively implemented from the grass root level to major centers in Akyem Abuakwa. The designation of these functions to the Board and its collaborative role with the Central Health Board especially on advisory matters epitomised a strong system of decentralisation that had the proclivity to help promote health care at the grass root level during the colonial period. Certainly, effective devolution of power in the healthcare management in Ghana in contemporary times can also advance her gains in public health.

The Housing and Town Planning Ordinance

As Adu-Gyamfi, Adjei and Owusu-Ansah have stated, the housing and the town planning ordinance in the Gold Coast came into being to ensure proper housing arrangement to prevent congestion, stuffiness and also to improve ventilation (ADU-GYAMFI – ADJEI – OWUSU-ANSAH 2013:225). The ordinance emanated from the 1926 Town Amendment Ordinance. It was applied in Akyem Abuakwa due to the insanitary conditions in the area (PRAAD,

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompheh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

Accra, and C.S.O 11/14/205). In 1933, a memorandum was submitted to the governor by the Paramount Chief of Akyem Abuakwa during a durbar with the sub-chiefs and the natives. They reported among other things that:

- The sanitary condition of Kyebi and its surroundings was not satisfactory. All that was required was sound rural method of sanitation
- Secondly, the perimeter of the town was too overgrown and covered with much filth and indestructible refuse.
- The prevailing system of pit-latrines, and the total lack of such convenience in some areas constituted an insufferable nuisance
- Poor disposal of indestructible refuse required some proper organization.

On 15th December 1933, the Governor of the Gold Coast received a report concerning the sanitary condition in Kyebi. The report made strong emphasis on the poor housing condition in the Kyebi community. It stated among other things that buildings were commenced and altered without any previous building permits. Many of the houses were in bad state of repair (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O 11/14/205, 1933). Upon the submission of the memorandum to the governor and the report on the poor sanitary state of Kyebi, the colonial administration responded quickly to ensure proper health and general sanitation in the area. Under the 1926 Town's Amendment Ordinance, the Director of Public Health was granted power to make building regulations in the various municipalities in the colony including the various municipalities in Akyem Abuakwa. The Director of Public Health was to make a legal provision for the following; the level, width, the materials to be used for construction, building lines, and the layout of buildings, building sites and their suitability for dwelling houses, spaces to be left unbuilt around buildings in order to secure free ventilation. The others include the percentage area which may be covered with building, provision of passages, lanes and roads for the purpose of giving access to premises among others (PRAAD, Accra, AMD, 4/1/55, 1926).

Also, section 17 clause 2 of the 1926 Town Amendment Ordinance granted power to the District Commissioner in concurrence of the Director of Public Works or the Provincial Engineer to demolish any unauthorised building that was seen as a threat to the general public in Akyem Abuakwa (PRAAD, Accra, AMD, 4/1/55, 1926). The Director of Public Works with the advice of the Provincial Engineer proposed a new lay-out plan for Kyebi and was extended to other areas within Akyem Abuakwa (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O/833/33, 1933). This plan came to be known as the G.C./B/848 plan. Under this plan, the high street and the streets

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompok
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

lateral to it was to be made parallel. Also, the side street was to meet the main street at a right angle. Section 32 clause 1 of the 1926 Towns Amendment Ordinance allowed the Director of Public Works in Akyem Abuakwa to make provisions in respect to overcrowding and the demolition of any building. In contemporary times, the literature on town and urban planning including the work of Hebbert among others have emphasized the importance of streets, access to building and how same are useful for public health and safety (HEBBERT 1999:437). However, the current state of layout of settlements in Akyem Abuakwa especially in Kyebi, Akyem Kukurantumi and Old Tafo are anathema to town planning. It is significant to adopt and improve upon some of these public health policies in Akyem Abuakwa in contemporary times to safeguard the health and well-being of the people (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O/833/33, 1933).

Mosquito Ordinance

Another important ordinance that became effective in Akyem Abukawa was the mosquito ordinance. Malaria has been an endemic disease in the tropics since time immemorial. However, the predominance of mosquitoes in the Gold Coast including Akyem Abuakwa within the period under review can be attributed to the insanitary conditions that persisted at the time (ARHINFUL 2003:36). Strother argues that, the duty of the mosquito anti-brigade band was to embark on a door to door campaign with the effort to eliminate open water and encourage personal measures to protect against bites (STROTHER 2016:447). The gang consisted of a sanitary inspector, labourers and a police who ensured that the people followed the recommended measures (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O/833/33, 1933). The sanitary inspector visited each compound once every fourteen days. To ensure that the people complied with the ordinance, larvae fine of 7/6d was imposed on offenders who were convicted (PRAAD, Accra, C.S.O/833/33, 1933). Preventive measures against malaria were implemented by the colonial administration especially in the 1930's (ARHINFUL 2003:36). This was due to the fact that, the reliance on curative health care alone could not fully eradicate endemic diseases that existed among the native population.

Mining Health Areas Act

Another important health ordinance implemented within the colonial days at Akyem Abuakwa was the Mining Health Areas Act. This law operated in mining areas to ensure good health of workers and a good environment (PRAAD, Accra, ADM 4/1/56). Comparatively, in Nigeria, Nkwam has noted that due to improper sanitary measures in mining communities in British West Africa, mining areas became the centre of many communicable diseases. To alleviate this problem, there was the introduction of the Mining Health Ordinance (NKWAM 1988:15). Under this law, the mining companies were to make provision for the health needs of their workers in mining areas in British West Africa including Akyem Abuakwa.

In a personal conversation with Mr. Asihene, he hinted that, in Kyebi, Nsutam and Osino, mining pits were covered after a day's mining and the entire area was secured after same. This was done to ensure public safety (EMMANUEL ASIHENE, personal conversation, 16th February 2020). Mining health centres in Akyem Abuakwa under the Mining Health Ordinance were expected to provide the town with public health accoutrements in order to enhance sanitation in these towns (EMMANUEL ASIHENE, personal conversation, 16th February 2020). Opanin Ofori hinted that, public instruments like incinerators, dustbins and sick bays were provided by the mining companies (OPANYIN OFORI, personal conversation, 14th February 2020). Kitula has lamented that, the impact of mining on the environment has been negative since environmental pollution has been a major challenge in most mining areas and this constitutes a threat to the health and well-being of human and animal species (KITULA 2006:409). Based on this, we argue that, the Mining Health Area Ordinance which was implemented in Akyem Abuakwa reduced many environmental problems that could serve as a serious threat to the health and social well-being of the natives.

Forest Ordinance and Reserve Ordinance

It has been scientifically proven that, proper vegetation provides a suitable weather condition that has positive impact on health (WORLD LIFE FUND 2020). As put forward by Amanor the Forest Ordinance was enacted basically to stop over exploitation to maintain the climate of the forest zone and watershed (AMANOR 1999:51). The colonial administration looking at the indiscriminate cutting of trees without any proper replacement and illicit mining in the Brim Forest Reserve compelled the colonial administration to implement the Forest

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAH – Benjamin Domprenh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

Ordinance of 1910 and the Forest Reserve Ordinance of 1937 in the Gold Coast and Akyem Abuakwa in particular (PRAAD, Kofiridua, SCRER.231/41). The main objective of the Forest Ordinance was to limit the destruction of the Brim forest through activities such as mining and lumbering. The Forest Ordinance was to create a forest reserve for future purposes. These two ordinances brought about suitable weather conditions, clean and healthy water bodies among others. This impacted positively on the lives of the people of Akyem Abuakwa. Making this policy a priority, the colonial administration created the office of the Forest Commissioner and Reserve Commissioner respectively to ensure effective operation of this policy (PRAAD, Kofiridua, and SCRER.231/41). The positive impact of this policy on the environment during the period under review has depleted as a result of the over exploitation of these natural resources in contemporary times in Akyem Abuakwa.

Difficulties Experienced By the Colonial Administration in Ensuring Proper Public Health

The difficulties experienced by the colonial administration in their attempt to administer public health can be summarised as follows: inadequacy of legal provisions coupled with stiff opposition from the local authority, inadequate health workers, and lack of political support including personal issues with chiefs (PRAAD Accra, Prevention of disease in Gold, Coast, No.452/32, 1932).

Inadequate Legal Provision and Stiff Opposition

In a letter from the Chief Commissioner's Office to the governor, it highlighted the various challenges experienced by the administration in their quest to administer proper health care in the colony. The major challenge which was raised in the letter is the question on inadequate legal provisions. The Provincial Commissioner stationed at Kofiridua (an area close to Akyem Abuakwa) explained that; the inadequacy of legal provision was based on the manner in which the existing ordinances were administered than to any defects in the ordinances themselves. He further reported that the bye-laws of chiefs were almost entirely ineffective and the District Commissioners of the various provinces also held this view (PRAAD Accra, Prevention of disease in Gold, Coast, No.452/32, 1932). Based on this, a suggestion was made by the Acting Deputy Director of Health. The suggestion aimed at empowering the

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompok
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

government to respond quickly to places where no bye-laws existed, and in places where bye-laws existed but were not properly administered. He further recommended that the colonial provisions should be operated side by side those that existed within the native jurisdictions. In areas where there were colonial bye-laws, chiefs were not to be bordered to pass new ones (PRAAD Accra, Prevention of disease in Gold, Coast, No.452/32, 1932).

In 1903, a report by Rev. A. Ph. Bauer on Akyem Abuakwa noted among other things that “all the Akyem are unruly people. They are very obstinate and do neither obey nor respect their chiefs especially the young men” (PRAAD, Accra, Adm.11/1/1096, 1903). Similar to this, Opanyin Asare, an 82-year-old retired sanitary worker hinted that, the idea of replacing traditional bye-laws with British Ordinance marked the earliest beginning of stiff opposition from the chiefs against such rules, and an indirect opposition from the people especially in areas where chieftaincy institution was rooted like Akyem Abuakwa. The people felt that their chiefs were being disrespected by Europeans who were eager to render the native laws moribund (OPANYIN ASARE, personal conversation, 14th February 2020).

Based on the persistent European attempts to define the legal space at the local level, chiefs felt angry; this was exacerbated by the apparent disrespect from the natives who hitherto respected them. There were several protests made by the Okyeman Traditional Council against the European interference in their native affairs, including issues of sanitation (PRAAD, Accra, Adm.11/1/1096, 1903). Therefore, restrictions placed on traditional bye laws brought stiff opposition especially from the native authority of Akyem Abuakwa. Okyeame Obeng, hinted that: people summoned and fined at the local council (traditional council) at Akyem Kukurantumi on certain barbaric customs that had negative health implications always complained during court proceedings that they could not sit in the land of their birth for a certain European to teach them what they defined as proper sanitation or how to keep their surroundings clean. The indigenes of Akyem Abuakwa believed that the traditional authorities had their own way of doing things; the indigenes of Akyem Abuakwa perceived that they were doing the right things (OKYEAME OBENG, personal conversation, 14th February 2020).

Inadequate Personnel

Another difficulty that the colonial administration encountered in administering proper public health and sanitation was inadequate personnel. In an attempt to improve the general sanitation challenge in the Gold Coast, the Commissioner in Asante identified, among other

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompfeh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

things, limited and efficient personnel to support the sanitary force. Some of his suggestions were largely applicable to Akyem Abuakwa. A letter from the office of the Chief Commissioner in Asante to the Colonial Secretariat argued among other things that:

One of the chief obstacles to the efficient operation of the sanitary department in outlying towns and villages was that, the work was carried out to a large extent by junior African subordinates to whom the test of efficiency appeared to be the number of persecution and the adverse nature of their monthly reports (PRAAD, Accra, Prevention of Diseases in Gold Coast, No. 454/32, 1932). According to Obaapanyin Kwokwe, this was true because only few people were educated then. Therefore, having access to biomedical health workers within this period was not easy (OBAAPANYIN KWOKWE, personal conversation 14th February 2020). Sanitary workers within this period were people with low educational background. According to Opanyin Ofori, *“inadequate personnel in the government sector was as a result of high illiteracy rate among the native Gold Coast during this period., if one completes standard 7 (which is equivalent to today’s Junior High School), such a person was privileged to work in a big company, it was a handful of people who had such privilege”* (OPANYIN OFORI, personal conversation, 14th February 2020).

It can be deduced that low level of education was responsible for limited personnel in the public health sector of the Colonial Administration. Therefore, the few professional public health workers were overburdened with a lot of work which had negative effect on their productivity. Obaapanyin Kwokwe hinted that; during the colonial period, the work of sanitary inspectors was tedious. They moved from community to community inspecting houses. Due to their limited number they could not expect all the places they were required to access in the performance of their duties. Obaapanyin Kwokwe further hinted that, in her village (Sokodeguaso), sanitary inspectors in Akyem Kukurantumi visited once in a blue moon. She argued that this did not put pressure on the indigenes in here village to practice proper sanitation (OBAAPANYIN KOKWE, personal conversation, 14th February 2020). Though it was envisaged that the local people will show great concern about their environment and their own health and well-being; the activities of the sanitary officers remained paramount in ensuring proper public health in Akyem Abuakwa.

Health Workers Attitude and People’s Perception toward the Profession

Health workers specifically, sanitary workers within this period were described by some as *apoobofuo* which literally means corrupt people. Opanyin Ofori hinted; during this period, it

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompok
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

was their duty to inspect people's homes and especially the water they drank to ensure that their water was safe and free from bacteria. Sometimes they intentionally polluted people's water when inspecting their homes and fined them for drinking unclean water (OPANYIN OFORI, personal conversation, 14th February 2020).

The corrupt attitude of sanitary workers was alarming hence, several people lost respect for the profession (NANCY AFUM, personal conversation, 7th April 2020). In fact, some were of the view that, when one was employed as a sanitary inspector, the person together with his family were cursed. Lack of respect for the profession coupled with their corrupt practices impacted negatively on the sanitary progress in Akyem Abuakwa during the period. Within the period under review, some natives of Akyem Abuakwa refused to take instructions from the sanitary inspectors. Obaapanyin Esther Asare, describing the effect of these actions on the sanitary progress in Akyem Abuakwa hinted that "*fines which should have been mandatorily returned to the town coffers to embark on developmental projects ended up in the pockets of the sanitary officers (tankasefo)*" (OBAAPANYIN ESTHER ASARE, personal conversation, 16th February 2020). This corrupt attitude did not aid the efforts to improve sanitation in Akyem Abuakwa which had wider ramifications on the health and well-being of the people.

Another huge problem experienced by the colonial administration were spiritual attacks in the form of curses. These spiritual attacks came as a result of the undesirable attitude and unprofessionalism of the sanitary workers. George Ofori noted that, corrupt practices among these workers resulted in several curses known as *duabɔ* among the Akan (OPANYIN OFORI, personal conversation, 14th February 2020). This resulted in deaths, strange diseases and sometimes madness. Due to this, the profession was described as the cursed job. It can therefore be deduced that, one of the core reason for a small number of people in the profession was partly as a result of "spiritual attacks" (OPANYIN OFORI, personal conversation, 14th February 2020).

Conclusion

The study has provided a historical analysis on public health policies in Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana. Adu-Gyamfi, Adjei and Owusu-Ansah have argued that, before the 1880's, the towns along the coast were notorious for their insanitary state (ADU-GYAMFI – ADJEI – OWUSU-ANSAH 2013:215). Senah has argued that colonial health care prior to the 1930's was basically curative. It was rather at the beginning of the 1930's that preventive health care

Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAHA – Benjamin Dompreeh
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

was introduced (SENAH 2001:84). Arhinful has argued that, the reason for the strict enforcement of preventive strategies in the 1930's was as a result of the great depression that had negative effect on public expenditure including health expenditure (ARHINFUL 2003:36). To prevent ill health among the local population, the administration resorted to preventive measures since curative health care required a lot of fiscal expenditure. The enforcement of public health policies within the colonial period was basically to improve the general health standard in the Gold Coast.

Arising from the detailed research, we argue that the implementation of these policies in Akyem Abuakwa during this period had positive impact on the health of the population at the time. Throughout the study, it was discovered that, natives in Akyem Abuakwa during the colonial period disliked European style of public health. However, the forced implementation of these policies impacted positively on the lives of the people. Public health policies in Akyem Abuakwa have undergone several transitions. Notwithstanding, choked gutters, poor location of refuse dump sites, improper disposal of refuse among others have been key challenges to public health in Akyem Abuakwa in contemporary times. This among others is a result of poor enforcement of sanitary laws and poor cooperation from the people. It is therefore pertinent for the government of Ghana and all stakeholders to pay proper attention to public health in Akyem Abuakwa. There is the need to make inferences from past public health policies to guide current action.

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Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMA – Benjamin Dompheh
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Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

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Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAH – Benjamin Dompok
DARKWA – Lucky TOMDI

Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

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Samuel ADU-GYAMFI – Phinehas ASIAMAH – Benjamin Dompkeh
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Public Health Policies in the Akyem Abuakwa of Ghana (1850-1957)

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Inequalities and Conflicts in Modern and Contemporary African History: A Comparative Perspective

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For decades, most of Sub-Sahara African countries have been marred with violent conflicts and political unrest. Scholars and analysts have pointed colonial legacy, creation and instrumentalisation of ethnic identities (MAMDANI 2001:1-28; WANJALA S. 2015:xi-xii, 1-4), corruption, greed and grievances (HOEFFLER 2011:274-284), manifestation of systemic inequality and marginalization (FUKUDA-PARR – ARNIM – MINE 2013:1-9), religious stereotypes (JOHNSON 2003; WILLIAMS 2011), as well as governance and economic policies (ASCHER – MIROWITSKAYA, Natalia 2013; MINE – STEWART – FUKUDA-PARR – MKANDAWIRE 2013) as the root causes of wars and conflict in Africa. However, none of the above mentioned factors solely explains the degree and variation of violence in the continent. Ascher and Mirovitskaya, and Johnson admit that armed conflicts in Africa should not be understood in generic terms like ethnicity or through Collier and Hoeffler's dichotomies of "greed and grievances" (ASCHER – MIROWITSKAYA 2013:2; JOHNSON 2003:xvi-xviii). Instead, multiple circumstances and the related catalysts should properly be studied so as to understand the causes of wars and violent conflicts in Africa.

BOOK REVIEW

In the view of the above, Jan Záhorký in *Inequalities and Conflicts in Modern and Contemporary African History*, offers a comparative historical account on the multiple circumstances, causes, and consequences of conflicts, wars, and political unrest in Africa. He approaches the subject to unveil the subterranean forces which have, since the 20th century, contributed to growing violent conflicts in the continent. Záhorký uses interdisciplinary approach by engaging historical, ethnological, political, international and other dimensions in order to enlighten the multiple facets which shape the contemporary conflicts and wars. The author points out that conflicts in Africa should be examined on the basis of “broader global trends and as a result of interaction between local and global forces” (viii). One of the strengths of this book is its accessibility in terms of language use, thematic and structural organization. The book is organized into three chapters. His arguments enable a reader to weave through multiple circumstances rooted in historical, socio-economic and political dimension such as ethnicity, separatist politics, ethno-nationalism, marginalization and inequality (vii-x).

The author’s motive for studying “conflicts in Africa into broader perspective that simply goes beyond colonial legacy” (vii), is to dispute the popular narrative which use colonialism as a sole factor for conflict in Africa. However, this argument appears to belittle colonialism and colonial legacy. He uses the absence of physical colonial domination in Ethiopia and Liberia to dispute colonial legacy. He argues that Ethiopia did not experience serious foreign colonial domination for a long period time, and thus, colonialism and colonial legacy cannot fit in accounting for its prolonged political tension, conflicts and wars (vii, pp. 6-7, 41, 85). This however, is an attempt to undermine colonialism, colonial legacy, neo-colonial relations, and imperial agenda of the postmodern era. The author considers colonialism in physical or regional terms and not as holistic phenomenon which also involved spread of ideas, attitudes, psychological and social dimensions.

In this book, the author articulates the historical roots that have resulted in current political turmoil in different regions in Africa. He digs deeper into colonial times in order to establish relationships between past and present. To him, this is the only reason that justifies “why does history matter” (ix). In the course of articulating how colonial policies and strategies are linked to the present, a detailed comparative historical analysis is provided demonstrating how colonial strategies and policies inculcated ethnicity, regional, economic, and social marginalization, superiority complex, and undemocratic attitude. The historiographical discussion offered and the capture of bipolar politics of the Cold War time acts as the basis for the realization of the central thesis of the book. However, the author approaches the Ethiopian question idealistically by ignoring the context of time and spread of colonial ideas of the late 19th century. The fact that colonial ideas of racism, superiority, conquest, and

BOOK REVIEW

domination were real, Ethiopia could not operate in isolation for it to survive. It was these similar ideas of the ruling dynasty which implanted the seed to current tensions and unrest in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa at large.

A comparative discussion on multiple sources of conflicts, war, and political unrest in Africa is provided by examining countries with prolonged conflicts, wars or those with critical and devastating impacts of instability such as Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, and Nigeria. Záhorkík insists that “conflicts and various political turbulences usually have more than one root cause or variable” (p. 43). His historical comparative approach in studying different cases reveals failure of de-colonisation, separatist politics, ethno and regional nationalism, socio-economic, political marginalization, and inequalities as contributing factors for conflicts and wars. The author criticizes the tendency of putting economic motives in explaining conflicts in Africa and calls for an “inter-disciplinary approach combining historical and anthropological inquires to political science and political economy” (p. 68). By this, Záhorkík criticizes economic determinism in explaining conflicts in Africa. This argument, however, lightly considers the fact that economic base, and mode economic exploitation set the motion for cultural, social, and political relations which develops in a given society (AMIN 2014:1-10, 55-79; BADRU 1998). The motives behind separatist politics, socio-economic marginalization, and inequalities or even the recent South African xenophobic chaos cannot be easily accounted without a critical examination of the actors of the neo-colonial and neo-liberal economies operating throughout the continent in a postmodern flavour.

In a detailed discussion, Záhorkík examines the extent to which marginalization, inequalities, ethnicity and race, ethno-nationalism, regional and religious conflicts, and many other circumstances have been contributing to conflicts, wars, and political unrest in Ethiopia, and the Horn of Africa. He qualifies the central thesis of the book and the repeated argument that conflicts in Africa are a product of multiple causes, and can never be entirely attributed to its colonial legacy. The author uses historical approach to analyze and examine the evolution of the Amharic dynastic imperial expansion to different regions of what is now modern Ethiopia. He approached this question by examining the Semitic speaking people, the Amharic (the center), expansion to the regions of Cushitic communities, Oromo, Somali, and Afar (the Periphery), and many others, mainly the Omotic, and Nilo-Saharan ethnic groups. Ethnic and racial stereotype, religious favoritism, discrimination and subjugation, regional marginalization and inequalities, political alienation as well as the division of people into classes of citizens and subjects, are used by the author to provide an account that European invasion and domination is not the only source of political conflicts and wars in Africa.

BOOK REVIEW

Záhořík has successfully demonstrated ways in which complexities of inter-racial, ethnic, religious, and regional tension which shape the state of contemporary Ethiopia and other parts of Africa. He does so, just like Pade Badru (BADRU 1998) by criticizing the use of ethnicity as a scapegoat of explaining tension in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa. Despite his ability to exploit contemporary sources (social media, internet and communication technologies) to examine contemporary politics and tension in Africa, there is relatively less attention on archival and oral sources thereby making the book devoid of people's voices in accounting for conflicts in Africa. Cases of Rwanda, Burundi, and Congo for example, require an ethnographic study and thorough review of local and international reports to be in a position to account for the prevailing circumstances in those regions.

To those who intend to study the nature and complexity of contemporary African conflicts, wars and political unrest, this book presents itself as both a critic to the meta-narratives like nationalist narratives and ethnic activists on the one hand. On the other hand, it provides an analytical examination of the complex circumstances from which the contemporary Africa confronts. The author might have been inspired by the contemporary crisis in the Horn of Africa, particularly Ethiopia and his earliest research as a historian of modern and contemporary history and politics in Africa.

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Čilejkári – Tradícia ako symbol kultúrnej identity [“Čilejkars” – Tradition as a Symbol of Cultural Identity]

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This book is written by Adam Uhnák, an ethnologist who lectures at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovakia. It is a complex and comprehensive study of ‘Čilejkar’ microregion focused on the origin and formation of regional culture of this local community. Author deals with the possibility and reasons to preserve the specific image of regional culture. It is written in an academical matter-of-fact tone but is accessible to the average reader too.

Uhnák’s research undertaken for this book took place for quite a long period of time, and he openly considers himself being a part of studied group. Author’s previous work provides impressive reflection on the research methodology, especially in the case of cross-cultural studies and ethnological research in non-European region¹ in which author developed a certain sense of awareness of his own – different – cultural conditioning in specific area. In

¹ See e.g. UHNÁK, Adam: A Tourism Program of Government and its Place in the Process of Preservation of Cultural Heritage on the Example of ‘Pueblos Mágicos’ in Mexico. In *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 14(4). 2018, pp. 179-192.

BOOK REVIEW

this book Uhnák developed such awareness by realising that one's own cultural background may also have an influence on formulating his/her research methodology – and on the results he/she provides.

As Uhnák mentions in his methodological chapter, the search for objectivity can be „*the quest for the holy grail*“ (UHNÁK 2020:17) – both equally „impossible“ to find, but it can be comfortably assumed he has succeeded where many similar efforts have failed. And author's methodological precision has paid off. The tension between the conception of ethnographic group; regional group and local community engages the reader in the dialogue with the complex theoretical perspective of this specific community and its microregion (UHNÁK 2020:19).

Chapter five sets the review of theories of cultural identity, recognising the cultural identity as both a “product” of tradition of local community and the “pressures” from the majority that may affect values and attitudes toward one's (own) cultural identity and self-definition.

Uhnák could not agree more with Geertz on his theory of cultural interpretation in describing the culture as the system of symbols and meanings (embodied in such symbols) in which men understand and organise their attitudes toward physical and social life (UHNÁK 2020:29).

In chapter seven, Uhnák discuss partial and not-fixed regional isolation of ‘Čilejkar’ microregion that has had a crucial impact on cultural development of local community. The main thrust of this chapter appears to be focussed on how the natural geographical boundaries isolated the community from social contact with rest of communities in Hont and Tekov, and so they became the cultural boundary too. Not only the geographical features affected the community development, the religiosity is significant and complex determinant of that development, and so the author makes the important linkages between the religion and culture. Not least the chapter reviews the (Slovak) language as the basis of the ethnic identity, reflected through the historical experience of magyarization of Slovak population, especially in the region where the language is heavily influenced by Hungarian even today (UHNÁK 2020:41–43). In his chapter ‘*The Rise of Specific Regional Čilejkar Culture*’ Uhnák views the contexts of development and surviving of specific culture of this community. He assumes geographical boundaries influenced patterns of cultural evolution of group and helped to preserve its specifics that could be threatened or assimilated into the “other” group – majority. Another vitally important is the role of land ownership in the system of social standing. Author describes several ways of understanding the high social position of farmers and local land owners, and codependent relationships of community members from different social

BOOK REVIEW

positions bounded by e.g. seasonal work opportunities for those of lower income in microregion.

More importantly, Uhnák writes, the land can be realized as an active factor of identity and local community formation. Author provides several proofs to support that claim, including the large-scale immigration to the United States from the region (and eventual motivation for homecoming), and the policy of collectivisation that fundamentally affected the life of this community (UHNÁK 2020:54).

In the last part of the book there is less politics and power but more of symbols and traditions. Author writes about common symbols and traditions that are displayed and embraced within a community, and they provide a sense of safety and connection to the group. Not only the book provides a list of symbols, but describes them, especially the clothing specifics and their meaning and current situation (UHNÁK 2020:63).

The book is a valuable contribution to the academic community for it points out the origin of local community – ‘Čilejkars’ and their culture.

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