

Polish Journal *of* *Political Science*

Volume 5 Issue 1 (2019)



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Polish Journal of Political Science

Volume 5 Issue 1

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eISSN 2391-3991

Original version: e-book

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The sub-municipal level of politics in Italy: a case study

Abstract

District authorities in the system of communal decentralization, known in many Italian cities as *Consigli di circoscrizione (Cdc)*, were established between the end of the '70s and the early '80s to make the local government closer to citizens and to promote, at the same time, the participation of the latter in the administration of the former. The set up of such district councils was also a move aiming to give real answers to the many questions raised by the urban social movements active in the big metropolitan areas of the Country.

This article, starting from the results of some recent studies on the decentralization system within the Commune of Genova, is set to discuss the implications of the establishment and the evolution of *Cdc* for political parties as well as for citizens' committees exerting pressure on local authorities. In other terms, it will describe the patterns of institutional and non-institutional political participation prompted by this new layout of local government, considered as an example of change in the political opportunity structure, trying also to verify if these two fields of participation may somehow overlap.

With regard to the local case study, where a new system of nine decentralized organs called *Municipi* was set up in 2007, the following points will be discussed.

First, what kind of political actors and what kind of lists participate in the elections to the bodies of the communal decentralization system. In more detail: are they civic or local lists (organized *bottom-up*) or organized by traditional political parties (*top-down*)?

Second, what kind of relationships are set with these institutions by neighbourhood-based citizens' committees that choose not to take part in elections at this level directly.

Third, the sociographic profile and attitudes of the politicians elected to these bodies, trying to verify whether they are closer to the mainstream political class or, say, to neighbourhood volunteers.

Keywords: Political participation, Local government, Communal decentralization, Citizens' committees, Local elections

1. Introduction

The focus of this article is on the sub-municipal level of politics in Italy, which includes the political and administrative organs, directly elected by citizens, set at the district level but within the broader institutional framework of the *Comune*, the Italian political and administrative institution of city government.

District authorities in the system of municipal decentralization, known in many Italian cities as *Consigli di circoscrizione (Cdc)*, have been established to make the local government closer to citizens, and to promote, at the same time, the participation of the latter in the administration of the former. The set up of such district councils between the end of the '70s and the early '80s was also a move aiming to give real answers to the many questions raised by the urban social movements active in the big metropolitan areas of the Country.¹

This article, starting from the results of some recent studies on the experience of the decentralization process in the city of Genova (Massa 2005, 2011, 2015), the sixth in the Country with regard to the number of inhabitants, is set to discuss the implications of the establishment of these new local institutions and their evolution in Italy, over the last forty years, for political parties as well as for the urban social movements acting as neighbourhood-based groups exerting pressure on local authorities, both central (the *Comune*) and

¹ We shall use the English terms "Municipality" to refer to the *Comune* and "District council" to refer to *Cdc*, the political and administrative organs in the system of municipal decentralization. Nonetheless, please take note that these decentralized organs in the city of Genova (*Cdc*) since 2007 have been renamed as "*Municipi*".

decentralized (*Cdc*). In other terms, we shall describe the patterns of institutional and non-institutional political participation prompted by this new layout of local government, trying also to verify if these two fields of participation may somehow overlap.

According to the national law 278/1976 establishing the *decentramento comunale* (municipal decentralization), cities could be divided into *Circoscrizioni* in relation to traditional city districts or a combination thereof, with an assembly of councillors elected by the citizens and a president elected by the assembly itself. These rules have been later improved by Law 142/1990 and then included in D.Lgs 267/2000, the main source of regulations for Italian local government institutions.

The opportunity to set up such district councils has been later restricted to the cities whose population is over 250.000 inhabitants (D.Lgs. 267/2000, art. 17), while Law 56/2014 has recently recognized as *Città metropolitane* the areas around the biggest cities of the Regions with an ordinary statute.²

In the current legal frame, *Cdc* have no autonomy, as they are formally part of the overall city administration, but with devolved power and functions. These are in fact very insignificant, since District councils have had a consultative rather than a decisional role – with differences from city to city. Their main areas of interest are: maintenance of public places; social services; local cultural events.

Every city has the faculty to decide some features of its decentralization system in its statute. Genova was one the first cities to establish such system, also because of the historical

² See, among others, Testa (2013).

features of its formation. The evolution of municipal decentralization in the city can be divided into four periods:

- first phase (1965-1981): District committees and Delegation councils, non elected and presided by a representative of the city Mayor;
- second phase (1981-1997): 25 *Cdc* with 21 elected councillors including the president, set up according to Law 278/76, corresponding to traditional districts of Genova and former autonomous Municipalities incorporated into the city in 1874 and 1926;
- third phase (1997-2007): nine *Cdc*, with 30 elected councillors including the president;
- fourth phase (2007-today): nine *Municipi*, with 23 elected councillors and the president, supported by a municipal board of three assessors.

In the current system, each *Municipio* has an assembly, a president and a board of three members, in which the presence of persons of both sexes must be granted. The councillors, including the president, are directly elected by the citizens who are resident in the district area, while the board is nominated by the president and voted by the council. Elections for the *Cdc* are held at the same time as those for the Mayor and the City council. If the Mayor is forced to step down, the City council dissolves and new elections are called. Therefore, all District councils dissolve too and go to the polls again.

Considering the topic at a more general level of analysis, our starting point is to maintain that the institution of District councils has in fact opened a new space for the political participation and the institutional representation of citizens living in Italian big cities. This can be seen as a clear example

of changes in the political opportunity structure, which occur, among others, in decentralized states providing a multitude of targets for citizens' participation at the system's base (Tarrow 1994, p. 89). The decentralization of power from the nation-State to the Regions, for instance, from the Regions to the cities, from the cities to their districts, has been considered as an opening of the institutional system of bottom-up social pressures (Cotta et Al. 2008, pp. 175-176).

While this process of rescaling was going on in different Countries at the national level (Brenner 1999, 2003, 2009; Keating 1998, 2013), since the late '70s, in the framework of the institutional political participation, beside the chance to get involved at the municipal level, citizens could also stand as candidates and try to get elected, or just support a list of candidates, at the district level. They could join lists organized by political parties or try to set up local or civic lists. We might also suggest that, to some extent, a new component of the political class was set to rise at this lower tier of local government.

On the other hand, if citizens would have preferred instead forms of non-institutional political participation, as individuals or, more often, within local protest groups, they could find the *Cdc* as a new actor to deal with, setting different possible kinds of relationships. District councils could be either an ally on the territory, to share campaigns against other public powers, or an adversary against which they intend to exert pressure at local level. It was also possible for these groups of citizens to organize lists for district elections and try to be directly represented in these decentralized organs.

With regard to non-institutional political participation, we have referred here to "citizens' committees": local groups that could be considered as forms of "neighbourhood-based

urban social movements". They have many characteristics typical of social movements, such as temporary existence and loosely structured organization. Moreover, the city is not just the setting in which they operate, but they focus precisely on urban problems. Nonetheless, they are usually related to a single neighbourhood – or even just to a part of it.

In general terms, the main aim of such groups is to work for "local mobilization". These are defined as a specific class of collective actions, organized by "entrepreneurs", in which the actors involved raise local problems and let them become public, developing interactions with public authorities and policies, pursuing one or more shared goals (Vitale 2007a, p. 10).

Within these legislative and sociological frames, the following points will be discussed in the article.

- What kind of political actors, and what kind of lists, take part in the elections to the bodies of the communal decentralization system? In more detail: are they civic or local lists (organized *bottom-up*) or organized by traditional political parties (*top-down*)? What are the sociographic characteristics of the people elected to these bodies? Are they closer to the mainstream political class or, say, to neighbourhood volunteers?
- What kind of relationships are set with these institutions by neighbourhood-based citizens committees that decide not to take part in the elections at this level?
- What kind of administrative and political relationships are set between the central and the decentralized level of local government institutions?

2. Elections for *Cdc* and *Municipi* in the city of Genova

Elections for District councils, as we have just pointed out, are always held at the same time as those for the Mayor and the City council. An analysis of the electoral offer since the first elections until today must be divided into three parts: from 1981 to 1990, the election of 1993, and from 1997 until today.

In the first of these periods, traditional parties were still enjoying their long “golden age” in the so-called Italian First Republic. Also at district level here they managed to set up all the lists. No local or civic lists, on the contrary, took part.³

This was the last decade of the harsh ideological confrontation in the broader frame of the “cold war”. It was important for the political parties, mainly Dc, Pci and Psi, to occupy all the places, even in the *Cdc*, to carry on their own power systems and to promote their values, while empty spaces could have been used by the “adversaries” for their propaganda, according to the logic of the “transmission belt”. Grassroots militants in every district have been recruited on both sides to fill the electoral lists. In the decentralized system of that period, every party had to mobilize and deploy the huge number of 525 candidates, 21 for each of the 25 *Cdc*. This task was feasible only for the bigger parties, while others found it very difficult. It is evident that to fill the lists parties had to deploy the same candidates in more than one constituency or to ask people marginally involved in politics to stand as candidates. Councillors’ turnover in office was therefore high.

³ See “Le elezioni per i consigli circoscrizionali a Genova (1981-2002)”, in Massa (2005): 41-103.

In this period, however, “traditional parties” (Dc, Pci, Psi, Psdi, Pri, Pli, and Msi) were facing the slow rise of “new parties”, such as for instance the Greens, the Radical party and the Northern League. All together, traditional parties always got a very high share of valid votes: 96.9% in 1981, 94.2% in 1985, and 83.9% in 1990. In 1990, however, in three districts Pci, then in full transition, did not go for elections with a list of its own but organized left-leaning “civic” lists, whose results cannot be properly considered within traditional parties. Besides that, in all these three elections, the results at both municipal and district level were very similar.

The elections of 1993 started to tell us a different story. In 1992, the system of traditional parties collapsed at national as well as at local level, for both internal and external reasons. In Genova, high fragmentation of the political offer was registered. There were a total of 24 lists for both municipal and district elections, but eight civic lists among them were present only for the *Cdc* polls getting, altogether, 2.5% of the overall valid votes. Measured by the index provided by Laakso and Taagepera (1979), fragmentation rose from 4.0 and 4.2 in 1981 and 1985 to 5.3 in 1990, and 5.9 in 1993 (Massa 2005, p. 59).

In more detail, only three parties participating in the 1990 administrative elections were to run again three years later, bearing the same name and symbol – right-wing Msi was the only one among the traditional parties. Other eight lists were somehow linked to political parties existing at national level. There were also five one-issue lists present at both municipal and district level, focusing on young people, pensioners or the self-employed. There were eight civic lists participating only in their own districts, achieving anyway good results.

These lists were present only at district level: their promoters were not interested in being represented at city level. They have been organized at the moment of crisis of mainstream political parties, in much more difficulties at local level. In Genova, these were the last polls for the system of municipal decentralization with 25 small *Cdc*, where it was not too difficult to organize a civic list. Six out of these eight lists were set up in districts that had been, until 1926, former independent small municipalities, then incorporated into the City of Genova. We could say that, while ideological identities were fading away, people looked for a territorial identity able to mobilize towards the political solution of very local problems.

In 1997, the system of municipal decentralization was reformed and the number of *Cdc* reduced to nine, through the merger of the previous 25. This change, together with consolidation of the party system at national level, led to the disappearance of civic lists in district elections. In that year, only *Insieme per Pegli* tried again to take part in the elections. It got 5.6% and one seat in the *Cdc* VII – Ponente, notably 11.7% in the former district of Pegli that forms this *Cdc* together with Pra' and Voltri. After that, to find another civic list we must wait until 2012, when *Cittadini per Centro Est* got 3.2% and one seat in *Municipio I – Centro Est*.

In the last 20 years, generally speaking, the strategy of citizens' committees has changed, as we shall see in the next paragraph. District councils have become too big institutions for such very locally-based groups to organize lists and succeed at the polls. Such committees usually focus only on one of the many neighbourhoods that make the overall area of a *Municipio*, often just on a small part of it, such as a couple of streets or a *piazza*. On the contrary, some leaders

of committees were included in the lists of other political parties and eventually got elected.

In the last local two elections, moreover, an innovation has been the formation of lists for the City council linked to candidates for Mayor, bearing their names, within different political coalitions. In 2012, one list (*Enrico Musso Sindaco*), and in 2014, four lists of this kind were set up to run for the District councils too, helping the candidates for Mayor to broaden their electoral base and, at the same time, showing evidence of the process of personalization of politics (Calise 2016), started in the mid-'90s at national level (Venturino 2000), also at its lowest tier.

3. Citizens' committees and District councils

The establishment of District councils in the late '70s, besides the officially declared purposes summarized in our Introduction, has been considered also as a move for reducing the relevance of citizens' committees through their institutionalization. Nonetheless, while political parties immediately managed to have a grip on *Cdc*, far from disappearing, the committees kept on developing, notably in the peripheral areas of big cities. Their comeback is seen today as a symptom of the crisis of the decentralization system set up in that period, highlighted by little effectiveness of its political bodies (della Porta 2004, p. 28).

Citizens' committees have generally a transient existence.⁴ As in the cases studied here, they usually arise when people meet up to discuss relevant problems concerning their territory and try to come up with new solutions. They organize

⁴ See, for instance, Toth (2003).

a strategy for local mobilization, often moderate and non ideological but relying on non-conventional forms of participation, to exert pressure on decision makers in local government institutions such as *Cdc*, the *Comune* or the Region. Committees have a defined life course and in most cases come to an end either when they are successful in their campaigns or when they consider their goals impossible to reach.

In the Genoese area, citizens' committees have grown, of course, in every district. Nonetheless, their number, in proportion to the local population, is higher in Val Polcevera and Ponente, where the territory has been used and exploited to host large infrastructures and facilities, such as highways, railways and heavy-industry manufacturing plants. Moreover, in the same districts, the old centres as well as new social housing programmes have received many immigrants, earlier mainly from Southern Italy and now from abroad.

We shall focus here on the case of the committees active in the western districts of the city. Many of them joined into a "*Coordinamento dei comitati del Ponente*", a "Coordination of western committees" aiming to elaborate an effective strategy of relations with the institutions of local government.⁵

Their main point was that the different problems on the territory were not easy to be solved in the short term and that they were all interconnected. It was, therefore, important to create a coordination among the committees and their leaders, in order to share:

⁵ On the persistence of committees and their coordination structures in other Italian cities, such as Turin and Florence, see Allasino (2004). On local mobilizations in Rome, see D'Albergo and Moini (2011).

- information and knowledge of the problems;
- studies and projects carried out for their solution;
- expertise developed as to committee organization and protest tools.

While each committee is strictly local, the Coordination is the place to raise the point of view to a higher position and consider all the problems at once.

On the one hand, the Coordination has turned from a movement into an institution on the political local ground, becoming a permanent actor, so that all conventional political forces and local government institutions have to deal with it. On the other hand, committees have decided to enter directly these institutions, but not setting up their own lists. As we have seen previously, since 1997 committees all over the city have given up this electoral strategy in favour of including their representatives in the lists that other political parties arranged for both district and municipal elections. These lists have not been chosen (only) on an ideological basis, but because of proximity to their positions on local issues.

In the previous administrative cycles, the committees gathered up in the western Coordination were able to elect their “contact persons”, one in the city council and a couple in the *Municipio VII – Ponente*.

It is worth stressing that in the last administrative elections, many candidates with a background in other committees were elected from the lists of the newborn *Movimento 5 Stelle*, to the city council and to the *Municipi*, but they are not joining the Coordination group.

The committees of the Coordination themselves, for different reasons, have judged positively the choice of electing “contact persons” in the *Municipi*. They can now collect

grassroots issues and channel them directly to the political system, as well as they can have direct access to information, while in the past they had to rely on other non-member councillors in both cases. They can also exercise control from within over the activity of the institutions.

The committees included in the Coordination show also differences among them. Some have been set up in opposition to the decisions that are made – or that are going to be made – by political institutions and their course of action is more likely to go beyond conventional forms of protest. Others mainly just for the valorisation of a district, or a part of it, and to exert pressure for making positive decisions such as, for instance, better roads or new street furniture.⁶ Sometimes, the two perspectives overlap. In our case, moreover, other differences are related to the provenance from specific districts.

4. The sociographic profile of the personnel elected to the bodies of the Genoese communal decentralization system

The set up of District councils, generally speaking, has increased the opportunities for institutional political participation and representation at local level. In particular, it has given many more citizens a chance to take part in the electoral competition, even if at a very local level. Before this, such form of political participation in local government was limited to very few people at municipal level. Starting from this point, therefore, it is interesting to find elements to sketch the sociographic profile of the people elected in these organs.

⁶ These local groups, in some circumstances, have become even service providers for the neighbourhood (de Leonardis and Vitale 2001; della Porta and Diani 2004).

In the period between 1981 and 2007, as we have seen, a remarkable number of people were recruited to be included in electoral lists and for district activities, drawing also from the group marginally involved in politics even if active for example in parishes, neighbourhood associations or trade unions.

Since 1997, the reduction in the number of institutions meant also a reduction in the number of the people involved – with great relief for political parties. The nine new *Cdc* had a territory wider than the previous 25, so that the ties with local associations and committees have become a little weaker. Moreover, since 2007 the presence of a board of assessors working together with the president resulting in differentiating the politicians active in the institutions of the municipal decentralization system.

According to a survey carried out on the city of Genova,⁷ about seven out of ten politicians elected to the *Municipi* are men, while women are slightly more represented in district boards, though only because of the rule requiring the presence of persons of both sexes there, in practice granting at least one seat out of three to women.⁸

The age of board members is higher than that of councilors. Among the former, 46% are between ages 35 and 54 years and 54% over 55, while among the latter 43% and 38%, respectively.

As for education, a half of the politicians in *Municipi* have a high school diploma, about 35% a university degree.

⁷ All the data about the profile of the political class of the District councils of Genova presented in this paragraph are available in Massa (2011).

⁸ About female representation in Italian local government, including *Cdc*, see Massa (2013).

About seven out of ten have an occupation and, among them, 50% are office employees, 31% self-employed professionals. Manual workers account for just 5%, the same as entrepreneurs and shopkeepers. As for the economic sectors, 64% are occupied in private companies, 29% in public organizations and 7% in the third sector.

The career of district board members seems longer than that of councillors. More than one half among the former began to get involved in politics between 1958 and 1982, only 13% between 1998 and 2007. Among the latter, on the other hand, only 21% started a political career in the first of these two periods, while 46% did it between 1998 and 2007.

In this framework, it is interesting to investigate the differences between ordinary councillors and district board members, whose profile seems to be closer to, or at least less far from, that of politicians at higher institutional levels, such as for instance city councillors or members of the Regional assembly. As regards their experience in political and social activities, by comparison with ordinary councillors, district board members:

- are currently members of political parties in the same percentage, but while all of them have been party members in the past, 10% of councillors have never been;
- have got in a higher percentage directive responsibilities in political parties, currently as well as in the past;
- show a higher rate of trade union membership;
- show a higher rate of association membership;
- show the same level of involvement in local citizens' committees.

Moreover, board members have also a more significant experience of participation in other elective public institutions.

Among them, 58% have already been members of *Cdc*, while among councillors this percentage is just 35%. Former members of city council account for 21% among district assessors and presidents, and only 3% among councillors.

Differences do not concern only their sociographics but also their attitudes and behaviours. In particular, they have a more positive view of the political outcome of the *Municipi*.

5. Conclusion

The establishment of district councils represented a small but interesting change in the political opportunity structure in Italy, opening a new space and new chances for both institutional and non-institutional political participation and representation for citizens living in big cities, and at the same time offering new challenges for political parties and urban social movements.

The institutions of municipal decentralization were established in the '70s to attribute a formal role to the existing informal citizens' committees. Since the very beginning, however, parties have held a strong grip on them. In the case of Genova, only in 1993, at the climax of their crisis, they left room for local civic actors to get in. At the next elections, nonetheless, parties got back completely, helped by the reduction of the number of the *Cdc*.

In the period from the start until 1993, characterized by a harsh ideological confrontation, traditional parties made a great effort to be represented in all political institutions, from the Parliament to District councils, in order to implement their policies, to defend their values and also to make their own power system stronger, according to the logic of the "transmission belt". Many grassroots militants in every

district had to be recruited on both sides to fill the electoral lists and many others to participate in *Cdc* committees open to non-elected volunteer members. More recently, in the framework of a change in the features of parties, less ideological and closer to the models of “cartel party” and “party in office” (Katz - Mair 1995, 2002), militants of this kind, more involved in local civic engagement than in party politics, are still present in the *Municipi* – as we shall see shortly.

Neighbourhood-based citizens’ committees, on the other hand, are set up to exert pressure on political institutions, sometimes also on private companies, to prevent decisions considered negative for the territory, or to promote positive actions. For committees, decentralization organs are just one among the many political institutions to deal with – maybe the closest but surely not the most relevant. The kind of a relationship they decide to establish with them depends on the kind of a relationship that they decide to set with the institutions exercising real power, such as the Mayor and the City council, the Region or the State and its administrative branches. Therefore, citizens’ committees can decide either to go along with the *Municipi*, considering them an ally for common battles against the real decision-makers, or to clash with them when they are seen too aligned with those powerful institutions.⁹

It is worth stressing that also District councils have the problem to decide what kind of a relationship they are to establish with the Municipality, since representatives in both institutions are directly elected by citizens in separate

⁹ In some cases, when they lack real representation, local movements can have conflictual relations with the residents of the district as well. A good case-study is available in Vitale (2007b).

polls and may decide their own policies. It can even happen that the political majority supporting the district president is different from the majority supporting the city Mayor. With respect to relevant problems of the territory, therefore, such as for instance the building of large infrastructures, District councils themselves can be caught between the hammer of the Municipality and the anvil of the committees, between two loyalties, one political and one related to the territory. In this case, the committees are the ones that can become an ally for local councils.

Our opinion is that the leaders of committees do not consider important for their goals to organize a list and try to enter directly local government bodies. In the first place, they do not think of *Municipi* as very effective political institutions. They then know that setting up a list is very demanding while electoral competition with political parties is hard to beat. Last but not least, participation in neighbourhood committees is very locally focused, as they are usually one-issue oriented. To be part of a political institution, on the contrary, even if at this very low level, means to deal with problems of different kinds and on a wider territory, to set priorities and try to achieve them using limited resources.

Looking at the experience of citizens' committees in Genova, we would like eventually to stress two aspects of their development. First, we consider relevant the decision of some committees in the western districts to create a coordination group among them. Forced to deal with long lasting problems, they have chosen to set up a permanent structure to discuss different issues and have a direct communication channel with local government institutions. In this way, we might say that the *movement* has turned into

an *institution*, since the Coordination has become a permanent actor to be recognized by all other actors present in the same territory – political parties, public institutions, private companies, other committees – when they elaborate their own political strategies. To conclude on this first point, it would be interesting to verify whether committees create such a form of coordination because of the kind of the problems they have to deal with or there are other crucial factors, such as cultural ones for instance. In the case of the Genoese western committees, the Coordination has been established in a mainly working class area with a strong tradition of solidarity and involvement in parties, trade unions and associations, politically dominated by leftist parties. The second relevant aspect, in our view, is the decision of the Coordination, in the last administrative cycle, to let include some of its leaders in the lists of candidates organized by other parties and then get them elected. As we have seen, this move has helped to keep local problems in full light and to have direct access to information.

Another point to discuss in these conclusions is related to the characteristics of the people elected to the bodies of municipal decentralization.

The political class elected to the *Municipi* of Genova, according to our survey (Massa 2011), does not consist of professional politicians – in terms of engagement as well as in terms of reward. Even if many of them, according to the traditional Weberian categories, can “live for politics”, nobody is likely to “live off politics”. Differences, however, can be found between councillors, on the one hand, and presidents or assessors, on the other. Rank-and-file councillors usually get a very small attendance fee and participate in official meetings a few times per month, so that, to some extent, their

activity could be considered in the concept of “voluntary political participation” (Verba et Al. 1995). The presidents are entitled to get a decent allowance but only when they opt for a full-time commitment.¹⁰

Lists of candidates set up by political parties are the only “vehicle” used today to enter the District councils. Our conclusion, however, is that those who run for election to decentralization organs can be inspired by two different prevailing logics of behaviour, that we could call the logic of *power* and the logic of *service*. According to the former, there are candidates deeply involved in party dynamics that chose a more active political engagement at district level, to implement the policies elaborated by the higher echelons of the institutions or of the parties. These, usually more politically experienced, are more likely to fill the ranks of district presidents and assessors. The latter is typical for citizens who decide to enter the *Municipio* just “to give a helping hand” to the neighbourhood, often for a limited period and without any wish of further political career elsewhere. They are more likely to remain simple councillors, often working hard but setting relations with citizens and local associations rather than with other political authorities. They sometimes get frustrated because of their experience with regard to the little political outcome they see in return for their great commitment. These two logics, of course, none of which carries a negative meaning, may overlap. But while there are presidents and assessors showing a great spirit of service, very

¹⁰ This is of course the situation in Genova. We have got some information only about the system of decentralization in few other cities, Naples (Brancaccio - Zaccaria 2007) and Palermo (Massa 2011, pp. 107-108, Rizzo - Stella 2007, pp. 244-245) for instance, where the situation seems to be different.

few councillors inspired only by this are interested in or able to get to the most powerful positions.

District board members are, therefore, closer to the mainstream political class than councillors, not only because of their sociographic profile but also because they have more frequent contacts with politicians at higher levels. This does not mean just that they meet them more frequently, but that there is also evidence of certain upward mobility. Some of them have acquired administrative skills and political experience, so that they could progress in a political career. In fact, there are many cases of assessors and presidents of *Cdc* or *Municipi* that have later become assessors in the city board or members of the regional assembly.

A final point to consider regards the future of the system of municipal decentralization that, as we have seen, was established in the '70s, in the period marked by forms of political participation and culture very different from the current ones. The criticism that from time to time has been made concerns its effectiveness. District councils, since they are decentralized bodies and not autonomous, have only devolved rather than original functions and powers. Moreover, the resources decentralized to *Municipi* are under the control of an administrative manager and not at direct disposal of the president of the District council. The authority of these decentralized organs on the local territory, therefore, has never been as strong as conceived by the lawmakers that decided to introduce this institution more than 40 years ago. If one adds that often the Mayor and the presidents of District councils can be supported by different political coalitions, and so the latter can obstruct the former's policies, it is not surprising that one future trend could be a downgrade rather than an improvement of the municipal decentralization system as it has been up to now.

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Table 1 – Bodies of communal decentralization in the central
Communes of the “Città metropolitane”

Commune	Number of bodies	Denomination	Average population
Torino	10	Circoscrizioni	89.519
Milano	9	Zone	146.972
Genova	9	Municipi	67.549
Venezia	6	Municipalità	45.002
Bologna	9	Quartieri	42.794
Firenze	5	Quartieri	73.412
Roma	15	Municipi	191.572
Napoli	10	Municipalità	102.550
Bari	9	Circoscrizioni	38.274
Reggio Calabria	15	Quartieri	12.371

Source: Adaptation from Testa (2013, p. 236).

Coming to the conclusion on this point, we could add that while the participation of candidates from the western Coordination in other parties' lists has been decided with full awareness, in the frame of a project aiming to set close relationships with the institutions of local government, also candidates from other citizens' committees in the city, often more spontaneously, were elected to *Municipi*. According to a recent survey¹¹ (Massa 2011, p. 70), in the last administrative cycle 18% of the politicians at district level were also members of a citizens' committee and 13% were not current-

¹¹ The survey was focused on a sample of 144 out of the 216 politicians elected to the *Municipi* of Genova in the 2007-2012 administrative cycle, including presidents and assessors. The sample is representative of gender, political group and the nine district councils in which the city is organized.

ly members but have been members in the past (Table 2). It means that a double membership of both political institutions and citizens' committees is somehow shared by three out of ten of them.

Tab. 2 – Citizens' committee membership

	Board members	Councillors	Total
Yes, currently	16.7	18.3	18.1
Not now, yes in the past	12.5	13.3	13.2
No, never	70.8	68.4	68.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Massa (2011, p. 70)

According to the same survey, the activity of citizens' committees, in order to find a solution for local problems, was considered "very effective" by 10% of the sample and "rather effective" by 40%, while the activity of the *Municipi* was considered "very effective" only by 4% and "rather effective" by 36% (Ibidem, p. 77).

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The Middle East in American media: a 21st century overview

Abstract

This study chronicles the portrayal of the Middle East in various American media that have received scholarly attention, centering on the print and broadcast media. The time frame of the media review in the United States towards the Middle East is from the September 11th attacks in 2001 until 2019. The article draws on the theory of orientalism to reveal a facet of the media that perpetuates false stereotypes of the Middle East as a threat to US interests, culture, and security. It finds that although the media in America have paid detailed attention to many issues in the Middle East during the last two decades, there are grounds to assume they have failed to comprehend the sociopolitical and economic reasons behind such issues. The coverage of the Middle East in American media during the 21st century has paralleled the government's official viewpoints and interests in the region.

Keywords: Media, The United States, The Middle East

Introduction

Like other people all over the world, Americans' understanding of other cultures and nations is profoundly impacted by the media. Most people in the United States get their information and knowledge about the Middle East and its events from newspapers and TV stations. But the media's biases are adopted almost without a doubt.¹ The media perform several functions in the United States and almost all of them have some political implications. Public misunderstanding of the Middle East appears to be on the rise all over the world, especially in the United States. There is a perceived link between the Middle East and terrorism, and American media reinforce this unfavorable image among Americans. Many previous studies demonstrate that media influence what issues audiences think about, as well as how they think about these issues. Nowadays, many scholars argue that the media affect political attitudes as well.² For instance, pro-Israel fallacies are spun into reality, and American media promoted pro-war attitudes prior to and during the Bush war against Iraq.

Some recent studies suggest that the perception of the Middle East as a cultural threat is probably more deleterious than its association with terrorism: public opinion data finds increasing anxiety about the Middle East's compatibility with Western values of acceptance, tolerance, and civility,³ and Americans who believe that people in the Middle East remain culturally distinct usually have negative opinions about them.⁴

¹ Ibrahim (2009): 511–524.

² Dimaggio (2015).

³ Panagopoulos (2006): 608–624.

⁴ Ciftci (2012): 293–309.

In other words, just as stereotypes about crime have been shown to shape the opinions of Americans as well as other people around the world concerning African Americans,⁵ stereotypes of the Middle East that are promulgated in American media may shape public opinion about peoples, women, wars and terrorism in the region.

This review centers on the print and broadcast media all over the United States that have described the Middle East. The time frame of the media review is from the September 11th attacks in 2001 until 2019. Social media is excluded from this overview because it reflects opinions of community rather than official organizations and governments, and what applies to print and broadcast media is different to social media. This article draws on the theory of orientalism to reveal a facet of the media that perpetuates false stereotypes of the Middle East as a threat to US interests, culture, and security. According to the orientalism theory, American media coverage of the Middle East portrays the member states of the region inaccurately.⁶

Although this work does not tackle the direct effects of American media on the Middle East situation, its substantial and fundamental contribution is to distinguish a key mechanism whereby American media portrayals construct stereotypes of the Middle East situation. In order to offer a comprehensive idea about American media and the Middle East, this study starts by discussing the history of American media in the Middle East. It then explains how the media in America has portrayed four contentious topics in the Middle East: terrorism, wars, democracy, and human rights.

⁵ Dixon, Daniel (2000): 131-154.

⁶ Terman (2017): 489-502.

2. The history of American media in the Middle East

At the beginning of WWII, American media de-romanticized the Middle East's image. Its coverage of the region was mostly unfavorable and conflict-oriented. Political, military, and economic news dominated.⁷ The Middle Eastern people were not presented as fighting for their independence, stories were limited, and presented from a distorted colonial viewpoint. This style of coverage is characterized in academic discourse as Orientalism.⁸ The media in America mobilized public support for the creation of Israel (1947-48). For instance, when President Truman changed his mind after the UN voted in favor of creating the Jewish state in 1947, and he decided to support the UN trusteeship over Palestine, the *New York Times* described this decision as weak, cowardly, and indicative of Truman's lack of leadership.⁹

During the period of Arab-Israeli conflicts, the 1956 Suez War, the 1967 Arab–Israeli Six-Day War, the 1973 Arab–Israeli October War (Yom Kippur), and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, American media did not present Arab perspectives objectively and fairly. Arab countries in the Middle East were portrayed as dishonest, backward, undemocratic, unreliable, uneducated, and against peace. Meanwhile, Israelis were described as being highly educated, as having democracy like Western countries, and when Israel attacked Arab countries, that aggression was depicted as retaliatory.¹⁰ The year of the most widespread Middle East news at the time, 1980, was dominated by American media

⁷ Ibrahim (2009).

⁸ Said (1978).

⁹ Evensen (1990): 391-400.

¹⁰ Batarfi (1997).

coverage of the Iranian revolution, the hostage crisis in Iran, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. That year was a turning point for American media attention to the region. This increase of coverage applied to all three American national stations, ABC, CBS, and NBC.¹¹ In 1982, Israel attacked Lebanon, and there were eight frames in the coverage of that invasion: intransigence, terrorism, aggression, land legitimacy, peace-seeking, action justification, and competence or incompetence. The New York Times sided clearly with Israel; it mentioned Israel and the United States significantly more frequently than 10 Arab states in the Middle East combined; journalists argue that this was due to Israel's close ideological, cultural, and political ties to the United States.¹²

Television documentary producers in the United States usually have the luxury of months of planning, preparation, and research; documentary programming can provide a brilliant opportunity to shape public opinion on international conflicts, especially in the Middle East.¹³ Shaheen¹⁴ observes that the NBC documentary *White Paper* about Saudi Arabia depicted the nation in ethnocentric and very negative terms. Saudi Arabians were associated with wealth, oil, extravagance, and as being a threat to American people. Also, Saudi women were shown as forbidden to drive and shrouded in black veils.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Islam became the contemporary global threat that replaced Communism

¹¹ Adams, Heyl (1981).

¹² Barranco, Shyles (1988): 178-181.

¹³ Batarfi.

¹⁴ Adams (1981).

as the primary enemy of the West.¹⁵ Sheikh et al.¹⁶ conducted research on the American and European press representations of Islam as a religion, entirely separate from connotations involving the Middle East. They analyzed randomly selected articles using a Lexis-Nexis search with the keywords 'Islam' and 'Muslim'. Articles were sampled from the Times of London, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, and the Detroit Free Press from 1988 to 1992. The Detroit Free Press was expected to be more sensitive in its reporting on Islam due to the large Muslim population in the Detroit area. The results showed that a majority of articles about Muslims involved events, groups, and individuals from the Middle East. Topics were mainly focused on crises, conflicts, and wars. Coverage of Islam was, for the most part, international and monolithic, in that the references to Muslim groups and organizations lacked specificity. A clear majority of stories did not distinguish between the various branches of Islam. As for negativity and bias, the authors found weak support for their hypothesis that a high level of negative tone would be detected, with coverage found to be slightly more negative than positive. The Detroit Free Press was not significantly different in its coverage from the other papers included in the study, with the exception that the Detroit paper was less likely to describe Muslims in derogatory terms like 'fundamentalist'. This finding becomes more relevant when contrasted with the New York Times' trend of justifying Israeli actions in deference to the large Jewish readership

¹⁵ Saleem, Anderson (2013): 84.

¹⁶ "Press Treatment of Islam: What Kind of Picture Do the Media Paint?", (1995): 139–54.

in New York.¹⁷ In *Covering Islam*, Said¹⁸ analyses the British documentary *Death of a Princess* and the American-produced *Jihad in America*, both aired on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) television. He laments the lack of Muslim sources in both programs and cites the documentaries as examples of furthering the divide between ‘us and them’. Documentary analysis is a particularly revealing method of investigating the representation of Arabs in the Middle East. Deconstructing longer format news shows can demonstrate in detail the reality of negative stereotypes perpetuated by television networks, despite the time and resources in documentary production that could theoretically facilitate deeper analysis and discussion than regular television news programs. Hashem¹⁹ also drew systematic samples from *Time* and *Newsweek* between 1990 and 1993. He found that *Time* carried slightly more articles on the Middle East countries than *Newsweek*. Iraq was the most mentioned Arab country, followed by Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and the rest of the Gulf States. Coverage was mostly negative for both magazines during the first two years, 1990 and 1991, as a result of the Gulf War. However, his results did show a trend toward more neutral or positive coverage over the entire four-year period. Hashem reconstructed recurring themes in both magazines: the economic decline of the Middle East, the growth of the fundamentalist Islamic movement, lack of democracy, the myth of Arab unity, Arabs living in the past, slavery still existing in the Middle East, and, finally, the changing political climate in terms of the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians.

¹⁷ Batarfi (1997).

¹⁸ *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (1997).

¹⁹ Kamalipour (1997).

In her content analysis of editorials in the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Los Angeles Times, together with an analysis of television news talk shows on ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN and PBS between October 1997 and February 1998, Khouri²⁰ used both statistical analysis and journalists' testimony to argue that the mainstream press marginalized both Arab and western voices that advocated withdrawal of sanctions and were opposed to further military assaults on Iraq. The LA Times emerged as the fairest newspaper from the Arab viewpoint; its editorial pages carried eight anti-war pieces and 10 editorials in favor of bombing Iraq, and the rest were neutral. The Post published 23 editorials in favor of bombing Iraq and eight against, with 44 neutral ones. Of a total of 75 articles, two presented Arab authors and 14 expressed concern for civilians. The New York Times, on the other hand, published not a single Arab perspective out of 59 articles, one anti-war piece and 19 pro-war editorials. As for broadcast news, an analysis of the guests chosen to appear on debate format talk shows found that of the five networks studied, all of them featured guests who represented the United States government line. Iraqi officials were the only Arab voices. These networks completely ignored independent Arab and American voices, and none of the shows discussed the suffering of the Iraqi people in detail. Khouri also highlighted several themes that various American network televisions and newspapers adopted in their late 1990s coverage of Iraq: Iraqi deaths presented as propaganda, the insignificance of Arab lives, and the portrayal of Arabs as irrational and violent. She describes the media discussion

²⁰ The Other Gulf War Syndrome: Flaws in US Media Coverage of the 1997/98 Iraq Crisis (1998).

about the possible bombing of Iraq as sensationalist and hypocritical. Arab arguments against the United States policy toward Iraq were consistently marginalized. Khouri argues that the consequences of the media reinforcing the pro-war administration policy had a negative impact on the Arab-American community. Hate mail, racial slurs, discrimination cases, and hate crimes against Arab-Americans all increased after the US–Iraqi standoff.

Using Lexis-Nexis, Abunimeh and Masri²¹ analyzed elite newspapers for their coverage of Iraq during December 1998 and August–October 1999. Using the keyword ‘Iraq’, they found over 1000 articles, but adding the keywords ‘civilians’, ‘sanctions’ or ‘UNICEF,’ the search results were far more limited, leading to their assertion that coverage of Iraq emphasized the bombing, while excluding reports of suffering by Iraqi civilians. They also analyzed transcripts from the television networks ABC, CBS, and NBC, as well as CNN and NPR. They found that CNN and NPR were the only media outlets that reported on the effect of UN and US sanctions on the Iraqi people. They outlined seven themes of the press during this period, using qualitatively extracted examples to illustrate their observations. They found that the media in their study ignored or downplayed the effects of sanctions on the Iraqi civilian population, discredited or ignored reports of civilian victims of the bombings, and personified Iraq as being entirely represented by Saddam Hussein. The news reports that were analyzed also created an artificial balance of coverage by relying on Iraqi government sources as opposed to including independent, non-governmental viewpoints. Journalists were towing the government line,

²¹ Arnove (2000).

exaggerating the threat of Iraqi weapons and using a narrow selection of ‘experts’ as sources.

Wars and Terrorism

Since the September 11th attacks and the subsequent war on terror, there has been a strengthening of the link between the Middle East and terrorism in American media. Journalists and editors were in general sympathetic to war, and media coverage clearly favored military action.²² President Bush, along with media all over the United States, amplified the rhetoric of hope and fear (hope of eliminating terrorism, and fear of terrorism itself). For example, the New York Times announced on September 15th: “For now, at least, the one state where American military power might be effectively used is Afghanistan, where the Taliban-led government is host to Osama bin Laden.”²³ Neutralizing bin Laden “would be no easy task”, but the military campaign was needed “to disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base and to weaken the military capability of that country’s ruling Taliban movement”.²⁴ The Washington Post announced that “military force must certainly play a role in the coming campaign, and Afghanistan now looks like one place where it may be needed. The United States can no longer allow Osama bin Laden to operate there—much less his training camps for aspiring terrorists.”²⁵

Editorials usually referenced corruption, evil, and regime-supported terrorism in reference to the Middle East,

²² Dimaggio (2015).

²³ Pincus, Priest (2004).

²⁴ CBS News (2002).

²⁵ CNN (2002).

particularly Iraq, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia.²⁶ Most American media organizations devoted no attention to the sociopolitical and economic reasons that might have contributed to such a horrible region. After the invasion of Afghanistan and attacks on the Taliban, the New York Times was three times more likely to mention the progress of the war than to discuss the sociopolitical situation of Afghanistan and its neighbors.²⁷ On CNN, 38% of war coverage emphasized “the technology of the battle” and 62% focused on “general military activity”, whereas 17% discussed civilian casualties.²⁸ Few writers discussed humanitarian matters because the extreme emphasis on the one-sided rhetoric of hope and fear took the center stage. Of the ten widest-read newspapers in the United States, from the time of the September 11th attacks, no newspaper claimed that military action was inappropriate, and none assumed that the war would fail. The main concern of American media was with a government that was hanging on in the face of an increasingly powerful terrorist insurgency, and its support for a “civilian surge” to speed deployment of Americans to help Afghan and Iraqi leaders to strengthen their governance.²⁹ Official sources were consulted exclusively and uncritically accepted, while nonofficial sources were ridiculed or ignored. Polls carried out during the United States war on terror in the Middle East found that the majority of Americans were interested in antiwar views; but those views were rare in American media.³⁰

²⁶ Dimaggio (2015).

²⁷ Ibrahim(2009).

²⁸ Western (2005).

²⁹ Entous, Barnes (2011).

³⁰ Dimaggio (2015).

People in the Middle East are frequently portrayed as aggressive, violent, and drawn to terrorism across all types of media in the United States, including cable news, newspapers, television, and video games.³¹ Although the media usually speak about terrorism in the Middle East as occurring in a far off place, these portrayals have implications for Arab and Muslim minorities in the United States, as American media audiences generally do not differentiate between Middle Eastern people at home and abroad.³² Media effects go beyond public attitudes to conform with foreign policies. For instance, exposure to media propaganda and stereotypes of people in the Middle East as aggressive has been shown to highly increase Americans' support for foreign policies that harm the Middle East, such as sanctions and military actions³³. Furthermore, some studies argue that Americans who believe that Middle Eastern people in general and Arabs in particular remain religiously and culturally distinct from American mainstream society are much more likely to have negative opinions about them and associate Islam with terrorism, violence, and extremism.³⁴ American media is the only source upon which many Americans can base their opinions, particularly regarding international issues. Hence, the Middle East has been linked with terrorism in American public opinion as a result of the American media presentation of the region since the September 11th attacks.

Editorializing in elite media organizations is very important because these organizations set the agenda for how complex issues are discussed in other media all over

³¹ Saleem, Anderson (2013).

³² Terman (2017).

³³ Saleem, Anderson (2017).

³⁴ Ciftci (2012).

the United States. In the period under consideration, elite networks regularly emphasized the official administration's interests, although in different ways.³⁵ For instance, many studies find that the narrative of the Palestine-Israeli conflict differs in European and American media. Whereas European media tends to cover both sides (Palestinians and Israelis), American media is less eager to discuss Palestinian perspectives in the news because of their longstanding friendship with Israel.³⁶ Throughout its history the United States' media favors Israel by focusing on Israeli narratives and perspectives, providing easy access to Israeli officials.³⁷ In the Afghanistan and Iraq wars the Washington Post clearly echoed President Bush's rhetoric, whereas the New York Times echoed the views of the Democrats by agreeing that Afghanistan and Iraq constituted a threat to the United States' security and interests but asked whether the United States should immediately go to war or not.³⁸ During the United States' recent engagements all over the Middle East, the American media's support for the troop surge in the region as an anti-terror measure was clear. With violence escalating in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, many of the media networks lauded the presidency for having "correctly begun shifting attention and resources away from Iraq to Afghanistan and Pakistan, which is the more insidious threat".³⁹

It is no exaggeration to say that for far too long, mostly but not only under the Bush administration, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were carried out with little accountability

³⁵ Kumar (2012).

³⁶ Ruigrok (2013): 259-289.

³⁷ Rashed (2019).

³⁸ Dimaggio (2015).

³⁹ New York Times (2003).

from the US media. American media paralleled the views of the President in deploying spectacles of terror and threats in the Middle East to promote political agendas. For example, the Washington Post claimed that Saddam manipulated weapons inspectors: “Neither the U.N. weapons inspectors nor any permanent member of the U.N. [Security] council contends that Iraq has ‘fully’ cooperated... Those who advocate containment through inspections ignore the strategy’s costly failure during the 1990s... Iraq stepped up its concealment operation, leaving thousands of tons of chemical and biological material and dozens of missiles missing.”⁴⁰ Also, on March 20, 2003, the day after the Iraq invasion began, the Washington Post reminded its readers of the need for action: “Hussein has threatened his neighbors, and the United States, with war and WMDs for two decades; he has violated the cease-fire that ended the Persian Gulf War and defied multiple disarmament orders... The war that has now begun stands to end the single greatest threat to peace in the Middle East; it will help establish that rogue states will not be allowed to stockpile chemical, biological or nuclear weapons in defiance of the international community.”⁴¹

During the United States’ military operations in the Middle East, there were a huge number of front-page articles in the American media making the President’s case for war. The general tenor of these articles is indicated by the frequency of such phrases as ‘the President declared yesterday... the Vice President announced yesterday..., the Pentagon pointed out yesterday...’ But there were only a few articles that ran on the front page that raised questions. What was

⁴⁰ Washington Post (2003).

⁴¹ Washington Post (2003a).

the level of truth? Was this really true? What were those aluminum tubes? Did the CIA really know?⁴² Furthermore, media coverage of American-Iran tensions since 2003 has been reminiscent of coverage prior to the Iraq war. American media has portrayed Iran as a threat to the security of the United States. It has generated a hope that the President of the country could resolve the crisis of Iran. Major media supported the claims of Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump that Iran posed a serious danger⁴³ Exactly as with Iraq, the media in America mostly failed to question the official rhetoric. Journalists displayed an official bias, limiting their sources largely to official views.

With regard to the Syrian War, the media in America was mostly mixed, reinforcing speeches that were both critical and supportive of the President in power at the time. The media sometimes expressed opinions that were suspicious of military operations, and at other times supportive, and there has been no criticism of the United States' government regarding its failure to protect civilians in Syria.⁴⁴

Overall, during the times of conflict or in the run-up to conflict, many stories stenographically reported the Bush and Obama administrations' perspective on WMD and terror in the Middle East, giving no critical examination of the way officials depicted actions, threats, issues and policy options. American wars and conflicts in the Middle East also provide preliminary answer; the American media is in a state of crisis because it has seriously lost much of its moral authority.

⁴² Dimaggio (2015).

⁴³ Rashed (2019).

⁴⁴ Alalawi (2015): 281-290.

Democracy and Human Rights

The Arab Spring in some Arab countries which led to the removal of dictatorial systems in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Sudan, and Algeria, has dominated American media organizations, especially CNN, FOX News, the Washington Post and the New York Times. However, the coverage was not the same in the conflicts or protests in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain, where average coverage significantly dropped.⁴⁵ When the Muslim Brotherhood took office in Egypt and became stronger all over the Middle East, they were explained and pictured as connected with extremism and terrorism, rather than as a political movement of moderation and non-violence.⁴⁶ Coverage in American media of the Muslim Brotherhood constantly communicated to Americans and the world that they constitute a radical and fanatic organization. Moreover, the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt, was described as a menace against democracy in the Middle East,⁴⁷ even if the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt succeeded to create the first democratic system ever there by electing Mohamed Morsi. As an example of American media bias against the Muslim Brotherhood, FOX News described them as “a real, clear present danger and the only organized political opposition. I think the odds are that radicals, maybe not immediately, but over time, they will sound moderate then it becomes radical Islamic.” American politicians along with the media were in conflict with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The presence of a democratic system in the biggest Arab country and

⁴⁵ Al-Jenaibi (2014): 241-260.

⁴⁶ Saleem, Anderson (2013).

⁴⁷ Alalawi (2015).

a neighbor of Israel represented a threat to US greed and Israeli occupations in the Middle East⁴⁸ until they found el-Sisi as their man within only one year of Morsi's inauguration. Furthermore, according to a survey conducted by the Fairleigh Dickinson University in 2011 about information Americans had about the Arab Spring, FOX News audiences were found to be much less aware of the reality, reasons, goals, and consequences of the Arab Spring than people not listening to or reading news at all.⁴⁹ In fact, American media again paralleled the official viewpoints regarding the Arab Spring. American politicians were interested in changing the political system in Libya and in Egypt, and they were less interested in changing the systems in the Gulf countries and in Jordan. Protests in Jordan and in some Arab Gulf countries were ignored in American media.

On the other hand, the democratic deficits in the Gulf countries (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait) were totally erased from the American political-media discourse. Due to the strong relationships between these dictatorial systems and the government of the United States, these countries are the biggest oil suppliers in the world, particularly to the United States.⁵⁰ Hence, Middle Eastern victims of U.S.-sponsored state violence in the Gulf countries received no attention, while those in an enemy country such as Iran received much concern and discussion in American media.⁵¹ In other words, the media all over the United States has failed to discuss political situations

⁴⁸ Glover (2013): 125-134.

⁴⁹ Alalawi (2015).

⁵⁰ Ruigrok, Atteveldt, Takens (2013).

⁵¹ Dimaggio (2015).

and the progress of democracy in America's allied countries while emphasizing violations in enemy countries.

Since the turn of the 21st century, Orientalism has undergone a remarkable revival in the American media. Many scholars argue that there has been "neo-orientalism" at work in the media portrayal of the Middle East.⁵² Some studies find that contemporary representations of women in the Middle East work to stigmatize them as suffering from continuous oppression and as victims of their religion, culture, and tradition.⁵³ So, according to the American media, the treatment of Middle Eastern women is a threat to American values of freedom and equality. The discourse in the American media is obsessed with women's oppression in the Middle East, for which the veil or Hijab is the paradigmatic symbol. It portrays Middle Eastern societies as uniquely or gravely misogynistic.⁵⁴ In addition, the media in America denies the agency of women in the region by portraying their lives as generally subject to oppression, while men in the region have been described as cruel and inherently barbaric.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the discourse of the American media usually compares women's lives in the Middle East to women's lives in the West, who are described, by contrast, as relatively free of sexism and liberated. In other words, the uniformity of gendered orientalism in the American media indicates that it is part of American foreign policy in the Middle East, and this orientalism reinforces the stereotypes of the Middle East

⁵² Abu-Lughod (2010).

⁵³ Terman (2017).

⁵⁴ Kumar (2012).

⁵⁵ Mahmood (2011).

as barbaric, uncivilized, and a threat to American and Western values.⁵⁶

In fact, no society in the world is immune to gender-based discrimination, even the United States. But American media has a limited attention span when it comes to women's rights globally, while Middle Eastern women are at the center of its agenda. Women from Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America lose out as a result of this agenda, even though many of them endure egregious discrimination on a daily basis.⁵⁷

On the topic of human rights violations, the discourse of American media has reflected paramount concern about the situation in Iran, Syria, Yemen, and Libya, but repression and human rights violations by oil-rich allies of the United States such as the Egypt of el Sisi, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia were generally given marginal coverage.⁵⁸ The United States authorized its allies in the Middle East to escalate human rights violations by offering training and equipment to their intelligence and police agencies.⁵⁹ For example, the 2011 Human Rights Watch report on Saudi Arabia clearly condemned Saudi Arabia for pursuing merely "symbolic" reforms for improving "the visibility of women" and establishing freedom of expression. The report mentioned that torture is routinely used all over the country to extract "confessions". There are also regular abuses against citizens, women, and foreign workers.⁶⁰ Therefore, this suggests that there is a human and women's rights double standard in the media in America when we compare

⁵⁶ Abu-Lughod (2010).

⁵⁷ Terman (2017).

⁵⁸ Al-Jenaibi (2014).

⁵⁹ Chomsky, Herman (1999).

⁶⁰ Human Rights Watch (2011).

the actions and reactions in Saudi Arabia and Iran. American media regularly proclaim the need to intervene in Iran and Syria on humanitarian grounds, but similar calls for intervention were absent with respect to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.⁶¹ Hence, human rights in Middle Eastern countries are politicized by the American media discourse.

Finally, although the media in America usually echo humanitarian slogans concerning democracy promotion and human rights protection, its coverage of the Middle East's democratic and political situations during the 21st century gives decisive evidence of its paralleling the government's official outlook and interests whatever they may be at the time. It is fair to conclude that many American media organizations have paralleled American government interests over the Middle East, since they were part of the American strategic machine to sell wars of aggression and generate public support for such ventures. But that cannot be generalized uniformly, as some of the media networks have their own interests. The assassination of Jamal Khashoggi recently is an event which was considered deeply by many American media organizations.

Conclusion

This study attempts to chronicle the various approaches of the American print and broadcast media during the first 19 years of the 21st century that have been studied by scholars for their portrayal of the Middle East. The findings of these scholars have all led to a more comprehensive realization of how the Middle East region has been portrayed and

⁶¹ Entous, Barnes (2011).

why. An increase in qualitative analysis of the representation of the region in American media would certainly add further detail to the existing body of literature.

This study concludes that although the media in America have paid detailed attention to many issues in the Middle East during the last two decades, there are grounds to conclude that it has failed to comprehend and objectively present the sociopolitical and economic reasons behind such issues. The discourse in the American media played out in a way that privileged pro-war officials in the Middle East, while setting an agenda for public discussion that emphasized an imminent threat of terrorism and destruction to Americans and America's interests all over the world. The media in America protects America's allies such as Israel and oil-rich allies in the region against any blame for almost everything and anything. Although the media in America usually echo seemingly well-intentioned slogans to the effect that they represent democracy promotion, human rights protection, and freedom, its coverage of the Middle East during the 21st century gives indisputable evidence of its paralleling the official government's viewpoints and interests whatever they are.

The Middle East is a unique place where American media organizations can learn about themselves and their future, because it is the theater where all pretenses of neutrality towards power and interests have faltered. However, there are many brave and dedicated American journalists and media networks representing the Middle East whose work deserves praise.

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Munich massacre

Research study of propaganda in communist countries

Abstract

In this analysis the author notices a difference in the perception of the Munich massacre in various countries of the communist bloc, which was justified by the political situation. It was a consequence of the race of the two strongest countries in that period. It inspired the author of the publication to make an in-depth analysis of the Polish and Soviet press of that period.

Keywords: terrorism, communism, propaganda, Munich massacre, USSR, Poland, Israel, Olympic Games, Black September, Palestine, newspapers

The purpose of this article is to show the coverage of events at the Olympic Games in Munich by analyzing the press of the communist bloc. A detailed analysis of the following newspapers allowed for plumbing the knowledge of this subject and also had a cognitive purpose, namely how that event was perceived in different source materials.

Trybuna Robotnicza (Workers' Tribune), initially named Trybuna Śląska. It was a regional Silesian newspaper. It was one of the largest regional papers in communist bloc, as close to 20 thousand copies were published every day. The Trybuna Ludu (People's Tribune) daily was the second largest newspaper in communist Poland. The paper was formed by a merger of two newspapers: Głos Ludu (People's Voice), the press organ of the PPR and Robotnik (Worker), the press organ of the PPS. Its average circulation was 1,5 million copies published every day. Izvestia (Известия) is also a daily broadsheet newspaper in the USSR/Russia. The average circulation was around 235 thousand copies every day. Each of those newspapers was dependent on the communist parties, so they were censored. Currently, there are many studies describing and examining the relations and answering the question why those events happened.¹

The Olympic Games in Munich, which took place between 26 August and 11 September 1972, have been remembered in history for two reasons. First of all, because they were the first Olympics after World War Two held in Germany and because of the attack against Israeli athletes carried out by the terrorists from the radical Palestinian organization Black September. The Palestinians chose the most

¹ Klein (2005); Groussard (1975); Dobson, Payne (1977), Farell (2010); Marcovitz (2002).

convenient - from their point of view - time to wield such a cruel attack, because the Olympic Games were the most popular sports event in the world, covered by most of the TV stations. Undoubtedly, they wanted to draw attention to themselves and show the whole world the cause for which they have been fighting for almost a quarter of a century. The Palestinians planned the strike with precision and additionally their attack had an ideological background. Noteworthy is the fact that the Jews for the first time since the creation of the independent state decided to represent their country in the state that had been so negatively recorded in their history. For a long time, it was debated whether Israel would participate in these Olympic Games. Although more than 25 years had passed since the end of World War II, the Jews could not entirely forgive the tragedy that the Germans had brought on them. On the other hand, total separation from the world would show the weakness of the Israelis, and sending their athletes to such a dignified sports event, moreover organized by Germany, would show the world their toughness and strength. All of these facts were described by the most of popular communist newspapers such as *Trybuna Ludu*, *Trybuna Robotnicza* and *Izvestia*. They showed that the point of view depended on the political situation.

Trybuna Ludu, 6 September 1972

According to *Trybuna Ludu's* reports, for the first time in history on Tuesday afternoon, 6 September 1972, the Olympic Games were interrupted as a result of the assassination of members of the Israeli team by a group of Palestinian commandos. The International Olympic Committee and the Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games decided

to suspend those events that were scheduled for Tuesday evening. At the same time, it was announced that a funeral ceremony commemorating the victims would be held at the main Olympic stadium on Wednesday at 10 a.m.²

According to the reports of the correspondents accredited at the Games, early Tuesday morning a group of armed Palestinian commandos from a small extremist organization Black September sneaked into the Olympic village and overtook the building where a part of the Israeli team lived. An Israeli team coach and one of the Israeli weightlifters died in unexplained circumstances. The assassins barricaded themselves inside the building, in which they imprisoned five Israeli athletes and five accompanying persons as hostages. The commandos demanded the release of 230 Palestinian prisoners in Israel, some of whom had been taking part in various actions organized by Black September. The assassins demanded that these prisoners were to be taken to any Arab capital except Beirut and Amman, though not by Israeli planes. The attackers initially demanded that their requests had to be accepted by midnight, but then they extended the deadline several times. They warned the West German police that any attempts to free the hostages would end up in shooting the Israeli Olympic team members. The negotiations with terrorists continued to take place. They were led by representatives of West German authorities and the IOC. From early morning hours, pavilion No. 33, in which the drama was taking place, was surrounded by a strong cordon of the Bavarian police. A similar cordon was formed around the Olympic village. A few police armoured cars

² *Act of terror in the Olympic village (1972).*

and a large group of police sharpshooters also came down to the scene.³

According to *Trybuna Ludu*, the Olympic Games Organizing Committee published an official announcement on Tuesday afternoon: The Olympic peace has been interrupted by criminal terrorists. The entire civilization condemns this barbaric feat. To commemorate the victims and as a sign of solidarity with the tragedy of the hostages still being held by the terrorists, all sports competitions this afternoon will be discontinued. These Games that are in being played will be brought to an end. The International Olympic Committee and the Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games will take part together with all participants in the Games in a manifestation commemorating terrorists' victims tomorrow, on Wednesday, September 6 at 10 a.m. in the Olympic Stadium. This manifestation should clearly show that the Olympic idea is stronger than terror and violence. We have all been deeply shaken by the events. In Munich, in the city of the Olympic Games, which from its earliest history has served to manifest peace and friendship between nations, a group of extremists from the Black September organization committed acts of terror. Sportsmen died. This terrorist action cannot be justified by either political reasons or the dignity of militants for a good cause. Thus, the actions of the assassins were condemned by the Arab countries and the main Palestinian representation – the Palestine Liberation Organization. The action of the assassins was firmly condemned by Polish public opinion. We regret the death of athletes - participants in the Games. Terror cannot be a form of solving any socio-political conflicts, it turns against those who use it.

³ Ibidem.

The drama deepened on Tuesday night. Information about the neutralization of the assassins came. We do not know the exact course of the events that took place at the West German military airport. We only know that it ended up in killing or injuring the organizers of the attack. There was new bloodshed. For decades, the Olympians have been guided by the idea of bringing together the youth of the world, disseminating friendship among nations. I regret that this noble idea has been violated. During an extraordinary meeting of the International Olympic Committee, convened on Tuesday evening, the leadership of the Polish Olympic team made a statement in which they expressed their deep regret at the tragic terrorist action and the disruption of Olympic peace.⁴

A few hours after the assassination, the Israeli cabinet met in Tel Aviv, and at the end of the meeting, Prime Minister Golda Meir called for the suspension of the Olympic Games until ten hostages were released. She gave orders to Israeli sportsmen to temporarily not take part in any competition. The Prime Minister of Israel did not mention a word about accepting the demands of the commandos - the release of 230 Palestinian prisoners.⁵

In the afternoon, a meeting of the West German cabinet took place. Chancellor Willy Brandt appealed to all heads of state and governments of the Arab countries to do everything in their power and help in freeing members of the Israeli team. Brandt then went to Munich to personally supervise negotiations with the commandos. In the evening, Chancellor Willy Brandt made a statement to the German television

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Ibidem: 10.

about the Tuesday Olympic tragedy. He said that painful circumstances forced the organizers to stop the Games. What had happened was a painful blow to the Olympic idea, which the terrorists disgraced. The tragic incident caused serious damage to the Federal Republic of Germany. Brandt said that attempts were made throughout the day to free the hostages, but all efforts to drive the terrorists away from the criminal intention failed so far. The Chancellor assured that the relevant authorities were in constant contact with the terrorists and that he himself was involved in person. The question was also whether proper security measures had been taken so that the tragedy did not occur again. Brandt assured that this matter would be subject to a detailed examination, however, one should not delude oneself that absolute protection could be found against desperate people. The Chancellor appealed to close all orders for cooperation in order to prevent such events from recurring in the future and expressed a personal opinion that the Games should be continued because, in his opinion, it could not be allowed that the extremists would impose their will on the whole world in such situations.⁶

According to *Trybuna Ludu*, the first reactions of leading politicians from around the world to the events that took place in the Olympic village were quickly reported. UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim appealed for the immediate release of the hostages. The attack carried out by the commandos was condemned by President Nixon, the West German government, the Dutch, the Vatican, and also by the leaders of both US parties in the Senate. The Office of the Arab League in Bonn issued a statement condemning the acts

⁶ Ibidem.

of terror performed by the extremists of the Black September organization. The Palestine Liberation Organization, which represents the majority of the Palestinians, also condemned the Tuesday attack. Rutkowski - the head of the Polish representation, expressed the regret over the tragic incident and condemned its perpetrators to the chairman of the West German organizing committee on behalf of of the entire Polish representation.⁷

As reported by *Trybuna Ludu* journalists, late in the evening on Tuesday, September 6, a press conference was held with the participation of Will Daume - chairman of the organizing committee of the XX Olympic Games. Daume said that the programme of the Olympic Games will be implemented with a 24-hour delay. At 10 p.m., the International Olympic Committee met to consider the current situation. At the end of the conference, a statement was made by the leadership of the Soviet team, which condemned the act of terror and expressed deep regret over the incidents that took place in the Olympic village. According to AFP and Reuters correspondents, just after 10 p.m. Warsaw time, five assassins with nine hostages left the Israeli team building and by coach went to a place where three West German military helicopters were waiting for them. The assassins and the hostages took their seats in one of the machines, and a moment later all three helicopters rose into the air heading for the airport. In one of them were several West German negotiators, including the interior minister Genscher. Immediately after the helicopters landed at the military airport, there was a short-term shooting.⁸

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Ibidem.

West German government's spokesman Conrad Ahlers said that the action taken against the commandos at the airport had been planned. He stated that the attempt to abduct the Israeli hostages was unsuccessful. Five of the Arab commandos were killed or injured. All Israeli athletes were released. According to supplementary information, another dead Israeli and three wounded Arabs were found in the building of the Israeli team after the departure of commandos and the hostages. It follows that the Israelis defended themselves.⁹

Trybuna Ludu, 7 September 1972

Contrary to the initial information of the news agencies, the action to free Israeli hostages held by Palestinian extremists ended on Tuesday, 6 September 1972, with a terrible tragedy. All Israeli hostages, in the number of nine, were killed.¹⁰

Because on Tuesday morning the Palestinians shot two members of the Israeli team in the Olympic village, the total number of fatalities of the tragedy in Munich increased to 18. Several people, including three Palestinian extremists, and one of the pilots, were injured. The tragedy at the Munich military airport put in question the continuation of the Olympics. The decision to resume the Games and extend them by one day was taken on Wednesday, 7 September, at the meeting of the IOC Executive Board. On Wednesday, September 7, the next Olympic competition was started. The first

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ *The course of the tragic events at the Munich airport (1972).*

competition after the break was a handball match between Romania and Hungary.¹¹

As the journalists reported, the first news about the tragedy at the military airport near Munich came on Wednesday at 3 p.m. Warsaw time, when the mayor of Munich Kronawitter declared that the Israelis could not be saved; an hour later, at the ad-hoc press conference, the Minister of the Interior, NRF Genscher, gave the official version of the events, according to which the action of West German police did not succeed because the headlights installed at the airport were poorly placed and hidden sharpshooters did not have good visibility in the ambush. When the first shots were fired at the Palestinians, the assassins opened fire at the helicopter in which the hostages were placed. A grenade thrown into the interior almost ripped the machine apart, and all Israelis and one of the pilots died on the spot.¹²

The Interior Minister Ganscher said that the police action had to be decided because the federal government was not be able to obtain a guarantee from Israel that 230 Arab prisoners in Israel would be released as the terrorists demanded.

On Wednesday, at 10 a.m. Warsaw time, a mourning ceremony was held at the upper Olympic Stadium in Munich in honour of the victims of the tragic events. The stadium gathered members of sports teams from all countries, including Poland, who merely ten days earlier took part in the joyous opening ceremony of the XX Olympic Games. The flags of all participants in the Games were lowered to the half-mast. In the grandstand were the President of the Federal Republic of Germany Gustav Heinemann, Chancellor Willy

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem: 10.

Brandt, Minister of Foreign Affairs Walter Scheel and many personalities from the political and cultural world. The ceremony began with the rendering of the Beethoven's funeral march. The main speaker was the President of the Federal Republic of Germany Heinemann, who said that the final answer to the question of who was to be blamed for the tragic events could not be given, but there was no doubt that the terrorist organizations were guilty, and those countries that did not interfere with the criminal practices of extremists were also seriously responsible. Heinemann ended his speech with an appeal for jointly opposing acts of terror so that the beautiful Olympic idea would not be lost. On Wednesday, 7 September, the head of the Polish Olympic team Józef Rutkowski expressed his condolences to the leadership of the Olympic team of Israel because of the further victims of the tragic events who died on the night of 5 September. On the same day, in the afternoon, the government of the FRG met in Bonn under the chairmanship of Chancellor Brandt. At that meeting, the FRG Minister of the Interior Genscher informed the Bonn cabinet about the course of the events in Munich. West German government spokesman Konrad Ahlers stated after the cabinet meeting that the Federal Republic of Germany would ask the UN Secretary-General to take steps within this organization that would put an end to the terrorist activities.¹³

On Wednesday, at 4 a.m., in the holiday resort of the Olympic village, the Interior Ministers of Bavaria and the FRG Bruno Merk and Dietrich Genscher held a press conference. Both ministers tried to justify the unsuccessful action of the West German police. Genscher said that the decision

¹³ Ibidem.

to attack the commandos was made because the federal government had failed to obtain a guarantee from Israel that two hundred Arab prisoners in Israel would be actually released in exchange for the hostages. According to Genscher, West German marksmen opened fire at the commandos when they were leaving the helicopter. According to the FRG Minister, the action did not succeed because it turned out that the headlights installed at the airport were poorly set and the shooters did not have good visibility. When the first shots of the Fedayeen were fired, they opened fire at the helicopter in which the hostages were placed. A grenade thrown by the terrorists completely destroyed one of the helicopters. The Interior Minister of Bavaria Bruno Merk said for his part that there was no way to free the hostages while they were still in the Olympic village. The tragedy in Munich is basically the only topic of news agency reports. They write about the indignation of world public opinion about what happened on Tuesday in Munich.¹⁴

The TASS agency in Moscow provided a statement that was announced by the Committee on Physical Culture and Sports at the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the Olympic Committee and the Soviet delegation to the XX Olympic Games. Soviet sports organizations deeply regretted the tragic events that took place on 6 September in Munich. Soviet athletes and the Soviet public believe that terrorist acts are incompatible with the spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding between nations that underlies the international Olympic movement.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

Izvestia - Известия, 6 September 1972

According to the reports of the most widely read Soviet newspaper, on 6 September 1972 there was an agreement between two parties - the terrorist organization Black September and the authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany regarding the flight of the terrorists and the hostages to one of the Arab countries. Late in the evening, the hostages were transported to the border of the Olympic village, and then two helicopters transported them to the airport 25 kilometres away from Munich, where a Boeing aircraft waited for them. When the helicopters landed, the snipers in hiding opened fire at the terrorists. During the shooting, the terrorists killed the hostages, a pilot of one of the helicopters and a policeman with grenades. Three other policemen were injured. As a result of the grenade explosion, a helicopter was destroyed. The police and the military police circled off the territory of the airport and began searching the area. The Bavarian Minister of the Interior commented on the events as follows: Not taking into account that the hostages agreed to fly with the terrorists to Cairo or Morocco, the German authorities that negotiated with the terrorists were afraid that the hostages would be taken to one of the listed places and liquidated; that is why the police tried to save the hostages before the take-off. Five terrorists were killed during the shooting and three were arrested. According to Ahlers, the federal authorities were prepared to prevent the take-off of the terrorists with the hostages. Ahlers said that the action at the airport had been planned.¹⁶

¹⁶ *Shooting at Fuerstenfeldbruck - Перестрелка в Фюрстенфельбруке (1972).*

The Committee on Physical Culture and Sports at the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the Olympic Committee of the USSR and the Soviet delegation to the XX Olympic Games in an official statement expressed deep regret over the tragic incident, which took place on 5 September 1972, during the Olympiad. Soviet sports organizations and public opinion released a statement in which they deplore the tragedy and believe that the terrorist activities carried out during the Olympics are contrary to the spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding between nations. Soviet athletes were determined to continue to support the ideals of the Olympic Games.¹⁷

Trybuna Robotnicza, 6 September 1972

For the first time in history, on Tuesday afternoon, 6 September 1972, the Olympics were discontinued as a result of the assassinations perpetrated by a Palestinian Commando group at the Israeli team's headquarters. The International Olympic Committee and the Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games decided to suspend those events that were scheduled for Tuesday evening. At the same time, it was announced that on Wednesday at 10 a.m. a funeral ceremony would take place at the main Olympic Stadium with the participation of all contestants to commemorate the victims of the attack.¹⁸

According to the reports from correspondents accredited in Munich, early in the morning on Tuesday a group of armed Palestinian commandos of the small extremist organization Black September got into the Olympic village and forced

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ *Dramatic situation at the Olympics* (1972).

entered the building where part of the Israeli team lived. Under suspicious circumstances, one of the coaches and one of the weightlifters from the Israeli team died. The assassins barricaded themselves inside the building, in which they imprisoned five Israeli athletes and five accompanying persons as hostages. The commandos demanded the release of 230 Palestinian prisoners currently kept in Israel, with some of these prisoners having taken part in various actions organized by Black September. The assassins demand that these prisoners be taken to any Arab capital except Beirut and Amman, but not on Israeli airplanes. The moment the Palestinian prisoners would be in a safe place, Black September would be ready to negotiate with the West German government regarding the procedure of handing over Israeli hostages from the Olympic village and organizing safe departure of the commandos from the West German territory. The attackers demanded initially for their requests to be accepted by 12 noon, but then they extended the deadline several times. They warned that any attempt of the West German police to free hostages by force would end up with shooting Israeli Olympic team members. The negotiations with terrorists continued to take place. They were conducted by representatives of the West German authorities and the IOC. From the early morning hours, pavilion No. 33, in which the drama was taking place, was surrounded by a strong cordon of the Bavarian police. A similar cordon was formed around the Olympic Village. A few police armoured cars and a large group of police sharpshooters were taken to the scene. A few hours after the assassination, the Israeli cabinet met in Tel Aviv, and at the end of the meeting, Prime Minister Golda Meir called for the suspension of the Olympic Games until the hostages were released. She gave orders to Israeli athletes not to take

part in any competition at the moment. The Prime Minister of Israel did not mention anything about possible acceptance of the demands of the commandos, that is, the release of 230 Palestinian prisoners. In the afternoon there was also a meeting of the West German cabinet. Chancellor Willy Brandt appealed to all heads of state and governments of the Arab countries to do everything in their power and help in freeing members of the Israeli team. Brandt went to Munich to supervise negotiations with the commandos personally. There were already reports of the first reactions of leading politicians from around the world to the events taking place in the Olympic Village. The UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim appealed for the immediate release of the hostages. The attack carried out by the commandos was condemned by President Nixon, the West German government, the Dutch government, the Vatican, and the leaders of both US parties in the Senate. The Office of the Arab League in Bonn issued a statement condemning acts of terror committed by extremists from the Black September organization. The Palestine Liberation Organization, which represents the majority of the Palestinians, also condemned the Tuesday attack. The Polish head of Olympic team Rutkowski represented the deputy chairman of the West German Organizing Committee with regrets of the tragic incident and condemnation of its perpetrators. Here is the text of the statement made by the leadership of the Polish Olympic team: "With deep regret we faced the fact that on 5 September a tragic incident took place in the Olympic Village. Armed terrorists invaded the lodgings inhabited by the Olympians. Members of the Israeli team for the XX Olympic Games in Munich have died. The Olympic peace was disturbed. We condemn the acts of terror that

occurred. This crime undermines the ideas that gathered us in Munich".¹⁹

In the evening, Chancellor Willy Brandt made a statement to the German television about the Tuesday tragedy. He said that the painful circumstances forced the organizers to stop the games. What has happened is a painful blow to the Olympic idea, which the terrorists have disgraced. The tragic incident caused serious damage to the FRG. Brandt said that attempts were made throughout the day to free the hostages, but all efforts to drive the terrorists away from the criminal intention failed so far. The Chancellor assured that the relevant authorities were in constant contact with the terrorists and that he himself was personally engaged. The question is also whether adequate security measures have been taken so that the tragedy does not occur. Brandt assured that this matter would be subject to a detailed examination, but one should not delude oneself that absolute protection could be found against desperate people. The Chancellor appealed to all governments to cooperate to prevent such incidents and expressed the personal view that the Games should be continued, because in his opinion, the extremists should not be allowed to impose their will on the whole world in such situations.²⁰

Conclusions

In light of the information presented above, taken straight from the newspapers of 1972, it can be concluded that the communist newspapers described the incident that took place

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ibidem: 2.

between 5 and 6 September 1972 very reliably and in detail. The most widely read Polish newspapers such as *Trybuna Ludu* and *Trybuna Robotnicza* presented the so-called Munich massacre very professionally and there was no negative attitude towards the Israeli side. The only point that aroused my interest was that the Palestinian terrorists were called commandos. Perhaps in this way they did not want to offend the Palestinian side, which at that time was very much supported by the communist governments. Palestinians bought weapons from Poles, and were also trained by Polish services. The information about the attack was on the front pages of the newspapers, which cannot be said about the Russian newspapers. Unfortunately, in one of the most widely read Russian newspapers Pravda no mention of the tragedy of Munich could be found. A short note on the last page was carried in the widely read Izvestia daily. In comparison to Polish coverage, information in Russian newspapers was very limited, incomplete and did not fully reflect the actual situation. I think that the Russian side, the Soviet one, did not want to denigrate its allies, because in the end they were the ones who gave huge financial outlays to support the Arab states and the Palestinians in the fight against the state of Israel, and partly with the United States. A very interesting fact which I encountered when analysing information about the Munich massacre is the presence of the media near the place where the actual drama was taking place. Of course, this is a big mistake made by the organizers and the German authorities, because the broadcast was live, and the terrorists knew exactly what the German authorities were planning, which way the anti-terrorists were to get through and much more. I mentioned this in the previous chapters. Among many foreign television stations, journalists from East Germany did

not stand out. Well, the message from the East German television was of the best quality and most accurately showed how West German commandos tried to take back the hostages. Certainly, we will never know all the information on this subject, but one can only guess that the East German special services may have had some interest in it, and as we know they were subordinate to Moscow.

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Wai-Yip Ho

**Re-Emergence of the Middle East in China:
Towards a New Research Paradigm in ‘One Belt, One Road’**

Abstract

China's new global initiative, 'One Belt, One Road', has been re-viving the ancient Silk Road trade route to launch an alternative 'Go Global' strategy. Commentators foresee China's new Silk Road, sometimes referred to as the new Marshall Plan, may reshape the dynamics of the regions and lead to confrontation among the big powers. There are fears that whether China is engaged in neo-colonialism in Africa and may become a super-power in the Middle East. While dominant policy and scholarly attention has been given to 'China in the Middle East', this paper explores another ignored trend and new research paradigm, namely 'the Middle East in China'.

Keywords: China; new Silk Road; Belt and Road Initiative; Middle East in China

Introduction: Western Islamophobia, Inter-Asian Connections

There has been a troubled relationship between Middle East and the West since 9/11 attack in the United States and the new wave of Islamophobia against Muslim immigrants in Europe. At the same time, new and closer inter-Asian connections between China and Arabia have been subtly growing, but relatively less attention has been paid to the revival of the Silk Road network. While global media and policy attention has been focused on Europe in tackling the problems of the migrant crisis coming from Africa and the Arab world, the Middle Eastern and Arab community has been emerging in China, but the phenomenon of the Middle Eastern diaspora in China has largely not been covered by media or noticed by mainstream academia. Through my ongoing fieldwork and observation, the main argument of this chapter is to suggest a return of the ‘Middle East in China’ as a part of the revival process of the Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road (‘One Belt, One Road’¹). The paper argues that there is a rise of the Middle Eastern and Arab community in China, which may have a far-reaching implications for China’s Islam and future ethnic-religious landscape.

Revival of ‘the Middle East in China’ along the New Silk Road

While there has been a lot of discussion about the inflow of Middle Eastern and Arab Muslim migrants facing discrimination

¹ *Yidai yilu* (一帶一路), is the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”, proposed by China’s President Xi Jinping in his official visit to Kazakhstan and Indonesia in 2013. Though rejected by the Chinese leaders, some commentators compared the ambition of China’s ‘Belt and Road’ initiatives as comparable to the United States’ Marshall Plan.

in the process of social integration in the America and Europe, this chapter suggests that research should not neglect the importance of the eastward flow of the Middle Eastern and Arab Muslim diaspora to China. In the midst of China's recent strategic initiative of 'One Belt, One Road', which is part of China's 'Go Global Strategy'² through reimagining the ancient Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road in the globalization context, mainstream academics and policy makers are focusing on Eurasian and China-Middle East integration, especially China's long march to Central Asia, Africa and the Arab world, driven mainly by energy and raw-materials diplomacy of the People's Republic of China (PRC). This chapter, however, focuses on the reverse flow of the Middle Eastern and Arab community to China, namely the understudied trend of re-emergence of the 'Middle East in China', which has been positively accelerated by China's 'Welcoming In' policy³ in pulling Middle Eastern traders to China as well as the Arabs' new global outlook of 'Go East' policy. Methodologically, my ongoing research suggests the importance of interdisciplinary, reflecting engagement within sociology, qualitative research methods in oral history and ethnography, as well as both China and Islamic Studies. The aim of this chapter is to suggest a research framework that is crucially

² *Zouchuqu zhanlue* (走出去戰略) is sometimes named as the 'Go Out Policy', which refers to China's outreaching and travelling out policy to reconnect with the international community after years of isolation from global affairs.

³ *Qingjin lai* (請進來) means 'Welcome In', which usually refers to China's friendly strategy in welcoming and inviting overseas investments, but my research here refers to welcoming Arab and Middle Eastern students for training and studying in China's universities, some of whom stay on, work and marry in China after graduation.

interdisciplinary, bridging the fields of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies as well as China Studies.

The 'Middle East in China': A Brief Historical Review

In 751 A.D., there was a small-scale armed conflict when a Muslim army defeated the army of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) in China; no other major conflicts followed, and Islam came to China with merchants. Tracing the formative period of Islam in China, the first wave of Muslims arrived in China by the inland Silk Route to Xian and also by along the maritime Silk Road to the coastal cities Guangzhou and Quanzhou.⁴ Following the arrival of Arab Muslim merchants, they did not only engage in trading, but also practiced faith and introduced themselves to China. The two oldest and surviving mosques in China were built in Xian and Guangzhou. Along the maritime trade route, Arab Muslim traders also set foot and settled in the coastal cities of Yangzhou, Hangzhou and Hainan since the seventh century.⁵ Persian and Arab merchants, as the cultural bearers of Islamic culture, played an important role in the formation of culture and economy of the Hui community in Guangzhou.⁶ Since the Tang Dynasty, the Muslim community from the Arab world settled in coastal China through the maritime route and they engaged in trading and business in China. During the eighth century, the Muslim community gathered and settled as an ethnic enclave called *Fanfang* - 'foreign quarters'⁷- which was separated from the Chinese community. The settlement is to prevent

⁴ Benite (2010): 412-413.

⁵ Ma, Tian (2008).

⁶ Ma (1996): 32.

⁷ *Fanfang* (蕃坊) means 'foreign quarters'.

Arab and Persian Muslim traders from spreading Islam faith to the Han Chinese⁸ and a *Fanzhang* - 'governor of foreign people'⁹ - was appointed to oversee the everyday affairs involving the foreign community. As a foreign community, the newcomers were identified as *Fanke* - 'foreign guests'¹⁰. For those staying in China without returning home, these people are named as *Zhutang*¹¹ - 'living in Tang China'- and *Zhutang* were the ancestors of the Hui Chinese Muslims.¹² During the Tang dynasty, strict separation between *Fanfang* and the Han Chinese people was imposed by the government. However, that policy relaxed during the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) in the thirteenth century. Without census survey data, it is now difficult to estimate the population of *Fanke* in Tang China. But an Arab source hinted there should be a significant presence of *Fanke* in Guangzhou. During the Huang Chao Rebellion (874-884 AD) when his forces shelled Guangzhou in June 879, around a hundred and twenty thousand of *Fanke* merchants were killed by Huang's army. If this source is reliable, the population and the business of *Fanke* in Tang Guangzhou should be quite vibrant.¹³ *Fanke* did not only engage in trade, but also played an active role in the Islamic da'wah activities ('Invitation to Islam', missionary activity). And they indirectly gave birth to the formation of the Hui Muslim community. As they mainly interacted through trade, it seems quite clear that Chinese interactions with Arab Muslim settlers went beyond theological debates

⁸ Tan (2009): 11, 85.

⁹ *Fanzhang* (蕃長) means 'governor of foreign people'.

¹⁰ *Fanke* (蕃客) means 'foreign guest'.

¹¹ *Zhutang* (住唐) means 'living in Tang China'

¹² Qiu (1996).

¹³ Chin (2004): 233.

or political confrontation. Without a prolonged and critical Western-style debate on Muhammad's role as Prophet-Statesman and his private life in a polygamous marriage after his first one, the perception of Islam in Far East Asia goes beyond the dichotomized or seemingly exclusive options of religion and politics (*din wa dawla*), coastal regions of South China perceived Islam as an opportunity – a business hub linking China and the Middle East. As Ben Simpfendorfer¹⁴ succinctly argues the 9/11 was the turning point, at which the Arab world turned away from the West and rediscovered China, and the new Silk Road has been gradually re-established.

Towards a New Research Framework: Studying Other Middle Easterns and Arabs in China

African and Arab communities have been expanding to become one of the largest diasporic communities in China. Though African communities in South China have recently attracted increasing attention from scholars and policy makers due to the escalating tension between African migrants and Chinese residents in Guangzhou, the growing Middle Eastern and Arab community and its implications for China-Middle East relations is inadequately understood. A future research framework should focus on the emerging Middle Eastern and Arab Muslim traders in China. First, this emerging research framework will re-identify the historical continuity of Middle East-China relations. In particular, it ascertains how China's considerable humanitarian aid, infrastructure and other international projects in the socialist era laid good foundation for the ongoing Chinese presence in the Arab

¹⁴ Simpfendorfer (2011).

world and the importance of shared socialist heritage in cementing strong bilateral relation in the 1950s and after. Second, the future research framework should indicate the pulling factors that have been attracting growing Arab presence in China since 1980s. China's 'Open Door Policy' in 1978 and subsequent economic growth, Middle Eastern and Arab Muslim traders, travelling and managing business between China and the Middle East, served as a business brokers, mainly for Saudi Arabia, explains the increasing presence of Middle Eastern and Arab Muslim sojourners in China. The diasporic lives of the Middle Eastern and Arab community on the two ends of the new Silk Road economy illustrate the transnational circuit of the New Silk Road. Third, the future research framework should focus on how Middle Eastern and Arab Muslim respondents perceive China's economic growth and political development ('China model'). In the midst of the Arab Spring in many regions of the Arab world, the China model provides Arabs with an alternative developmental path and a governance model other than the authoritarian regimes. Through interviewing them, the future research framework should evaluate how the Middle Eastern and Arab Muslim traders imagine the future development of the Middle East. Finally, the future research framework should analyse everyday challenges the Middle Eastern and Arab community faces and how they resolve the difficulties and foresee their diasporic lives in China. Strategically speaking, the future research framework does not only assess China's national policy of 'Going Global' and the growing China-Middle East relations in terms of energy and raw materials diplomacy, but it contributes to evaluate the emerging trend of China's 'Welcome In' policy of accommodating the rising Arab expat community in China.

Future Focus of 'One Belt, One Road': Growing Gulf-China Relations

In order to break through the isolation imposed by the West, China's strategic involvement in the Middle East has been growing since the Tiananmen incident in 1989 and the First Gulf War in the early 1990s.¹⁵ Since 2000, researches have been indicating that closer Sino-Middle Eastern and Sino-African relations are primarily due to China's concern for sustainable energy supply, natural resources as well as bilateral trade and arms sales.¹⁶ Recent research even points out that Gulf-Asia and Gulf-China ties will continue to grow.¹⁷ Most importantly, the consequences of the Arab world shifting from the West to China marks a rebalancing of global power.¹⁸ Having stated that, one should say that Beijing's political involvement in the Middle East has remained passive and insignificant when compared with its strong economic ties within the region. It is due to the cautious attitude of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to prevent China from falling into the volatile regional politics and controversies.¹⁹ While much scholarly attention has been given to China's overall 'going global' policy and its strategic involvement in the Middle East and Africa, recent researches show a growing presence of African traders in Guangzhou and Hong Kong.²⁰ However, relatively less attention has been paid to another emerging presence of Arab traders in China's cities. Indisputably,

¹⁵ Shichor (1992); Gladney (1994).

¹⁶ Olimat (2010); Zhu (2010): 53-77; Huwaidin (2002).

¹⁷ Davidson (2010).

¹⁸ Simpfendorfer (2011).

¹⁹ Shichor (2006).

²⁰ Lyons, Brown, Li (2012); Mathews, Yang (2012); Bodomo (2010); Bertonecello, Bredeloup (2007).

the growing presence of the Arab Muslim Diaspora does matter to the geopolitics and Chinese-Arab ties. Nevertheless, the future research framework of the Arab diaspora in China should explore the potential and long-term impact of the Arab traders' perception of 'progress' and alternative Arab development under the shadow of the 'China Model'²¹ or 'Beijing Consensus'²² in the times after the Arab Spring, and how the presence of Arab traders transforms China's Muslim landscape in terms of Islamic thought and architecture.

Conclusion: Future Research of New *Fanke* in Chinese Cities

In forging a closer link with the Middle East and Arab world, the Chinese government has been becoming aware of Islam – an uncompromising monotheistic faith which defines the cultural identity of Arab and Middle Eastern Muslims and shapes national behavior and foreign policy of the Muslim world. After the success of the flourishing Middle Eastern and Arab Muslim traders business in Yiwu of Zhejiang province, China has been strategically transforming Yinchuan of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region as the Islamic hub of China-Arab trade. Ningxia province will play an increasingly ambassadorial role in enhancing the future China-Middle East financial cooperation. Compared to the successful story of Yiwu in Zhejiang province – which attracts thousands of Arab and Middle Eastern traders to its wholesale market for cheap consumer goods and small business²³ – large-scale investments in the areas where most Muslims live have been more limited. Nonetheless, in contrast with

²¹ Yip (2012); Ding (2011).

²² Halper (2010).

²³ Simpfendorfer (2011).

the bottom-up Middle Eastern and Arab business formation process of Yiwu, Sino-Arab business connections in Ningxia (which has a strong Muslim community) enjoy governmental encouragement. This is seen as a national project, blessed by the Chinese state.²⁴ Including Yiwu, this future research framework proposes to investigate the rising community of Middle Eastern and Arab traders in Guangzhou, South China, and its implication to the emergence of Inter-Asian connections along the New Silk Road.²⁵ As Middle Eastern and Arab Muslim traders were the important cultural bearers in making the maritime Silk Road and one of the important origins of China's Islam in history, this future research outlook will analyze the re-emergence of *Fanke* in Guangzhou and other parts of coastal China. Based on my ongoing ethnographic study of Yemeni traders, the largest Arab trader group in China,²⁶ this future research framework will point to the re-emergence of the Middle Eastern and Arab community (*Fanke*) in China's cities (Guangzhou, possibly extend to Yiwu, Wuhan and Beijing), where the Middle Eastern and Arab communities are located, and how these diasporic communities contribute to the Inter-Asian connections in the revival of the New Silk Road.²⁷

The relevance of this new research perspective is to analyze the long-term implications of the growing influence of Sino-Islamic connections across the Middle East and China. This new research framework will allow for a new understanding of China's emerging soft power in the Middle East. While

²⁴ Ho (2013a); Ho (2013b).

²⁵ Simpfendorfer (2011); Ho (2013a); Ho (2013b); Ho (2013c).

²⁶ Ho (2014a).

²⁷ Ho (2013c).

Middle Easterners and Arabs in China are Muslims, the new research framework will also explore China's cultural diplomacy aimed at reviving Silk Road business networks through mobilizing its own ethnic Muslim minorities in China. As regards China's national strategy of 'Welcome In', it considers China as attracting incoming the Middle Eastern and Arab community and promoting a stronger China-Arab economic ties. In addition, it also sheds light on the cyber-Islamic environment in the Chinese language and the new Silk Road in the world economy, the cultural expression of Islam in Far East Asia as well as how the Middle Eastern and Arab Muslim communities in China critically perceive China's development and 'China model' as their developmental model.

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Powrót do Ojczyzny? Patriotyzm wobec nowych czasów. Kontynuacje i nawiązania [Return to Homeland? Patriotism in the face of the new times. Continuations and references], sci. ed. Cezary Smuniewski, Paweł Sporek, Instytut Nauki o Polityce, Warszawa 2017, pp. 438.

Starting the discussion of the book prepared by Cezary Smuniewski (professor at the War Studies University in Warsaw) and Paweł Sporek (Pedagogical University of Cracow) two general issues should be noted, which are directly related to it and affect its assessment. First, it should be noted that a visible increase of interest in patriotism, national identity, development of movements and organizations promoting defence and cultivating national heritage and legacy of history have been observed over the last decade in Poland. Those processes are accompanied by heated social and political discussions. This agitation seems to be a force oriented against the current of the present time together with its steam roller of globalization and unification. Secondly, the today's reflection on patriotism in Poland arises in the context of the legacy of 20th century totalitarianisms and clashing of various visions of the future of the European Union. Poles, who brutally experienced both fascism and communism, and at the same time their country became a cradle of the Solidarity social movement, without which no transformations in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Berlin Wall would have taken

place, ever more frequently say that the Peoples of the Old Continent have not yet drawn adequate conclusions from the anti-human ideologies of the past century. It may be easily noted that those two general remarks unequivocally fit in the issue of narrations typical of research in the area of studies on the national security of Poland.

Having in mind those two above observations, we can immediately place and try to understand the monograph edited by Cezary Smuniewski and Paweł Sporek in the current of important contemporary topics. The book *Powrót do Ojczyzny? Patriotyzm wobec nowych czasów. Kontynuacje i nawiązania* not only fits into the context of contemporary Polish research, but also seems to be an important point of reference for discussion. The book is an answer to the questions formulated in various spaces of life of the Polish political community.

The editor of the volume already on the first pages of the monograph disclose their own awareness of how important and high-ranking the discussed topics are, and first of all of the multitude of issues associated with patriotism, which contribute to the multi-facetedness of the process of creating Poland's national security: "The importance of patriotism in the contemporary scientific reflection and public discourse is indubitable. Also the very notion does not yield to negation, although it is a subject of various disputes and discussions. Only it does not concern the very sense of the love of the Homeland, but rather its forms. The statement that the future of Poland depends solely on the economy, integration with Europe, the future of which is rather obscure, seem to be insufficient nowadays. After all, we know that national security means not only a concrete material dimension, but also such values as family, education...

It is the people who grow up within the spirit of the nation, its traditions and beautiful though at times difficult history. These are people integrated with culture, which constitutes both the foundation of the lives of individuals and the society, as well as building national security, the basis for which has been and will invariably remain the discovery and formation of one's own and common identity." (pp. 9-10). Such an understanding of the processes contributing to the creation of Poland's national security is in full accord with the lesson learned by the Polish political community from the history. The past of our nation makes us fully appreciative of the need to respect this non-material dimension – the spirit of the nations – in the reflection on creating national security, including military security and defence.

Cezary Smuniewski's and Paweł Sporek's motivation arising from the judgement of the present, which lies at the beginning of drafting this monographs, seems to be by all means very important. Speculating why nowadays the reflection on the role and meaning of the homeland understood as a category which is fundamental for thinking about a collective and individual identity, the scholars state: "The modern times are a picture of dynamic changes, which are reflected in the cultural, political and social reality. The civilizational development, the clash of globalist tendencies with ever more noticeably meaningful national movement, the upset possibilities and potentialities of various discourses conducted in public space augment the existing divisions and build new barriers on the road to consolidation of civic communities at the state and supra-state level." (p. 10). In light of the above statement it should be inferred that studies concerning patriotism cater for the needs which manifest themselves on at least two relational levels: first, consolidation of civic communities

at the state level” and - what seems particularly interesting and actually may be perceived as controversial – “consolidation at the supra-state level”. The understanding of the patriotism of Poles as an element which may contribute to creating building of relations in contemporary Europe is a brave thought because it means that true patriotism not only has nothing to do with deification of one nation and contempt for other nations (as it happened for instance in Nazi Germany), but may actually turn out to be a space for a peaceful encounter with other nations and political communities.

As co-authors of the monograph Cezary Smuniewski and Paweł Sporek invited scholars representing various disciplines and academic centres, frequently expressing very different views, who are however united by the concern about the shape of the Homeland and the need to think over the issue of patriotism.

Such an approach proved to be by all means correct. The reader gets a thick volume composed of twenty thematically diverse texts, the first one of which is a synthetic introduction “From the editors”. The reading of the book makes one unequivocally recognize that the Authors are interested in: broadly conceived culture, socio-political thought, theory of national security and presentation of changes taking place in thinking about the issues associated with the notion of homeland and nation. The book seeks answers to a number of questions: How can the notion of patriotism be understood today/ What models of patriotism determined the shape of the Polish nation in the past and to what extent the function (or can function) in contemporary cultural, social, political and economic space. How can a patriot be imagined nowadays? How is patriotism to be taught? Which values customarily associated with patriotism help one to sustain

in the today's world, and which ones do not pass the test of time in a clash with the new reality created in the space of globalisation processes determined by media phenomena? What model of patriotism can be adequate for a contemporary Pole? What kind of thinking about a mother country could be combined with political effectiveness and building Poland's position on the international arena? How are patriotic attitudes to be evoked in the foreigners, refugees, businessmen, repatriates who come to Poland and want to settle down here?

The book consists of four parts:

1. Patriotism in thought. On the basis of theory;
2. Patriotism in word. With the voice of literature;
3. Patriotism in education. Towards upbringing.
4. Patriotism in experience. Faces of daily reality.

From the above it follows that four notions – thought, word, education, experience – proved to be key issues for the originators and scientific editors, opening an integral reflection on patriotism. This idea should be by all means appreciated. The first part includes the following texts: Cezary Smuniewski - *Towards identification of "the homeland adorer's" contemporary journey. In the light of research on identity and patriotism in creating national security*; Marta Szymańska – *Patriotyzm – rozumienie pojęcia na gruncie polskim. Próba rekonesansu*; Konrad Majka – *Nationalism versus patriotism. Differences, similarities, reliances*; Marcin Mazurek – *The cosmopolitan patriotism*; Lech Szyndler - *Antropological aspects of patriotism (formula of efficient Thomism in Prof. Mieczysław Gogacz's approach)*. The second part, which includes analyses of literary texts, starts with Paweł Sporek's *Rarely on my lips... of Jan Kasprowicz as the voice*

of opposition to the profanation of the idea of patriotism and affirmation of love for native country; followed by an article by Karolina Zakrzewska – Stanisław Wyspiański's metaphysics of the nation; and Małgorzata Gajak-Toczek - Bonifacy Miązek in search of the native home. Lyrical writings of contemporary exiles. The third part of the book consists of studies which are focused on education and upbringing: Iwona Morawska – Pros and cons of patriotic education; Leszek Jazownik – On patriotic upbringing in modern school; Dorota Karkut – Patriotism – always an important and current subject of the Polish language and history lessons; Maria Sienko – Small, bigger and the biggest homeland of man. Shaping patriotic attitudes in Polish language classes (according to the curriculum offered by the series "I like it!"); Zofia Budrewicz – Patriotism in intercultural education of Polish philology; Henryk Gradkowski – How Romantics used to be and are currently read at school?. The fourth part of the monograph is devoted to the specific spaces where patriotism is realised: Janusz Królikowski – The "political" function of the Church in service to the homeland; Ilona Urych – From physical culture to patriotism and from patriotism to physical culture. About shaping attitudes towards creating national security; Jolanta Fiszbak – The 'illness' not only of the Soplica family – about patriotism and modern Polish youth's love of freedom; Katarzyna Grudzińska – Patriotism of contemporary youth – declarations and attitudes (of military profile class, secondary school students); Alina Kulczyk-Dynowska – Natural heritage vs. patriotism – the example of national parks.

From among all articles, three seem to deserve special mention. The first one is the article written by Konrad Majka (pp. 63-85) discussing differences, similarities, and primarily

relationships between patriotism and nationalism. The young scholar presents the issue that is of interest to him linking it to the emergence of first national ideology in Europe, i.e. the French Revolution.

The second text deserving separate discussion is the essay written by Prof. Janusz Królikowski (pp. 327-343) on the political function of the Church in service to the homeland. The author considers the contemporary cultural and political situation. In this context he asks: what form of service should the Church present nowadays to continue contributing to the life of the national community, and in this way shape – also in the political dimension – the image of the homeland fitting the new times? He concludes that the principal participation of the Church in politics consists in carrying out the moral mission, which is the foundation of democracy and a measure of its authenticity. So understood contribution of the Church to the life and functioning of the political community goes beyond the traditional concept of *in negativo* with respect to the freedoms enjoyed by the Church within the framework of the state order, situating itself rather *in positivo* in the perspective in which the Church is openly entrusted with “public function”. This is one of the key issues which is nowadays of crucial importance for shaping relations between the state and the Church. The scholar is of the opinion that the Church does and can even more effectively contribute to the deed of consolidating, developing and maturing of the political community, showing respect to its own nature and its own objectives, as well as showing respect to secularity and independence of the state within its distinctive order.

The third text which is worth noting has been written by Prof. Cezary Smuniewski (pp. 15-46). This text

is at the same time the first article in the monograph. The author of the article – for many years associated with the Warsaw academic community – has made an attempt to present the possibilities for creating Poland's national security in a very close relationship with the national identity and patriotism of the Poles. A special role in his analysis has been played by the sources situated within culture shaping the attitudes towards the homeland. In the author's opinion, patriotism comprises an expression - emotionally and volitionally extended over time - of the national identity which is an element decisive for constructing security of the nation, which has been always manifest in the political, economic, spiritual, cultural and defence might of the state. The author concludes that the patriotism of the Poles, deprived of the support of identity arising from culture inseparably linked with religion, is endangered with becoming a useless theory or ideology drawing its strength from contempt for otherness.

The monograph is addressed to people interested in the problems of patriotism, broadly conceived national security of Poland, political science, education, as well as literature and broadly conceived culture. It may prove useful for the faculty and students as a teaching aid in classes on national security, cultural security, education for security. The book may also be of use for the faculty and students of pedagogical departments, as well as philologists.

Concluding, it should be stated that the monograph constitutes one of the most significant contemporary works on patriotism and national security in Poland. It is an important voice in the discussion on education and upbringing in the spirit of responsibility for the common good, which is the Homeland.

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**Report on the ECPR General Conference
Hamburg, 22-25 August 2018**

From 22 to 25 August 2018, the University of Hamburg hosted the 12th General Conference, which is the largest annual meeting for representatives of political and administrative sciences as well as other social sciences organized by the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) – a learned society established in 1970 by a group of twelve founding European universities and as the result of a project led by eminent political scientists, Jean Blondel and Stein Rokkan. The objective of the ECPR was to break down the barriers between the national traditions of the discipline and create a truly international community of scholars within Europe. Some fifty years on, we are the leading scholarly society for political scientists in Europe; we have over 300 institutional members in nearly 50 countries, which amounts to a global community of tens of thousands of scholars. In order to develop social sciences, the ECPR delivers methodological and professional training and career development to PhD students and early career researchers; provides forums for the development of research and the formation of networks; issues grants and runs a scientific publishing programme.

For the 12th General Conference in Hamburg the organizers planned a rich academic programme as well as plenary speeches. The plenary lecture was delivered by Reiner Forst, professor of philosophy and political theory at the Philosophy Department of the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Mein. His lecture was entitled: “Normativity and Reality: Thinking Politically About Politics”. During his lecture Professor Forst asked a crucial research question: “If social and political reality is a reality of justifications, what distinguishes better justifications from worse ones – and what distinguishes different forms of exercising power?”. Conference participants also took part in workshops during which they discussed current topics in the area of social sciences. The Hamburg Conference was divided into 78 research sections, each comprising one to forty panel meetings. All in all, the conference comprised 515 panels. During its conferences the ECPR assigns so-called Open Scholarship panels to discuss certain new trends or political problems so that the academic community could talk them over and decide how best to adjust their research practice to the newly emerging environment. The ECPR planned three Open Scholarship panels to be held at the Hamburg Conference:

Gender and Diversity in Political Science, which was organized to mark the 2018 release of the third Gender and Diversity Monitoring Report of the International Political Science Association (IPSA). This Panel reflected on contemporary issues relating to gender and diversity in the discipline of political science from both an international and comparative perspective. One of the main topics during the panel were the processes of the rise of new social movements such as those promoting gender and racial equality and indigenous rights, and it was also noted that political science was

sometimes slow to engage with these new political actors and with issues of inequality more generally. The panelists tried to answer the following questions: To what extent is the discipline of political science, including its professional associations, inclusive and representative in terms of focus and composition? What practices have professional associations or other institutions of political science adopted to foster diversity, and what lessons can be learned from these? Is the discipline accommodating diverse perspectives and approaches or is there still a hierarchy of knowledge favouring particular frameworks and preoccupations?

EPS Debate: Teaching Populism in the Era of Trump. During that debate its authors put forward the following thesis: “In the 21st century, populism is sweeping the world. Populist leaders are in power in the most powerful country on the globe, the United States of America. They form governments in regional hubs such as Poland, the Philippines and Venezuela, and they threaten some of the most established Western Democracies, including France and Italy.” Later on, it served as a basis for a reflection how this state of affairs affected political science and how it should be taught. An answer was sought for the question how should populism be integrated into an International Relations, Comparative Politics, or Women’s Studies class? To answer all those questions scholars representing all the discussed areas took part in the debate: Alison McCartney (Teaching and Learning and International Relations), Daniele Caramani (Comparative Politics), Dick Katz (American Politics and Political Behaviour), Isabelle Engeli (Women’s Studies).

Political Values and Norms Shaping Political Behaviour: Evidence from Comparative Social Research. In this panel it was noted that political behaviour was an essential element

of political culture of the population and an important indicator and predictor of the democratic political system development. In one of its broadest definitions, political behaviour is considered as an aggregated category for all those actions of private citizens by which they seek to influence – select, support or challenge – government and politics. The panel did not reflect on the most classical forms of political behaviour such as voting, organising demonstrations, writing letters to a governmental official, focusing instead on relatively new and evolving forms which presume using the resources of the internet and social media. The panel included papers analysing available empirical evidence from these and other quantitative research programs describing patterns, factors and consequences of political behaviour in different world regions and in a global comparative perspective. The interventions were based on the following data bases: Eurobarometr, European Social Survey, International Social Survey Program, World Values Survey, European Values Study, Comparative National Elections Project, Comparative Study of Electoral System as well as the group of regional barometers – Afro Barometer, Arab Barometer, Asian Barometer, Eurasia Barometer, and Latinobarometro. The main question which the panellists tried to answer in their interventions was how the scholars could use data and empirical evidence to deepen their understanding and prediction skills with regard to different forms of political behaviour and the role of values and norms in shaping participation patterns.

Another tradition of the ECPR General Conference is organization of four roundtable discussions, two of which are always organized by local scholars. One of this year's roundtables was entitled: "Cosmopolitan Metropolis and Parochial Hinterlands: New Social Cleavage". It was an attempt

to answer the following questions: What explains the push towards populism and the phenomenon of ‘democratic regression’? Are the explanations all the same for Poland and France, Great Britain and Germany, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries, for the United States of America and for countries like Turkey?

The second roundtable: “Multilateralism in Crisis: The Re-Nationalisation of Governance and the Emergence of a Neo-Westphalian Order” addressed the causes and consequences of the move away from multilateralism and towards greater emphasis again on the role of the nation-state as the principal unit of decision-making.

The roundtable entitled: *When Does Teaching Matter in Academic (Career) Development?* It emphasized the discussion of the increasing trend to distinguish between research and teaching job profiles, and how to react to higher education systems, where university administrations talk about the importance of teaching, but then hire according to publication records.

During the roundtable entitled: “Political Communication in a Post-truth Era: Much Ado About Nothing?” scholars of political communication and journalism discuss the latest developments with respect to post-truth politics, scrutinise its effects, and analyse implications for future research.

The ECPR General Conference is every year attended by over 2000 academics from all over the world, so it is impossible to sit on all panels or at least read all available interventions. In 2018, very popular were subject connected with authoritarianism, crisis of democracy, elections and populism. All those subjects were addressed in the panel during which I had the pleasure to present my paper: “Does ‘Western’ Democracy Still Mean ‘Liberal Democracy’?”.

It comprised the following interventions: Daniel Bochsler (Central European University) and Andreas Juon (University College London): “Authoritarian Footprints: the Transformation of Democracy, 1990-2016”, Anna Lührmann (University of Gothenburg) and Staffan Lindberg (University of Gothenburg): “Layers of Liberal Constraints: Institutional Decay and Democratic Breakdown”; Jorgen Moller (Aarhus University): “The Janus-Faced Political Legacy of Catholicism: Representative Government and Absolutism”; Efe Sivis (Altinbas University): “Trump’s Impact on Democracy in U.S.: Statements and Actions”; Jarosław Szczepański (University of Warsaw) and Paulina Kalina (University of Warsaw): “The Road to Autocratization? Redefining Democracy in Poland”.

The thread that was common to all papers were deliberations on liberal democracy and departure from its model in the US and certain highly developed EU Member States. The ever more frequent claims that “Western democracy” no longer stands for “liberal democracy” made the panellists to examine theoretically and empirically the degree of development of non-liberal democracy. It was discussed whether the concept of non-liberal democracy is suitable for analysing the contemporary development of “Western” democracies and what are its strengths and weaknesses. A large part of the discussion was devoted also to deliberations on the place of liberal democracy in this changing world, as well as whether the model of “non-liberal democracy” does in fact endanger democracy and its fundamental principles.

As it frequently happens in the world of science the panelists differed on many issues and even after the Q&A session they did not agree on all issues. However, it is the greatest value of such conferences that they offer a meeting space for people from different environments, with totally different

experiences (including research), who can see that not everybody shares their views, not everybody follows the same current, which will always remain a value as it makes us think, revisit certain assumptions, and in consequence pushes science forward.

Another place for this revitalising exchange of views and opinions is the book and software exhibition, which offers a natural meeting space for participants in between sessions and an ideal opportunity for getting acquainted with most recent publications. It is also an ideal opportunity for publishers to talk with potential authors about the proposals of books and articles in magazines, and for scholars an opportunity to meet editors of the *European Political Science* (EPS), published in cooperation with Palgrave Macmillan; the *European Political Science Review* (EPSR), published in cooperation with Cambridge University Press; the *Political Research Exchange* (PRX), published in cooperation with Routledge, Taylor i Francis; the *Political Data Yearbook* (PDY), published in cooperation with Wiley.

During the conference 28 meetings of standing groups were also organized. ECPR standing groups organize major sub-fields or extensive long-term research subjects. They have an extensive membership base and offer a wide range of activities, such as summer schools, awarding of prizes, publication of bulletins and periodicals.

The next ECPR General Conference will be held in Wrocław on 4-7 September 2019. There is a two-stage process for submitting proposals to the Academic Programme. The first stage is the call for sections, which starts on 17 September and will last until 19 November 2018. The second stage, from 5 December 2018 to 18 February 2019, is the call all for full panels and individual papers.

Chairmen of individual sections will evaluate proposals for panels and papers in their sections.