TRANSFORMATION OF THE MOROCCAN COUNTRYSIDE
AIT ALI BOUBKER: CASE STUDY

Hassan SKOURI[1]

Abstract:

Starting from the two last decades of the former century, the Moroccan countryside has experienced profound transformations, which the researcher perceives to have taken and are taking place at an accelerated pace. In this regard, we present through this paper, a field study of one of these sites, namely the countryside of Ait Ali Boubker which is located within the purview of the province Sefrou and the Department of Imouzzer Kandar, part of Fes – Meknes region.

This study adopted the technique of interviewing of a selected sample from the population of the chosen countryside. Our sample consists of 58 interviewees, including 23 females and 35 male respondents. Age has been a decisive determinant in the selection of the target segment. Thus, a group of people belonging to the generation of independence was selected so that its views about the various changes in this country could be verified. This allowed us to compare and contrast the past with the present-day situation and measure the vicissitudes of the events through the opinions and experiences of the living reality of these cohorts.

The results of this survey point out that this countryside, which is predominantly inhabited by an Amazigh population, has witnessed several social, economic, cultural and linguistic changes because of a hodgepodge of factors. Thus, the population sample attributes the reasons behind this shift to the invasion of various communication channels, urbanization and mechanization as well as acculturation.

If the trend continues in this direction, the researcher believes that the Moroccan countryside is gradually disappearing as a consequence of the confluence of the aforementioned factors and that the Moroccan Bedouin is progressively abandoning his bedouinness and adapting or else absorbing components of an increasingly globalized social environment.

Key words: Moroccan countryside, Invasion of Communication Networks, Social Change, Diffusion, Acculturation, Urbanization.

Introduction

We were born and bred in Ait Ali Boubker, which is a small village within the community of Ain Chgag and the district of Imouzzer Kandar in the Middle Atlas Mountains, and which are currently part of the region of Fez-Meknés. Ait Ali Boubker is a small village that is bordered by the tribes of Ait Wellal on the west side, Ait Lousane on the east, Ait Bouftin on the north and Ait Seghrochen from the southern bank. It is mostly inhabited by an Amazigh population that lives on agricultural activities and raises livestock. Following the 2004 census, Ait Ali Boubker counts 1231 residents, which are expected to have quadrupled nearly two decades now.

We grew up among the people whom we considered, so would do everybody else, a natural extension of our closest family. We enjoyed their unconditional love and support; we also relished their unlimited warmth and kindness. However, we were also astonished by their outright exemplary empathy and solidarity. Luckily enough, we spent our childhood, teenage and early adolescence in Ait Ali Boubker among such kind-hearted people whom we had to quit upon the obtention of our baccalaureat in 1993. Then, we had to move to pursue our higher education, executive training and embark on our professional experience in bigger cities where we missed such affection and tenderness. We not only yearned to our mother's bread or coffee, but to our fellow men compassion and closeness as well.

In big cities, we experienced indifference and aloofness. We incessantly looked forward school and summer holidays as well as religious celebrations to regain the warmth of our compassionate neighborhood and considerate compatriots. Upon such visits, we were bewildered and spellbound by the number of antennas and dishes that sprout over houses' roofs and the disappearance of our country-life characteristic aspects, such as threshing floors and traditional ways of harvesting grains, which have given way to combine harvesters.

Several country life distinctive processes are increasingly abandoned and are dying out as a consequence. For instance, the proceedings of 'Wazi'a' and 'Touiza' are progressively vanishing. The 'Wazi'a' is an age-old practice held in the countryside in which village inhabitants would collect money to buy and slaughter sheep or calves; then, distribute meat among the rich and poor indiscriminately. Such abandoned habit, which would mostly be common in Ramadan, aims at disseminating happiness as well as joy among all residents. Likewise, the habit of 'Touiza', which is sort of customary mutual help and cooperation system consisting of voluntary provision of work among the members of the community, is vanishing. This jettison bespeaks a noticeable regression and dereliction of solidaristic and communal inclinations in favor of ascending individualistic inclinations.

Research Problem:

Indeed, the desertion and jilting of these distinctive and peculiar country life practices has intrigued us and calls for due attention and analysis susceptible to shed light on this phenomenon. Such are the objectives that inspired this study, which seeks to uncover the nature and reasons behind this issue.

In accordance, our study raises and aspires to respond to respond to three main questions.

Research questions:

1) What changes are taking place in the countryside of Ait Ali Boubker?
2) What factors might have caused these variations? And
3) Does attendance to media networks impact and threaten Ait Ali Boubker's local cultural features?

Research hypotheses:

To come up with satisfactory answers, we assumed these two hypotheses.

H_1: A confluence of factors including the advent of urbanization, exposure to the media and acculturation account for the changes taking place in Ait Ali Boubker's countryside.

H_2: the main factor behind such alteration is countrysiders' media involvement.

Therefore, cultural change assumptions, mechanisms and processes are mobilized in our study's theoretical framework to gain sound understating of the issues at stake.

I- Theoretical Framework: Cultural Change assumptions and processes

Most anthropologists, such William Havilland (1993), contend that cultural change is quite a familiar process. In this regard, Ahmed Boukous (1999) maintains that evolution is an inherent part of the very nature of culture. He notes that culture is an evolving object that undergoes constant alteration by incorporating values and manners that are state-of-the-art. A culture also advances, according to Ahmed Boukous, by disposing of old-fashioned standards and practices (p. 11). Carol Ember and Melvin Ember (1993) approve such assertion, too. The Embers state that "no particular cultural pattern is impervious to change" (p. 305). Change permeates and obtrudes all cultures. Gary Ferraro (1995) also holds this belief and asserts that "nothing is as constant as change" (p. 330). The status of cultures is always transient, but change is persistently perpetual. William Havilland, equally, endorses such contention and believes that culture variation is quite compulsory. He contends that "a culture must have the capacity to change in order to adapt to new circumstances or to altered perceptions of existing circumstances" (p. 29). In other words, culture change enhances a culture's flexibility and increases its malleability to new environment or different conditions.

Indeed, the state of culture is never eternal. Havilland admits that cultures change throughout time and that the pace of the occurrence of such change is irregular; henceforth, his statement that "all cultures change over time, although not always as rapidly or as massively as many are doing today" (p. 45). In other words, culture change is quite an ordinary feature. No culture is ever changeless. Havilland also spells that current cultures are not only undergoing swift but enormous alteration as well. Then, he outlines the catalytic factors that accelerate and result in these variations, namely environmental calamities, foreigners' interference within domestic cultures, besides the conversion of cultural values and behavioral exemplars. Havilland instantiates such cultural mutation by the fact that dressing fashions, for instance, vary constantly and considerably. Hence, he believes that nudity has become more of a culturally acceptable tendency of both genders not only in swimming or art exhibitions, but in different walks of life as well. Cultural attitudes regarding sex, gender roles and other deeply interwoven social practices, equally, alter in a similar procedure (p. 45-46). Garry Ferraro (Op. Cit.) also maintains that literacy and technology primitive societies change rather unhurriedly; whereas, literate, industrialized and technologically advanced communities alter more speedily (p. 330). Ferraro, identically, claims that cultures change in response to intrinsic forces, such as innovation, or extrinsic drives like diffusion and acculturation.

Furthermore, William Havilland (Op. Cit.) outlines the mechanisms whereby a culture undergoes transformation. Only three, namely diffusion, acculturation and modernization are relevant to the present paper. Diffusion consists, as far as William Havilland is concerned, of the dissemination of customs and practices from one culture to another, and he mentions the practice of borrowing within this wide-ranging course of diffusion (pp. 407-409). Conrad Phillip Kottak (2002) also brings up diffusion among culture change cogwheels. The author considers, too, that diffusion commonly involves the transfer of cultural features amongst cultures; and he attributes the rampancy of such method, nowadays, to the proliferation of the media as well as sophisticated information technologies (pp. 75-76).

Likewise, Carol Ember and Melvin Ember (1993) uphold a similar belief regarding diffusion. They assert that diffusion designates the "process by which cultural elements are borrowed from another society and incorporated into the culture of the recipient group" (p. 307). Garry Ferraro (1995), equally, encourages such opinion and claims that diffusion indicates "the spreading of a thing, an idea, or a behavior pattern from one culture to another" (p. 332). In other words, all of the mentioned authors concur that diffusion denotes the dispersal of cultural artifacts among various cultures. They also agree that the diffusion process subsumes diverse patterns and basic notions. In particular, the Embers (Op. Cit.) and Phillip Kottak (Op. Cit.) bring up three different modes with relatively analogous designations. Both of these mention direct contact wherein adjacent, trading or intermarrying societies diffuse amongst themselves cultural traits that are taken on in stages. Secondly, indirect or intermediate contact takes place through the involvement of a third party that intercedes the diffusion operation among related cultures, something like a two-step flow of cultural traits. Regarding the third pattern, which Kottak labels "forced diffusion", that occurs when a culture not only dominates another, but also imposes its cultural ideals upon it (p. 75). The Embers name such sample as "stimulus diffusion" wherein a culture learns about a trait pertaining to another culture and decides to invent a domestic alternative (p. 309).

As far as the essential conceptions that are entrenched within the diffusion mechanism, all of the Embers (Op. Cit.) and Garry Ferraro (Op. Cit.) acquiesce that not all the borrowed cultural traits diffuse evenly or harmoniously into recipient cultures. Instead, they advance that diffusion is inherently a selective process; otherwise the margin of difference among cultures would be tiny. They also advocate that usefulness and congruity of a foreign cultural feature with the existing attributes of the host cultures enhance its infusibility. Ferraro also maintains that diffusion is a give-and-take procedure. That is, the industrialized and technologically-advanced societies, equally, borrow some cultural components from the primitive communities. He states, as well, that the diffusible elements might undergo some form or function transformations as they diffuse (pp. 332-333). Moreover, both of Ferraro and the Embers underline that the cultural material imports are more readily spreadable than the nonmaterial ones such as ideas or behavior patterns. In the same way, Ferraro stresses that numerous other variables, such as the length and the strength of contact, besides the level of cultural assimilation as well as the resemblance among the exporting and importing cultures intervene with the diffusion course (p. 333).

In addition, Milton Singer (1972) specifies five phases of the diffusion of the borrowed elements. These foreign components whether artifacts, activities or lifestyles are, first, isolated and segregated within enclaves. Then, they are neutralized. That is, as the indigenous peoples' familiarity with the new borrowed items increases, acceptance of the innovative modes amplifies, too. There emerges and grows, among the local social folks, a natural tendency to appease hostile attitudes regarding these foreign ways of life. In other words, these outlandish behavioral patterns are normalized gradually. For instance, the diffusion of hip hop in Morocco was initially enclaved in Casablanca and other big cities such as Marrakesh, Rabat and Meknes before it got generalized nationwide. The foreign imports, thirdly, turn out a typological option in the domestic culture. They are classified as alternates among a collection of other alternatives. Singer explains that Western-style clothes, systems of dance, music, philosophy, etc., have all gone through such methods and they held their designation although indication of their foreign sources are removed (pp. 390-394).

Fourthly, as the borrowed elements are tolerated as possible variations, they mingle gently with the local culture and society. In other words, they are incorporated freely as their alien origins are overlooked and the weight of the foreign enclavement fades away. Singer illustrates that lots of loan words, social forms, techniques and products are unconsciously employed regardless of their foreign basis. Having reached this stage, the loaned artifacts could be conferred aesthetic value or gain prestige, and they might also be perceived to present a challenge, though not much significant, to the indigenous culture. The latter, lastly,

appropriates such borrowed traits and no longer recognizes them as different from its traditional components (pp. 395-397).

Additionally, the afore-mentioned writers bring up another culture change mechanism, notably acculturation. In this respect, William Havilland (Op. Cit.) states that acculturation denotes the "major culture changes that people are forced to make as a consequence of intensive, firsthand contact between societies" (p. 490). Likewise, Garry Ferraro (Op. Cit.) affirms the entailment of bullying within acculturation. He points out that acculturation is a particular kind of compulsory borrowing that occurs due to constant contact between two societies wherein the recipient is not only subjugated, but also coerced to internalize the customs and the beliefs of the donor community (p. 333). The former, accordingly, undergoes radical and spectacular variations. Both Havilland and Ferraro spell out three outcomes. The overwhelmed culture may first be wiped out. It could also be incorporated to fuse as a subculture or else be assimilated into the overriding society's civilization.

Similarly, Phillip Kottak (Op. Cit.) considers that acculturation entails the exchange of cultural elements as a result of incessant direct contact between societies (p. 76). The Embers (Op. Cit.), too, hold and extend such viewpoint. They contend that acculturation encompasses most of diffusion components. They consider, in addition, that acculturation surfaces as a consequence of rigorous connections between communities, especially when one is more powerfully potent than the other; hence, John Bodley's *Victims of Progress* (1990) assertion, as mentioned in the Embers (Op. Cit.), that acculturation is "a process of extensive and cultural borrowing in the context of super ordinate-subordinate relations between societies" (p. 311).

The Embers further assume that acculturation, unlike diffusion, is a unidirectional process. Most often, it is the overpowered society that emulates the dominant community. Moreover, the Embers (Op. Cit.) argue that members of the recipient society might voluntarily choose to take on cultural features of the leading community for achieving a variety of objectives. Positive appreciation of such elements entices and incites the enchanted folks to incorporate them hoping that these would better their subsistence conditions in the changed world. The overwhelmed people also look forward sharing the benefits they think those cultural artifacts bestow on their inventors (p. 331).

Ultimately, both of Ferraro (Op. Cit.) and Havilland (Op. Cit.) mention modernization as a culture change mechanism. They support the belief that modernization subsumes the processes whereby traditional societies espouse socio-cultural features familiar to modern nations. Moreover, Milton Singer (1972) raises doubts as regards the continuity and permanence of Tradition. He contends that "it has become a commonplace of modern history that even the most traditional societies are no longer sure of what it is they can take for granted" (p. 59). In other words, Singer considers that social members are progressively suspecting their long-held convictions and assumptions. He also thinks that such reassessment is due to the contemporary hurried variations taking place on the local as well as the global level. Accordingly, people are more inclined to believe that "their cultural traditions have become problematic hypotheses in an inquiry into the design for a meaningful and worthwhile life" (Ibid.) That is, social members are more and more reconsidering their cultural traditions as well as beliefs and they are readily disposed to blame them for their awkward predicament.

Likewise, Daniel Lerner (1958), as mentioned in Kunczik (1991), supports Singer's reevaluation of tradition, but Lerner attributes such reconsideration to the role of the media. Lerner champions that involvement with communications compels people to reexamine their compliance with Tradition. He contends that media exposure further speeds up the alteration of Tradition and hastens the shift from a traditional to a modernized way of life. Lerner also depicts the media as multipliers of social mobility. He explains that the media, by presenting novel experiences especially the western lifestyle, boost up peoples' aspirations and cause them to desire the modern daily life (p. 46). Identically, Daya Kishan Thussu (2000) stands

up for Lerner's point of view. Thussu advocates that the media's information and entertainment content disseminates the Western mode of life together with the Western values of capitalism and individualism (p. 57).

Equally, Wilbur Shramm (1964), as stated in Kunczik (1991), strongly endorses Lerner's position. Schramm argues that the media are third world's window on the world and they undertake a major role in passing on the western ideals and models southwards (p. 123). In the same way, Kunczik (1991) considers the media as a principal agent of modernization and he identifies other modernizing institutions, namely factories and schools (p. 124). Yet, Kunczik attaches a substantial weight to the media. He states that "extensive exposure to the mass media produces equal or more powerful effects" (p. 127). Likewise, Daniel Lerner (1963) in Towards a Communication Theory of Modernization, as cited in Kunczik (1991), formerly champions such viewpoint. Lerner states that "new public communications – the diffusion of new ideas and information which stimulate people to want to behave in new ways" (p. 348). In order to defend his claim, Kunczik, additionally, draws on the assertion of Gerbner and Gross (1976) that television is the prominent means of taking on a foreign culture and its values. In other words, the media instigate and cultivate the course of modernization (Ibid.).

In this regard, Ronald Inglehart (1997) contends that modernization is a course of action that amplifies the political, the economic and the social potential of a society. Inglehart explains that modernization improves a society's political qualifications through bureaucratization the same way industrialization enhances its economic capacities, which alters society's poverty and brings about more prosperity (p. 5). Inglehart, additionally, distinguishes two distinct versions of modernization. The Marxist form, first, notes that all of economics, politics and culture are intimately related since economic advancement bears on the political as well as the cultural attributes of a society. The Weberian version, on the other hand, emphasizes the role of culture which strongly moulds the economic and political features of communities. Thus, while the Marxists underline the centrality and determinism of economics; the Weberian account focalizes the part cultural factors undertake in social development (p. 67), a position Inglehart seems ardently fervent of no matter how he disapproves of the linearity of socio-economic changes implicit in both versions. Yet, Inglehart notes that cultural elements assume an influential part (p. 72).

Moreover, Inglehart underlines that the process of modernization involves several components. First, Inglehart singles out two distinctive sets of changes associated with modernization depending on the level of industrialization of related societies. Thus, among less industrialized countries, modernization commonly engages "industrialization, occupational specialization, bureaucratization, centralization and rising education levels" (p. 67). Additionally, Inglehart stresses that such components are intimately reinforced and coupled by values as well as beliefs supportive of advanced economic expansion. Secondly, amid industrially far-ahead countries, modernization results in a second syndrome that emphasizes less economic progress but which highlights more the quality of life besides democratic political institutions. Furthermore, Inglehart underlines that economic development is closely intertwined with an extensive compilation of variations. Inglehart, then, clarifies that these alterations include "urbanization, industrialization, occupational specialization, mass formal education, development of mass media, secularization, individuation, the rise of entrepreneurial motivations, bureaucratization, the mass production assembly line, and the emergence of the modern state" (p. 70).

Identically, Kunczik (1991) identifies a correlated amalgam of elements of modernization. He asserts that modernization designates a unanimously ongoing process of convoluted social change that is directly associated with "an increasing rationalization of the society and the individual" (p. 78) , besides a bunchy collection of related social practices, namely the appropriation of "scientifically-based technologies, the proliferation of a state-sponsored system of education, urbanization, secularization, increasing interdependence within the society, an increase in political rights, and the introduction of mass media" (Ibid.).

Thus, both of Inglehart and Kunczik bring up the shifting urban, secular, educational and the communications together with the political participation aspects coming up with modernization.

In addition, Lerner (1968), as mentioned in Kunczik (1991), fervently reiterates such contention when he notes that modernization indicates "the process whereby lessdeveloped societies acquire characteristics common to more developed societies" (p. 368). That is, modernization is typically a western trajectory through which the underdeveloped non-western states develop by embracing the western path of development. Modernization also indicates the transfer of western modern ideals into the peripheral ends of the world. In other words, the western version of progress serves as a universal reference whereby other countries evaluate their degree of growth on the basis of Western-defined standards. Consequently, modernization, Lerner (1968) argues, produces Westernization. Modernization, in short, cultivates, fosters and operates to reproduce western exemplars worldwide.

Daniel Lerner (1968) further underscores that such western genre of modernization is the most effectual brand of developmental and societal qualities, particularly wealth, power, skill and rationality (p. 47). Likewise, the *Newsweek* columnist Fareed Zakaria (1994) in his interview with Lee Kuan Yew also contends that modernization and westernization are quite inseparable processes. Fareed Zakaria believes that modernization and westernization are two facets of the same coin. He, equally, underlines that the influence and authority of the West over the rest of the world resides more in "the realm of ideas" (p. 11), i. e., the soft and symbolic artifacts are more influential than the material or the technological products. In other words, the West craftily exports its western ideals and standards eastwards. The values and the principles in the East, nowadays, bear a characteristic western stamp.

Identically, Milton Singer (1972) isolates a conglomeration of constituents that are universally connected with westernization, chiefly "technical improvements in communication and transportation, urbanization, industrialization, the new occupational opportunities that come with them, and Western-style education, as well as the civil and military institutions of parliamentary democracy and the new occupations associated there with" (p. 265). However, Singer maintains that such hodgepodge of variations is regularly referred to as modernization. In this sense, he considers that westernization and modernization are analogous processes.

Furthermore, Milton Singer points out that the modern lifestyle model entails literacy in English besides the adoption of European dress, diet and manners. The modern way of life also comprises modern occupations together with the approval and implementation of technological products. The new standards of living, according to Singer, are equally accompanied by an unswerving espousal of western political institutions and ideologies alongside a deep reverence for scientific and erudite worldview. Accordingly, Singer stresses that western material and symbolic products are widely desirable and commonplace. He affirms that "European and American education, clothes, films, automobiles, cameras, books, journals, industrial techniques and organizations are greatly admired and sought after" (p. 319). These objects and artifacts relish immense popularity and admiration worldwide. In other words, the Western material success, industrial and technological achievement tempt and incite non-Western countries to endorse the occidental model of modernization. In short, modernization variations do commonly entail technological, economic, political and cultural elements.

Likewise, Huntington (1996) tallies a comparable set of modernization components, yet he enlarges these to include wealth and social mobilization. He not only thinks that modernization is the fruit of marvelous scientific and manufacturing erudition, but also underlines that modernization resembles radical processes that involve an insurgent break with primitivism and a prologue to civilization. On the whole, Garry Ferraro (1995) underlines that diffusion remains the greatest prolific procedure that brings about magnitudinous culture change. He also underscores that borrowing of culture elements among diverse

cultures is a highly enriching practice that has enhanced the development of human cultures as it has allowed the sharing of their resourceful inventions (pp. 330-332).

II- The Study's methodology:

2. 1. Design, Sampling and Data Collection

Our study objectives point clearly to the mixed method design. The study utilizes both interviewing and observation as research instruments. The data collected is both in qualitative and quantitative forms. Data is qualitative as our interviewees narrate their experiences when responding to open-ended questions. Their account consists of stories characterizing what our countryside used to look like contrasting it to its current features. This qualitative data is examined for both patterns and meaning and is categorized to identify themes that correspond to our research questions. Then, a quantitative – statistical – analysis is performed to render the presentation and interpretation of such data more convenient. Secondly, observational data is captured through observation of our compatriots' behaviors and activities.

In addition, studying the transformation of Ait Ali Boubker's countryside narrows down the choice of the population to be studied. In accordance, we elected members of the countryside's elderly to be our study's informants. Age has been a decisive factor in our selection of the target population. The chosen group of people belongs to the independence generation because we assumed that these have spent an interesting part of their lives, nearly half of the last century, in this countryside. Thus, they have witnessed both, what we deem to be, its primitive form and current status. Accordingly, they lived through or were part of the various changes that took place in such setting. Therefore, their views are of paramount importance since they enable the comparison of the past with the present-day situation of the living reality of these cohorts.

In this respect, our study' population sample involves 58 interviewees. It is composed of 35 men and 23 females. Their age is comprised between [50 – 95]. That is, the study covers an age span of 45 years. Most of the study respondents are either the researcher's or his family's acquaintances. In addition, the majority of our study respondents, especially the females, are illiterate. For more precision, all the female and male informants whose age exceeded the sixties are uneducated. An important portion our study subjects had difficulty telling or recalling their age more precisely. They recalled and related their age in terms of famous occurrences we read about in history books at school, such as the exile of king Mohamed V by the French colonial authorities in August 20th, 1953 and his return in October 30th, 1955.

Concerning the study's research instruments, we relied mostly on observation and interviewing. We got immersed in the day-to-day activities of our participants and we witnessed the former and current statuses of the countryside at stake. We would visit and talk to our study informants in person in the local Amazigh dialect. We would sit closer to them after kissing their hand or head as a customary sign of respect; then, engage them in an informal conversation around cups of tea and related foods, which are customarily offered to visitors as hospitality tokens.
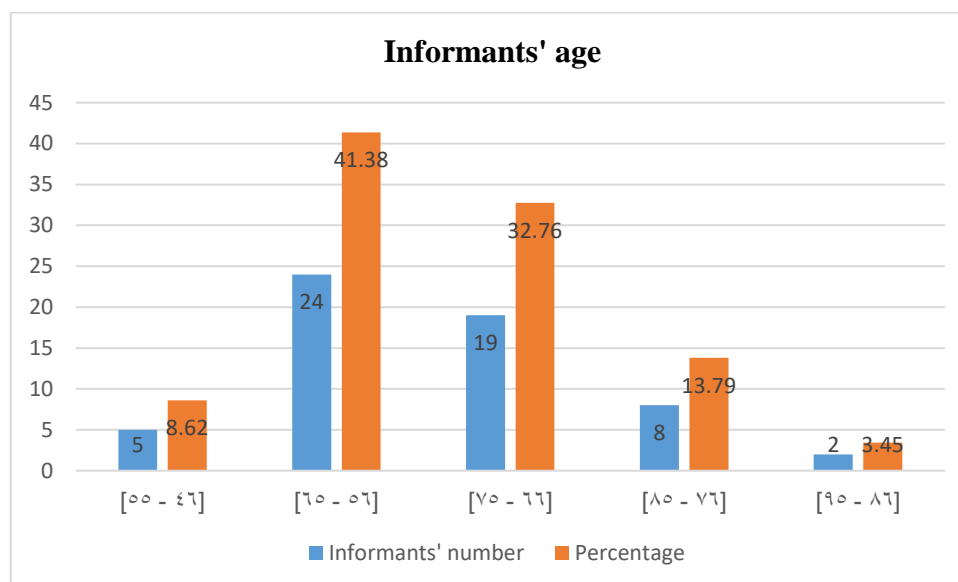
We would ask them about (**i**) the changes that are taking place in our countryside, and secondly about (**ii**) the factors which could have brought about these alterations. Then, we would inquire about (**iii**) their opinion concerning the agency of media networks in causing such variations.

3. Survey findings

3. 1. Informants' age:

For consistency purposes, we have split the study sample into five age groups of equal breadth, nine years each to facilitate classification and interpretation. The following table and graph convey the study informants' age:
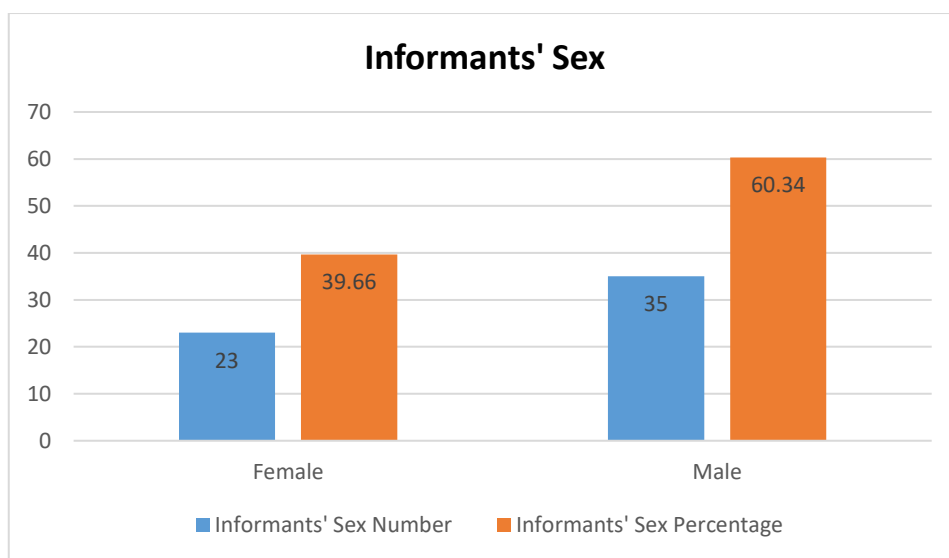
Informants' age		
Age Categories	Informants' number	Percentage
[46 - 55]	5	8,62
[56 - 65]	24	41,38
[66 - 75]	19	32,76
[76 - 85]	8	13,79
[86 - 95]	2	3,45
Sum	58	100,00

As the table shows, the largest age category is the one whose age is comprised between [56 - 65]; and the group whose age is contained between [66 - 75] is the second largest category. Both of these categories represent more than two-thirds of our sample. While our sample includes 8 respondents whose age ranges from 76 to 85, constituting 13.79% of the whole population, the other two groups are rather insignificant with the youngest faction whose age is limited between 46 and 55 involving 5 participants and the eldest group that is aged between 86 – 95 comprises only 2 interviewees.

3.2. Informants' gender:

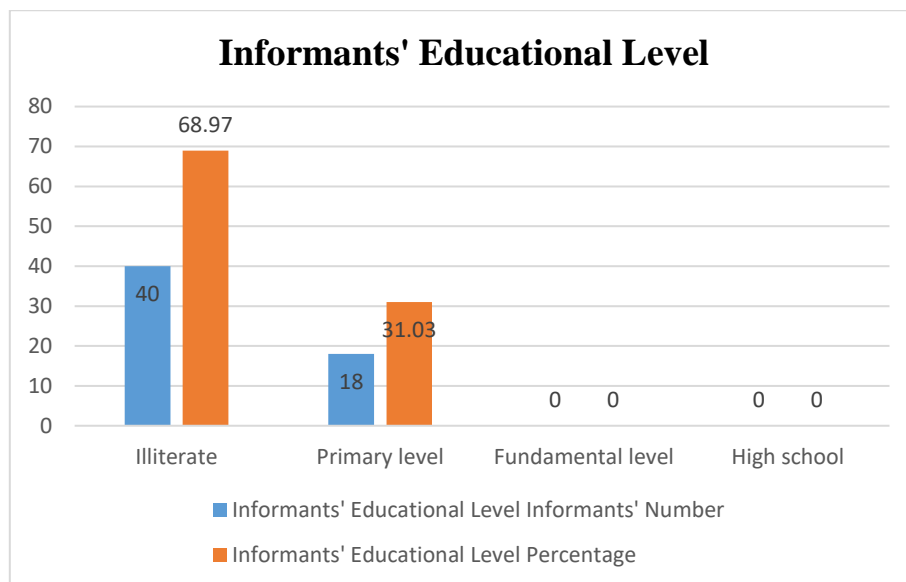| Informants' Sex		
Sex Category	Number	Percentage
Female	23	39,66
Male	35	60,34
Sum	58	100

As the table and the related graph show, males constitute almost two-thirds of the study sample: 35 respondents representing 60.34%. The fact that a significant portion of married women within our countryside are not native to it justifies this imbalance. Thus, we included only those women who are innate to the countryside as they would be more familiar with the changes taking place.

3.3. Informants' educational level:

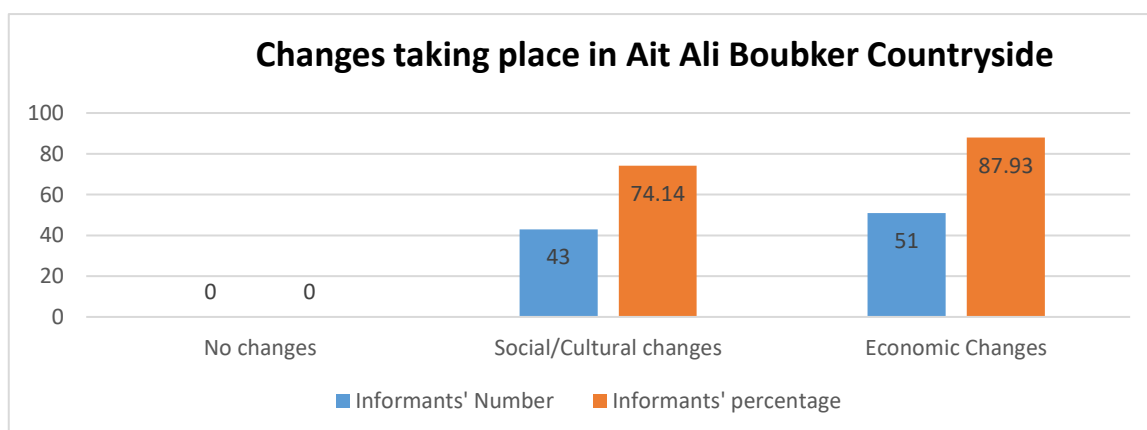This table and related graph illustrate our informants' educational level.

Informants' Educational Level		
Educational Level	Informants' Number	Percentage
Illiterate	40	68,97
Primary level	18	31,03
Fundamental level	0	0
High school	0	0
Sum	58	100,00

Informants' Educational Level

(chart)

More than two-thirds, namely 40 respondents who represent 68.97% of our sample is uneducated while 18 individuals representing 31.03% are literate. Yet, the latter hold only a primary school certificate since the nearest fundamental school, which is quite recent, to this countryside is almost 10 kilometers far, which justifies the high literacy rate among our sample.

3. 4. Changes taking places place in Ait Ali Boubker Countryside:

Changes taking place in Ait Ali Boubker Countryside			
Type of change	Informants' Number	Informants' percentage	
No changes	0	0	
Social/Cultural changes	43	74,14	
Economic Changes	51	87,93	
Sum	94	162,07	

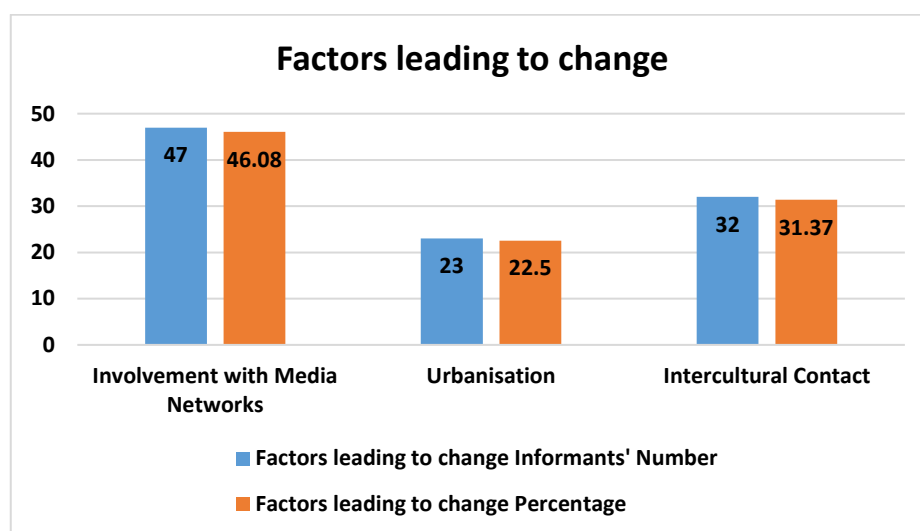## Changes taking place in Ait Ali Boubker Countryside

(chart)

Indeed, as the table and related graph show, all the members of the population sample concur that the Ait Ali Boubker countryside is not only undergoing social and cultural changes, but also economic variations. These variations will be meticulously mentioned in the discussion section.

3. 5. Factors leading to change:

Regarding the factors that lead to the observable changes, our research participants

Factors leading to change		
Change Factors	**Informants' Number**	**Percentage**
Involvement with Media Networks	47	46,08
Urbanisation	23	22,5
Inter-cultural Contact	32	31,37

4. Discussion

Indeed, all the study respondents concur that the Ait Ali Boubker countryside has/is witnessed/ing deep-seated changes. These informants explain that these alterations have started and accelerated ever since the equipment of this countryside with electricity services in 1998. From this date onwards, several social, cultural and economic variations have taken place. In accordance, Color TV sets, instead of black and white ones, have made their way into the countryside' s households. Therefore, the new comer's programs gained more popularity and deprived elderly grandmothers' of their former audiences. Consequently, kids and adolescents attended more to TV shows, at the cost of elderly mothers' erstwhile attractive stories, which hindered the opportunities of cultural transmission. As a consequence, the socialization and enculturation roles of grandparents regressed significantly.

Consequently, because of their abandonment, grand/mothers are getting more involved with television and social media, especially Facebook and WhatsApp, mainly during Covid-19 related confinement. The majority of these grand/mothers confess that they it was the use of Moroccan Arabic that drew them to television and thanks to which they discovered and enjoyed exciting foreign serials. These also add that the above-mentioned social networks enable them to keep in touch with their remote family members and offspring who settled in big cities. These stress that both TV and social media are good company and that thanks to them, they no longer feel lonely. Some of the grandchildren, the grand/mothers relate, opened Facebook accounts for them and introduced them into the enlightening and learning potential of Youtube. The grand/mothers ultimately tell that thanks to their social/media involvement, they can issue both phone or video calls and share pictures as well as audio material. They feel, thus, no longer secluded, but more and more up-to-date.

Moreover, the survey informants mention that these changes are closely-interrelated with on-going economic metamorphoses that were taking place. These explicate that the availability of electricity introduced into the countryside quite new activities. In this respect,

livelihood agricultural activities were abandoned in favor of mercantile agricultural pursuits, which flourished thanks to the widespread use of modern irrigation systems; whereas the former kind shrank further due to its heavy dependence on rain bearing in mind that drought and heat waves regularly hit the countryside in the last two decades [2000 - 2020]. Likewise, traditional activities, such as wool spinning, have also declined and were surrogated by novel income-generating activities like raising livestock and dairy cows. This enabled households to accede progressively into markets, which provided more opportunities for intercultural contact and exchange.

As a result of this new tendency, extra income was earned and families spent their earnings on improving their living conditions. In this regard, old horizontal buildings were demolished and new vertical constructions, built on the pattern of cities, emerged. Similarly, these additional revenues were invested in further mechanizing their agricultural activities. Such mechanization provided household members with more free time, which they spent on watching TV more and more. In fact, attendance to television amplified, especially when the 2M channel started dubbing foreign serials into Moroccan Arabic (Darija) starting from 2009. *Moroccoworldnews* (May 5th, 2016) electronic paper comments on this feature and advocates that: "2M is reported to be the most watched channel in Morocco, capturing an almost 30 share of total viewing." (§, 7). *Moroccoworldnews* reveals that "The pattern (dubbing) continued on 2M, where characters in a solid 87 percent of TV series dialogued in Darija. [...] 2M dubbed a total of 199 episodes from six series into Darija from non-Arabic languages last October.' (§, 6).

A significant portion of our study sample believes that this practice of dubbing serials into Darija significantly challenges the dominance of Amazigh in the countryside and introduced Darija into Amazigh households, which turned out progressively bilingual. Some members were very positive and welcomed Moroccan Arabic into their households. They believe that this initiative would help their offspring since it is the language of instruction at school.

This increased exposure to the media introduced households into different life styles and rose their expectations quite enormously. Accordingly, more female individuals enrolled in schools, which increased the rate of literacy among females. Female graduates, like their male fellows, increasingly took on professional roles outside the limited countryside in adjacent cities, Fes mainly. Some of these established themselves in such cities and exchanged visits with family members in the countryside on holidays and religious celebrations. These visits augmented with the availability of transportation means, the pavement of roads and/or the appropriation of one's own car. Such visits acquainted countrymen with urban life whose aspects they emulated on convenient circumstances, such as weddings where 'Neggafa', a woman that specializes in the bride's cosmetic stuffs, dress and accessories as well as DJs who are taking over local celebrations in which native Amazigh musical bands used to play.

On the whole, more educated members of our study subjects perceive these changes to be quite normal and part of the natural growth processes of people and civilizations. On the other hand, the uneducated informants, who make up the majority, blame these alterations on exposure to the media. This segment stresses the agency of the media, especially the Moroccan TV channel 2M which these believe to be performing a modernizing role by introducing modern lifestyles into rather primitive households. This fact confirms our H_2 that the main factor behind the afore-mentioned variations is countrysiders' media involvement. On the other side, the former facts approve our H_1 that a confluence of factors, including the advent of urbanization, exposure to the media and acculturation account for the variations taking place in Ait Ali Boubker's countryside.

Conclusion

But whether media networks' output which our study sample attend to might undermine or pose any threats vis-à-vis the local cultural features of the Ait Ali Boubker countryside is far debatable. In this regard, Samuel Huntington in "The West Unique, not Universal" (1996) postulates that

The spread of Western consumer goods is not the spread of Western culture. Drinking Coca-Cola makes a Russian no more Western than eating sushi makes a US. Citizen Japanese. As counties modernize, they may westernize in superficial ways, but not in the most important measures of culture (p. 28).

That is, the increased presence of Western material products all over the world does not forcefully mean the adoption of Western culture. Still, the consumption of occidental goods and the reproduction of Western dressing, singing and dancing styles are only shallow elements of a culture's surface structure. These constituents are dimly the visible part of the iceberg; whereas, a culture's deep structure consists of world view, family and history. By analogy, attendance to foreign movies and soap operas does not alter a viewers' culture.

In this respect, Huntington (Op. Cit.) considers that borrowing among civilizations has always existed all through history without there being any alteration or disruption of any parts' cultural or belief standards. Huntington instantiates his claim by the fact that the Chinese have taken up Buddhism from India, but such borrowing did not result in the indianization of China. Arabs, too, at some point of their history, have safely sought some of the Greek body of thought. Therefore, Huntington concludes that many societies are assimilating key elements of the Western civilization and they are using them to bolster and invigorate their national cultural identity (pp. 28-46).

Alfred Kroeber, as mentioned in Milton Singer (1972), not only endorses Huntington's contention of the undisruptive nature of borrowing among cultures, but enlarges its scope as well. Kroeber considers that both cultures and civilizations are the fruits of compound historical developments out of elements that are mostly borrowed from other cultures and civilizations. However, most cultures successfully rework and confer indigenous traits on the majority of these imported cultural components despite their non-indigenous sources. In other words, a culture always tends to absorb a foreign influence, and appropriate it, then, to its domestic needs. That is, the final product would be sort of fusion of global and local aspects, i. e., glocalization. Kroeber also maintains that civilizations exhibit various evolution stages that both the incorporation of extraneous culture aspects and native innovation processes impact. He, equally, believes that cultures attain climaxes of maturity that correspond with epochs of victorious organization of ideas, standards and sub-styles. Kroeber, finally, asserts that the inclusion of foreign elements not only enhances a culture's orderliness, but amplifies its faculty to assimilate more external constituents, and fosters its efficiency as well (pp. 252-267).

Robert Redfield, as mentioned in Milton Singer (Op. Cit.), identically, draws an analogous account. Redfield, in this respect, distinguishes two stages of the growth of civilizations. Within the primary phase, the Great Tradition not only indigenously grows out of primitive native cultures, but also maintains homogeny and agreement with the Little Tradition regarding the order of "highness" and "lowness" among the different communities in a civilization. Within the secondary period, a civilization tends to absorb foreign features from other cultures and civilizations, which deteriorates both the afore-said accord and the cultural harmony between the city and the country. Moreover, both of Redfield and Milton Singer, as mentioned in Milton Singer, reiterate the assertion that civilizations are distinctive assortments of native and non-native constituents from different cultures and civilizations. They also uphold the claim that civilizations may integrate foreign ingredients at certain times of their progression without disrupting their main character traits. Instead, such integration yields a characteristic rich composite concoction of indigenous and non-indigenous components (pp. 256-257).

Moreover, William Havilland (1993) also recognizes the fruitful aspect of borrowing, which, he believes, triggers two-way mechanisms on both parts. In accordance, Redfield notes that, on the one side, the borrowed cultural artifacts are most often modified and reshaped so that they would comply with the host culture components. On the other side, the recipient culture most likely undergoes variations so as to better tolerate the imported materials. For instance, Moroccan Hip Hop music instantiates such twofold process. In order to please Moroccan audiences, Western Hip Hop is being moroccanized. To enhance Hip Hop's cultural acceptability among native spectators, famous traditional local songs have been adapted to conform to and fit Hip Hop music tunes. Indeed, borrowing is such a widespread and undamaging practice among cultures that Ralph Linton (1936), as mentioned in Havilland (Op. Cit.), considers that borrowing makes up the largest majority, "as much as 90 %" (p. 407), of any culture's content. That is, only ten percent of a culture's artifacts are of intrinsic origin.

However, it should not be assumed that TV channels are the only agents behind such variations. TV and the media, in general, are only a variable amongst a legion of others. Kunczik (1991) encourages such belief and claims that

The mass media and their effects cannot be regarded in isolation from the social context within which they are integrated. Beyond doubt, the mass media represent an important variable in processes of social change. But they are, certainly, only a variable alongside many others (p. 44).

That is, the agency of TV is compounded by the effect of a plethora of other factors. Milton Singer (1972) also spells out that urbanization intervenes within such process. He contends that

The effect of urbanization (…) has been to shift attention and activity away from ritual observances and sacred learning to fields of popular culture and the arts. This change carries with it a shift in values from those predominantly connected with religious merit to those of mass entertainment and aesthetics (p. 187).

In other words, irreligiosity and the attractiveness of entertainment and the arts are obvious corollaries of the advent of urbanization. Samovar, Porter and Stefani (1998) bring up the involvement of contact as a contributory element in the course of culture change and they argue that "cultures are being constantly confronted with ideas and information from outside sources – and contact , by its very nature, brings change" (pp. 44-45). Many social forces such as women associations, which are in ascendancy, promote culture change, too. I also think that the State's cultural policy of festivalization intensifies this effect. By giving popular culture a tangible platform and by inviting Middle Eastern or Western song stars to perform before the public, festivals materialize and reinforce the entertaining content of Arab satellite TV.

In accordance, it would be much safer to attribute the observable alterations within Ait Ali Boubker to the convergence of the totality of these factors rather than ascribing them to one individual agent, something comparable to a multiple influences' network. Hence, Dennis McQuail's contention (1983) that "it is not at all easy to name a case where the media can plausibly be regarded as the sole or indisputable cause of a given social effect" (p. 81). Perhaps, in order to assign the media as the single variable at the origin of such metamorphoses requires an extensive longitudinal study that tracks informants' cultural, societal and economic behaviors overtime before the introduction of TV within the studied tribe and long after its popularity, something that is completely unfeasible for the time being.

References

Boukous, A. (1999). Dominance et Différence : Essai sur les enjeux symboliques. (Edition Le Fennec). Casablanca: Imprimerie Najah El Jadida.

Ember, C. R., & Melvin, E. (1993). Cultural Anthropology (7th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., A Simon & Shuster Company, Englewood cliffs.

Ferraro, Garry, (1995). Cultural Anthropology (2nd ed.). USA: west Publishing Company.

Gerbner, George; Gross, Larry; Morgan, Michael, & Signorielli, Nancy (1986), 'Living with Television: The Dynamics of the Cultivation Process', in Bryant, J., & Zillmann, D., (eds.) (1986), Perspectives on Media Effects, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale: New Jersey.

Haviland, W. A., (1993). Cultural Anthropology. Fort Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Huntington, P. ,Samuel. (1996). The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd.

Inglehart, R., (1997). Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, Political Change in 43 Countries. New Jersey: Princeton Univ. Press.

Kishan, D. T., (2000). International Communication: Continuity and Change. Great Britain: Arnold.

Kottak, P. C., (2001). Cultural Anthropology (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Companies.

Kunczik, M. (1991). Communication and social change. Germany: Friederich-Ebert-Stiftung.

McQuail, D. (1983). Mass communication theory –an introduction. London: Beverly Hills, Sage Publications.

Samovar, L. , Porter, R. , Stefani, L. (1998). Communication Between Cultures (3rd. Ed.). USA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Singer, M. (1972). When A Great Tradition Modernizes: An Anthropological Approach To Indian Civilization. New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc.

Staff Writer, (2016). "Almost 96% of Movies on Morocco's Channel Al Oula Are in Darija" accessed from **https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2016/05/185811/almost-96-of-movies-on-moroccos-channel-al-oula-are-in-darija** on May 05, 2016 2:45 p.m.

.