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Globalization and the Creative/Cultural Industries: An Assessment of Nigeria's Position in the Global Space

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Abstract: *Globalization has become a tempting concept in the discourse of creative/ cultural industries. Its impact to our daily lives is best imagined, and the Nigerian movie culture is not an exception. Nollywood as a creative industry blindly and effortlessly secured an enviable position in the global space, yet it struggles for definition, categorization, and conceptualization in scholarly debate. Perhaps these confusion results from the industry's growth, which has defied normal protocols and conventions to achieve fame. This paper seeks to establish that despite its deviant nature, Nollywood as a creative industry has succeeded in defining its identity through the establishment of new values, attitudes and cultural practices. In this regard, this paper concluded that Nollywood did not only carve its niche, but also it is becoming a topic of great interest in global dialogue.*

Keywords: *Globalization, Global space, Nollywood, Cultural practices, Film culture, Creative industries*

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalisation has become a generic term that is topical in intellectual discuss in the last 50 years, its definition and scope has incited scholarly debates with a consensus where it is deployed to define economic changes with cultural, social and political changes in scope. As a complex and multidimensional concept, the effect of globalisation has become almost hegemonic and hostile to national and local economies. Irrespective of its capitalist tendencies towards the integration of local and grey economies into a global unregulated market, it is perhaps in principle a global economic assembly shaped by consultations and exchanges of economic, social and political institutions of global capital and nation states (Shalmali, 2007). Mostly driven by industries of global capitalism, they are helpless with the support of individual states in providing enabling environment for it to thrive.

However, many scholars are concerned about its effect and scope, with the general assumption that globalisation may seek to subsume smaller or weaker economic structures in the guise of a global umbrella. In this regard, it is difficult to disentangle the Nigerian society from the web of this phenomenal process. Nigeria has therefore continued its integration into the global connexion in practically all domains of its national lives. Cautiously, Nigeria has persistently sought mutual relations with sister countries in its attempt to boast trade and investment and ways to enrich it cultural heritages and achieve global recognition and acceptance.

Moreover, a key driver in promoting Nigeria's socio-culture is through its film culture (Nollywood). With an annual production in excess of 2000 copies (Larkin, 2008) and a vast unregulated distribution network, the Nigerian film culture has permeated a great part of sub Saharan Africa and has become a cultural appeal to

many black people around the globe. Perhaps, this film industry is set to dominate the global film pantheon; it is in this context that Nollywood is determined to locate its place in the globalisation processes.

The globalisation process has infiltrated different cultures including film cultures; it has also resulted in a near homogenization of cultures where dominant ones, pioneering a new order and form, have subsumed local cultures forcing local cultures to abandon their own representation and identity. Despite the ambiguity of globalisation and its obliteration of weak cultures, some did not only manage to keep afloat, they have also fought to have a voice, locate and establish themselves on the global space (Majumder, 2016). It is worthy to note that globalization has also resulted in a creative content and production paradigm; hence, this paper observed Nollywood and the tautness related to its content imbalance among its audiences.

Obviously, there is a considerable gap in understanding the film industries; this gap is amplified when discussed in the context of globalisation. Looking at it critically we understand globalisation not just in the spread of products, people or practices but also a deliberate interconnectedness between nations in conference whose negotiations are aimed at integration of local economies into a global economic, cultural, and to some degree also political hegemony.

2. Globalisation as an Aggregate Term

Before we narrow this paper into the globalisation of film cultures, it will be pertinent to understand globalisation as an aggregate term. In this context however, we will seek to understand globalisation as a process where nations integrate into a single global social order. However, the globalisation theory can be examined from the globalization of cultures, globalisation of political systems and the globalisation of economic systems. If we are to examine film as a culture and Nollywood in addition, we must understand the film culture as exhibitors of society and culture from which it emerges.

2.1 Cultural Globalization

As a phenomenon it embraces our daily experiences that is predisposed to the diffusion of products and ideas, characterized by the calibration of global and cultural lexes and fuelled by demand and the effectiveness of communications, e-commerce, popular culture, and global travel. Cultural globalization has set itself on the path of homogeneity that is threatening the flavour of our cultural diversity. Although this might sound as an exaggeration, the phenomenon is making noticeable progress in establishing a single global culture (Watson, 2016), through the proponents of new media and of course, film.

2.2 Globalisation of Political Systems

According to the Global Policy Forum (2016) politics fall within the domain of national political systems. In these systems, government is responsible for the protection of lives and property, regulation of economic mechanism and the protection of the environment, human rights among others. However, the continued global exchange of ideas on climate, economy and respect to international protocols and conventions has made political activity a key aspect of globalisation. Under this phenomenon politics have risen above the state and has found abode in regional or transnational organizations and projects such as the World Bank, WTO (world Trade Organisation) UNCTAD (united Nations Conference on Trade and Development) and global advocacy groups such as Amnesty International, Transparency International among others.

2.3 Globalisation of Economic Systems

Virtually every aspect of our daily economic lives has been transformed by globalisation. In Africa, the significance of continental trades especially in commodity exchange has shaped local economies and has provided linkages on a global scale. The angle of this argument is that these linkages embodies a growth trajectory influenced by a global economy that is sharpening and restructuring local and regional economies (Dawood, 2001).

2.4 Globalisation and Nollywood

As these elements of globalisation infiltrate regional and local borders, they share cultures, which eventually result in a culturally collective identity. According to UNESCO, the exchange of cultures is executed at a faster rate between developing nations and the developed nations who are arguably the major exporters of cultural goods. This exposes the domination of American, Indian and Chinese movies before the boom in Nollywood. This elusive threat to Africa's culture and Nigeria should be a basis for concern, the dominance of American styled movies has become the yardstick in gauging the standards of similar industries across the

globe. This dominance has led to the near homogenization of the film industry, which is threatening its diversity. This phenomenon, understood as cultural imperialism is associated with the annihilation of cultural identities.

The erosion of indigenous cultures has been amplified through the invasions of local and regional economies mostly through film, and the Nigerian situation is not an exception. However, this continued erosion of local values has mostly been blamed on the globalisation of film cultures. Although, the Nigerian film industry has been rated among the top three in the world (Larkin, 2008), it has continued to bear the resemblance of cultural imperialism even from the coinage of its name 'Nollywood' where 'wood' has become a globalisation suffix used to denote film with the appropriate prefix used to determine its geographical location (Ibagere, 2015). This points to the fact that globalisation is often overwhelming and an irresistible wave local cultures cannot halt.

The response then is to propagate Nigeria's original cultures by making them relevant and an extension of the global film culture. Fittingly, Nollywood as an industry has grown to fit into this global matrix. It has therefore become necessary for Nollywood to establish itself, if it must be seen as an extension of the globalised film culture (Haynes, 2005). Although Nollywood has been rated the largest by production (Larkin, 2008), it has been plagued by low production quality (McCall, 2004) and high content recycling, which give most of the films a similar story line.

Apart from all these flaws, Nollywood has become a topical issue for not only scholarly discussion but also political debates. These trepidations stimulated a reorientation of Nollywood professionals (filmmakers) as they renew their desire to situate Nollywood on the global film space, as a film industry that has defied all protocols to succeed and as such earned its place in the global film culture. Even though the general assumption of Nollywood films is towards gender segregation, fundamentalism, occultism with a homophobic ambience, many of Nollywood's films are actually folkloric in nature. Therefore, can we safely conclude that the identity of Nollywood is to large extent determined by its content? If content is a determinant in film culture, then what type of identity or image has Nollywood amplified to the global community?

The global image of Nollywood cannot be separated from Nigeria's prevailing conditions. Therefore, what Nollywood has offered to the global space, the way and manner it is delivered, and the contents deployed in these deliveries are intricately enveloped by the conditions of its industrialization (Ekwuazi, 1991). Additionally, the social, political, cultural and philosophical indices have also contributed in shaping the image of Nollywood in the global space (Ayakoroma, 2008).

In this regard, it is acceptable to analyse Nollywood's position in the global space against the circumstances enumerated earlier. That it is possible to create an image for Nigeria through film considering the viewpoints of the environment where the film is produced (Nbeta & Ikiroma-Owiye, 2014). However, the truth remains that most of these portrayals may not be an actual representation of reality (Ekwuazi, 1991; Cartelli, 2007; Ayakoroma, 2008) of what the Nigerian society really is. Nevertheless, this continued image profiling by Nollywood filmmakers has only succeeded in submitting to critics and scholars a 'negative image' of Nigeria on the global space and this has exploited the gullibility of its admirers (Ibagere, 2015).

Nollywood's Position in the Global Space

It is pertinent to note that, for a film industry to effectively occupy a position in the global space, it must first have an identity (Ibagere, 2015). Such identity must represent its philosophy clearly directed at its progress despite the challenges that threatens its march into success (Ekwuazi, 1991). However, Nigeria as a country has been marred in political turbulence, the seeming perennial crisis signal a nation devoid of political ideology. This scenario has painted an atmosphere of doubt and fear characterized by a catalogue of social and economic woes that is unacceptable owing to the vast resources at its disposal. Added to these myriads of problems is the vertical pressure by the west to alien norms such as same sex marriage. Ibagere (2015) noted that these developments can destroy the socio-cultural foundations on which the nation is built, which will erode its identity and the chances of establishing itself on the global map.

This paper therefore posited, that nations are now challenged by obnoxious cultural and social practices, which are now threatening our traditional and valued norms. Albeit, in the face of this continued pressure in the guise of globalisation, Nollywood must position Nigeria and indeed Africa to defend its cultural territories

by using its position as the largest producer of film culture (Larkin, 2008) to present a positive image of Nigeria and indeed Africa. Although, most of the films produced in Nollywood seems to present a negative image of the region, there are copious advances that present positive characteristics.

Nigerians are optimistic irrespective of grim conditions. However, they must translate this optimism into attitudes and attitudes into patriotism just as it is applicable with American citizens who are willing to die for America. These attitudes can be promoted through our film culture just like the Americans, Chinese and Indians. Here we see that while film production is being nurtured, it is often used as a tool in cultural diplomacy and ultimately globalisation of cultures.

Drawing examples from Hollywood, the American dream is projected in such a way and manner that even sovereign nations that look up to this projected America as the 'country ideal' see strong political ideologies deep-seated in the minds of its citizens. Ideas of an America that can commit whatever resources to save its citizens even if it is just one man (Ayakoroma, 2008). In the submissions of Igabere (2015), the analysis of Ayakoroma posits that any other nation can replicate the American template when its people are ready to sacrifice anything including their lives for its nation to achieve integrity and dominance.

Other industries that have also used the film industry to project its culture include Chinese films characterised by its spirit of self-defence and a subtle image projection that rebels against Japanese domination. Another example are Indian films, despite the abject poverty of its people and cases of ill treatment to its women (Soutik, 2012), its film industry has succeeded in portraying an image of love and marriage finesse. The analysis of these films divulges a positive exemplification of the societies from which they develop (Ibagere, 2015). It is therefore easy to see, why we consider Indians as more beautiful (Sharma, 2011) and America as God's own country (Bates, 2012).

Desolately, the Nigerian film culture has failed to establish a positive image of Nigeria. It has failed to generate a socio-cultural norm Nigeria can be identified with, nor has it succeeded in promoting any political ideology for global digestion, if any, the Nigerian filmmaker has effortlessly and blindly projected a negative Nigeria that is ironically admired but hardly trusted (Onifade, 2012). Nigerian cinema has also failed to create a film culture that is popular (copied across the globe) (Okome, 2007; Okoye, 2007) where a Nigerian political ideology is promoted as a way of life.

The search for Nigeria's global pedestal can be examined against America's dominance of global politics (Gagnon, 2015). Nollywood can be used as a cultural diplomatic tool to assert itself as a political leader in Africa, therein advancing the voice of Africa in global politics (Ibagere, 2015). This has become necessary because Nollywood has the highest production of films in the world (Cartelli, 2007). Therefore, Nigeria must adopt Nollywood in similar ways America adopted Hollywood to enhance its image and attract people to visit them, this will boost tourism; attract foreign investment and intellectuals who will see Nigeria as the 'country ideal' of the black world. This is only achievable within the context of cultural exclusivity and not cultural inclusivity.

In the light of the above, it has become pertinent for Nollywood to look inwards and position itself in the global space, by harnessing the potential of its production volume to project a Nigerian image that is positive and to advance the understanding of the country as one worthy to visit, live and invest in.

Attitude of Nigerian Government to Film Production

Until recently, the Nigerian government does not seem to have clear policies towards film production. This attitude is different to other creative economies where substantial finances are channelled towards the development of the film economy. It is evident that many of these countries have exploited the film industries to develop its cultural heritages; therefore, the need for support is no longer a choice but a national imperative (Dibie, 1993).

On the contrary, producers who see filmmaking as a capitalist venture dominate the Nigerian film economy (Nollywood). Regardless of this truth, film is also a tool for national propaganda (Jason, 2013). A determining factor to this attitude lies in the erroneous perception by government that since the industry thrives on the mediocrity of its producers who see film only as a venture medium with little consideration to its technicalities where the naivety of its viewers has been highly exploited, Nollywood is gradually losing credibility to sustain its niche on the global space.

It is therefore no wonder that Nollywood's content continues to circulate in a 'deleterious content transference' circle of infantile love and rituals watered by religious prodigy, the recycling of this negative contents continues unabated as it satisfies the gullibility of the poor and low class who constitute a large portion of its (Nollywood) audience (Ibagere, 2015).

Cultural Impacts and Challenges

Transmission of cultural values has gone beyond the resurgence of globalised film cultures. Although the film industry as an entertainment industry often reflects values such as cupidity, vehemence, decadence and diffidence often fought to promote local values and norms; it has failed to convince educators and parents who perpetually find it difficult to clamp the surge because of its negative influence on society.

Irrespective of these flaws, the industry has recorded some degree of impacts especially in sounds and images. The relationship between sounds and images is independent and at the same time complimentary. While sound enhances the quality of action in film production, images enhance comprehension and visual literacy. Nollywood clarifies this view despite its poor production; it has played important roles in the representation of African cultures and tradition using images and sounds (Ugulah, 2015).

Accordingly, Nollywood has anchored its breakthrough on its ability to transit from an immovable medium to a hyperactive electronic market that is affordable and accessible. Its distinctive distribution methods have affected the consumption rate of information expressed in Nigerian films. This distinctive method however, necessitates solemn effects on cultures in Africa. Thus, the amalgamation of numerous predictable and hegemonic film productions signals a new landscape for cultural development.

Another challenge the industry faces is its constant tongue lashing from western critics who focus on its flaws at the detriment of its breakthroughs. It is a fact that Nollywood has succeeded in restructuring the manner and way films are produced, yet it has over time seek improvement in its flaws despite the negative influence on the indigenous cultures.

A major challenge to Nollywood points out that independent films do not promote national development, but rather proliferates the assassination of national image, which is a prerequisite for development for capitalist gains. In towing this line, the Nigerian film industry maybe losing grip of its enviable position as Africa's top film economy. The challenges often manifest in isolation and inability of Nigerian films to reach global audiences due to economic constraints that necessitated the use of videos as an alternative (Haynes, 2005; Okome, 2007). Hence, in the re-branding project it is imperative that the Nigerian government should be fully engaged in any information-disseminating tool, such as film. This will ensure that film messages are crafted in such a way that will bring about a positive perception of the country.

Another challenge facing the industry stems from failure of knowledge institution to capture the needs of the industry adequately in its curriculum. It is common with most knowledge institutions to concentrate on theories at the expense of its practical and obvious necessities, according to Ekwuazi (1991) and Igbere (2015), films studies are taught theoretically without needed apparatus to compliment theoretical teachings. The dearth of necessary apparatus to support theoretical instruction is evident from the products these institutions churn out into the economy, where they are often left to the mercy of quacks that have commandeered the film economy. In this situation, a rather trained professional strangely accommodates existing standards if they must make a living.

The preceding challenges are rather central to the success of Nollywood in its endeavour to carve a place for itself on the global space. These challenges are formidable, for Nigeria to establish itself as a major film player on the global space; it must take deliberate and common-sense action that is particularly geared to the progress of this up-and-coming industry.

Nollywood and The Likely Panacea

In the face of all these, Nigeria must not despair; the challenges so tallied and detailed can be transcended. A panacea to this relies first on Nigeria's attitude towards its film economy; the government must accept its role as a primary driver in positioning itself in the global space. The film industry is a veritable tool to galvanize the creative economy (Wei, 2016); the Nigerian government must deploy the film industry to propel its cultural heritages into the world, at least as its contribution to globalisation.

Evidently, many countries have become actively involved in their film industries (Gagnon, 2015); and Nigeria must not be left out. Government must not always give out bailout funds to producers, where some films may never see the light of day; but in its place, introduce a prize system where films that promote national unity, cultural heritages and symbolizes Nigeria's positive image are awarded. This paper suggest that such prize must not be less than an anticipated sell of an ordinary production (the value for 20,000 copies at least). In essence, Nigeria must have a philosophy and cultural policy that is the pantheon of every Nigerian citizen.

When a positive attitude, philosophy or socio-cultural policy is repeatedly amplified (through film), it coerces its audience (global audience as its target) to rethink its impression of the regular Nigerian who is often seen as an ardent crook in other climes. Film business is not for charlatans anymore, film is a brand business and government (s) must take it seriously.

Nigeria must revive its film corporations to produce films which portrays the good image of Nigeria just as in the United Kingdom with '007' the James Bond series, in truth, though, the years since Fleming first corralled 'Casino Royale' have been conspicuously variegated for the United Kingdom and its secret agent. It is true that for the last 63 years, James Bond has helped boost the reputations of his real-life colleagues in the British intelligence service (Apps, 2015).

Nigeria must reconsider its attitude to the film industry, high quality films and positive impact movies must be re-engineered into the national film culture, and this can be facilitated through the adoption of local and important literary materials. Knowledge institutions must create a synergy between production and dissemination such as it is applicable with Multi-Choice, Star-Times and Iroko TV (an online medium). In this calculated attempt, it is not difficult for Nollywood to relaunch itself into global prominence with a new and positive image. Intellectuals with filmmaking experience should pilot such a project, intellectuals who can set standards that will be difficult to erode. These standards must fall into Nigeria's cultural parallelism.

Finally, Nigeria's knowledge institutions must begin to act as partners and not critics. Film or media department must receive adequate funding for instruction and practical studies. Knowledge institutions must fit into the new image equation, they must work hard to improve Nollywood's technical finesse, Nigeria's brand burden is too important to be left to charlatans to manage. Government, knowledge institutions and the creative industry must synergize to ensure that not only does Nigeria secure a rightful place in global space it should also be a position that is truly respected and held in high esteem.

3. Conclusions

This paper herein concludes that Nollywood as a creative industry, blindly and effortlessly secured an enviable position in the global space, but it is still struggling for appropriate definition, labelling, and conceptualization in global discuss. This paper examined the globalisation process, and how it has permeated different cultures including film cultures. It also questioned the near homogenization of cultures where dominant ones, pioneering a new order and form, have subsumed local cultures forcing local cultures to abandon their own representation and identity in favour of these dominant cultures.

However, the paper could not disentangle the erosion of indigenous cultures through the amplification of foreign cultures by the media of which film is also inclusive; here we have also seen that the Nigerian film industry is simply another prey in the hands of these dominant societies. However, this continued erosion of local values has mostly been blamed on the globalisation of film cultures.

It was also impossible to separate Nigeria's prevailing situation from Nollywood's global image. Therefore, what Nollywood has offered to the global space, the way and manner it is delivered, and the contents deployed in these deliveries are intricately enveloped by the conditions of its industrialization. In that regard the onus to reposition Nigeria on the global map lies partly on Nollywood as a veritable medium to defend its cultural territories by using its position as the largest producer of film culture to project a positive image of Nigeria and indeed Africa. Although, most of the films produced in Nollywood seems to present a negative image of the region, there are ample developments that present its positive characteristics yet have failed to register any meaningful impact.

In Nigeria's search for a global pedestal, this paper also examined Nollywood against America's dominance of global politics, it also examined film as a cultural diplomatic tool, which Nigeria can adopt, modify and deploy to assert itself as a political leader in Africa, therein advancing the voice of Africa in global politics. If this holds true for image branding, then it becomes germane for Nollywood to look inwards and position itself in the global space, by harnessing the potential of its large production and extensive reach. The possibility to project a Nigerian image that is positive and good enough to advance the understanding of the country as one worthy to visit, live and invest in.

Heedlessly, a major problem in the Nigerian film economy are its producers who see filmmaking as a capitalist venture. Regardless of this truth, film is also a tool for national propaganda whose advantage the government has not fully utilized. However, this attitude of the Nigerian government lies in the erroneous perception by that the industry thrives on the mediocrity of its producers who see film only as a venture medium with little consideration to its technicalities where the naivety of its viewers has been highly exploited.

Ironically, Nollywood has also secured its breakthrough in the global film economy on its ability to transit from an immovable medium to a hypermarket that is cheap, affordable and accessible to majority of its audience that are poor. Using its unique distribution methods, it affected the consumption rate of information expressed in Nigerian films (negative or positive). This unique method however, necessitates firm effects on cultures in Africa. Thus, the consolidation of numerous predictable and hegemonic film productions signalled a new landscape for cultural development. This line of thought however saw the Nigerian film industry losing grip of its enviable position as Africa's top film economy. The challenges here were manifested in its isolation and inability of Nigerian films to reach global audiences due to economic limitations that demanded the use of videos as a substitute in the first place.

In its final submission, this paper posited that Nigeria must have a philosophy and cultural policy that is the pantheon of every Nigerian citizen. A policy that promotes the amplification (film inclusive) of positive attitude, a Nigerian philosophy or socio-cultural policy that is strong and technically sound which will drive its audience (global audience as its target) to rethink its impression of the regular Nigerian who is often seen as an ardent crook in other climes. In this regard therefore, Nigeria must not leave film business to charlatans alone; filmmaking is a serious business, which must be taken seriously if Nigerians position in the global space will be firmly secured.

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