

**FORMALIZING NOLLYWOOD:
GENTRIFICATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY
NIGERIAN FILM INDUSTRY.**

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ABSTRACT

Formalizing Nollywood: Gentrification in the Contemporary Nigerian Film Industry.

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This study investigates transformations in the Nigerian film industry, focusing specifically on a segment of the industry known as Nollywood. Typically characterized as an informal industry due to its low budgets and unofficial modes of distribution, Nollywood is regularly referred to as a success story, accounting for \$7.2 billion (1.42%) of Nigeria's gross domestic product. Because of this success, the Nigerian government, under the President Goodluck Jonathan administration (2010-2015), introduced various mechanisms to formalize and economize Nollywood in the quest to maximize its potentials and diversify the Nigerian economy. This endeavour availed the industry of film fund, professional training and enhanced distribution. My study focuses on this specific area, addressing wider issues of debate relating to how countries seek to economically benefit from their film economies and the role policy plays in the formalization of film industries. Existing studies on Nollywood have concentrated on a point in the evolution of the industry, an era now labelled the old Nollywood. Whole studies on political economic matters, national cinema discourses and individual and corporate efforts and motivation towards these transformations remain lacking.

In this study, I examine as gentrification the efforts of the state, corporate organizations and individuals to transform Nollywood. Adopted from urban studies, gentrification is applied figuratively to examine the motivations propelling these transformations in order to determine its implications for the industry and the industry players. I draw on primary data sourced using a method I term econo-ethnography that combines forms of ethnography, economic base theory and political economy analysis. This data is interrogated using a theoretical framework that incorporates literature from the fields of political economy, gentrification and national cinema, the intention being to understand the development of evolving film economies, particularly Nollywood. I argue that with the right policies, sustained state and corporate support, Nollywood would be gentrified. However, this attempt to gentrify Nollywood impacts on the economic processes of the industry as well as the practices of the industry players. I find that with deep-rooted informality, inefficiencies in policymaking and implementation and sporadic nature of state support, gentrification will further sector Nollywood creating new and varied opportunities for filmmakers, distributors and consumers.

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INTRODUCTION

This study investigates transformations that in recent times, have been reshaping Nollywood, a segment of the Nigerian film industry typically defined as an informal, “shadow economy of cinema” (Lobato, 2012:1). The Nigerian film industry is made up of several segments producing films in different languages. Nollywood, one such segments is situated in predominantly Christian southern Nigeria and produces films primarily in the English language (Jedlowski, 2013). Although Nollywood has been used as a metonym to describe the entire Nigerian film industry (Treichel, 2010) and the entire video film industry (Haynes & Okome, 2013), in this study I adopt Jedlowski’s (2013) perspective. My study gives attention to changes in economic activities brought about by an influx of professionally trained filmmakers and renewed state and corporate interest in the industry, focusing on attempts made by President Goodluck Jonathan’s administration (2010-2015) to gentrify Nollywood. It seeks to answer the overarching research question:

To what extent can recent political and economic developments in the segment of the Nigerian film industry known as Nollywood be understood as gentrification?

Furthermore, I attempt to answer the following research sub-questions:

- a) in what ways is the contemporary Nollywood being restructured following state interest in the industry?
- b) what role does the government as well as its policies play in the gentrification of Nollywood and the making of a national cinema?
- c) How do filmmakers perceive a gentrifying Nollywood and how are their practices affected?

Primary data was collected using the methodology of econo-ethnography, which combines economic base theory with interviews and observation of the making of recent Nollywood productions. I define econo-ethnography as a critical qualitative research approach that investigates the business and politics of cultural industries. The method is particularly useful in researching cultural industries witnessing state-industry interactions that involve policies and economic restructure. It demands an engagement with the major aspects of economic activities within an industry. While an insider-researcher will find econo-ethnography favourable, a non-insider researcher will require extensive involvement with the cultural industry under study. Being an insider allowed me to draw on my prior knowledge of the Nigerian film industry, both as a consumer and a critic; a situation which influenced my position as a researcher. This enabled me to form a bond with my participants, fostering relaxation, trust and spontaneity. I equally drew on this insider knowledge in the writing of this thesis.

As part of the econoethography, I draw on contents from twenty-five interviews conducted with filmmakers involved in the new and old Nollywood, labels designated for styles of filmmaking reflecting the aesthetic transformations which this study engages with. I began by contacting all the filmmakers whose films matched the qualities of these labels (Jedlowski, 2013), but I eventually interviewed only those who responded to my email and phone requests. All of them, I discover, are middle class filmmakers who keep up with information and communication technology. I return to the issue of class in chapter six where I explore how class and power struggles within the industry indicate gentrification. These filmmakers include Obi Emelonye, Kunle Afolayan, Lonzo Nzekwe, Stephanie Linus, Mahmood Ali-Balogun, among others. I interrogated data collected using the concept of gentrification, adopted metaphorically to investigate state and corporate interest in the formalization of developing film economies. I found that despite the presence of

professionally trained filmmakers, wealthier investors, larger budgets and state support within the industry, this effort to gentrify Nollywood will have two possible implications for the industry. This may be attributed to the fact that regeneration is not completely widespread across the industry and state support remains inconsistent, unreliable and inadequately planned. Hence, gentrification in the industry will further compartmentalize production, distribution and consumption.

This study emerges from my own personal interest in the Nigerian film industry; its history, evolution and transformation. From 1995 when the first VHS machine was brought into my home, Nollywood video films remained a major part of the household entertainment, complementing television series, weekly Bollywood films and late night Hollywood action films. My family bought VHS cassettes or exchanged with neighbours and family friends and/or borrowed from the video-clubs that Okome (2007) terms “video parlors” (6). Usually distributed straight to video without a cinema release, Nollywood products appeared to be made for the mass market. In an interview I conducted with Okey Ogunjiofor¹, producer of *Living in Bondage* (1992), he agrees that the mass market target was a strategy employed to meet the needs of the time. His ‘take cinema to the homes of the audience’ campaign benefitted homes like mine that could not, at that time, afford the cost of premium pay television technology. The revival of cinemas in Nigeria and the proliferation of affordable pay television service providers notwithstanding, Nollywood continues to provide entertainment for the mass audiences.

University education changed my orientation and appreciation of the videos. With the knowledge of theatre and film arts, I lost patience with the slow paced, heavily worded storylines, intelligence insulting acts and excessively theatrical acting. I became too critical

¹ Oral interview conducted with Okechukwu Ogunjiofor on 22 March, 2016.

of the videos and so enjoyed only a few. Studies such as Okoye (2007), and Ajibade and Williams (2012) and other critical studies on the industry's informality motivated my investigation into the contemporary Nollywood. Due to the technical limitations of film production in Nollywood, Haynes (2010) notes that extended readings of Nollywood films have been sparse. Dismissed as "naïve and lacking in political, cultural, social, aesthetic, and ideological import", and produced "principally by small entrepreneurs simply interested in making money" (Okoye 2007:20), some recent Nollywood films now address these shortcomings. The storylines have become serious, less porous and less wordy, pictures are no longer grainy, and sound is clearer and consistent. The films portray definition and aesthetics. Filmmakers are availing themselves to further education in film production, state interest in the industry is becoming evidently renewed and corporate bodies are investing more readily in the industry. President Goodluck Jonathan's (2010-2015) administration set precedent by mapping out sums of money under the Project ACT Nollywood to train filmmakers, provide infrastructure and fund productions. My study focuses on this attempt at formalization, and the desire to create a new Nollywood.

The concepts of political economy, gentrification and national cinema form the theoretical framework for this study, and are explored in chapters one, two and three. Chapter one examines political economy, but essentially, political economy of the media as an approach to understanding the production, distribution and consumption of media. Beginning with a general review of literature on media, it narrows down to the political economy of film industry, particularly the Nigerian film industry. The exploration of Nollywood's political economy in this chapter gives attention to the struggle for ownership and control, which is further examined in chapter six. I suggest in chapter one that what differentiates various film industries is the political economy within which they exist. I argue that Nollywood's continued existence within the nation's informal political economy poses more hindrance

than progress. Noting the current efforts to re-position Nollywood in the formal political economy, chapter two reviews gentrification as an urban development concept, establishing how it can be used to understand formalization attempts in media industries. Stigmatized as an expression of inequality and displacement, gentrification is approached in this study with some cross-disciplinary relevance. Retaining its original interpretation, gentrification is adopted figuratively in this study to examine political economic policies put in place to develop national cinema.

Chapter three explores the concept of national cinema and issues in the national cinema of Nigeria. I equally note that the Nigerian film industry is sectorised, Nollywood being only one of its sectors. In the light of existing national cinema definitions and existing literature on the industry, I query the form and boundary of Nollywood and its suitability as Nigerian national cinema. Chapter four discusses research methods and ethics. Settling for the qualitative research method, I engage in an exploration of various forms of ethnography having established it as the most suitable approach to my cultural study in this thesis. My decision to adopt an econo-ethnography rather than conventional ethnography was informed by Nollywood's uniqueness and the informality of interaction between its political and economic processes. Within the chapter, I establish my research design, define my setting and participants and enumerate the challenges faced in the course of data collection and interpretation. The chapter concludes with a note on ethical considerations and how the research method differs from those of previous studies on the industry.

Chapters five, six and seven make up the findings chapters. I draw on primary data to discuss different aspects of the state's attempt to gentrify Nollywood. Chapter five serves as an extended introduction to the context of my research findings. Drawing mostly from my observations, it discusses current debates within the industry, evidencing the rate of the transformation enumerated by Jedlowski (2013) and giving an industry player perspective to

the implications of these changes. I discuss essentially the old and new Nollywood labels, labels that have come to represent different classes of filmmakers and films within the industry. I argue that the labels are irrelevant to the development of a national cinema and only represents stages in the history of its evolution. I enquire into political economic debate around nation, nationhood and national ideology within Nollywood. I apply the concept of gentrification to interrogate the political economic shift from informality to formality within the industry.

In chapter six, I examine the quest to incorporate Nollywood into the formal political economy of Nigeria and evaluate the extent to which Nollywood is currently becoming increasingly formalized. I analyse the structure and power struggle within the industry using political economy. With the overall aim of deciphering the extent to which gentrification can explain the industry's current transformations, I investigate the changing face of the informal industry. The chapter equally questions possibilities of sustained corporate financing, a definite step towards sustained regeneration. I conclude in this chapter that the clamour for formalization using tools such as the proposed MOPICON bill, illustrates the struggle for power and supremacy – terms that reinforce the inequality that defines gentrification.

Chapter seven further examines this struggle as evidences of gentrification within the industry. Tracing the transformations that have occurred from the inception of Nollywood till date in the productions of *Living in Bondage* and *Queen Amina*, I attempt an answer to the central research question. I examine how gentrification could give meaning to the difference in structure and organization of the industry over the period of time. I found that due to undependable state and individual interest in the industry, discontinuity and inefficiency of policies and uneven spread of sustained financing within the industry, Nollywood can not be effectively and entirely gentrified. Therefore, Nollywood's recent political and economic

developments demonstrate gentrification-like characteristics that promise further sectoring - strictly defined categories that transcend the old and new Nollywood labels.

The dissertation concludes that Nollywood's transformations are politically, culturally and economically driven by state and corporate organizations for commodification and aesthetics. Hence the investigation of its implication using gentrification, a concept concerned with economic and political relevance, commodification and aesthetics. The concept of gentrification highlights Nollywood's attempt at transformation. However, while this transformation could be interpreted as the state's attempt to gentrify the informal industry, its inefficient and unsustainable policies and finances causes the industry to break into smaller economies. This sectoring results from dissimilar funding opportunities and dysfunctional policy enforcement. Nollywood's gentrification will engender voluntary, multi-lateral migration into sectors resulting from the inequality created by ineffective policies and funding. My study creates room for further research on factors that could stimulate migration among filmmakers and influence audiences' consumption habits and how they are shaped by state interventions.

CHAPTER ONE

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND THE MEDIA INDUSTRY

Introduction

In this chapter and the next two chapters, I establish the theoretical framework for investigating the transformations in filmmaking practices in Nollywood. This chapter explores the political economy of industries in general and that of film economy and Nollywood in particular. The aim is to consider how previous academic studies have conceptualised political economy and establish the political economy within which the industry exists. The chapter investigates how past studies on political economy have applied it to media, film and the Nigerian film industry. Establishing the political economy within which Nollywood exists helps to determine how the attempt to reposition it in a formal political economy could mean gentrification. Gentrification is adopted as a metaphor to give insight into the implications of formalization attempts for the industry. While it raises questions about aesthetics, class separation and displacement in a formalized Nollywood, it attempts to understand the transformation as an effort towards making a national cinema out of the successful Nollywood. This dissertation goes on to examine the concept of national cinema, query Nollywood as the national cinema of Nigeria, and drawing primary data through econo-ethnography, investigates the industry's political economic repositioning as gentrification.

This opening chapter reviews the impact of state codification on economic and social activities, and the social implications they hold for class representations or exclusion. Split into four sections, it reviews previous studies on the application of political economy to media and communication, and its place and relevance to the Nigerian film industry. It inquires into ownership, organisation and functionalities of cultural industries that are

currently transforming especially in Nigeria. It lays a foundation for the examination of these transformations against policies and actions taken to economize Nollywood. As an approach, political economy is essential in the process of mediating information, class formations, access to media, and rights of ownership, which are to be represented in this study.

1.1 Political Economy

Etymologically, political economy “referred to a tradition of economic thinking that addressed the production, distribution and consumption of resources used to sustain human existence” (Hardy, 2014:4). According to Mosco (2009), political economy, prior to its evolving into a science, described a system of production, distribution and exchange and the knowledge of how to manage household and community. Derived from the combination of economics – home law or management - and political – state, political economy means the management of home and state. According to Gilpin (1977), political economy is first a branch of statecraft and then a study of decisions made on specific issues. Besides these classical interpretation of the concept, many other alternative approaches have been adopted like the neoclassical political economy, the positive or neoliberal political economy and the critical political economy approaches. Although delimited in focus, each of these approaches enquires into the political and economic facets of media.

Founded by Leon Walras, Alfred Marshall, Francis Edgeworth and Vilfredo Pareto, neoclassical political economy developed from the classical political economy (Hardy 2014). Unlike the classical political economy which locates wealth “in the surplus value extracted from workers”, neoclassical political economy locates value in “consumer preferences exercised in markets” (5). It differs from the classical political economy in terms of class division and labour exploitation. Besides the classical and neoclassical political economy, critical political economy has become a common approach to media with its emphasis on

“the unequal distribution of power” (6). Inspired and influenced by Marxism, critical political economy takes into consideration political and economic facets of communication as well as how power is acquired and sustained. Approaches and perspectives on political economy differ according to purpose and application. Common perspectives include liberalism, socialism and communitarianism whose purposes are freedom, equality and the general community respectively.

Differences in approach and/or perspective are inevitable as modern political economy according to Dewan & Shepsle (1985), “is not a one-way street from economics to political science” (76). These differences notwithstanding, there remains a common ground in political economic discourses – ownership and control. Acknowledging the separate areas of study that have come together to become political economy, Graham (2007) offers an encompassing definition of the concept as:

the study of how values of all kinds are produced, distributed, exchanged, and consumed (the economic); how power is produced, distributed, exchanged, and exercised (the political); and how these aspects of social life are organised and enacted at given place and time in history (227).

Defined from a Marxist perspective, it recognises the interconnectivity between wealth, people, wealth creators and owners, social relationships, power and class, rather than the classical recognition of a relationship that exists only between goods, costs, demand and supply. From a scientific standpoint, Marxists define political economy as concerned with people and their social relationships which lead to wealth creation. This deviates from the classical economists’ emphasis on labour as the source of all value. Before becoming a science, political economy was strictly political, emphasizing the relationship between the government and the governed in terms of wealth creation and management and highlighting the state’s concern for the welfare of the governed. As a science however, it deals fundamentally with the industrial activities of individual man (Palgrave, 1913), losing its

social outlook, de-stressing the political and becoming the theory and practice of economic affairs (Horton, 1948). Like every economic activity, political economy bargains for a common ground in the struggle for control of resources and survival of the producer. Hence Mosco (2009) defines political economy as “the study of control and survival in social life” (3). Political economy suggests that every economic strategy could be efficient if adequately implemented. However, this proves true of Nollywood, an example of a successful informal economy. This equally implies that the government’s efforts to formalize the industry could potentially work except for its inadequate implementation. Political economy, according to Weignast & Wittman (2008), is a world of contradictory meanings.

The contradictory meanings of political economy emanate from its many traditions, schools and debates resulting from different political economists agreeing to contrasting theories and research methods. Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Thomas Malthus and John Stuart Mill make up the classical school of thought which focuses on “the interplay of economic forces, the operation of markets and the cost of production” (Albarran 2008:46). Arguing against price being solely determined by the cost of production as believed by the classical political economists, the marginalists believed that price equalled demand. The Marxist school favoured labour as the main source of production, rejecting capitalism, which according to their arguments, exploited workers. With different schools of thought agreeing and disagreeing on what perspective is best to understand political economy from, many definitions have been given to it. From Adam Smith’s (1776) interpretation of the concept as the science of national resource management for wealth creation, to how Karl Marx’s idea of ownership of production resources affect history, political economy has come to be either an area of study or a methodological approach which can be economic or sociological (Weignast & Wittman, 2008). The concept, according to the authors, is a family of methodological approaches to economics, which are “applied to the analysis of political behaviour and

institutions” (2008:3). Its definition as the science of wealth and wealth creation has been argued against, as a school of thought believes that before the concept

became a science, before it served as the intellectual description for a system of production, distribution, and exchange, (it) meant the social custom, practice, and knowledge about how to manage, first, the household, and later, the community (Mosco 2009:23).

Reiterating Stuart’s idea of political economy, Mosco (2009), explains the concept etymologically as the management of the city-state, suggesting that political economy is confined to a relationship between the government and the governed; an advice to the “statesman on how he could best manage the economic affairs of the state so that the wants of the citizens would be met” (Caporaso & Levine, 1992:1). However, a form of science, political economy is less political, emphasizing more on man’s industrial activities rather than the relationship between state and people (Palgrave 1913). It is the study of economic rather than political issues, differing from the mainstream economics only by giving attention to ethical and normative issues (Hesmondhalgh, 2008). Ethics and norms form the political components that interact with economic activities to bring about social change and intervention (Wasko, 2005). Hence, Mosco (2009) observes that emphasis is once again returning to the mainstream political economy – an interaction between man’s economic activities and state involvement. Perceptions have been shifting and definition focus for political economy has moved back and forth between economics and the science of politics.

No single perspective to or interpretation of political economy commands a universal agreement. Among its contending perspectives are: the classical liberal perspective, which borrows its thoughts from the classical political economists. Clark’s (1998) study illumines an integration of optimism and pessimism in the classical liberalists’ interpretation of market economy. They argue for a free market that results in increased wealth and detachment of individual wealth creators from state control. As a downside, this school of thought

recognises that at certain point the market gets saturated, leading to an economic impasse. Free market in the classical liberal perspective has a repeated business cycle of expansion and contraction. Despite meltdowns and depressions that could occur from time to time, they believe that eventually, without state interferences, the economy experiences a boom.

A second perspective, the radical perspective served as an urge on liberalism to accept state's influence and regulation on economic processes. This perspective insists that state control of means of production is important to achieving freedom, equality and justice (Clark, 1998). Rejecting neoclassical economics, the radical perspective pursues alternatives to capitalism and its attendant unavoidable economic instability. As a neo-Marxist approach to political economy, the radical perspective relies on the critical evaluation of capitalism in order to reach a conclusion. Like the conservatives whose ideologies emanate from a preference for an existing order (Stephanovic & Mitrovic, 2012), the radicals argue for hierarchy, order and community as against the classics' individualism and liberalism. It appraises the society in terms of existing economic and political structures.

The last of the contending perspectives on political economy, the tradition I will be adopting for this research, is the modern liberal perspective. As a hybrid of classical, radical and conservative perspectives, it offers the flexibility and resilience needed for this study. Modern liberal perspective to political economy demands social justice while preserving both private property and democracy. Its belief in the classical liberal's business cycle is altered by the assertion that market is not always self-regulating. Like in radical perspective, modern liberalists accept that for a market to boom and be stable, state regulation is inevitable and essential. It borrows from structuralism the view that market does not exist in a vacuum, but is shaped by social, economic and political factors. This perspective is applied to chapters six and seven that investigate power struggle, industrial interactions with the state and possibilities of gentrification. For the entire study, I incorporate Marxist people-centric

ideology to this perspective. I discuss gentrification and Nollywood's repositioning into the country's formal political economy from a modern liberal perspective that considers their implications for filmmakers.

Whatever its interpretation and however its application, political economy has a selfish tendency: the state, represented by the policy makers and individual investors struggle for their own interests. This is exemplified in chapter six, a discourse on the motivations behind Nollywood's formalization attempt. Opposing perspective on this selfish tendency led to the emergence of the critical political economy. Evaluative of political economic intentions, it scrutinizes the dominant paradigm, ideologies, positions and status quo of political economy. Conservative and in near opposition to the radical perspective on political economy, the critical political economy approach is sometimes labelled as "heavily critical of media and cultural corporations" and their government allies (Hesmondhalgh, 2007:33). According to Golding & Murdock (1991), critical political economy looks beyond issues of economic efficiency, and engages with "basic moral questions of justice, equity and public good" (61). This view has, however, been challenged as insufficiently critical. Nixon (2012) maintains that the critical method that demonstrates political economy as critical, remains insufficiently addressed. An avenue to put to rights this deficiency, the author says, is by further developing the concept by Marxist dialectical method. With a distinctly Marxist and Hegelian approach, it recognizes the need to review conventional political economic concepts as they relate to media. Critical political economy is best adopted for studies on major media corporations, media conglomerates, consumer choices and power relations. Hardy's (2014) essay for instance discusses media power, influence, convergence and digitalisation, but argues for more flexibility in challenges adapted by the approach.

However political economy is approached, critical, classical, marginalist or Marxist, and through whatever perspective, it remains in the interests of the government rather than

individuals. Hence Mishan (1982) opines that the term political economy is often associated with distinct advice offered by economists to the government or public on policy issues. This advice, he says, tends to be policy conclusions drawn from personal or governmental judgements, and often not necessarily shared by the entire community. All of the approaches above, however firm their ideologies, remain open to new ideas, examination and re-examination, challenges and interpretations. Political economy continues to evolve and its application to communication has informed the politics and business of the media industry as will be discussed in the following section.

1.2 The Political Economy of the Media

Media currently exists in a rapidly changing business and social environment (Alexander, 2004). The field of economics is equally being refined and investigations into the application of economic theories and concepts in different markets are on the rise. An economic interest in media plus growth in the field, requiring attention to its production and distribution rather than textual interpretation or audience survey (Durham & Kellner, 2006), necessitated media economics and/or the political economy of the media. Media economics, as non-Marxists choose to call political economy of the media, is described as a ‘subspecialty’ of both media and economics. Derived from media and economics, media economics has the goal of broadening “understanding and discussion of the impact of economic activities on media operations and managerial decisions” (Wasko et al, 2011:3). It entails applying economic theories and concepts to media and media industry studies. Its major proponents - Compaine (1979), Robert Picard (1989), Allison Alexander et al (2004), Alan Albarran (1996, 2008), Gillian Doyle (2002) – disagree with critical political economy of the media, paying more attention to the economics inherent in the field of media and communication. Their

arguments are a close representation of the new form of classical economics. With primary focus on production and consumption of media and also the economics of media and communication, media economics concerns itself with how industry players maximize profit in order to stay in business. It encompasses all media forms, from the traditional media like print, broadcasting, film and music, to new media forms like the Internet (Albarran 2008).

Wasko (2004) differentiates between media economics and political economy by stating that while political economists engage in moral groundings, media economics concentrates on 'what is', rather than 'what ought to be'. Therefore, while political economics is critical in outlook, media economics is descriptive. Media economics takes a micro-economic approach to media as it emphasizes the economic characteristics of media and communication. Political economy of media on the other hand takes a macro-economic perspective, emphasizing also on policies and regulations, ownership and control. Important of note is the place of media economics in literary discourses. While Wasko, et al (2011) classify media economics along with political economy, creative industry, industrial organisation model, new media, as approaches to economic analysis, Albarran (2008) adopts political economy, along with micro- and macroeconomics as theoretical developments in the field of media economics. They are in agreement however, on media economics emphasis on industries and market.

Following Albarran's (2014) observation on media economics, political economics is concerned with the application of economic theories, principles and concepts to the analysis of the power struggle for the control of means of production, distribution and consumption. Although purely economic in outlook, political economy has political concerns, which are "centred around the balance between state activity and power and the organisation of civil society; between rights and responsibilities; private interests and the public good" (Golding & Murdock, 1997:xiii). While the economic outlook serves as a common denominator in all

societies, approaches to political concerns become the distinguishing factor between and within societies. Golding and Murdock (1997) explain it as the ‘how’ to organizing the complex interplay between state interest and capital on the one hand and private and social life of the members of the society on the other hand. Whatever approach is adopted, wealth, its creation, consumption and sustenance still remain the subject of political economy.

As far back as 1911, Fawcett (1911) evaluated wealth, labour and capital. Wealth, the author defines as anything that possesses an exchange value. He dismisses media as unproductive, identifying only land, labour and capital as the requisites for wealth production. Over the many years following, scholars with neoteric understanding of media contribution to economy conclude differently. Wasko et al (2011) for instance, cognizant of media value, suggest that the study of political economy of media demands attention, especially to issues relating to labour. This accentuates its essentiality to economic processes necessary for wealth generation. Fawcett (1911) defines unproductive labour as “that which neither directly nor indirectly helps to increase the material wealth of the community” (13). The labour of an artist or a public reader, the author maintains, are useful to production but do not contribute to wealth creation. This argument contradicts itself, for labour cannot be both useful and useless. Actors are essential in filmmaking and so are editors, directors, producers and photographers. They are to the filmmaking process what farmers are to food production. Without them, a film cannot be made. Films contribute to wealth production. If labour is that which puts ‘things into fit places’ then actors are labour providers as they interpret roles written out on papers, following the instructions of a director.

Perceptions on labour have changed over the years and an actor’s creative input as well as a director’s prowess can be considered as labour. Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011) describe such labour as ‘creative labour’ – a form of labour “with an especially strong element of aesthetic, expressive, and informational symbol making” (382). What Fawcett

describes as unproductive labour, the authors explain as the labour provided in the media and cultural industries as well as artistic work in public sectors. Labour has gone past concrete or tangible human contribution to converting land and capital into wealth. Wasko (2005) illustrates this by highlighting Dallas Smythe's (Wasko, 2005) argument that audiences form the wealth created by the media. The author maintains that "audiences' exposure to advertising should be considered labour which add(s) value to the audience commodity" (29). Although his emphasis on communication over the Marxist ideology has remained an issue of debate under the audience commodity concept, his major contenders, Jhally & Livant (1986) and Meehan (2010) do not dispute audience exposure to advertisement as labour. The media has remained a strong force in the world of advertisement and actors play essential roles in this. Doyle (2002) defines production as the conversion of resources into goods and services. If 'resources' means a supply of functional assets, then an actor's creativity, a director's expertise or an executive producer's financial input become resources which are converted into a product. That labour is productive or unproductive is relative to how and when it is applied (Doyle, 2002).

Political economy in general is concerned with the relationship between the makers, the distributors and consumers of a product; how one group's choice affects the decisions of the others in terms of what is produced, what gets sold and what gets consumed and how. Mosco (2009) explains that as simple as discerning the relationship between the producer, distributor and consumer may seem, distinguishing one from the other is not always quite as easy, especially in filmmaking where it is absolutely important to separate the makers, especially the producers, from the distributors and marketers. Distributors, he explains, are "often critical to the production process because they can guarantee the financing and marketing necessary to carry on with production" (2009:24). Separating the producer from the distributor is necessary to avoid chaos and corner-cuttings.

Of importance in the discussion of the political economy of the media is distribution. In the discourse on critical political economy of media, production, supply and regulation of media, especially film, have received analyses from Janet Wasko (2005), Vincent Mosco (2009), Toby Miller (2008), but distribution has remained a “difficult thing to research” (Lobato 2007:114). Distribution is the lifeline of any production company, its most profitable segment and so, for commercial reasons, information in this regard is often guarded rather closely. Lobato (2007) observes that in the film industry, distribution is the least theorized and although a sizeable body of literature exists on it, “it rarely has any critical component” (114). How a film reaches the audience or how it does not is necessary in the industry, especially in Nigeria where filmmakers have identified distribution as their biggest challenge. Like Larkin (2004), Bud (2014) and Ogunleye (2008) observe of the industry, behind-the-scene middlemen who control distribution of films regulate flow of money, tweaking scripts, casting and marketing plans to their advantages. This is a common occurrence in all film industries especially because distribution determines how much profit can be made from a film, who watches a film – why, how and in what circumstance, reinforces differences – in class, age, culture, gender, ethnicity, and it encourages transnationality (Lobato, 2007).

In addition to the conventional modes of movie distribution, Lobato identifies the informal modes of film consumption as subcinema, a term referring to feature films that bypass conventional exhibition outlets like cinema, digital downloads, home video, video parlors, cable and television. The author asserts that subcinema is a theoretical model rather than an industrial category, and identifies such phenomena as straight to video releases, piracy, cult movie markets, pornography and even Nollywood as subcinemas. His theorization is based on the ideal that these film forms are “incompatible with more familiar paradigms” like Bollywood or national cinema (2007:117). The classification of Nollywood under subcinema still remains a matter for further discussion, as the industry’s

incompatibility with the familiar Hollywood model does not make it less a national cinema. Of interest are the characteristics of Lobato's subcinema. They circulate informally and illegally, leading to a non-cinematic distribution and consumption that is profit rather than progress driven. Subcinemas are not taken seriously and they are a global phenomenon which can overtake any film no matter where it is produced as manner of distribution is actually what makes a film subcinema or not. If any film can become subcinema by being distributed in a certain way, then classifying an entire industry under a common mode of consumption would appear unfair to industry players, especially filmmakers who attempt to distribute their films formally. At the time of his research however, only a few Nollywood films have attained theatrical release - Jeta Amata's *The Amazing Grace* (2006), Stephanie Okereke's *Through the Glass* (2007) and Kunle Afolayan's *Irapada* (2007) (Jedlowski 2013). They marked the beginning of a transformation that some other filmmakers have seized and have continued to explore till date. Chapter five of this study discusses this change and how it is contributing to the formalization process. Distribution in global film industry as discussed by scholars – Kristin Thompson (1985), Michael Quinn (2001), Robert Allen (2006), Douglas Gomery (1986), Justin Wyatt (2005) - have a focus on Hollywood and European film industries as is usually the case in text that discuss film and filmmaking in a global or transnational context.

Political economy of the media considers the place of power and power relations in the production, distribution and exchange of media and mediated communication. Once the singular tool of critical analysis in media production, political economy now has major contenders like media economics discussed above and media production studies, which relies on the theory of cultural studies for its arguments (Mayer et al, 2009, Holt & Perren, 2009). Politics, economics and media are facets of a process through which the society organises itself in order to achieve individual and communal goals. While media economics has a

certain profit driven research interest, political economy of the media appears broader and gives attention to more details in the media business. It has a practical value as it pays attention to the business of media communication, observing the chain of production, distribution and consumption. Thus, it pays attention to the production company or studio (producer), the distributors (wholesalers and retailers) and the consumer, gathering feedback for the start of a new production process (Mosco 2008). Political economy of the media refers simply to how media industry players organise themselves, utilize available resources for production and how they sustain reproduction in the light of changing conditions in public and economic affairs.

Vincent Mosco's political economy key defining terms – control and survival – are also relevant in the application of political economy to the study of media. However, this application will be dependent on what perspective political economy is interpreted from. Mosco's understanding is guided by the modern liberal standpoint that accepts state intervention in economic activities. Hence, while survival connotes continuity and sustainability and is purely economic driven, control is political, constituting the relationships between social organisations within a state or an industry. This struggle for survival and control within the media industry is reflective in the Nigerian scenario (discussed further in chapters six and seven), especially with the industry existing within the informal sector of the nation's political economy. A review of previous studies discussing its implications for the production chain of the industry shall be discussed in section 1.4 below.

Since communication is unique to a people, a region's media content is shaped by their cultural tendencies. For this reason, political economy of the media has regional emphasis. Developed from this point of view in North America, proponents of political economy of communication, Dallas Smythe (1981) and Herbert Schiller (1989), approached their study from an institutional and Marxist perspective. That is, rather than being prescriptive and

normative, the approach is scientific, objective and systematic. But, as is with Marxism, sub-perspectives are unavoidable. Although their work focused on their respective regions, especially America, they influenced “transnational media companies throughout the world” (Mosco, 2008:3700). Their research on the political economy of communication have influenced a number of other researchers in Europe and across the globe, giving rise to various theoretical traditions and derivatives (Garnham, 2000; Murdock & Golding, 2000; Mosco, 1996; McChesney, 1999; Wasko, 2003). In addition to mapping political economy of communication based on regions, Mosco (2009) identifies commodification, spatialization and structuration as three processes that are central to political economy of communication. In summary, commodification is a process of transforming a good or service of value into a commodity for profit generation. Spatialization has to do with space and explains the process of overcoming geographical space and time in media and communication. Structuration is a process of creating social relations that are organised based on social class, gender, racial background, and religion (14-15).

Political economy of the media commands specificity to every region given the difference in the content and context of media information. This should explain the popularity of the hybrid perspective – the modern liberal perspective among scholars. However, being objective and systemic, it is temporarily bounded as Marx observed of the classical political economy. Shifts in thought patterns, social relations, economic interactions, and media structure and evolution often lead to changes in perspectives. Media studies and research are transnational and share a common goal of determining how industrial structure influences content and the commodification of information. This may explain why media development, along with education and other social factors are thought to be essential in stimulating modernisation. The application of a single approach to media and communication, although from differing perspectives, is working towards globalizing media. As structure determines

content, media, currently integrating into one big body via media conglomeration, collaborations and mergers, is growing into a global cultural industry. These changes are also reflective in discussions on the political economy of media. From Herman & Chomsky's (2002) focus on media concentration and discouragement of content diversity, which according to Mosco (2008) marks the hallmark of political economy, there are rising departures. In keeping with the hallmark, the departures only serve to expand the field while searching for a common ground. There is rising diversification in perspectives and application of the approach, thereby unifying structures and creating wealth. Its application in media has essentially benefitted the film industry, especially in terms of discussing and understanding filmmaking processes like production, distribution and consumption.

1.3 Approaching Film Industries

Political economy as an approach to media studies enables scholars search for the right thing in the film industry. Guback (1978) proposes an institutional approach to film studies, a stratagem Wasko (2004) says is similar to the political economic approach. Their argument is that the film business goes beyond history, theory and criticism. Drawing from Adam Smith's conception of the approach, political economy of film would be described as the endeavours of film industry players to allocate available scarce resources to filmmaking in order to satisfy the essential needs required to meet the entertainment (filmic) needs of the people and maximise profit for sustenance. Political economy of film engages with relationships existing between film and economic and political interests. It concerns itself with such factors as ownership, finance, production, distribution, competition, marketing and advertising and control. Political economy as an approach to understanding films, film industries, why they exist and why films are made, is essential for both economic and political reasons. These reasons are connected to Mill's (1844) objectives of political

economy – supply and consumption. Its capitalist undertone notwithstanding, market liberals or the Marxists have only tweaked this to be more people-centric. As Downey (2006) observes, despite their disagreements, capitalists and market liberals are ‘ultimately concerned with the same thing – what sort of media system is best for ‘the people’ (11).

As established in the sections above, political economy of the film industry aims at understanding the practical details of the filmmaking business, especially as it concerns production, distribution and consumption. In her essay on the political economy of film, Wasko (2004) observes that the approach looks beyond the popularity of an industry to its control and dominance and the sustenance of such position, state involvement and policy formulation and implementation, film production, distribution and commodification and political and cultural implications, especially for the consumers. This makes the market place essential as it, to a large extent, determines what is to be produced, how the product will be distributed and who the consumers are. Hence, arguments for a free market, especially that by Hayek (1994), have come to be much more acceptable now than in the twentieth century. The move for a self-regulating market draws from Marx’s argument against collective ownership and class control (Marx & Engels, 1974). As a market-based economy where cost is controlled by forces of demand and supply, filmmakers only enter the industry if they are sure of making profits. What they consider before venturing into the industry and how they assess their chances of survival in the market becomes the concern of political economy.

Political economy of film differs from the mainstream economics of film because, beyond its consideration of economic debates, it concerns itself with ethical and moral questions. According to Hesmondhalgh (2007), beyond media economic or orthodox economic concerns of production and consumption, it analyses power in relation to cultural production. As a creative and cultural industry, film has political in addition to economic concerns. O’Connor (2010) posits that beyond polemic and statistic concerns, cultural

industries consider transformations in the society, economy and culture. As a creative industry, film originates from individual creativity, skill and talent (Flew, 2013) requiring state protection and support. Economics of film however, strictly tries to understand and describe factors that control or regulate film production, distribution and consumption. Each makes tangible contribution to the field of media and communication. Major scholars of political economy approach to media and communication (e.g. Golding & Murdock, 1991; Mosco, 1996; Garnham, 1990, 2008; Schiller, 1996; Wasko, 2001, 2004, 2005; Wasko, et al, 2011; McChesney, 2000; Hesmondhalgh, 2007), the media economics approach (egg Alexander et al, 2004; Albarran, 2014; Doyle, 2002;) and also the economic growth approach (Potts, 2009, discussed later in this section) are confident that the media will benefit more from their respective approach.

Prior to 1960, studies in communication were less focussed on the economic context of media production, distribution and consumption. Smythe's (1960) persistence on communication as an economic unit and his definition of the political economy of communication as the study of policies (political) of production and processes (economic) of distribution and consumption, influenced other critical political economists as noted in the section above. Downey's (2006) illustration from Hollywood's situation highlights why political economy is an important approach in filmmaking. Hollywood evolved while in the control of a few industry players and until 1914, films were made everywhere across the United States. By 1914, California became the production hub for films, Hollywood emerging as the capital of the industry due to weather which provided ample light and sunshine, beautiful landscape and bustling urbanscape (Kellner, 2004). Most importantly, Los Angeles proved to be the powerhouse for filmmaking in the country as production companies, film executives, agents, producers, actors and directors are based there (Wasko 2003). The author adds, however, that due to rising costs, offers of incentives by film

commissions, exchange rate and lower labour costs, film production is gradually and deliberately being lured away from California as producers engage in what she calls ‘economic runaway’. In as much as location is essential in filmmaking, production cost is of utmost importance as every film has a budget and cost limit.

In her book on how Hollywood works, Wasko (2003) observes that rudimentary to the political economy of Hollywood are issues of production, distribution, exhibition and retail, industry expansion, promoting and protecting the industry and the functionality of the industry. Hollywood’s aim at expanding beyond the frontiers of the American markets through commercialisation and commodification, diversification and synergy and globalisation has been successful especially with Anglophone markets where her titles attract more audiences than other English language films (O’Regan 1996, Garnham 1990, Held et al 1999, Wasko 1994, Hesmondhalgh 2007). This claim is still debatable in India where, according to Hesmondhalgh (2007), impact of Hollywood films on the domestic film market remains minimal. This, he maintains, could be as a result of the aesthetic difference existing between Hollywood and Bollywood films. Molloy & Burgan’s (1993) study on the political economy of the Australian cinema reveals that imported films, principally from America, attracted more cinema admissions than did Australian and British films in their respective countries. Within the United States, on the other hand, O’Regan (1996) maintains, “other national cinemas occupy minor niche markets and do not threaten Hollywood’s American hegemony” (42).

Internationalization of media, a process that describes the spillage of media ownership, production and consumption across national borders (Downey 2006), has been the industry’s avenue for exporting US values and hegemony (Dower, 1999), a necessary step in maintaining political dominance. A similar situation, understood as transnationalization, has been observed of contemporary Nollywood (Jedlowski, 2013).

Transnationalization in Nollywood (further discussed in chapter three) is a trend among a class of filmmakers who aim at international co-production deals (or setting/location) and distribution. Hollywood's international dominance stems from its distinguishing itself as a commercial enterprise, exploiting local developments in foreign countries that promoted market expansion (Hesmondhalgh 2007). Downey (2006) argues, however, that its dominance is mainly because the nation has a large population with relatively large disposable income and an enormous media market that gives it edge over others. This is further accentuated by the budget sizes for films that present Hollywood films as the standard for other industries. Downey's position on the contribution of the size of a nation's population holds true for other national industries like Nigeria, India, China and Hong Kong. In Wasko's (2003) opinion, Hollywood operates like every other industry whose development is linked to general economic cycles. An understanding of what to produce, where to produce and for whom to produce and how to go about this, is essential in basic economics.

Given that film business is, in addition to being unique, risky, uncertain and frenzied, organization, planning and policies are important to its success and continuity. Political economy of film is governed by the drive to make a profit. The struggle for power and survival is to dominate the market and remain in business by maximizing profit. Wasko (2003) therefore, identifies profit, power and paucity as necessary general tendencies in the discussion of political economy of film. In Downey's (2006) discussion on media industries, he notes how cost-cutting, risk-spreading and innovation have aided Hollywood studios not only to remain in business, but also to expand. While considering the political economy of the American film industry, Wasko (1981) highlights one benefit of the industry which some other national film industries did not enjoy early in their developments - an early association between filmmakers and formal financiers (bankers). Identified as a capital-intensive

business, filmmaking requires ready financiers and organisation in order to compete healthily. As finance is a key component of the industry, Hollywood's transitional years, the late 1940s and 1950s as well as the period of adjustment to independent productions (Wasko 1981, Downey 2006), are important considerations in the study of political economy of film industries. Wasko's study shows that any film industry can face the problem of limited finance and the challenge of structural and policy changes. The industry's ability to survive however, is dependent on how well it is able to strategize and manipulate cost (of production and distribution), risk (assessment and sharing) and innovation.

Along with production, equally of importance to political economy of film, is distribution. Films could be distributed through various mediums – cinema, VCD/DVD (sales or rental), television and video on demand. The glamour of film production, Wasko (2003) notes, is wound up with the business of film distribution. The ultimate goal for every film made is to be distributed. This explains why production teams and independent producers in Hollywood often work “directly for major production/distribution companies” (2003:59). In Bollywood, Ganti (2012) highlights the necessity for the involvement of a distributor before the movie is eventually made. These distributors, although existing as a ‘decentralised network’, are major financiers for the industry prior to the entry of corporate producers and media conglomerates (Ganti 2012:186). In both industries, the difference in organisational levels notwithstanding, the distributor bears most of a film's commercial success risk. Hesmondhalgh (2007) identifies lack of marketing and distribution clout as the reason why European films earn very little money outside their own territories. Efficiency in marketing and distribution explains why Hollywood and Bollywood films, as well as Nollywood films (especially within Africa) are popular in international markets where different languages are spoken. Nollywood's situation could be marked different as piracy mostly accounts for the widespread of the films outside the national borders. Indian, Nigerian and Korean film

industries' excellent performance in their local domestic markets notwithstanding, American films still dominate the global box office, thanks to their fierce marketing and distribution strategy.

Being thus central to the film business, distribution is essential consideration in the political economy of film as it determines an industry's survival and dominance. A sustained spread into new international markets, Wasko (2003) observes, contributed to Hollywood's growth and dominance. The understanding that filmmaking is a money making enterprise and Hollywood majors control of the worldwide distribution networks and exhibition sectors, is Kerrigan's (2010) explanation for the industry's dominance. Film distributors, identified as the necessary middlemen (Leedy 1980), have immense power and position in the filmmaking process. Their marketing strategies, advertising and business decisions on when a film is to be released and via what medium and business relationships, are guided by their comprehension of the political economy of the media industry in which they operate. Film distribution, according to Daniels, et al (1998), involves "a complex web of business relationships, market demands and arcane custom and practice" (85). Wasko (2003) explores this complexity in Hollywood, O'Regan (1996) highlights the Australian battle over Hollywood's domination of local distribution and exhibition and Ganti (2013) undertakes an ethnographic study of production and distribution in Bollywood, concluding that the distributor bears "the majority of the risk of a film's commercial outcome" (189). In the British film industry, Sin (2003) observes that distribution is going digital to allow for more efficiency, hassle-free distribution and greater flexibility. He records that distribution in the British Film Industry focuses on marketing and the sustenance of films in the local market.

Despite being concerned with the all-important release and sustenance of a film in the market, distribution remains a film production process often unknown to people, except industry players; hence it is called the invisible art. Often discussed along with film

distribution is exhibition. Besides being geared towards profit maximization, distribution and exhibition have the primary focus of expanding an industry. In her study on professionalising the British film industry, Kelly (2015) argues the importance of distribution and the necessity for an introduction of commerciality to the industry. In the Australian film industry, Dermody & Jacka (1987) identify distribution and exhibition as the industry's challenge between 1975 and 1980 because there existed an unclear relationship between them and production. In essence, there has to be a symbiotic relationship between production and distribution for an industry to attain any remarkable growth.

Equally important to the growth and development of the industry is the place of government and government policies in the industry and how industry players relate to them. Although there is the argument that increased state support is tantamount to a decrease in creative filmmaking (Kerrigan 2010), the Hollywood experience records a decrease in 'nationness'. Depending on the focus of state interest and policies, the effect of state intervention differs for every film industry. Noting the efficiency of government policy on the Danish film industry, Kerrigan (2010) observes how the policies developed for the industry aligned with industrial needs and so concludes that "film policy is important in shaping and developing indigenous film industries" (80). For Australia, Formica (2011) examines state involvement in the Australian film industry crisis of the 1960s. Maintaining a critical stance on the policies and politics in the industry, the author suggests that the state's intervention in transforming the industry into a world-class business set up had political rather than creative industry interests. Scholars such as Stratton (1980), Dermody & Jacka (1987) and O'Regan (1996), look beyond the involvement of industry players such as producers in the policies, concentrating rather on the reforms such policies contributed to the industry. Murray (1990) considers the subject from the perspective of a 'cottage industry' being transformed into 'a business' (14). While Formica adopts the conventional political

economic approach to interpreting a creative and cultural industry, the other aforementioned authors unintentionally choose what Potts (2009) describes as the economic growth theory.

Economic growth approach differs from the media economic approach that combines economics and media to manage scarce resources so as to meet the informational and entertainment requirements of people (Parkin et al 1997, Picard 1989, Albarran 1996, Alexander et al 2004). It equally differs from the political economic approach, which prioritizes power struggle, basic institutional structures within the media and relationships in which they operate (Herman & Chomsky 1988). Rather than emphasize power relations and evaluative factors affiliated to socio-cultural and political structures as political economy does (Garnham 1990, Mosco 1996, McChesney 2000), economic growth theory celebrates specialisation and trade, which when made focal points, create wealth, leading to economic growth. Without disproving the efficacy of political economic approach to media and communication, Potts (2009) postulates that cultural and creative industries could profit from an in-depth understanding of the economic growth theory. Crane's (2014) study on cultural globalization and the dominance of the American film industry agrees with this. The author argues that while film, cultural and political policies are important and contribute to the success of national film industries, such policies do not empower the industries to challenge Hollywood's global dominance. Isolating the economic from the political however, could lead to a deficiency and a shortfall in the management of media and communication. Clark (1998) notes that the market and government as institutions are "sufficiently flawed" and thus require "a balancing of political and economic processes to sustain a healthy society" (18). From another point of view, the isolation could be advantageous to the society considering that the market and government often generate powerful forces that compete unhealthily against each other, leading to damaging consequences on the society (Clark 1998).

Political economy of the film industry, however, still has the fundamental aim of expanding the industry, sustaining such expansion and dominating the market, both locally and internationally. Wasko (2003) identifies commodification, commercialisation, diversification and globalisation as the major political economic steps taken, especially by Hollywood towards the expansion of the industry. She discusses this from a political economic perspective characterised by “social change and history, social totality, moral grounding and praxis” (227). Crane (2014) on the other hand, does not state categorically what approach she adopts in her study, but her analysis agrees with Potts’ (2009) economic growth model that is “based on the construction and testing of growth models” (93). Unlike political economy’s holistic combination of factors in media analysis, economic growth approach isolates particular set of factors to determine their contribution to economic growth. This approach justifies Hollywood’s modification of its film content as a strategy to dominate the market. In her classification of national film industries in the global film market, Crane (2014) indexes India, USA, China and Japan under world’s super producers with India topping the list. Under market shares, however, US films command over 90% market shares in its domestic market, over 80% in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. Although its market share is as low as 10-12% in India, it still overpowers European films market share of 2% in India, with the highest share of 6.8% in the USA and 5-9% in Japan. Crane’s (2014) classification however, does not recognise Nollywood as a film industry, but rather as an alternative approach to film production. Although Nollywood films are no longer distributed on VHS, scholars like Crane continue to record that films from the industry and ‘many African countries’ are widely distributed via VHS, DVD and TV networks (379).

In conclusion, while the political economic approach is more holistic, industrial need and demand should determine what approach is most suitable. The divergence in specificities notwithstanding, political economy and the economic growth approaches share the same

foundation from the insights of classical economists. From every indication, globalization and media conglomeration are gradually transforming film industry into one large cultural industry, with Hollywood in the lead position as an international supplier of popular culture. These cultures are evident in various national films, Nollywood inclusive. Studies on the political economy of the Nigerian film industry indicate reforms resulting from inter-industrial interactions and the quest to reach transnational audiences. In terms of production, distribution and consumption, the industry has evolved beyond Crane's (2014) submissions.

1.4 The Political Economy of Nigerian Film Industry

As observed in the previous section, there is a need for contemporary study on the Nigerian film industry. With repetitive studies on history, theory and criticism, very little extensive research and fresh knowledge would be available on the industry. Haynes (2010) observes that studies on the industry have been undiversified because of structural reasons he identifies as ignorance on the industry, a weak academic and scholarship culture and lack of capable hands to supervise scholarship on the industry. Thus, studies on the industry have "hovered at the edge of the video phenomenon, repeating the same things over and over" (106). Study on ownership and control in the industry, political economic approach's primary concern, has been sparse. This could be ascribed to otherness – an appreciation of Nollywood as different due to its informality. More often than not, general descriptions of the industry, its transnational and diasporic tendencies, cultural studies of the industry and/or selected films, discussions on issues of class, gender, ethnicity, religion and interdisciplinary studies on the industry, have been more regular in publication. Jedlowski (2014), Larkin (2004), Lobato (2012), Bud (2014), Tsika (2015), Afolayan (2014) however, have beyond issues of theory and criticism, looked at discussions of stardom, film economics, piracy and distribution, industrial transformations. They follow on Dallas Smythe's (Wasko 2004) understanding of

media as “an important component of the economy” and ought to be perceived as “an economic entity” (223). A few other essays (Saul, 2010; Moore, 2010; Mistry & Ellapen, 2013; Santanera, 2013) have been written from a political economic perspective, but with a wider outlook on African films rather than the Nigerian film industry alone. In consonance with Smythe’s (1960) explanation that political economy of communication evaluates the impact of media organisations especially as it relates to the policies that govern their operation and organisation, they examine film in Africa, with few mentions of Nigeria, upholding also, Murdock and Golding’s (1974) definition of media as the product of a capitalist industry. Haynes (2011) attempts such capitalist study on the famous Nigerian filmmaker, Nnebue, paying an unusual attention to the auteur’s films and their contents. Rather than adopt a political economic approach in the study of Nnebue’s films, the author does an auteurist film criticism.

Critical evaluations of the industry and its films abound, but the industry will benefit more from a closer study of application of political economic approach. The Nigerian film industry, according to Kerrigan (2010) does not lack commercial incentive. But unlike Bollywood, Nollywood films are not widely distributed in theatres abroad and “rely on similar methods of distribution as in (the) home market, distribution through retail outlets for home viewing” (36). Although this is changing in recent times (Jedlowski 2014), distribution and exhibition remain the industry’s number one challenge. In the section above, the instrumentality of distribution to a film was highlighted. “Irrespective of the talent of the writer, director, technical staff and stars involved, if a film fails to secure a distribution deal... it will not be widely exhibited and will certainly not recoup its production budget” (Kerrigan 2010:37). In the Nigerian film industry, films are generally distributed straight to the consumers via retail outlets. Being a commercially motivated, low cost producing industry, investment in distribution is equally low.

One important element that contributed to the transformation of the political economy of the media production in Nigeria would be the introduction of the VHS technology. Whole study on this or the political economy of the Nigerian film industry does not exist. However, different scholars have written on the different political economic issues on aspects of the industry. In terms of production, studies on the Nigerian film industry appear to repetitively observe the short period of time within which films are produced and released for distribution (Barnard & Tuomi, 2008; Kerrigan, 2010; Haynes, 2011; Ugor, 2009; Miller, 2012, among others). Finance for films is obtained from ‘marketers’ who control distribution and finance in the industry and thus have great collective power (Miller, 2012; Bud 2014; Oyewole, 2014). Films are not financed according to estimations of potential sales, a distribution plan or a formal knowledge of the consumer’s demand, but on a financier’s confidence in his informal knowledge of the consumer market. Nollywood financiers often double as the distributors to cut out a middleman. Bud (2014) describes them as a cartel and Miller (2012) asserts that their dominance over distribution, however informal and obscure, gives them “a level of power that is difficult to penetrate and even more difficult to usurp” (119). The industry operates outside “conventional channels of film production, distribution and exhibition” (Lobato, 2007:119).

Prior to the emergence of Nollywood or the video film phenomenon in Nigeria, celluloid was the medium of production. Ajibade, (2007) discusses economic decline as cause of its short span, but Enahora (1989) blames the government and its policies, which halted rather than encouraged filmmaking in the country. Added to political factors, Onuzulike (2009) identifies cultural and economic factors and personal safety as other contributors to the shift from celluloid film production to video-film. Discussions on production in the Nigerian film industry identify Lagos as the California of Nollywood. It is Nollywood’s centre for filmmaking and distribution (Haynes, 2007; Oladunjoye, 2008). With

no geographical space called Nollywood and no constructed visible space for productions (Haynes, 2007), films are shot on location, for budgetary reasons, in different parts of Nigeria. While filmmakers are located in every part of the country, the marketing hub of the industry still remains Idumota and Alaba markets, Lagos, Iwaka Road market, Onitsha and Aba market (Bud, 2014; Ugor, 2007), where the producers or marketers are mostly situated. Being the major funders for what Mistry & Ellapen (2013) describe as “the ‘looser’ entrepreneurial mode of production” (47), these producers serve for Nollywood the purpose institutional frameworks that enable and fund productions serve for other national film industries. They have formed production companies individually and as groups which exist along with those formed by other independent filmmakers. These companies fund projects set both in Nigeria and the diaspora. Jedlowski’s (2012) study on Nigerian video filmmaking in Italy, observes that Nollywood production companies are beginning to exist in the diaspora as “Nigerian expatriates began to see the economic potential of investing in filmmaking and started to set up their own production companies abroad” (239).

Scholarship on production in Nollywood has very easily been conflated with regular discussion on the shift from celluloid filmmaking to video, which reshaped production process within the industry (Ajibade & Williams 2012). There has been a deliberate accentuation on the duration of the production process in the industry. There appears to be varied account of the duration. However, Ajibade & Williams’ (2012) four days to one week of shooting and Barnard & Tuomi’s (2008) 15 days (from conception to marketing), contrast very sharply with other authors’ (Jedlowski, 2013; Miller, 2012; Haynes, 2007; Chowdhury et al, 2008, Schultz, 2012) ten to fourteen days of shooting. Jedlowski (2013) adds that increasing number of films from the industry are having higher number of shooting days that could go anything from twenty days to two months. Comparing the production paradigms of Hollywood and Nollywood, Ajibade & Williams (2012) argue that while being ‘untidy and

messy' and consumed in about the same manner, Nollywood's 'un-Hollywood' production style has enabled the industry to "retain potentials that are positive to social change in Nigeria" (208). These potentials remain untapped by the state. In addition to no state interest in the affairs of the industry, the content of the videos cannot be said to be 'a product of government censorship' (Ugor, 2007:20). The same nonchalance has been observed on issues of IP rights and state support. Literatures discussing IP rights and state support in the industry, have not thoroughly engaged with the political angle of the subject as much as the economic.

Scholarship on the video phenomenon in Nigeria (Ugor, 2007) attribute the emergence of video filmmaking to structural change in the national economy, which was brought about by policy implementation. Failed policies and the government's inability to monitor, regulate and support the film industry, lead to situations where filmmakers and producers bypass censorship with impunity. Okome (2007) cites an example and Ajibade & Williams (2012) conclude that letting such act go unpunished as well as allowing uncensored films into the market would "allow imaginations that run contrary to institutional opinions" (207). The transposition from celluloid to video is consequential to the abandonment of theatre houses (Ajibade & Williams) that promptly fell into disrepair.

Film distribution has remained a major challenge to the Nigerian film industry due to high prevalence of piracy. Okon, 1990; Onuzulike, 2009; Adedeji & Ekwuazi, 1998 discuss history of film distribution in the industry highlighting how the culture of piracy was triggered. In his study on marginal film distribution, Lobato (2007) identifies two models of film distribution, none of which the Nollywood system falls under. Proposing the subcinema under which the author classifies Nollywood's popular video industry, he defines the concept as embracing the informal modes of film consumption. Employed as a theoretical model, subcinema bears resemblance to what media scholars refer to as small media (Sreberny-

Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1994; Larkin, 2000) or small screen cinema (Jedlowski, 2012) that includes the video and audiocassette technologies. Nollywood's system of distribution is a deflection of the Hollywood system, a deviation from the conventional film releasing patterns. Indeed, as Haynes (2007a) remarks, there is no basis for comparison between the industries. An outline of the characteristics of the subcinema shows that Nollywood is 'incompatible' with Hollywood (Lobato 2007). While major studios are in charge of distribution and exhibition of films in Hollywood, Haynes (2007a) and Ugor (2007) note that marketers, scattered across Nigerian major cities, are in control of film distribution in Nollywood. In his study, Haynes (2007b) observes that distribution in the Nigerian film industry is sectorized like the industry itself is. While Hausa language films are sold exclusively in Northern Nigeria, Christian videos have a church based distribution system, Nollywood has its own distribution system; a system Haynes describes as extremely leaky (2007b) and dysfunctional (2007a). Its dysfunctionality notwithstanding, this mode of distribution according to Meleiro (2009) has social, political and economic significance, both for the industry and the consumers. Its major setback, however, is piracy. The author observes that formal cinema distribution and Tunde Kelani's Mobile Cinema project are avenues adopted to overcome the challenge. Ugor's (2007) study on Nigerian video censorship unintentionally highlights the ineffectiveness of government agencies in monitoring film distribution within the country, although his emphasis was on the impact of such inefficiency on video content.

On transnational distribution, scholars identify piracy as a significant explanation for Nollywood presence in countries within and outside Africa (Lobato, 2007, 2012; Larkin, 2004, 2008; Oladunjoye, 2008; Zajc, 2009; Miller, 2012; Chamley, 2012; Oyewole, 2014). Jedlowski (2012) records that "countless number of unofficial pirate copy vendors" of Nollywood films are located in Turin, Italy (241). Adejunmobi (2007) discusses transnational

distribution from the perspective of languages used in the films extending to other African countries (Barrot, 2008; Larkin, 2004). The need to reach transnational audience and an absence of a formal distribution channel gave rise to media piracy in the industry (Eriksson, 2013). As a form of informal economy, piracy results in invisible distribution, accounting for difficulty in monitoring consumption. Classifying media economies, Lobato (2012) elaborates the complications inherent in international film culture and how much it relies on informal or shadow economy. The informal or 'shadow' economy, defined as economic activities "occurring within capitalist economies but outside the purview of the state ... is a space of unmeasured, untaxed and unregulated economic activity" (Lobato, 2012:39-40).

Nollywood's lingering existence within the informal sector of the political economy of Nigeria has both benefited and hindered it. It accounts for informal distribution and consumption and minimal state intervention in terms of copyright laws, tax regulations, tariffs and censorship. Resulting from such informality, piracy claims an estimated fifty per cent of Nollywood's profit (Mackay 2009), although Scaria (2014) observes that "the illegitimate character of piracy and the resulting lack of data on the actual transactions make the accurate quantification of the volume of piracy and its economic effects very difficult, if not impossible" (23). To curb piracy, there have been attempts at formalizing the Nigerian film industry or bringing it into the formal economy of Nigeria, but some producers, distributors and consumers are resisting this (Lobato 2012), especially for personal gains. While Lobato (2012) describes them as 'smaller producers' (70), Jedlowski (2010) classifies them as 'a section of the industry' that finds "the present situation convenient, because of the freedom and the economic mobility that it allows" (9). The struggle for control and survival has been vicious in the Nigerian film industry.

These producers, according to Jedlowski (2010) are "aware of the need to improve the quality of the filmmaking to enlarge their potential markets" (9), but are unable to due to

limited resources and the challenge of piracy. Piracy, “the unauthorized taking, copying or use of copyrighted materials without permission” (Lobato, 2008:24), contributed significantly to the development of the Nigerian film industry. Nollywood’s first filmmakers and consumers “were deeply influenced by the consumption of pirated copies of foreign films” (Jedlowski 2010:20) from Hollywood, Bollywood and Hong Kong especially. Although menacing, piracy gets the credit for Nollywood’s popularity and success around the world (Oladunjoye, 2008; Haynes, 2007; Krings & Okome, 2013). Unofficial distribution network brought the industry to success and popularity, but it is “eroding producers’ and directors’ main sources of income” (Jedlowski, 2010:3), scaring off potential investors and makes large investments risky (Haynes 2007). Like the term gentrification, piracy holds a negative impression, a single reality of theft – material or intellectual, and is met with disapproval. A few scholars have looked beyond this single reality, appreciating its contribution to development -economic and otherwise. Lobato (2012) presents six faces of piracy, elaborating it as free enterprise and speech, a form of authorship, resistance and access in addition to being theft. Discussing political economic issues on IP, Bettig (1996) proposes weak copyright to check market colonisation. Piracy has also been interpreted as a business force (Johns 2009) and a resource swap (Lloyd 2009). It is a lucrative business from the supplier’s perspective (Cheung, 2009). While not justifying piracy, they consider its contribution, to the political economy of media. Lobato (2010, 2012) and Larkin (2004) discuss this in relation to the transnationalization of the Nigerian film industry.

This persistent discussion of piracy in this section is deliberate. In the struggle for control of power and resources, production is important, but distribution determines survival. For this reason, scholarship on the political economy of the industry has given attention to the issue of piracy, whose persistence results from the continued existence of Nollywood in the

informal sector of the political economy of Nigeria. Piracy could be further explored in the industry, especially since policies in place are inefficient in checkmating it.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the how political economy has been conceptualized in academic work. Starting with a broad discourse on the general concept, I narrowed down to political economy of the media and the Nigerian film industry. I showed how the concept has been explored in the media and how scarcely discussed it is in the Nigerian film industry academic discourses. By exploring past academic works on the concept, I found that it has no single definition. This results from the existence of many different schools, traditions, debates and perspectives. However, the various perspectives appreciate the concept as decisions made on political and economic matters. How these decisions are made is the point of difference among the schools. I also discovered that the presence of ‘political’ in political economy of the media introduces moral grounding in the business of media. This does not make the concept less selfish as those involved in political economic decision-making often struggle for their own interests. Political economic decisions lead to power struggle within industries. Despite individual specificities in terms of political economy in which industries exist, the major difference between one’s dominance over the other is measured in the perceptive economic relevance accrued to the industry. For instance, while Hollywood began early to understand cinema as a profitable endeavour, the BFI was more concerned with culture, image and representation. Kerrigan (2010) notes that European filmmakers have at last begun to acknowledge profitability as a means of survival in film industries. Higson (2011) observes that the film business in the UK developed as a small aspect of important businesses in the 1990s and 2000s. In fact, he asserts that to some people, it was “less about business and more about cultural and social engagement” (39). For Nollywood, while filmmaking has

always been about business, state support remained lacking until the President Goodluck Jonathan's administration in 2010 (Justin Akpovi-esade²).

I therefore concluded that the political economy within which an industry exists is determined by the level of interest the state puts into it. Without state/corporate support and interaction, industries tend to operate in an informal political economy. However, the classical liberalists, as observed by Clark (1998), perceive an economy detached from state involvement a perfect economy. I noted that for this study, I adopt the modern liberal perspective to political economy. Upholding that markets are not always self regulating, I shall employ this perspective to enquire into the sudden state interest in Nollywood and attempt to regulate and economize the industry. I found that political economy has selfish tendency and so employ it to understand motivations behind the formalization attempt and responses to it. I found a lack in the availability of wholesome academic studies on the political economy of Nigerian film industry in general and of Nollywood in particular. This could result from the state's disinterest in the activities of the industry. Production, distribution and consumption have more frequently been discussed in isolation and discourses on policies remain scarce. In chapter six, I examine the MOPICON policy document and how it impacts on the political economy repositioning of the industry. This lack in political economy studies on the industry could be addressed through greater government involvement in the affairs of the industry. Nevertheless, this is dependent on the perspective from which political economy is conceived since some perspectives advocate for limited state interference. In the next chapter, I introduce the gentrification process as a way of understanding state involvement in the repositioning of Nollywood in the nation's formal political economy.

² <http://independent.ng/october-1-piracywhat-nollywood-telling-jonathan/>. Accessed 14/06/15.

CHAPTER TWO

GENTRIFICATION AND THE MEDIA INDUSTRY

Introduction

This chapter introduces gentrification as a concept of political economy. In the previous chapter, I explored the usefulness of political economy in understanding the implications of political and economic policies for evolving industries, especially Nollywood. I now apply the concept of gentrification to understanding how film industries in developing economies evolve through state intervention. The concept engages with issues of class, standards and aesthetics that are affiliated with formalization. Originally an urban studies term stigmatised with class discrimination, gentrification has remained scarce in media scholarship. Suggesting the transformation of a locality into an ideal city for the elite and professionals, gentrification gives meaning to the political and economic transformations that reshape media industries and the implications this has for those who work within the industry. As noted in the previous chapter, I use the concept of gentrification from a modern liberal perspective, employing as a metaphor to describe attempts to formalize and ultimately regenerate Nollywood. This allows me to maintain a balance in its application in media studies, evening out the economic tension between the state and industry.

Divided into four sections, this chapter begins with a discourse of gentrification as applied to urban geography. As a term rarely used in media studies, this is to establish the background of the concept. The first section conceptualizes gentrification in order to adequately apply it to media study. I then explore the relationship political economy and gentrification share as social, economic and political tools of analysis. Focusing on the media, the chapter discusses gentrification in media studies, and conceptualizes media gentrification. In addition to exploring a concept stigmatised for its single-reality definition

of class secession and displacement, this chapter considers the concept a neologism, evaluates its place in wider cinematic studies and then in the context of academic work on Nollywood. The chapter concludes by presenting the concept of gentrification as a way to investigate changes in consumption, production and distribution patterns resulting from increased state-industry interaction. It lays a foundation for this study's discourse on Nollywood's transformation, commodification and re-positioning in the formal political economy of Nigeria and how this could mean displacement for certain film producers.

2.1 *The concept of Gentrification*

One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two rooms up and two down – have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences... once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the social character of the district is changed. (Glass 1964:xviii).

In mid 1960s London, "some inner-city neighbourhoods were unexpectedly being resettled by middle- and upper-income "pioneers", who were typically young, childless, and well educated" (Helms 2003:474-475). This phenomenon made news headlines, attracted scholarly attention, and was dubbed gentrification. Persisting over these many years, the process is becoming familiar in disciplines other than urban and regional studies for which it was originally coined. Illustrated above, the term gentrification was conceived and has been used, although not exclusively, in urban studies and regional development. Coined by Ruth Glass (1964), gentrification has remained a subject of heated debate in policy issues, public circles and scholarship. Developed with a focus on transforming living spaces (Butler & Robson, 2001; Atkinson, 2000), gentrification has been discussed in various other fields as close to urban study as real estate and as far from it as the cinema. These studies integrate the

concept, both as theory and evidence into various aspects of urban research (Lees et al, 2008). Hence, gentrification has become a “lens through which to examine a variety of intersecting phenomena in a city and/or neighbourhood context” (Lees, et al 2008:xvi).

One of such phenomena of interest is the cinema. However very little has been done on the study of gentrification in media and cultural studies. Ganti (2012) devotes sections of her book to the discussion of gentrification of the Hindi cinema and of its audience imaginaries. Jedlowski (2013) observes the shifts that are provoking aesthetic, narrative and economic transformations in the Nigerian film industry and wonders what they hold for the industry. The author does not suggest that these transformations are leading to gentrification in the industry, but simply wonders what they “represent for the industry as a whole” (41). This study develops from his observation and investigates state and corporate organizations’ intervention towards transforming the industry as conscious efforts to gentrify and formalize it.

Gentrification in urban studies means the renovation and transformation of a neighbourhood, previously occupied by the working class, to suit the tastes of middle and upper class (Smith 1996, Ward 2008, Atkinson & Bridge 2005). Over the years, this idea of unjust displacement of one class by another has not changed, but scholars have argued over the narrowness of the traditional definition of the term and the selectivity of its understanding. The close attention paid to the displacement of individuals and sometimes on the displaced poor in gentrification studies, makes the concept problematic and causes a constriction of analyses and research. Bondi (1999) expresses frustration over gentrification studies closed doors on new insights. Slater (2002) disagrees, however, believing that there are aspects of gentrification yet to be explored. One of such aspects is the controversial displacement itself. Once considered a gentrifying neighbourhood, every movement out of a locality is termed displacement. However, according to Marcuse (1985), displacement comes

in various forms. While some forms are directly linked to gentrification, others are not. Moiles (2011) for instance, acknowledges eviction as a form of everyday urban displacement that can occur as a non-gentrification form of displacement. Studies by Davidson (2009) and Davidson & Lees (2005) equally consider the constitution of displacement. They opine that displacement could occur in various other unconventional ways including a displacement that does not physically relocate individuals out of the neighbourhood. As an essential and consistently discussed component of gentrification, displacement forms an unavoidable discourse in virtually all gentrification studies. Yet displacement in gentrification still appears rather invisible and as Chum (2015) notes, the extent or severity of displacement continues to be an issue of debate among scholars. In fact, according to Atkinson (2000), investigating displacement is tantamount to measuring the invisible.

Acknowledging variations in time, place and stages of gentrification (Kerstein 1990), studies on the concept tend to be in agreement with capital influx and displacement as the defining traits of transformation of a neighbourhood. Their disagreements appear to stem from what perspective to define gentrification, which perspective best typifies the process and where the process occurs. While Brown-Saracino (2010) questions the strict application of gentrification only to urban processes and who is really responsible for the gentrification process, Clark (2006) argues for “a broader definition of gentrification than is commonly found in the literature” (261). What is commonly found in the literature is Rose (1984 in Brown-Saracino 2010) and Beauregard’s (1986) definitions of the term as a chaotic concept. What Clark advocates for is a “clear and inclusive definition of gentrification” in order to “incorporate new phenomena in this concept and to maintain the political topicality of the term” (Huber 2012:210). Some other questions have arisen which call for a broader definition of the process. Brown-Saracino’s (2010) collection of essays has a number of these questions: is gentrification strictly an urban process? Can it take place outside the city? Must

displacement occur and is it a defining characteristic of gentrification? Is the revitalisation process also gentrification? Is gentrification defined by a set of outcomes or causes? (12). Narrowly defining a concept like gentrification that will affect lives and influence life changing decisions like gentrification, presents the concept as chaotic.

Gentrification results in the radical cultural transformation of an area (Kohn, 2013), which has suffered a period of disinvestment. It means reinvesting in a depressed area, a process indicated by a shift towards the rich and informed and consequently, a resultant rise in cost of living (Grodach et al, 2014). The key factors in the definition of gentrification are urban property renewal, class structure, space (working class neighbourhood) and displacement. Smith & Williams (2006) explain that certain political, social and economic factors are responsible for the transformations in an urban landscape that eventually leads to the reshaping of the locality and a consequent change in class structure. They maintain that gentrification “is a visible spatial component of this social transformation” (3). It is a social as well as economic and political transformation that leads to the creation of inner-city spaces suitable and affordable to the more affluent occupiers or users (Hackworth, 2002). Gentrification presents out-movers the tough options of relocating to less desirable places or paying higher rent.

Structural economic factors, according to Smith (1996), are essential in understanding gentrification whose driving force is disinvestment. Arguments have arisen as to where is most appropriate to apply gentrification: large post-industrial cities, commercial development, smaller cities or rural areas, urban studies, cultural or media studies. Observing that the choices are widening currently, Tierney & Petty (2015) opine that gentrification “no longer carries the restrictive definitional baggage that constrained and narrowed (it) in the 1980s” (442). It has always been regarded as a small scale residential process which takes place within the city, but Kern (2013) believes that gentrification has greatly expanded in

recent times to become a global urban strategy, thus including “a wide variety of ways in which diverse spaces are primed for, and colonized by, the middle classes, urban elites and investment capital” (511). Its expanded definition, Tierney & Petty (2015) maintain, leaves researchers the invitation to study ‘less traditional settings’ experiencing “dramatic, cultural, demographic and economic shifts” (442). This therefore accommodates an exploration of the process by which ‘higher status’ in-movers struggle for power, survival and possession with ‘lower status’ (Krase 2006) occupants in a given neighbourhood, economic space or territory.

Of the previous studies reviewed for gentrification, the simplest definition and the most enlightening, which classifies the effect of gentrification into two, is that offered by Schaffer & Smith (1986). Quoting from the Oxford American Dictionary, the authors define gentrification as the “movement of middle class families into urban areas causing property values to increase and having the secondary effect of driving out poorer families” (347). Important of note here is that there is a primary effect – urban renewal resulting to a rise in property cost. This is often overshadowed by the secondary effect – displacement. Perez (2004) also captures these effects of gentrification in his definition of the concept as

a gradual process, occurring one building or block at a time, slowly reconfiguring the neighbourhood landscape of consumption and residence by displacing poor and working-class residents unable to afford to live in ‘revitalised’ neighbourhoods with rising rents, property taxes, and new businesses catering to an upscale clientele. (139)

Continued debates and arguments over the boundaries of gentrification and its cause and effect still exist as the term remains loaded and a confusing phenomenon. Debates also exist on whether the benefits of gentrification for the middle and upper classes and urban economy outweigh the effects on the displaced residents (Brown-Saracino, 2010). Smith & Williams’ (2007) anthology for instance, raises the debate on whether the gentrification process results to positive urban revitalisation or impacts negative consequences on the poor and working

class inhabitants of the gentrified locality. A close study of most definitions of gentrification offered by scholars reveals that they are all in agreement on the results of gentrification, especially its contribution to urban renewal, but rarely discuss its effects on the displaced inhabitants as well as the likely cause of the process. Apart from the mention that a period of disinvestment results in investors taking interest in an area, the scale appears to tilt towards discussions on the after, rather than before, the inception of the process. Brown-Saracino (2010) is of the opinion that this is most probably because while they may agree on the causal factors of gentrification, they disagree on which particular causal factor is rudimentary to the process's occurrence. This disagreement is reflected in Helms' (2003) question, "which local amenities and structural characteristics attract renovators to certain neighbourhoods?" (476).

Still acknowledged a neologism (Smith, 2005), redefinitions and extensions of the boundaries of the term to embrace other processes of change have portrayed gentrification in terms of globalisation, urban regeneration (Atkinson & Bridge, 2005) and revitalisation (Rubino, 2005). As its definition boundaries expand, different situations are identified to which the gentrification process can be applied. There is a turn in categories of investigation involving gentrification. For instance, Anderson (1990) applies it to the study of race, Rothenburg (1995) examines sexuality, Ganti (2012) explores Bollywood cinema and its audiences and Hassler-Forest (2014) looks at television and audiences. Accordingly, Kruse (2005) stresses the permissibility in taking ownership of the word. This postmodernist perception of the concept gives it a dual or even multiple reality interpretation. Atkinson & Bridge (2005) expostulate that rather than interpreting gentrification as a direct, conflict-ridden displacement of the poor masses, it ought to be seen as a process of reconstructing the inner city to serve middle and upper class interest. Depending on the perspective from which it is interpreted, gentrification could represent both evil and good. The concept, Clark (2006) maintains, has more and deeper universal truths than just displacement. In essence,

gentrification is not as chaotic and complex as it has been understood to mean. The author advocates for a simplification as well as a turnaround in the use, interpretation and application of the term. Clark's position, along with the rising argument in scholarship about where is most appropriate to apply gentrification, gives me the leverage to take ownership of the term and apply it to the study of Nollywood.

However, definitions of the term have been associated with urban development. Described as the radical cultural transformation of an area (Kohn, 2013), Clark (2005) opines that it does not matter where, when or how gentrification takes place. The end result is what defines the concept, although the processes leading up to the eventual outcome cannot be overlooked. All change processes that fit this description, he maintains, is gentrification (258). Such changes are currently taking place within Nollywood industry. One such change, the gradual shift from predominant video and VCD distribution to cinema releases, leaves assertions like Kerrigan's (2010:79) in need of revision. Gentrification may not be a common term in the arts, especially media studies, but Grodach et al (2014), whose findings confirm that art is not inseparably connected to gentrification, classify fine arts activities as being associated with revitalisation and, commercial arts activities as associated with gentrification. Although their research is on how the arts can contribute to the transformation of an area and how the art is associated with gentrification, the study leaves the possibility of art itself undergoing gentrification. When artists indirectly set transformation in motion through their cultural capital and sweat equity, they not only aesthetically revalue areas, but the art form to which they are contributing. A three-step process, gentrification starts with an influx of new residents with low financial, but high cultural capital, the middle-class gets attracted to the unconventional attractiveness and low prices and this eventually leads to transformation thus drawing the elite or upper-middle class professionals and developers to the area (Kohn 2013). More often than not, government policies contribute to this influx. In-movers are generally

attracted to the transforming area by political as well as economic interests. The next section therefore examines gentrification as political economy to establish a basis for exploring as gentrification attempts at formalizing and commodifying Nollywood. Gentrification, according to Lees, et al (2007), is a political and policy-relevant issue concerned with regeneration at the cost of displacement. Having gone global, the authors assert, it has become intertwined with the process of globalization and thus relevant in political economy discourses.

2.2 Gentrification as Political economy

In chapter one, political economy was examined as the study of control and survival in social life (Mosco 2009). It suggests a struggle for the control of power and means of survival, especially economic, social and political factors. Gentrification is a social, economic as well as a political tool, which Betancur (2002) defines as “a struggle of contending interests vying for control” (780). There exists an established link between gentrification and political regulations on urban spaces and issues of affordability. Scholars like Hagerman, 2007; Kreuger & Savage, 2007; Lees & Demeritt, 1998; Kear, 2007; discuss this, Quastel (2009) observes that limited literature exists on how these process relate or how to understand the commonalities between them. Like political economy of the media, with its established relationship between media business and government policies, political economy of gentrification is concerned with an interaction between policies and urban renovation. According to Hackworth & Smith (2001), the process of gentrification in the 1960s and early 1970s was sporadic and partly driven by governments with the aim of curbing inner-city neighbourhood disinvestment. Noting this as ‘first wave gentrification’ Quastel (2009) observes that in second and third waves, gentrification became widespread and large scale

respectively, involving government policies and public-private partnerships as key drivers. Glynn (2008) perceives however, that third wave gentrification is now noticeable in smaller cities as resistances become weak and ineffective. Although Quastel's (2009) discussion centres on gentrification and political ecology, which seeks a synthesis between political economy and the study of biological processes, his essay gives attention to how economic and social processes create and recreate urban spaces. Granted that their (Heynen et al, 2006; Braun, 2005, Keil, 2006) discussions on political ecology eschew resources discourses, favouring socionatural ones, it does not make gentrification any less a materialist social science as Quastel (2009) proposes.

The search for studies on the political economy of gentrification yielded few indirect references. As early as the 1980s, Palen & London (1984) present political economy as one of the approaches to understanding the causes of gentrification. They note a dual perspective to the approach – traditional and Marxist. While the traditional perspective maintains that everyday political and economic factors in society prompt people's movement into the inner-city, Marxists, being people-centric, argue that these factors are intentionally orchestrated rather than invisible as claimed. As noted in the previous chapter, the discussions of these factors and their place in Nollywood's transformation is done from the modern liberal perspective with an incorporation of Marxist people-oriented ideology. Keeping a balance between the perspectives, scholars acknowledge the existence of an interaction between state policies and the concept of gentrification. In their discourse on the changing state of gentrification, Hackworth & Smith (2001) write, "gentrification has changed in ways that are related to larger economic and political restructuring. Among these changes is the return of heavy state intervention in the process" (464). In its first wave, gentrification was a tool used by the state, but in the second wave, private individuals took over, driving gentrification based on policies put in place by the government. In its third wave, gentrification is once

again experiencing state involvement, serving as a boost and disproving Bourne's (1993) prediction that gentrification would eventually face a recession amounting to its end.

Already holding a negative interpretation, a discussion of political ecology of gentrification, which makes a socio-natural consideration rather than political economy's socio-economic concerns, seems appealing. The difference between them, however, remains obscured since political ecology of gentrification like political economy, seeks to comprehend resource or 'material' flows and power regimes (Quastel, 2009:698). If political economy is concerned with individuals and state relationships and what influences such relationships, then political economy of gentrification is no different from what Beauregard (1993) describes as an interaction of people who come together to formally evaluate how, where, and with whom they live, the costs and benefits of such co-habitation. Some of these may be either influenced or decided on by the state. Coined by a politically committed scholar with a powerful sense of social justice (Slater, 2009), gentrification according to Glass, (1964) results from de-nationalization of development rights, unfreezing of development values, liberated real estate speculation and a relaxation of rent control. Thus, as a process that occurs within inner cities, gentrification does not occur outside government regulations. One of the key researchers on gentrification, Badcock (1996) states that the concept is concerned with how capital and class shape power relations, in addition to Cosgrove & Jackson's (1987) spaces and places and the politics of representation. Slater (2002) and Hastings (1999) argue, however, that there is a recent cultural turn in gentrification studies focusing more on real people and their issues rather than the initial prioritization of class and capital (Cook et al, 2000; Anderson & Gale, 1999, Fincher & Jacobs, 1998). No longer reducible to class and capital, gentrification study is shifting focus to people and their relationships. A constant in gentrification, Slater (2009) maintains, is class inequality as well as power struggle.

Hamnet's (1973) study on the gentrification of London proves that little consideration is given to original residents of an area mapped out for redevelopment. With gentrification shifting its focus on real people, political ecology of gentrification cannot contribute to Hamnet's (1973) argument for an improvement of conditions for the original occupiers who often get displaced in the gentrification process. What the author argued for was a political economy of gentrification that would examine the interaction between state policies such as the Housing Act of 1969 and the people, with a consideration of their financial or economic capabilities. Another reason political economy of gentrification is important is to arrest the debate on the realities of displacement and replacement. Having established displacement as a fact in the gentrification process, Glass (1964) notes that the out movement of the working class is inevitable due to rising costs. Hamnet (1973), initially agreeing to this, does a critical evaluation of state policies on city redevelopment. The lack of diversified approach to the study of gentrification apparently informed Hamnet's (1991) position that replacement, rather than displacement is what actually takes place. Acknowledging that displacement does occur, the author maintains that a minimized number of working class population in the city results from a long-term depletion of the same class in the locality. Therefore, much of what takes place is replacement rather than displacement. Freeman (2005) agrees to this, asserting that displacement is an insignificant component of forces driving change in gentrifying localities. As with Atkinson (2000), Smith (1992) finds a lacuna in this argument, which he describes as pro-gentry philosophical individualism lacking social justice. These studies may have reasons to be different in their conclusions because they are carried out with case studies located in differing parts of the world.

Replacement and displacement have been much confused as abandonment and gentrification. Just as replacement and displacement are not polar opposites and could occur simultaneously, Marcuse (1985) believes same for abandonment and gentrification. He

explains that the processes happening at the same time create a vicious cycle. In essence, what Hammett (1991) believes to be replacement resulting from a rise in the standard of living, is actually a cycle of displaced working class being replaced by an incoming middle class seeking a gentrified neighbourhood. This sort of displacement, identified by Marcuse (1985) as exclusionary displacement amounts to “a heinous act of injustice” (Smith, 1994:152), dispossessing people of their places of habitation. To check this, Marcuse (1985) proposes that first, there has to be a desire to want to do so and secondly, it is a task that to be conducted from the political arena. Highlighting intellectual neglect of Marcuse’s propositions, which explain the sparse scholarship on the policy-people interaction side of gentrification study, Slater (2009) suggests that such propositions could “reinstatement a sense of social justice in gentrification research” (293). This sort of neglect on the part of intellectuals explains the mere references and assumptions made on issues of injustice and harm in gentrification rather than explanations (Kohn, 2013). In her study, the author identifies five possible harms of gentrification on the occupants and proposes that policy making as well as empirical research could efficiently assess them. She believes that employing the tools of political theory, policies could be structured to prevent the displacement of occupants of a gentrifying neighbourhood.

In addition to social justice for residents of a gentrifying neighbourhood, political economy of gentrification is important for the survival of businesses located in gentrifying localities. Businesses, according to Kohn (2013), may either suffer displacement when they are unable to afford the rent or lose their customer base, forcing them to liquidation in due course. Making similar observation on the relevance of political economy of gentrification, Aalbers & Christophers (2014a) posit that the paucity of academic discourses on political economic analysis on housing issues need be addressed. Although discussed from a housing rather than gentrification perspective, the authors maintain that housing research could

benefit from an understanding of capitalism and political economy. Political economy on the other hand could equally benefit from housing research since land and property are foundational to power and wealth. The authors thus argue that housing researchers take political economy seriously just as political economy ought to take housing seriously. Their essay, described by Berry (2014) as “a compendium of analyses from different theoretical traditions” (402), does not state clearly how this could be achieved, although the authors acknowledged their research a proposition for a perspective rather than a method for framing political economy of housing. Berry (2014) faults this uncertainty on the application of political economic approach to housing, noting that the authors rather fell “into the epistemological trap of eclecticism” (402). Nevertheless, he does not suggest or recommend a suitable approach. Aalbers & Christophers’ (2014a) controversial essay evoked other reactions from authors like Bryan & Rafferty (2014) and Schwartz (2014) who concur that comparative political economy disregards housing. Like Berry (2014), however, Schwartz (2014) faults the possibility of an application of abstract housing theory and their underplaying the political tension around housing as use and exchange value. In response to these commentaries, Aalbers & Christophers (2014b) clarify that contrary to downplaying political tensions around housing, their essay argues that both concepts are indispensable to each other as coming to grips with one meant factoring in the centrality of the other.

As highlighted in the illustrations drawn from ecology and housing, gentrification does not exist in the isolation of political economy. According to Hackworth & Smith (2001), gentrification changes in relation to larger political and economic restructuring. The authors observe that state intervention in the gentrification process marks one of the numerous restructures. Examining the process in three New York cities, Hackworth & Smith (2001) argue that such state intervention and directness in encouraging gentrification is often for economic reasons, usually to raise property value and/or cause an increase in revenue derived

from taxation. Hence the consideration of evolving film economy gentrification as a deliberate attempt by the government to formalize the industry in order to increase revenue generated via taxation. More often than not, what promotes or contributes to gentrification is neoliberal policies put in place by the state to promote free market and privatisation. Moiles (2011) illustrates this with the Ronald Reagan deregulation and privatisation support in New York City in the 1980s. This, the author says, caused rent rise and displacements of residents and businesses.

Political economic explanations of gentrification therefore hold that changes to policy or economic incentives contribute to gentrification. In essence, the forces contributing to gentrification often do not exist within the given locality, but according to Gruis, et al (2006), a “neighbourhood’s fate is determined to a large degree by powerful forces allocating scarce resources throughout a metropolitan area” (45). Gentrifying factors therefore are a function of outsiders rather than residents within the neighbourhood. Sutherland (2012) proffers a contrary opinion in her discourse of agricultural gentrification, noting that insiders and outsiders can contribute equally. In media, art, culture and creativity play vital roles in facilitating the occurrence of gentrification (Brown-Saracino, 2010). The following sections consider gentrification in media (and film) industry as calculated initiative of outsiders (the state and corporate bodies) and insiders (filmmakers) to make the industry profitable.

2.3 *Gentrification in the Media*

A diversified study of gentrification, as the revivification of working class or unoccupied areas of a city into middle and/or upper class use is, according to Chum (2015) more important now than before especially with the rising promotion of the concept as an urban policy strategy for improving economic, physical and social outlook of disinvestment.

Although the author's (as well as Hackworth, 2002; Atkinson & Bridge 2005; Peck 2005; among others) interest in such disinvestment lies with that of central cities around the globe, gentrification study is equally relevant in the disinvestment of industries such as media and communication specifically and art in general. Lees (2000) highlights that gentrification has been constructed by media and politics as an emancipatory metropolitan process and a practical solution for urban decline. Its negative impact – displacement notwithstanding, gentrification has the capabilities to attract investments. The shift in gentrification research focusing on identifying the causes of gentrification rather than a study of the process itself draws from Palen & London's (1984) attempt to elucidate the roots and causes of the spread of gentrification. An identification of causes and effects of gentrification and possible gentrifiers contributes to the application of the concept to fields other than urban studies. Beyond the in-movement of one class and the out-movement of another, gentrification is the fundamental restructuring of a space or industry. It is a process that occurs within an urban space where prior disinvestment in infrastructures brings about fresh opportunities for gainful redevelopment. According to Smith (2007), of utmost importance to the gentrification process is not the in or out movement, but the amount of productive capital returning to a given area from the suburbs.

Media are the means of mass communication. Either social or mass, the media are, according to Herman & Chomsky (1988), designed to serve as a way to communicate messages as well as symbols to people. Aimed at amusement, entertainment, information and the inculcation of values, beliefs and codes of conduct, the media often employs systematic propaganda. Embedded in the production and consumption of cultural products and social meaning, the media, according to Hesmondhalgh (2007), are a core cultural industry largely made up of the broadcasting, film, internet, music, video and computer games, advertising and marketing, and the print and electronic publishing industries. Film, the overarching

media form of this study, constitutes the art forms that contribute to or are associated with neighbourhood revitalisation (Grodach et al, 2014). Prior to Hollywood's emergence as the movie city of America, Marcy (2007) notes, "it used to be scary place, but now there are great bars, restaurants and stores, and it feels like its own cool neighbourhood" (2). The drastic regeneration, the author writes, is anchored on the refurbishment of existing theatres and construction of new ones, as well as the presence of fashion retailers. Discussed from a fashion perspective, Marcy's *Hurry to Hollywood* illustrates how art and media could stimulate gentrification. In addition to being instrumental to gentrification (especially by giving publicity to the process), art and media equally undergo gentrification. While trying to suggest links for research agendas in gentrification discourses, Huber (2012) remarks that the media hold a crucial impact on gentrification, and thus suggests that they are not underestimated considering that people rely on the information gathered from media sources. Studies like Huber's however, focus on media coverage of and contribution to the gentrification process rather than the occurrence of the process within the media. Direct discussions on media gentrification may not exist at the time of writing this chapter, but authors like Vivant (2009) and Chum (2015) hint on gentrification within the cultural industries and the likely causative factors. The authors note that supporting arts and culture is tantamount to supporting their redevelopment, renewal or regeneration, which eventually results in an economic growth.

In her essay on agricultural gentrification, Sutherland (2012) notes that the gentrification process could occur from both within and outside a given locale. The author therefore defines agricultural gentrification as resulting from both the in-movement of wealthy newcomers and the social upgrading of resident agricultural households. Interpreted as both chaotic (Beauregard, 1986) and multifaceted (Sutherland, 2012), the concept of gentrification, as well as its derivatives, appears to have a multiplicity of interpretation.

Gentrification in the media industry will therefore respond to both internal and external stimuli. It is an outcome of changes in preferences and/or capital allocation within the media industry. It translates to the amount of productive capital returning to the media industry or the amount of capital moving within the media industry, resulting in a radical transformation of the industrial structure. Media gentrification or gentrification in the media industry can be conceptualized in this study as the transformation of media spaces brought about by the movement of economic capital.

Of all media forms, gentrification has been most readily applied to studies on film industries and perhaps television. The earliest appearances of film in gentrification discourses and debates describe its contribution to the gentrification process. Colomb (2009) records that in East London, the concentration of artists and art happenings like exhibitions and installations, attracted creative professionals like filmmakers, actors, designers and musicians, thereby setting off the gentrification process. Like Grodach et al (2014), Zukin (2010) and Marcy (2007), Colomb (2009) identifies film and other media forms as gentrification stimulants rather than gentrifiable fields. Hence, DeSena (2009) illustrates how filmmakers are gentrifiers. With instances drawn from interviews with local residents, the author concludes that artists do not strive to fit into an already established neighbourhood, but instead, attempt to take over and recreate the locale. Drawn from the study of a single neighbourhood within an American city, this conclusion may be specific and unique only to the given neighbourhood.

In her ethnographic study of Bollywood, Ganti (2012) examines the radical transformations that reshaped the Hindi film production between the 1990s and 2010. She credited the gentrifying efforts to Hindi filmmakers whose ability to gather capital and manage the risk and uncertainties of filmmaking business, as well as professionalism and social respectability culminated to the industrial reformations. Another essential ingredient to

the transformation is linked to the political economy of the Indian State that embraced neoliberal economic ideals. The author notes that the neoliberal restructuring of the national economy altered India's media (film especially) landscape, expanding to include satellite television and multiplexes. Discussing gentrification here with a focus on audience reception and appreciation, Ganti (2012) does not engage with the issue of developing film economies. Building on this limitation, my study focuses on applying the concept to understanding how film economies are developed. She approaches the concept in its newfound interpretation; one described as sugarcoated by Slater (2006), a popular, increasingly scholarly image of the concept. Ganti's exclusion of a displacement discourse aligns with Slater's (2006) opinion that in gentrification studies, there is a current demise of displacement as a delineating attribute of gentrification. Without being less scholarly, my approach considers displacement as inherent in the gentrification process. It presents a critical approach to gentrification that investigates policies and corporate/state interests in evolving economies and how they might lead to displacement of 'functional' informalities in film economies like Nollywood.

The less critical approach to gentrification results in lax attitude towards state policies that contribute to or encourage gentrification. In a news report on how movie making speeds up gentrification in American cities, Osterweil (2014) asserts that corrupt city and state policies flaunt the cultural values of the industry as a yardstick to fund film production companies, encouraging gentrification and increasing inequality within the state. Although the figures are unclear, as New York state spending is not reported to the public, Osterweil rightly observes that about fifty per cent of the movie subsidy money contributes to the payment of wages to middle class employees who have the capabilities to give generously back to the politicians supporting state policies. In other words, despite contributing to tax money, working class filmmakers are often unable to access funding as easily as recognised, high-earning filmmakers. Osterweil argues that much as moviemaking in New York City

contributes to revenue generation, state backing widens class inequality, creates a tourist-friendly city and boosts gentrification thereby resulting in the invisibility of the poor and excess glamour for the wealthy. Although not particularly focused on the film industry, studies and news articles on gentrification such as Osterweil's, demonstrate that contrary to predictions on the demise of gentrification, the concept is diversifying. Schulman (2012) explicitly declares the dearth of gentrification, offering that

With the crash of credit markets, the corporate bailout, institutionalised unemployment, the foreclosure epidemic, ...– this process, the influx of white money into mixed neighbourhoods as a means of displacing the residents and replacing them with racial, cultural, and class homogeneity, will no longer be in motion. I predict that it will stop for a while (18).

In what appears to be a complicated and self-contradicting study written in an informal style, Schulman (2012) explores gentrification beyond urban and environmental studies, examining the mind, AIDS, creation and gay politics. With such diversity in its application, the demise of gentrification seems improbable. The existence of authenticity and originality in various fields of study such as architecture, film and television, urban and even rural neighbourhoods, attract gentrification, explaining the research diversification in and mutation of gentrification. Discourses on gentrification in Los Angeles and ultimately Hollywood, although more as a locality than as an industry, exist due to this mutation and diversification. According to Lees (2012), LA in general lacks the authenticity required by gentrification and until recently, it held nothing for gentrifiers. Ironic as this may appear, considering that art and the influx of professionals contribute to the gentrification of a neighbourhood or an industry, the author insists that LA does not possess the sort of waves that attracted gentrification to London and New York in the 1950s to 1970s for instance. Her submission of LA's youthfulness as an explanation for the decreased gentrification in the city

remains debatable since it is proven that gentrification now occurs in big and small, urban and rural, young and ancient cities alike.

Gentrification has equally transcended race, locale, discipline and timeframe. Identified within the film industries, Ganti (2012) explains the concept as a deliberate and conscious efforts by industry players to understand and represent their audiences. As a purely economic process, gentrification in the film industry requires formalisation of the industry. In Bollywood, Ganti (2012) notes the establishment of film academies and corporatisation of the industry were valid steps that transformed Indian cinema. The recognition of filmmaking as an approved industrial activity in India, according to the author, led to structural changes that have helped to reshape the industry. But most important to the gentrification of Bollywood was the presence of investors (high profile Indian corporations and conglomerates) who established new production and distribution companies, thus prompting a transformation of already existing production, distribution or exhibition companies. As a result, there was and has continued to be, the author says, more abundant capital to finance film production. Although she mentions that such corporatisation avails industry players with low cost filmmaking, she fails to mention that importantly, it spreads risk, reducing its impact on the filmmakers.

An essential boost to gentrification is the availability of capital. As earlier stated, starting off as a regenerating process, continuous inflow of capital sustains regeneration, which eventually gives way to gentrification. This explains Bollywood's gentrification. The reforms in the industry (especially in finance and organisation), Ganti (2012) notes, "transformed it from being a very undercapitalised enterprise to one where raising capital is not perceived as the main challenge or constraint" (266). With gentrification in place within the industry, films, previously made for either the masses or the classes, but especially for the masses, are now being made for the masses and classes, or only for the classes. The current

shift in audience target, from the masses to niche audiences or the gentry, ought to evoke the same reaction generated by displacement in urban gentrification. Due to the invisibility of audience displacement, however, Ganti (2012) notes that filmmakers, journalists and economic analysts celebrate this shift, considering it a sign of artistic maturation and industrial modernisation. A new source of revenue generation, especially via distributions in the diaspora, a focus on audiences of class is akin to developing what Lees (2012) terms world city status, an ideal which appeals to both media and economics. With a focus on audience re-imagination in the Indian cinema, rather than a concern over the newfound urge to appeal to a class in Bollywood's audience body, Ganti (2012) offers India's political economy as the plausible explanation for production and consumption changes in cultural products. She discusses the Hindi cinema as a cultural industry being gentrified in Bollywood. With inauthenticity replacing the originality of a gentrified entity (locale, industry or field), the reader wonders which the author considers authentic between Hindi cinema and Bollywood.

In the media, as illustrated in the studies of Schulman (2012), Osterweil (2014), Ganti (2012) and Jedlowski (2015), events are commonly examined against the gentrification process. In other words, the characteristics of gentrification are explored in the changes within an industry. My study avoids this prevalent usage and examines state and corporate interest and investment in formalizing Nollywood as gentrification. Hence this study's concern over the political economy and state of the industry before and after its interaction with the government and corporate bodies. Rather than mirror Nollywood's transformations in the gentrification process, I use the concept to describe, investigate and understand formalization of the industry.

2.4 Gentrifying Nollywood?

Like media gentrification has been conceptualized in this study to mean the transformation of media spaces as a result of movement of economic capital, Nollywood gentrification will imply transformation of industrial activities resulting from economic capital movement. Aimed at investigating the formalization process of developing film economies, this section focuses on a gentrifying Nollywood. By gentrifying Nollywood, I mean an evolving film economy being dispossessed of its informalities and in the process of being incorporated into a formal political economy. Like the Hindi film industry, the Nigerian film industry is sectorized, with Nollywood representing films made in the English language. Hayward (2005) identifies these sectors as individual cinemas that make up a country's national cinema and Higson (2002) terms them strands and traditions. Sectoring in the Nigerian film industry can be identified broadly along regional lines– the Northern and Southern Nigerian film industries; and along ethnic, language and religious lines (Haynes, 2007, 2016). This shall be discussed further in the next chapter. It suggests a division into separate sections ordered according to the lines identified above with Nollywood representing the Southern Nigerian film industry. Nollywood films have been criticised by both journalists, intellectuals and social as well as cultural elites, as rootless, culturally inauthentic, unabashedly commercial with porous storylines targeted at the mass audience. This phenomenon shall be discussed extensively in the next chapter that explores the Nigerian national cinema.

Rare and uncommon in media discourses, gentrification has been sparsely applied to discussions on Nollywood. A general state of marked improvement in production values, visual style and narrative content have been observed in Nollywood, but these have not been investigated using any concept. Jedlowski (2013) confirms that new wave filmmakers are currently introducing elements of professionalism, theatrical exhibition, a change in target audience, larger budget sizes to the industry. He does not explicitly term the process

gentrification, nor attempt to understand these changes using the concept. In later study, the idea of gentrification in Nollywood is highlighted in class or group separation. While discussing the increasing exclusiveness of access to local production environment, Jedlowski (2015) affirms “strategies toward the creation of more rigid entry points and social privileges acquired over the years by a restricted elite of film practitioners” (2015). In contrast to Ganti’s (2012) very liberal approach to gentrification, identifying the pros and cons without neglecting the endemic issue of class, Jedlowski’s (2015) study appears rather selective, discussing gentrification as displacement or segregation. His study, which provides a background for this research, equally outlines some of the reforms that are currently regenerating the industry. Contrary to established knowledge on how amateurs, businessmen, uneducated and untrained aspiring filmmakers run Nollywood (Ajibade, 2013), he indicates a marked influx of professional filmmakers. The technical expertise required for making feature films, which Ajibade (2013) notes as lacking in the industry, has become relatively commonplace in high budget feature length films like Kunle Afolayan’s *The CEO*, Izu Ojukwu’s *'76*, for instance, which among others, contain what Adesokan (2011) describes as the aesthetic tendency usually missing in Nollywood films. In addition to this newfound expertise in technical aspects of filmmaking, the content and approach to filmmaking in general is equally witnessing a wave of transformation.

Existing as a shadow film economy (Lobato, 2012), with a rising tension between formality and informality, Nollywood is faced with attempts of formalisation, regulation and consolidation by film producers. These attempts, akin to the regeneration of a city, according to Lobato (2012), are aimed at making “Nollywood, a quintessentially informal media economy, more amenable to conventional measurement and accounting, bringing it into the formal realm” (60). The author does not give details highlighting this initiative, a part of the broader attempt driven by top industry players and supported by the government. In Bud’s

(2014) study, however, details of such attempts are recorded, illustrating how government regulatory bodies such as the Nigerian National Film and Video Censors Board, contradict themselves by going into negotiations with guilds and individuals, especially marketers in the course of shaping the film distribution system. The author highlights that while the laws are often in place, implementation is usually a challenge. For instance, the Licensing Controversy of 2006 that sought to provide license to film distributors or marketers, hence formalising distribution in the industry, was followed by nearly four years of dormancy, during which time things went back to usual. Contrary to Lobato's (2012) optimism in the Nigerian state government, Bud (2014) notes that well-conceived private initiatives are more functional. He cites an example in Gabosky's G-Media, established in 2014 by a loan from the Bank of Industry. G-Media proposes to operate with the same blueprint submitted to Nigerian National Film and Video Censors Board, but was ineffective. Launched at the time of Bud's publication, G-Media's efficiency at implementing its proposed distribution network is uncertain, but has continued to release and distribute successful films such as Mahmood Ali-Balogun's *Tango With Me*, Kunle Afolayan's *Phone Swap* and *October 1*, among others. Other such private endeavours include filmmaker Obi Emelonye's The Nollywood Factory, Tunde Kelani's MainFrame Productions, and Moses Babatope's Talking Drum Entertainment that produce and distribute films within and outside the country.

These individuals, along with notable filmmakers like Emem Isong, Kunle Afolayan, Izu Ojukwu are the artists whose presence in Nollywood incites regeneration. Jedlowski (2010, 2013) posits that they are pushing towards a conventional industry model bereft of informality, a mature industry with global reach. In addition to meeting cinema standards, they aim at a formal distribution system that allows opportunities to reach the audience in diaspora. In essence, their primary aim is not to make better films for the local audience. Although the authors do not mention it, it appears an explanation for the newfound tendency

for international premieres. Jedlowski (2013) perceives these premieres as successful ‘social events’ (36) aimed at mesmerising the audience with feelings of uniqueness. With Nollywood films now premiering in both the United States and United Kingdom, the author observes this as a bid to encourage bigger budget productions, attract conventional movie funding and integrate Nollywood into the world of formal business. While Lobato (2012) discerns that the current situation in Nigeria could be likened to Hollywood in pre-1908, he posits that such comparison ought to be avoided as developmental patterns of industries could differ from one another.

Consistent in Jedlowski (2013), Lobato (2012) and Bud’s (2014) studies is the submission that there is a division among the producers in the industry. While a group prefers the flexibility of its informality with a large local market, the other group favours integration into the formal film industry, hoping to “filter off the negative elements that blocked the industry” (Jedlowski, 2013:41). All three authors are uncertain what the future and the reforms hold for the industry. Noting the inconsistency of state support in the industry, Lobato concludes that it is unlikely that increased regulation, whether by the state or individuals, may not unseat informality in the industry, especially in the distribution sector. Jedlowski leaves his study open-ended, optimistically concluding with the hopeful remark of one of his interviewees that the transformations in the industry would be long lasting, taking the industry to the next phase of development. Although these transformations so far have not suggested gentrification of the industry or the displacement of any industry player and audience, they align with Gant’s (2012) definition of coolness that “encompasses aesthetics, affect, social class, identity and subjectivity” (79). The protracted showings in cinemas before an eventual release unto DVD deprive a certain class of individuals access to the films at the same time as others. On the other hand, making the film readily available to everyone is tantamount to considering quality a secondary issue. Professionally trained filmmakers in

the industry agree that such quality does not define the industry they belong to (Jedlowski, 2013).

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I reconceptualised gentrification for the media, establishing how the concept is used in film studies. I identified that previous studies have acknowledged it a neologism, (Smith, 2005), being open to semantic extension or shift, hence its adoption in this thesis as a metaphor. Using gentrification as a concept to explore how film develop enables an understanding of state involvement to formalize and monetize Nollywood. It offers interpretation to the implication of uneven spread of wealth within an economy. Its application to media studies will instigate an exploration of classes or the included and the displaced and how to encourage, between them, a healthy competition/interaction that could bring about regeneration. As a regenerative tool, gentrification creates tension within an industry, between the beneficiaries and those likely to be displaced. I examine such tension existing between the new and old Nollywood in chapter five and investigated the resultant power struggle in chapter six. I therefore adopt an ideological position that perceives the concept as capable of offering new insight into how media industries evolve, the role of government in this process and what implications it holds for the economy, industry and industry players. This position helps to predict possible beneficiaries and displaced as the industry strives towards aesthetics, quality and standard.

Following this understanding, I noted that gentrification is a postmodern concept with multiple reality interpretation. I projected the concept as a struggle of contending interests striving for power control and it helps to give meaning to this struggle – the beneficiaries and losers. This power control is measured in government-industry relationship as well as among

industry players to determine how capital and class shape power relations. Gentrification is thus applied to this study as a political economic tool to investigate and determine the impact of policies and initiatives on evolving film economies. I recognised the controversy over displacement, the usual outcome of the gentrification process. Beyond this negative, Marxist critique of the concept, I established that migration of people in gentrifying economies may not essentially be directly connected to the gentrification process. Hence, some of those counted as displaced could be individuals sampling new economies/territories. This is one advantage the gentrification process holds for developing economies – providing alternative, parallel economies to accommodate the so called displaced individuals.

As political economy, I suggested that gentrification captures power struggle in class separation and hierarchies. I adopted a modern liberal position to the use of gentrification in this research; a position that appreciates the relevance of state intervention, however limited, in the regeneration of industries. This position demands that the government creates room for individuals to excel; a process that industry players involved in this research refer to as enabling environment. This position enables me capture the individualism in Nollywood and reflect upon the changing circumstances in economic and social processes within the industry. It allows me the opportunity to contemplate on collectivism; a rare phenomenon in Nollywood used only as a means to an end. The perspective helps me to consider collective response to gentrification of Nollywood's social and economic environment where state support must allow individuals to flourish. From a modern liberal perspective, I propose a positive critique of gentrification. This allows me to explore the existence of parallel economies to accommodate industry players who maybe perceived as displaced.

I suggested that gentrification will hold varied implications for the media industry. I argued that gentrification in the media industry could result from in-moving professionals or upgrading of existing industry players. I perceive state-led gentrification as that instigated

and promoted by the government through tax rebates and financial support. I discussed the place of government in the gentrification reshaping the industry to illustrate gentrification in evolving film economy. I suggested that gentrification could give understanding to the state's investment in Nollywood and offer meaning to its attempt to formalize and commodify the industry. I argued that re-investments by private individuals, corporate bodies and the government to curb disinvestment can stimulate the gentrification process. I thus conceptualized gentrification in Nollywood as the transformation of production, distribution and consumption spaces as a result of their interaction with government policies and the movement of economic capitals within the industry. Having thus reconceptualised gentrification for evolving film economy studies, I explore in the next chapter the national cinema theory highlighting the government's attempt to curb Nollywood's disinvestment via policies.

CHAPTER THREE

NATIONAL CINEMA CONCEPT

Introduction

This chapter, centred on the third and final theoretical framework for this study, explores evaluations of national cinemas in past academic studies. It investigates how national cinemas are economically constructed and partly regulated by the state, hence the exploration of the government's attempts to gentrify, formalize and commodify Nollywood. A review of past academic works on national cinema as a concept is relevant to this research as it would resolve the confusion over understandings of Nollywood, Nigerian film industry and Nigerian national cinema. Noted briefly in the introduction to this dissertation and as will be further discussed later in this chapter, Nollywood only represents a sector of the Nigerian film industry located in southern Nigeria and producing films in the nation's official language. This exploration of national cinema concept appraises Nollywood as Nigerian national cinema. This is because national cinemas are expected to represent nations in specific ways, and being successful, far-reaching and phenomenal, Nollywood could serve such purpose. After appraising Nollywood as Nigerian national cinema, the rest of this study will investigate the state's interventions in Nollywood's economic construct as effort to formalize and gentrify it.

This chapter shares a relationship with previous chapters via its consideration of aesthetics and artistry as well as economics and policies in the structure and organisation of cinemas. Beginning with an investigation into the concept of national cinema, with illustrations drawn from the cinemas of various countries, the chapter focuses on Nigerian film industry whose political economy was discussed in chapter one. While the chapter noted increasing state interest in Nollywood, this chapter queries the industry's ability to represent

the nation in ways required of a national cinema. Thus focused on Nollywood, this chapter interrogates the form and boundary of the industry in contemporary times.

The first section of this chapter examines the general concept of national cinema as interpreted and discussed in various national cinemas across the globe. From the second section, I narrow down the literature search to cinema in Nigeria and eventually to Nollywood. As the focus of this study, Nollywood's form and boundary is defined in preparation for the presentation of research methodology, scope and approach. While concluding, the chapter considers Nollywood's transformations as policy driven gentrification instigated by the state to develop a profitable, taxable and transnational national cinema.

3.1 The Concept of National Cinema

Etymologically drawn from the Latin word, *natio*, which stands for *birth* of kin, flock, people, tribe, nation remains a subject of intense and critical debate (Noble, 2005). Nation is most commonly used to identify larger groups of people with similar attributes like history and language, customs and traditions, art and culture, descent, habits and ethnicity. Derivatives such as national, nationality, nationalism, remain subjects of controversy. Benshoff & Griffin (2004) highlight that such derivatives are classificatory systems put in place to reduce to simplified terms, the vast complexities of human experience. Due to the uncertainty of what national truly represents, Hake (2002) wonders how national cinema should be defined. With features that could fluctuate between economics, politics, aesthetics and even cultural and national representation, the author highlights a lacuna in the ultimate reference point. While Higson (2002) does not note this as a gap, he avers that the idea of a national cinema does not have a single universally accepted discourse. The majority of scholars, the author adds, equate national cinema with the collection of films produced in

and/or by a given country. Again this is controversial, as country here means a marked geographical space rather than a collective of people sharing similar language, culture and the likes. In reconceptualising the idea of a national cinema, Croft (2002) establishes the use of a nation's particular language and cultural themes as defining elements of a national cinema. He labels this a purely commercial cinema and like other liberal thinking authors, Croft believes that national cinemas may equally produce several other forms of cinema like the art cinema and third cinema. In other words, he agrees with Higson (2002) that national cinema has no single discourse.

The idea of nation or its derivative – national, is not the only controversial term. Cinema itself has been interpreted as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Arguing for a multiplicity of interpretations, Metz (1974) offers that cinema does not “lend itself to any rigorous and unified study, but only to a heteroclitic collection of observations involving multiple and diverse points of view” (9). He suggests therefore that the idea of a national cinema can only be responsive to observations, rather than systematic or standardized knowledge, a submission that O'Regan (1996) finds disagreeable. For O'Regan, national cinema writing goes beyond mere responsiveness to observations, requiring specific rather than generalised knowledge. The function of a national cinema study, the author insists, transcends making sense of the films produced within a geographical area to include making sense of dispersed elements like local history and sociology, knowledge of the filmmaker's personae, and hybrid analytical strategies required in the examination of national cinemas. While O'Regan (1996) tries to apply these to his discussion on the Australian national cinema, there is a noticeable tilt towards a comparative study of Australian national cinema and others, notably Hollywood, British and Canadian films.

Writers on the idea of national cinema for different countries often start with an introduction that re-examines the national in the concept. Hayward (2005) questions the

enunciation of the national, what it truly means and how to express this meaning. She notes that the concept could be discussed from three different reflective axes – via the films themselves, the written discourses on them and the archives that hold and display them – an approach which appears limited. With no systematic way of identifying the ‘national’ in a film, it is problematic to say what films ought to make up the collection of a national cinema. This perhaps explains Metz’s (1974) view that national cinema writing entails response to observations. Related to the challenge of identifying the ‘national’ in a film, is the difficulty of settling for a cinema. Like Hayward (2005) notes, in many countries, Nigeria inclusive, there is not just one cinema, but several cinemas. In the previous chapter, I identified these cinemas as segments, Nollywood being one of them. Hence the search for the cinema that represents *the* national cinema of such country. And if national ideologies determine national cinema, then depending on who is canonising the cinema/sector and from what national ideological perspective, any cinema/sector can function as *the* national cinema at any point in time. The same applies to films. Maingard’s (2007) *South African National Cinema* is premised on a selection of films, which she imagines, evokes a sense of ‘the national’. But Higson (2002) queries, “which strands or traditions of cinema circulating within a particular nation-state are recognized as legitimate aspects of the national cinema?” (57). Hayward (2005) agrees that just as the function of cinema fluctuates, ‘national’, however constant it may seem, has varied and shifty significance according to social, economic and political modifications and pressures. Hence, the national cinema concept remains emergent. And in most cases, considering transnational and intercultural interactions and the fact that national identities and traditions are not permanently fixed and fully formed, Higson’s (2000) argument holds true for national cinemas as they imagine the local and transnational rather than the national. Steele (2016) proposes the transnational regional concept in order to better understand transnational-national-regional interactions in contemporary Belgian cinema. The

challenge of obscuring the national, especially in nations with no clearly defined national, but regional ideology, makes this concept unsuitable.

Transnational cinema has been portrayed as having a multiplicity of meanings. The concept is fraught with arguments and criticisms that border on the perception of cinemas from countries outside the west as others. This denies the cultures under study the opportunity of individual specificities which are embodied in the uniqueness of their identities. The concept allows me the opportunity to explore development and effects of films beyond national boundaries, it however poses a challenge for industries struggling to identify a national cinema amidst ethnic and regional divisions. The idea of a national cinema in Nigeria has not been adequately conceived to create room for transnational cinema's key argument – redefining and/or refuting the national cinema concept. While the concept serves as an opportunity to escape ethnic and regional rivalry in the possible discourse of national cinema in Nigeria, there remains a need to properly conceptualize the national since transnationalism interrogates how filmmaking activities “negotiate with the national” (Higbee & Lim, 2010:9). Transnational cinema, unlike the national cinema concept, is all encompassing, capturing the committedness in Nigerian filmmakers to make “brilliant film(s) that can travel globally” and put them “on the map”³. However, since this study focuses on understanding implications of nation state-industry relationships, the national cinema concept appears better suited.

Nevertheless, national cinema significantly manifests the cultural, linguistic and ideological values and influence of the political economy of the nation state within which it exists. From a transnational perspective, O'Regan (1996) adds that all national cinemas are an international project formed in response to dominant international cinemas, especially Hollywood. This remains contestable. Nandy (1998) projects the popular Hindi cinema, not

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as a response to dominant international cinemas or a contender to popular Hollywood, but as a cultural form designed for mass appeal and which represents the sensibilities of the slum. Tracing the development of Bollywood between the 1920s and 1930s, Ganti (2012) describes a sectorised and decentralised industry that only began in the 1990s to aim at corporatization, a process akin to Hollywood's vertical and/or horizontal integration in the studio system. Because Hollywood is an example of a successful business model in world cinema, it appears like all other national cinemas contend with it at certain points in their evolution and all national cinema discourses come across as comparative study to the Hollywood example. Andrew (1995) asserts that "from the standpoint of economies, there is but one viable national cinema – Hollywood – and the world is its nation" (54). Among many examples is Davies' (1996) study that examines the South African national cinema as a genre, highlighting a distancing from and a replication of the Hollywood system. Whatever the reason for the formulation of a national cinema, O'Regan as well as Nandy's positions, according to Croft (2002) are placed from a limited knowledge of the vast diversity of global cinemas. This limitation in knowledge base often results either in overgeneralized or de-emphasized information. Higson (2000) admits such flaw in an earlier work of his where he presents a theory of national cinema assumed to be applicable in all national cinema contexts.

O'Regan's (2002) submission can be understood in the light of Croft's (2002) outline of the varieties of national cinema. While most of Croft's classifications come across as reactions to the Hollywood standards or system, he appreciates that some national cinemas have successfully ignored Hollywood, focusing on exploring their large domestic market and effective trade barriers. He cites countries like India and Hong Kong as examples of countries where culturally specific cinemas have risen and flourished. If none of these authors avoids a discourse of the national cinema idea in the comparative form of 'Hollywood and other', one is left to wonder the essence of *a national* cinema discourse. What makes a cinema national

ought to be contained within the boundaries of the nation rather than observed through a lens that directs attention to cinemas of other or specific countries. For this reason, Higson (2002) questions the usefulness of the concept of a national cinema since this process of titling only amounts to fetishizing rather than describing the national. An illustration is Maingard's (2005) discussion of AFP's *De Voortrekkers* (1916). Although described as a film on imperial ideology rather than Afrikaner nationalism (Tomaselli, 1986), Maingard presents the epic movie as a national cinema because the publicity poster promulgates it as an exclusive perception of the nation. Rather than prioritize the notion of the national in the movie, the author devotes attention to a comparative study of *De Voortrekkers* in the light of South Africa's American idol – D.W. Griffith's infamous *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). The shift in priority notwithstanding, Maingard's discourse goes a long way to validate Higson's (2002) assertion that the idea of a national cinema “erects boundaries between films produced in different nation-states although they may still have much in common” (58).

Other debates have arisen over the concept of national cinema. While Higson queries the usefulness of a national cinema, Hayward (2002) argues that debates around national cinema and what the concept truly is, are still relevant. And while Higson (2002), but especially Croft (2002), proffers an evaluative or criticism-based approach to the study of national cinema, White (2004) advocates for a return to a descriptive or historical approach. He posits that since films are part of a national cinema because of what they are rather than what they do, a descriptive approach to their discourse will match the diversity of their production; a diversity, which he claims is a crucial element of any fully formed national cinema. Demonstrating that there is more to the concept of national cinema than authors have been able to discover and discuss due to their selectivity with films, White (2004) suggests studies of national cinema should expand to accommodate films with no linkages to national projects. In other words, instead of selectively searching for films like *De Voortrekkers*,

which is “in every sense a national film documenting a climatic point in South African history” (Gutsche, 1972:313), attention needs to be paid to other films. What these films are and can describe, he insists, could offer further illumination on understanding the national in a cinema. While White’s argument appears somewhat inconsistent, he makes a valid point that discussions on national cinema are neither comprehensive nor encompassing owing to limitation of or deficiency in films selected for study. And for the films selected or neglected, Middents (2009) asks the question of who sets the parameters of defining what is or is not the ‘national’ in them and how they do or do not contribute to that definition.

Interesting of note is the sparse availability of academic writings on African national cinemas. The Routledge national cinema series under the editorship of Susan Hayward has produced book length research on various national cinemas in Europe, the US, Canada, Asia, but so far, only one country in Africa – South Africa. African cinema has not, however, been altogether left out, but as Haynes (2011) notes, it has often been inserted into the global system of cinema business in the most unfavourable manner. From being the dumping ground for second-run ‘B’ movies from other film industries like Hollywood, Bollywood and Hong Kong (Haynes, 2011), it has been regarded as a continent unable to produce a national cinema (Dovey, 2009). Following on such failure, Dovey (2009), reiterating Diawara’s (1992) submission, argues for a regional and/or inter-African cinema rather than a national cinema.

Given the linguistic, cultural, political, economic and otherwise challenges in writing about national cinema that make the endeavour exhausting and even frustrating (White, 2004), it is only left to be imagined what greater challenge and frustration the vast diversity of writing on West African ‘national’ cinema will bring especially as co-productions are quite a recent phenomenon among West African nation states. If the author meant a West African cinema like a ‘global’ cinema would imply – a big budget cinema with international

casts and multiple national locations- it sounds realistic, but a West African national cinema that will consider functional linguistic or cultural similarities could prove a challenge. And there is also the state quota representation to be considered – does a film pass for a West African national cinema with minority Ghanaian and majority Nigerian involvement. Chion (1999 as translated by Williams, 2002) notes the difficulty such endeavour will pose.

The idea of nationalism is hardly new and its effect on such collaborations can be illustrated in the Film Europe movement that “unsuccessfully tried to unite the countries that were all suffering” (Christie, 2013:20) from the Hollywood domination. With authors such as Beus (2011), Armes (2006) and Dovey (2009) making allusions to and drawing conclusions on African cinema using a few films selected from a few African states, it becomes common to fantasize an African national cinema or West African national cinema. The functionality of this fantasy has not been considered. According to Crane (2014), the success of national cinemas or national film industries is dependent on successful film policies. Highlighting the American national film policies as contributor to the formation of organizational and economic characteristics that have enabled the continued dominance of Hollywood in the global market, Crane (2014) concludes quite discreetly, that rather than improve on their national film policies, national film industries are emulating the American style of filmmaking, producing less culturally specific films that will appeal to a wider and global audience base. After a thorough examination of policy issues in the South African national cinema, Tuomi (2006) surmises that part of the industry’s failure to produce a thriving national cinema could be attributed to a misalignment of policy emphasis. Favouring production with few to no existent policy on distribution and exhibition, the author questions the prejudice of emphasizing production as a vital component of film success.

In addition to the no attention paid to issues of policies, is the failed problematization of the concept of ‘African(ness)’. The conception of Africanness with a sense of

homogeneity has not only been deemed problematic, but non-existent in the actual sense of the word. Like Ebrahim (2014) observes of world cinema writings, the idea of an African cinema is only a marketing label as more often than not, such titles are organised around a set of key concerns in African cinema studies rather than revolving around selected national cinemas across the continent. For instance, Saul & Austen's (2010) volume examines issues of film audiences and reception with essays drawn mainly from the Nigerian, Ghanaian and Tanzanian film industries. African cinema is not discussed in the manner Bergfelder (2000), for instance, discusses European cinema. With a focus on the co-production practice of the 1950s and 1960s and a mention of earlier and later attempts, the author examines the common grounds that warranted and encouraged European film producers to look beyond the idea of a national cinema. Drawing illustrations from various European states and their co-production treaties, Bergfelder (2000) appraises a number of attempts at forming a potentially lucrative European cinema. He engages in a more insightful research that draws from various European nation states, highlighting collective opportunities and setbacks. One of the main setbacks, Coles (1962) records, was the people's fear for a lost national and cultural identity.

Like Bergfelder (2000) questioned the idea of a European cinema in the 1960s, Tcheuyap (2011) questions the idea of African cinema in a continent with plurality of identities, collecting a pool of opinion from African directors. Dismissing the concept as an overgeneralised idea, the author notes that the notion allows for assumptions on issues of "authenticity, race, nation, territory, funding, language, and many others" that come together to define the cinema of a continent (Tcheuyap, 2011:13). Although he concludes the essay on a note which hints that African cinema could be conceived and defined (as a collection of films that integrate Africa or Africans as a category of representation), he rules out possibility of an African or West African *national* cinema by observing that territoriality, race, politics and cultural authenticity are not all that matter. But these are germane to the discussion of a

national cinema. Understanding the multiplicity inherent in the concept of a cinema, Gugler (2003) focuses on a discussion of African films, which he says are defined by multiple criteria like the film's setting, subject matter, perspective and even production location. Although he does not explain his choice of 'film' over 'cinema', like Metz (1974) he responds to observations on Africa with the aim of helping the African audience re-image Africa and the Western audience re-imagine the continent.

From another perspective, Tuomi (2006) underscores policy and political economy as quintessential to the development and sustenance of a national cinema. Illustrating with national cinemas like those of Australia, Canada, India, China, she affirms the views that policies align with political economy to identify patterns of production, distribution and consumption of cultural products, which when commodified or commercialized and spectaclized, promote ideologies and business interests (Mosco, 2009; Flew, 2007; Rasul & Proffitt, 2011). Spectaclization and commodification here, hint on packaging, but especially on gentrification, a process that searches for aesthetics, respectability, professional distinction and elite approval articulated through quality and innovation, but displaces the poor in the process (Ganti, 2012). The urge for gentrification leads to various industries' proclivity towards the Hollywood standard. And as observed in chapter one, the first step towards gentrification is an appreciation of cinema as an industry and the films as commercial products (Tuomi, 2006). Kerrigan & Culkin (2000) underline this as the major difference between the US and Europe – an acknowledgement of the natural separation existing between commerce and art. Hence Middents' (2009) call for a differentiation of the commercial from art as this makes the conception of a national cinema realistic.

National cinema in film discourse, criticism, studies, theory and analysis has come to mean films produced by a given country and the industry itself and how they relate to the social, political and cultural contexts of the country (O'Regan 1996). Often questioned as a

category, national cinema has remained an avenue for a people to advertise their national qualities, culturally, economically and even politically (Christie 2013). In essence, national cinema is a medium for showcasing a people's identity, history and culture. This explains why the 'how' and 'where' of a film's making and viewing, as well as themes, are relevant in the discussions on national cinema. The following sections shall consider these in the Nigerian scenario.

3.2 Cinema in Nigeria

Unlike the diversity of academic output on the Nigerian film industry in recent times, with keen concentration on Nollywood, history and record keeping had been the main focus of earlier studies. Ukadike's (1994) *Black African Cinema* proves an invaluable source on the developments of cinema in Nigeria. As noted earlier, cinema in Nigeria is divided along ethnic, but essentially regional lines. Such division, Johnson (2000) and Haynes & Okome (1998) observe, has continued to shape the Nigerian film industry which today has various sectors unified as one. Divided broadly into Northern and Southern industries, Bud (2014) explains that the Hausa film network, which forms the Northern industry, is relatively separate from its Southern counterpart. While divisions along ethnic lines explain this sectoring, Okome (1999), Okome & Haynes (2000), Adesanya (2000) and Lawuyi (1997) note that a number of setbacks slowed the growth and development of celluloid filmmaking in Nigeria generally. Re-echoing Ebewo (2007), Barnard & Tuomi (2008) summarise the situation aptly, "the relatively affluent filmgoers were at such high risk of being attacked by criminal gangs that the movie-going culture all but collapsed" (658). The implementation of the Structural Adjustment Planning as well as economic depression, caused the early celluloid filmmakers like Ola Balogun, Hubert Ogunde to give up the 'capital intensive'

filmmaking investment. Cinemas were either incapacitated or converted to brothels, churches, warehouses etc (Abraham & Abulude, 2014; Larkin, 2008), marking the end of the celluloid era, which according to Barrot (2008) was “pretty much finished by the 1980s” (6).

Enahora (1989) captures major constraints for the early collapse of this era. These constraints, she notes, include a lack of adequate supplies of film stocks and credit facilities to produce films, lack of financial support, inadequate infrastructural facilities like power, transport system, monopoly of distribution and exhibition channels by non-Nigerians whom she claims neither produce in Nigeria nor encourage local productions. While Ukadike (1994) corroborates the challenge of exhibition, he disagrees on production providing instances of international collaborations in the making of some early Nigerian films. Launching a pointed attack on leadership, Enahora faults the censor’s board that confiscates indigenous films and not foreign ones under the guise of censorship. Again this contrasts with Jedlowski’s (2012) perception of the censors’ board in Nigeria. While it could only be assumed Enahora researched on the celluloid era, Jedlowski clearly researched on the video tradition. He observed that no censorship board was ready to deal with the then new media format. Enlightening his readers on the celluloid era, Ugor (2007) writes that although censorship was strict as early as 1912 when no anti-colonial ideologies were tolerated, there existed no indigenous film industry. This may have affected the cinema culture in Nigeria, but same argument cannot be offered for post-1970 especially with independence and the establishment of an indigenous cinema.

The same arguments have continued into the video phenomenon, which emerged in the early 1990s following plummeting economy worsened by economic instability and social collapse in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Kenneth Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* (1992), with its production, manner of distribution and exhibition different from conventional system obtainable in the dominant cinema, began an era of commodifying cultural entertainment for

survival. A venture, which, according to Adesokan (2011) is not a negative development, but when compared to other essences of filmmaking – culture and art, the focus on market or commerce tends to “de-emphasize aesthetic considerations in scholarship” (99). Contentions have risen over the pioneer video-film in Nigeria. Towing the lines of Adesokan’s (2011) argument on accepted mode of filmmaking pre-existing the making of *Living in Bondage*, Olayiwola (2011) defers that Onwuzulike (2007) and Ebewo's (2007) claims over Nnebue's film as the industry's first video-film remain disputable. Like many other issues in Nigeria often reduced to ethnic tussle, Olayiwola (2011) notes that Yoruba filmmakers accuse Igbo filmmakers of “subverting the truth surrounding the authentic origin of video revolution by advancing *Living in Bondage* as the maiden Nigerian video film” (190). Yoruba traveling theatre troupes, he posits, produced some videos long before Nnebue's, Alade Aromire's *Ebun* having been produced in 1986. Ogundele (2000) and Haynes & Okome (2000) also impart that although *Living in Bondage* unarguably exposed cinema in Nigeria to economic viability, jumpstarting the industry, it was by no means the first video film.

With inadequate documentation and contradicting dates, there still remains the possibility of other films pre-dating *Ebun* (1986). *Living in Bondage* redefined filmmaking in Nigeria, setting in motion paradigm qualities attributable to Nollywood films in the years that followed. And as Zajc (2009) asserts, production multiplied in all parts of Nigeria, in different languages. With video-films becoming affordable alternative to celluloid filmmaking, everyone began making films; educated and uneducated, trained and untrained, skilled and unskilled, causing the video boom in Nigeria, and an upward surge in the number of films produced. By 2009, Lobato (2012), Jedlowski (2011), Geiger (2012) note, Nigeria was listed world's second biggest film producer by UNESCO.

The introduction of cinema into Nigeria as a purely economic venture, the lack of state interest in cinema as a national endeavour and its existence in the informal sector of the

political economy of Nigeria are important highlights in the discourse of cinema in the nation (Ekwuazi, 1991; Ukadike, 1994; Haynes & Okome, 1998). Cinema in Nigeria is an industrialised but unregulated enterprise influenced essentially by the Yoruba travelling theatre. The collaboration between film veterans like Ola Balogun and celebrated theatre dramatists like Hubert Ogunde, Moses Olaiya Adejumo and Duro Ladipo, marked the beginnings of filming among the troupe. Ukadike (1994) observes that Duro Ladipo's theatre troupe members mainly comprised the cast of *Ajani-Ogun* (1975/6) and that, as well as being shot completely in Yoruba language, expedited its huge success among the Yoruba audiences. Theatre troupes soon began to film their stage performances, using film as "an extension of their theatre practice and to enhance remuneration" (Russell 1998:149). The Structural Adjustment Program, the market limitation (as productions were mainly in Yoruba language), the rising cost of production all contributed towards the economic necessity that warranted the disbanding of most of the troupes. The actors joined the mainstream English language films, but dissatisfied with "the pittance they were being paid by the Igbo producers, soon rented video equipment and launched into their own productions. A deluge of films followed" (Haynes 2000:56). These films, produced predominantly in southern Nigeria and in the English language, soon came to be called Nollywood.

Another important sector of the Nigerian cinema is the Hausa film industry (Kanywood). Extensively researched on by Larkin (2000, 2003, 2004), the industry emerged in the mid-1990s, distinguishing itself from its Southern counterpart by concentrating on themes of love, emulating the Bollywood style rather than emphasizing magic and corruptions of urban life. Larkin's (2004) ethnographic research on the industry traces the rise of the video phenomenon, the threat of the Shari'a laws, issues of piracy and copyright, concluding that despite their dissimilarities, the Hausa film industry, with headquarters in Kano State, has like the Southern industry, evolved and benefitted (in terms of distribution

and audience reach) from piracy and its infrastructures. Johnson (2000) takes a more critical stance on the industry, questioning its rather slow growth in the light of its many advantages over other sectors of the Nigerian film industry. With the most widely spoken language after English in Nigeria, a language spoken by millions across Africa south of the Sahara, Hausa films ought to command a larger audience base within and beyond Africa. Johnson's (2000) examination suggests that poor business acumen, cultural didacticism, language and religion as the fundamental hindrances to the industry's expansion. While Johnson's study concentrates on the Hausa film industry after the evolution of the video phenomenon, Larkin (2000) examines the development of the video format from older forms of popular cultures and the influence of Indian films. His ethnographic reflection, however, excludes filmmaking in Northern Nigeria during the celluloid era.

Films have also been made in other local languages like Efik, Nupe, Edo, Urhobo, Itsekeri, Igala, pidgin English. In fact, Marston et al (2007) hold that video films in Nigeria are produced in as many as the two hundred and fifty tribal languages in the country, but of course, these are in very small numbers compared to those in the three major local languages in Nigeria. The validity of this claim has remained unquestioned by other scholars. While the English language films have more extensive geographic outreach, enjoying about 65% of the export market (Marston et al, 2007), and circulating around the nation and beyond Africa, the Hausa and Yoruba films circulate primarily within the continent and within their regions. Adejunmobi (2007) notes that films in Yoruba and Hausa languages "extend well beyond the borders of Nigeria, into Benin and Togo for Yoruba, into Niger, Chad, Mali and several other West African countries for Hausa" (4) with several million native speakers. Hence Johnson's (2000) incredulity at Kanywood's rather slow growth.

The naming of the Southern industry, the English language films precisely, in 2002 (Onishi 2002, Jedlowski 2011), series of documentaries made, especially by CNN (*Inside*

Africa: The Best of African Film in 2014) and BBC (*Nick Goes to Nollywood*), the UNESCO report of 2009⁴, and studies as well as reports on the industry, prompted a wave of international interest in the Nigerian film industry (Bud, 2014; Jedlowski, 2011). Despite criticisms from cultural mediators, Larkin (2007) accounts that the industry has a large audience base within Nigerian market and Africa. Cartelli (2007) documents that at least 80% of the videos sold in Castries, St Lucia, come from Nigeria. According to Duguid (2004), the industry offers a taste of home to Nigerians in diaspora, from Europe to North America. In South Africa, however, Barnard and Tuomi's (2008) article, which currently demonstrates some deficit in audience engagement and survey, disagrees. While trying to differentiate between the Nigerian and South African audience taste, they assert that Nigerians, unlike South Africans, are willing consumers of unrefined local films, ruling out the possibility of South Africans viewing "unsophisticated Nollywood films" (661). This, the authors explain, is because South African "audiences have been exposed for longer to more sophisticated and technically advanced international films, especially from Hollywood" (Collins & Snowball 2015:44). Nevertheless, regarding these "rudimentary quality and mostly genre-oriented" (Tcheuyap 2011:24) Nigerian products, Becker (2013) writes that although their major consumers are immigrants from across the African continent, "they are also extremely popular among South Africans" (25), even the young well-educated elites of South Africa and Namibia.

Having identified various segments that make up the Nigerian cinema and their disparity in production, distribution and consumption patterns, the question becomes what comprises the Nigerian national cinema. With homogeneity ruled out due to ethnic, linguistic, cultural and production practice differences, the search for a national cinema

⁴ http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/nollywood_rivals_bollywood_in_filmvideo_production/. Accessed 17/11/15.

becomes eminent. Authors like Olayiwola (2011), with a pan-ethnic view on the Nigerian film industry, have argued that a national cinema has to comprise of at least the three main ethnic groups in the country. However, the formation of a national cinema ought not be based on composition, but on a reflection of set culture, language, ideology and national representation. National cinema, as noted earlier in this chapter needs also be influenced by the political economy of the nation within which it exists. For this study, I employ the concept to stand for films produced by Nigeria and the various segments of the Nigerian film industry and how they relate to social, political and cultural contexts of the Nigerian state. This, according to Higson (2011), will be a prescriptive usage which defines the concept in economic terms. This prescriptive application is concerned with where films are made, who makes them, what industrial infrastructures are available, who owns and/or controls them, who are the producers and how they distribute or exhibit their films. Due to the scope of this study, however, I shall not engage extensively with distribution/exhibition.

3.3 The Nigerian National Cinema

The Nigerian film industry has proven to be a major contemporary art form in Nigeria along with literature. Starting in the 1970s, Ekwuazi (2000) notes that film business in the country was both risky and capital intensive. In recent times, it has a higher risk value considering rising cost of production along with the unchecked threats of piracy. Operating within the nation's informal economy, Ekwuazi (2000) maintains that filmmaking in Nigeria "is not a bankable project" (131). Like other businesses existing in the country's informal sector, no defined structure exists for production, distribution and exhibition of films. Cost of production is recouped in what the author describes as a "desultory and phlegmatic manner" (131).

Traces of a national cinema in Nigeria began to be seen only after the independence. From then on, Olayiwola (2011) notes that the Yoruba traveling theatre dominated the film industry in Nigeria to a point that it “almost turned out to be a regional or ethnic industry with just a few privately-sponsored films from other regions” (186). While some of these films (discussed with details in Ukadike (1994)) can pass for a national cinema, some will not. For instance, Adamu Halilu’s *Shaihu Umar* (1976), although historically important and sponsored by the federal film unit only tells the story of salvation in Islam. As discussed in section 3.1, although the issue of who or what determines what truly makes a national cinema remains debatable, *Shaihu Umar*’s unilateral outlook on what defines ‘the national’ does not compare with Ola Balogun’s *Amadi* (1975) or *Cry Freedom* (1981) that explores topics of collective national identity like agriculture and struggle for freedom or independence.

On the developments of a national cinema, Adesanya (2000) opines that the involvement of the Yoruba traveling theatre troupes in filmmaking in Nigeria is “perhaps the most auspicious single factor in the evolution of an indigenous cinema in Nigeria” (38). Being already established before the inception of cinema in the country, its output was high and surpassed those of other regions, its appeal was high too, especially among Yoruba audiences and remuneration was equally good. While appreciating the contributions of the troupes, Ukadike (1994) argues that

the so-called prosperous years of filmed theatre had nothing to do with the creation of a long-lasting cinema industry for Nigeria or the development of a genre based on the Yoruba popular traveling theatre. (Nollywood) was an enterprise born out of greed and lack of concern for cinematic creativity and is truly second rate entertainment since the artistic excellence of the Yoruba travelling theatre’s stage performance is an enduring tradition. (149).

Referring to the video film tradition rather than the idea of a national cinema, he infers that while the troupe may have influenced the video tradition in the country, the idea of a national cinema develops from a national consciousness. Linguistic difference and differing

ethnic ideologies often restrict content to what concerns those being addressed. Diawara (1992) records that the Yoruba cinemas were limited to Yoruba audiences and told stories of the Yoruba cosmology. Being what the audiences yearn for, the filmmakers can only desire to “direct films that communicate with the public at a deeper and more intellectual level” (124). The Hausa audiences, among whom India’s Bollywood enjoys a celebrated popularity, prefer films made in the Bollywood style as they share some affinities with Hausa folktales (Adamu 2010). The Hausa cinema, started by amateur theatre groups or drama clubs and authors of the *soyayya* (love) literature (Haynes 2007), has not moved too far away from its melodramatic inclinations just like its circulation rarely goes beyond the North. Made purely in Hausa language, often going without subtitles, the films currently borrow themes from foreign models rather than the conventional local folktale (Adamu 2010), however, “all cultural borrowings involve acts of reinvention and reappropriation” (Larkin 2000:232). Other than this ‘creative creolization’ of re-inventive borrowing, they are everything the films from the Southern part of Nigeria are not, the Hausa cultural norms being “different from, and much more restrictive than, those in the south” (Haynes 2007:5). These disparities hinder a holistic representation of the nation in one ethnic film industry, warranting Olayiwola’s (2011) position that the totality of Nigerian film industry must comprise at least the three major tribes.

But cinema is not measured by numeric representation. A national film industry transcends components and sectors. It is that which evokes a sense of the national, reflecting emerging relatable collective social movements and identities; a realist project reflecting the times, lives and cultures of a given nation’s population (Jarvine 2000). As a national cinema, it must be influenced by the political economy of the country within which it exists. A national cinema represents the nation in a particular way and according to O’Regan (1996), implicates, negotiates, expresses, reflects and bonds society. It does not matter what social

group the cinema comes from or is located in, as long as it serves this purpose, it is a national cinema. White (2004) argues that films are not part of national cinema because they represent a sector of the society, but because they are a reflection of the nation in question. Prior to the video phenomenon, national cinema existed in Nigeria, although sparse due to the limited number of total cinema output. Ukadike (1994) notes that some of these films were made in local languages and subtitled in English. Balogun's *Amadi* as well as Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* were made in Igbo language. Both films explored the challenges of acquiring wealth in a complex postcolonial Nigeria. Reflecting emerging social movements, attitudes and identities, these films, according to Green-Simms (2010), demonstrate a keen dramatization of lessons that bond the society.

Discussing the challenges of attaining a national cinema in Nigeria, Haynes & Okome (2000) infer that the degree to which video production in Nigeria is organized along ethnic lines is quite unusual since elsewhere production is organized on a national and international basis. Emerging from different, but specific circumstances, the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo films approach storytelling quite differently. While the Igbo films appear more liberal and all embracing, the Yoruba, as well as the Hausa films, tend to make non-ethnic group viewers feel culturally excluded (Haynes & Okome 2000). This liberal tendency among the Igbo filmmakers is as a result of what the authors call "lack of linguistic loyalty" (87). Ekwuazi (2000) elaborates on this, offering that the Igbo people, unlike the Hausas and Yorubas, "exhibit no serious attachment to their language" (132). Corroborating White's (2004) opinion on national cinemas as inherently composite, with an inherently diverse audience body and inherently diverse production styles, Haynes & Okome (2000) opine that "the Nigerian nation is simply too big and diverse to be fully represented by any one kind of film" (88). Collectively these films, they agree, remarkably represent national immensity and diversity.

A nation, according to Gellner (1983), is a group of people who share a common culture and recognize that they belong to the same nation. Identity rather than linguistic uniformity underlines nationality. Hjort (2000) argues that “the use of a national language and the development of stories set in national contexts do not alone suffice to establish a theme of nation” (105). Forms of shared belonging, she maintains, must be explicitly thematised to bring into focal awareness a given nation’s mutual beliefs about belonging. This explicit thematization is scarce in the industry because of the insignificant level of governmental support for filmmaking (Ebewo 2007), warranting producers and filmmakers to respond to market demand against national interest (Barnard & Tuomi, 2008); hence the emphasis on populist rather than national themes. Abah (2009) therefore describes the Nollywood industry as a popular culture. Her elaboration on the industry’s depiction of everyday domestic, social, political and economic lives of the masses as well as representation of the disintegration of societal values, however, presents it as serving the purpose of a national cinema.

Having observed that films from Nollywood evoke a sense of the national much more than those from other sectors of the Nigerian film industry, this study proposes that Nollywood could represent the Nigerian national cinema when/if it enjoys greater state interventions. This thesis thus investigates the state’s attempt to reposition Nollywood in the country’s formal political economy in order to effectively profit from it as a national industry. Originally a nickname for the ‘Nigerian film industry’, Nollywood, contrary to Olayiwola’s (2011) perception, does not represent the entire Nigerian film industry. In the next section, I consider previous studies that define Nollywood’s form and boundary as arguments have arisen over how much of the Nigerian film industry it represents.

3.4 *Nollywood: A (Trans)national Cinema?*

Considering how popular Nollywood has become, the question of what really is Nollywood seems out of place. Having become an international phenomenon, a widely accepted sobriquet for the ‘Nigerian film industry’ and existing in a country with numerous local languages in which films are made, there is need to clarify, especially for the purposes of this study, what Nollywood implies and establish its boundaries. Although the entire Nigerian film industry has been called ‘Nollywood’ (Jedlowski, 2011), other industries exist within the nation that have been called by other names; Kanywood for instance represents the Hausa film industry. While scholars are cautious of their use and application of the term, filmmakers within the Nigerian film industry are selective of the understanding of Nollywood they identify with. Distancing himself from the conception of Nollywood as second rate film industry, Kunle Afolayan, one of the industry’s most successful English language filmmakers maintains, “if Nollywood is just a name that has nothing to do with the content, I’m fine with it” (Jedlowski, 2011:246).

In terms of content, Barnard & Tuomi (2008) describe the first identifiable Nollywood film, *Living in Bondage* (1992) as lacking elitist aspirations. The authors distinguish the ‘Nigerian film industry’ from the low-budget mass production oriented Nollywood. They imply that there are two industries in Nigeria; one that produces documentaries and films targeted at the elite cinema audience and the other (Nollywood) produces low quality video films targeted at the mass audience. The language in which these films are made notwithstanding, a film’s category is determined by the format in which it is produced. Schultz (2012) on the other hand understands Nollywood as the Nigerian video film industry whose content is made up of the familiar stories that accord with local sensibilities, reflecting and preserving them rather than contributing to global monoculture. As Schultz does not specifically state the language(s) these Nigerian video films are made in,

one is not sure if films made in languages other than English are part of his understanding of Nollywood. Marston et al (2007) equally describe Nollywood as the popular title for the Nigerian film industry, noting clearly that these videos from the industry are “produced in many of the 250 tribal languages in Nigeria, though Yoruba, Igbo and English are numerically dominant” (54). As to content, the authors offer that the disjunctive nature of the storyline and their pattern of development suggest poor scripting rendered in a manner Okpewho (1992) says mimics African oral narrative pattern. Like the oral narrative drawn from popular culture, Haynes (2011) maintains that the content of Nollywood films, a name that designates the video culture in Nigeria, draws from popular imaginations and that, he opines, gives it popularity among the masses.

Understanding that a cinema culture once existed within the nation before the advent of the video format, scholars (Ebrahim, 2014; Oloruntoba-Oju, 2013; Ugor, 2009) tend to underline Nollywood as representative name for the video industry within the Nigerian filmmaking culture; an umbrella term that captures a certain filmmaking practice in Nigeria. Rarely specifying what language Nollywood videos are made in, the quest for the boundaries of Nollywood remains unresolved. Ebrahim (2014) is particular in his description of Bollywood as the Hindi language film industry, but omits such peculiarity for Nollywood. Beyond the un-established Nollywood language boundary is the issue of what films are classified as Nollywood. While authors flatly categorize all home videos as Nollywood, the question arises over where to class films currently made in celluloid. Jedlowski (2013a) reports that Afolayan who makes high budget films for theatrical releases identifies himself with Nollywood if the term does not describe the content of the films. In an editorial, Dovey (2010) catalogues Tunde Kelani’s *Arugba* (2008), an award winning, high budget cinema movie produced in Yoruba language under Nollywood. In her review of the Transnational Cinema/Film Studies Conference, Hudson (2015) notes Okome’s classification of Kunle

Afolayan's theatrical film, *The Figurine* (2009), under Nollywood. Meleiro (2009), despite noting that Jeta Amata's *The Amazing Grace* (2007) was shot on 35mm and screened at the Cannes festival, still identifies it a Nollywood film. Treading rather cautiously, Arthur (2014) suggests that Nollywood now makes two categories of films – the inexpensive traditional video films and an emerging theatrical film. This suggests further sectoring within Nollywood as noted by Haynes (2016).

So far, I have established that in the Nigerian film history, there existed a Nigerian film industry and currently a video industry named Nollywood. But with films like *Arugba*, *The Amazing Grace* and *The Figurine* classified under Nollywood, one can understand that the Nigerian national cinema is not considered an entity existing by itself. Beyond issues of content and format, the industry is viewed as an 'other' existing in the shadows of a 'superior' cinema – Hollywood. Hence, instead of a comparative between the film and video formats within the national cinema, Nollywood (now standing for the entire industry) is compared to Hollywood. Like Marston et al (2007) observe, Nollywood is understood as a less sophisticated, more amateurish rendering of Hollywood films (in southern Nigeria) and Bollywood (in Northern Nigeria).

And this raises the question of quality and standard, for what makes one film less sophisticated or more amateurish than another draws from an imagined or set standard or quality. Just like it is problematic to decide who determines what film qualifies as a national cinema, it is equally a challenge concluding on what cinema serves as a standard. Qualified as a quality film, Dovey (2009) presents *Tsotsi* (2006) as one of South Africa's major breakthrough having reached both international and local audiences. In addition to making a major turnover at the box-office, the made for the big screen film won an Oscar for best foreign language film. As expected in an evolving cinema study, she compares *Tsotsi* to Hollywood films available in the country. Like *Living in Bondage* is said to have set the

standards for Nollywood films (Arthur, 2014), Nollywood films that do not emulate its narrative standards are judged against Hollywood standards or what Ajibade & Williams (2012) refer to as quality that is normal. Normal, they say, is conformity to satisfactory laid-down principles and qualities acceptable for mainstream distribution by studios, cinemas and international distributors and marketers. Although they claim this ‘quality’ is ‘global’, Wasko (2003) and Ganti (2012) highlight disparities that contradict their submission.

The confusion of what Nollywood actually represents rests among scholars of the industry. As shown above, while all films and videos made in the industry, and in whatever language, are flatly called Nollywood films, some scholars still exhibit elements of indecision. Miller (2012) for instance understands Nollywood as Nigerian movie industry that produces three hours long, two part films not meant for the big screen in the theatres. Yet, prior to her publication, a number of single part, big screen movies had been produced that lasted half the duration. Kunle Afolayan’s *Irapada* (2007) was produced for the big screen and lasted 109 minutes (Jedlowski, 2013). Despite interviews with numerous industry practitioners and major industry players, Miller (2012) cross-references same old information other scholars provide on production, distribution and consumption in the industry. With scholars offering the same information on the industry and constantly comparing it to Hollywood and Bollywood, very little new knowledge will be available on the industry itself.

Okome (2007) notes that the 34th Berlinale Film Festival captioned Nollywood films as “Hollywood in Nollywood or: How to Get Rich Quick”, assuming that Nollywood’s visual practice cannot exist outside Hollywood’s cultural and institutional framework. Although the author interprets the second part of the title as a slight on the audience, it indicates the perception of Nollywood as the complete commercialisation of filmmaking (Afolayan, 2015) rather than an emerging creative work of art that the contemporary Nollywood is becoming. As few scholarly works are being published on its new form, Nollywood is still accorded a

peripheral position in film festivals. Jedlowski (2013b) notes that no Nollywood film had ever been screened at any festival's main competition section. Still perceived an art object, Nollywood films are not deemed fit to fall into the same program as auteur-films made for a festival audience, recent reformations notwithstanding. A study of these emerging reformations in the industry is relevant and forms an important part of this study. While Jedlowski (2013a) calls this emerging Nollywood the new wave, Okome (2014) explains that this new Nollywood takes over from the other film form, which now becomes nameless. This marks the beginnings of sectoring along the line of aesthetics. In the next chapter, I consider the benefits and disadvantages of such separation.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the application of national cinema in previous academic works. I began by reviewing the etymology of the root words that form the theory. I established that these – cinema and nation – are controversial and multi-dimensional. They bear the same multiplicity of interpretation that belabours political economy. I noted that national cinemas are generally discussed in the 'Hollywood' and 'others' format; with Hollywood serving as a cinematic lingua franca. I found that in general discourses of national cinemas, the Nigerian national cinema has remained largely under-discussed, Nollywood's popularity notwithstanding. This, I discovered, draws from the segmentations within the industry, its informality and state's lack of interest in its economic activities. I suggested that beyond the questions of nationality, nationhood, national identity and ideology raised by Brown (2014) and what ethnic groups comprise the Nigerian national cinema, there is need to pay attention to these sectors that make up the industry. Although I evaluated Nollywood as a possible representative of Nigerian national cinema, the concept of national cinema still carries a question mark especially in a plural, complex, hybrid and heterogeneous nation like

Nigeria. Coming from diverse cultural backgrounds, the totality of Nigerian films and videos offer different and often transgressive visions of the nation. I advanced that accepting one therefore as representing the national and dismissing another as violating it only limits perspectives on the national. Considering the state's inconsistent support for the industry in general or any specific segment, the idea of a national cinema becomes problematic.

Challenges, such as those identified in this chapter, with using the national cinema concept calls for an exploration of transnational cinema concept. The transnational, according to Higson (2000), could present a subtler description for cultural and economic formations which national boundaries rarely include. Nevertheless, national cinema is vital to the promotion of cultural diversity and better attends to national specificities, both of which are vital considerations in state policy formulation. I plan therefore to employ the concept to capture the multiplicity in national, regional and ethnic identifications that characterise life in Nigeria. I adopt the concept from a modern liberal perspective that will investigate the government's role in the gentrification of Nollywood and the filmmakers' response to this. I closed the chapter by focusing on the observations made by Jedlowski (2013, 2015) about transformations in filmmaking practices and renewed state interest in the affairs of Nollywood. I build my dissertation on this, attempting to understand this renewed interest as gentrification and what it implies for Nollywood. Having introduced my theoretical framework, in the next chapter I discuss how I researched the political economy and gentrification of Nollywood.

CHAPTER FOUR

ECONO-ETHNOGRAPHY: RESEARCHING NOLLYWOOD'S POLITICAL ECONOMY

Introduction

This chapter presents econo-ethnography as a method for researching Nollywood and other evolving film economies. It presents the research questions and discusses the methodology adopted for data collection and interpretation. Econo-ethnography combines economic base theory and aspects of ethnography to investigate the political economy of an evolving film industry such as Nollywood. The method will address the limitations of past studies on Nollywood that I discussed in the earlier chapters and suggests an approach for enquiring into the relationship between state and film industry as it is being formalized. It reconsiders research methods employed in previous academic works carried out on the Nigerian film industry, particularly Nollywood, highlighting methodological differences and limitations that have warranted repetitive studies. And finally, this chapter gives consideration to research ethics and ethical issues that could arise while collecting data.

As identified in the introduction, the overarching research question for this dissertation is:

To what extent can recent transformations in the sector of the Nigerian film industry known as Nollywood be understood as gentrification?

Anchored around the above question, other research questions include

- In what ways is the contemporary Nollywood being restructured following state interest in the industry between 2010 and 2015?
- What function does the government and its policies play in the gentrification of Nollywood and the making of a national cinema?

- How do filmmakers perceive a gentrifying Nollywood and how are their practices affected?

To answer these questions, I employed econo-ethnography to query the industry's political economy and how economic and political decisions are impacting on filmmaking in the industry. As an approach, econo-ethnography requires ethnographic observation of filmmaking process, interviews with industry players and contextual analysis of policies. I propose that such methodology is necessary to fill the lacuna in academic works especially where it concerns policy and political economy matters within the industry. While I agree with Kanuha (2000) and Serrant (2002) to the challenge of objectively analysing a culture as an insider-researcher, this study benefits from my being a part of the culture. I overcame this challenge by maintaining a critical distance as Smith (1999) and Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) propose. Besides establishing trust, being a part of the culture allowed me access to the more covert aspects of the Nollywood business. I begin the chapter with a contextualization of methodologies regularly adopted by Nigerian film industry researchers, noting their common grounds and the reason for repetitive studies on Nollywood (Haynes, 2007). Secondly, I define econo-ethnography, illustrating how the combination makes a useable approach for researching the political economy of evolving film economies. Thirdly, I discuss my research design, outlining them under settings, research participants, observation, analysis, interpretation and writing. Providing an overall idea of the steps taken to collect and analyse data for this study, the chapter finishes with ethical considerations. The method will serve for studies on evolving film economies like Nollywood where access to policy-makers and government is limited.

4.1 *Researching the Nigerian Cinema*

This section reviews and discusses past studies on Nollywood and their use of methods in order to highlight the limitation and weakness which my approach fills. Three broad categories – textual, qualitative and quantitative methods – have been identified (Berger, 2014; Bertrand & Hughes, 2005). Of these three, Nigerian film industry researchers in general and Nollywood in particular most frequently employ textual and qualitative research methodologies. Comprised of semiotic and rhetorical analysis and ideological and psychoanalytical criticism, textual explorations on the industry have been put into two broad categories by Haynes (2010). He identifies essays that portray films as expressions of culture and those constructed around concepts like post-colonialism, gender, culture and cultural studies. The author identifies a lack of debate over meanings, interpretations and critical evaluations around the video films. Nonetheless, textual methodology predominates over other methodologies in Nollywood research. This could be as a result of the uncomplicated, one-man-researcher opportunity it offers the researcher who only needs to choose and maintain a suitable framework for the analysis.

Although Nollywood videos have been dismissed as amateur and mediocre (Olayiwola, 2007), some scholars carry out studies on individual film texts and auteurs. Haynes (2011), for instance, attempts an auteurist criticism on Kenneth Nnebue's films. Afolayan (2014) collates a number of critical perspective essays on Kunle Afolayan's *The Figurine* (2009) in addition to unanalysed interviews with some of the film's cast and crewmembers. Tsika (2015) is more evaluative of interviews, exploring them against textual contents (visual, virtual and written) to establish a link between Nollywood stars and an understanding of the industry. His complex, but detailed and engaging consideration of stardom, actors' performances and film contents combine different methodologies. However, researched and written from the perspective of an outsider seeking to understand the star

system of a cultural industry, a cultural link appears missing. Although Tsika's ethnography duration is not stated, studies such as his, according to Liamputtong (2008), require accurate understanding of the cultural group under study. Kerstetter (2012) argues that researchers such as Tsika may not accurately comprehend a culture they have never experienced.

Interviews and textual references form the basis of majority of previous studies on Nollywood. This hinders possibilities of clarification and adjusting theoretical preconceptions by engaging with participant observations. Samyn (2013) interviews five Nigerian immigrant filmmakers in Europe and complements her findings with "textual analysis of their films with the aim of highlighting their motivations and expectations" (101). Okome's (2013) essay on comedy and the critique of post colony draws on an analysis of textual content (of Kingsley Ogoro's *Osuofia in London* [2003]), critical reviews of the film (especially from its audience) and interview with star actor, Nkem Owoh. Haynes' (2000) collection of essays adopts content analysis as the overriding methodology except for essays by Adesanya, Ogundele, Ekwuazi and Larkin, which manifest traits of ethnographic involvement and/or cultural and ideological familiarity.

Ugor (2007) does not state what methodologies he adopts for his research on censorship of the Nigerian home video films. His critical examination of the video censorship process in the country and forthright submission that "the content of Nigerian movies is not entirely a product of government censorship" (20) suggest an ethnographic involvement in addition to interviews with industry players. Larkin's (2008) *Signal and Noise* as well as his earlier essays (2004a, 2004b, 2002) emerges from a long period of ethnographic study within the Nigerian film industry, with an apparent concentration on the Hausa video film industry, otherwise known as Kanywood. Lobato (2010) describes Larkin's studies as "exemplary interdisciplinary works, combining ethnography, cultural/media theory, historical analysis and spatial analysis" (350). Some other researchers like Haynes and Jedlowski demonstrate

expert knowledge of the industry acquired from ethnographic involvement with Nollywood, however short spanned and spread over a period of time. Ethnography, participant observation, focus groups, and quantitative research methods are rarely applied, probably due to their requiring extensive periods of time as well as the physical presence of the researcher in the field. This explains the paucity of industry research with experiential focus (Haynes, 2012).

In summary, previous studies on the industry could be classified under three broad categories: studies guided by ethnography, those informed by theories and those based on film texts. Studies that reflect ethnographic involvement of the author often provide new information on the industry's political economy, however indirect. Such studies like those carried out by Haynes, Larkin, Ugor, among other authors often form texts of references and cross-references for the other two categories. However, these previous studies have rarely applied economic theories to the study of Nollywood, especially since the call to diversify the national economy. What the state has done and/or continues to do to make this a reality through the film industry remains under-explored. While studies, but especially news articles on Nollywood's recent transformations exist, its impact on the economy and the filmmakers remain under-examined. To address this, I adopt the method of econo-ethnography to investigate Nollywood's industrial repositioning.

4.2 Defining Econo-Ethnography

Econo-ethnography derives from the combination of economic base theory, political economy analysis and ethnography which form this study's approach to data collection and interpretation. While these are typical individual methods of data collection and analysis, their combination in this study differentiates my research from previous ones. The essence of this combination is to address the weaknesses observed in Nollywood research. Economic

base theory belongs to economics as well as geography (Gibson, 2004). While it is an economic theory, geographers and urban developers have engaged it actively, connecting it to the study of real places and spaces. For example, Robertson (2003) uses the theory to hypothesize economic growth in Southeast Alaska. He offers that basic economic activities (exportable activities) drive local economy and impact on non-basic sectors (non-exportable activities servicing locals). He also notes that changes in the basic economic sector are often triggered by those in the non-basic economic sector. Nollywood, as will be expounded in the next chapter, began as a local audience servicing industry. Recent changes in the structure of the industry, as noted by Jedlowski (2013), indicate that filmmakers are beginning to target transnational audiences. I question the involvement of the Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015) administration in the economic restructuring of the industry as attempt to encourage and create a basic economy out of the informally organised industry. Gentrification is queried as a concept employed by the state and/or corporate bodies to attempt to formalize informal industries in order to commodify them. And economic base theory guided the interpretation of data collected via econo-ethnography. Stimson, et al (2006) observe that criticisms and problems trail the theory despite its being an important analytical tool for regional and industrial sector analysis. Such criticisms and debates as addressed by Andrews (2007) are relevant because among theories such as EBT, “lie much of the root and cause of most other planning problems and the basis of their solution” (37). Such criticisms bring into consideration specificities of individual political economies within which industries exist.

During data interpretation, economic base theory was applied as a modern liberal tool to analyse Nollywood’s political economy. Modern liberal perspective to political economy, earlier discussed in chapter one, holds that market does not always regulate itself. Susceptible to increases and declines, markets are liable to experience a terrible decline that could bring about economic downturn. At such point, the state is required to stimulate the economy again

via investments, financial supports, tax cut or rebate. Economic base theory offers insight into such state involvement like the establishment of film fund for production, training and distribution. It provides understanding to policies, which include the proposed MOPICON bill discussed in chapter six. It offers a new interpretation of the sectoring Nollywood is witnessing in recent times as the industry inclines towards formalization.

This political economy research on Nollywood examines the process of transforming film into a formal economic activity, exportable, generating taxable revenue and enhancing non-basic economic sectors within the economy. To understand this process, policies and motivations behind policy formulation, I incorporated political economy analysis in the econo-ethnography method. Political economy analysis, according to McLoughlin (2014), situates development interventions within the purview of existing economic and political processes in a given society. It aids in the development of politically feasible and effective strategies to realizing goals. Political economy analysis of the media attempts an understanding of political actions and policies of economic establishments, with a vested attention to the interests of major industry players and what inspires or frustrates their collaboration. Wasko (2004) notes that political economy research entails studying dominance, state involvement, impact on other national industries and the political, ideological as well as cultural implications for the industry and nation. Political economy research into film industry involves a study of the state of the industry, a consideration of distribution of wealth and power within the industry and a recognition of attempts made to confront or challenge industrial actions. According to Mosco (1996), political economy research into film does more than describe the state of the industry. It offers a theoretical understanding of developments within the industry, “situating them within a wider capitalist totality encompassing class and other social relations (and critiqued) from a moral evaluative position” (115).

I attempt to accomplish these in this exploration of Nollywood's political economy in the light of the state's recent attempts to formalize the industry. I employ ethnography to efficiently query the industry's changing political economy and economic base theory as well as political economy analysis to guide data interpretation. Doing an econo-ethnography of political economy has the advantage of showing how political economic processes and changes take place and why they do (Luhtakallio & Eliasoph, 2014). As ethnography observes individuals and establishments in actual time in order to determine why and how phenomenon takes place and responses to it, Auyero & Joseph (2007) wonder why it is not a preferred tool of research among political economists, sociologists and scientists. By not employing ethnography to political economic study, social scientists miss the essential, day to day details of political economy. Hence, the authors infer that "the pace of political action, the texture of political life, and the plight of political actors have all been cast into the shadows created by the unnecessary and deleterious overreliance on quantitative methods" (2) in political economy research. Employing ethnography to research on Nollywood's transforming political economy is essential as it captures changing beliefs, policies and structures and what relationships they bear with specific industrial practices.

While ethnography has its origins in anthropology, its application to media production enhances understanding on how media are produced differently. Ganti (2014) observes that media industries tend to be unanimously commercially driven and blockbuster oriented. However, their distribution and financing structures, organization of labour, work culture and sites of power differ from one another. Ethnography is relevant for grounding film industry research in specific space and time, offering understanding into industrial activities that are not discerned from textual analysis and interviews only. Used more frequently in media studies than the quantitative research methods, qualitative research methods are assumed to be less rigorous and convenient. But as Brennen (2013) posits, the method is challenging,

time-consuming and difficult to get right. Although insightful and emancipatory, Brennen notes that qualitative research method could be ambiguous, controversial and contradictory. Its use of language rather than numbers and numerical correlations to make meaning and construct social realities makes the approach difficult. However, its tendencies to describe situations, phenomenon, problems or events rather than quantify the variations in situations, phenomenon or issues makes it better suited for this study.

Ethnography, according to Reeves, et al (2008), studies “social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organisations, and communities” (512). Despite being challenging, demanding sustained and intensive period of fieldwork, reflexivity and intuition, I do not propose that ethnography is the perfect method for cultural research. Lindlof (1995) questions ethnographic decisions like what is acceptable in or left out of a research, and whose point of view is represented or prioritized. However valid these questions are, every researcher is a decision maker. And having an analytical tool such as the economic base theory to guide data interpretation, bias is isolated from such ethnographic decisions.

Ethnography studies “an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily, observational data” (Creswell 2007:14). As a research approach, ethnography is flexible, evolving contextually in response to social and lived realities experienced within a setting (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). According to Brennen (2013), it answers questions “about people’s beliefs, rituals, attitudes, actions, stories and behaviours, emphasizing what people actually do rather than what they say they do” (159). The same applies to an ethnography of a political economy, investigating questions about production and trade and their relationships to the state that formulates policies affecting acquisition and distribution of wealth.

Ethnography originally involves a long-term field research, requiring researchers to live and work consistently with members of the culture being observed for many months or years (Brennen 2013). Observing new trends in the ethnographic method, authors like Atkinson (2005), Gobo (2005), and Silverman (2005), argue that such notions of ethnography are fast changing. Knoblauch (2005) notes that following the anthropology ideal of ethnography, only long-term field studies epitomise the method, rendering short-term ethnographies in other fields deficient. This argument has been countered on the grounds that ethnography has different methodological orientations for different disciplines. Besides the differing orientation, Knoblauch (2005) adds that contemporary ethnography constitutes of various types. He broadly categorized them under two types – the conventional and focused ethnography. Economic base theory and political economy analysis, which inform data interpretation are combined with the focused ethnography (to be discussed later in this chapter) along with textual and historical analysis, and interviews to form the method of econo-ethnography.

Econo-ethnography is therefore defined in this study as a research method that studies economic behaviour, interactions and perceptions within film industry as impacted by political and economic phenomenon. Econo-ethnography translates to researching the business and politics of a cultural industry. It pays attention to the distribution of wealth and power within an industry. The methodology does not just describe the state of the industry, but offers an economic and political understanding of events in the industry. It provides knowledge of how political economic changes occur and why they do and the impact such change might have on the industry. Econo-ethnography is a two step-research method – first, data collection step using select forms of ethnography and second, data interpretation step using the economic base theory and the political economy analysis. This methodology benefits from the flexibility of ethnography, making it administrable to other research beyond

the Nigerian film industry. Its flexibility allows for customizing the method, tailoring it around the specific needs of the industry.

While econo-ethnography could be applied to any flexible field of research, in this study it concentrates on elements of the economy. It consists of fieldwork which is essentially short-term where the researcher is a field observer rather than a full-fledged participant observer. The field observer, Knoblauch (2005) offers, requires only background knowledge rather than insider knowledge of the research object. However, an insider knowledge is an added advantage. Because econo-ethnography is focused, the participant observer often knows “what kind of information is needed and the amount of time and other resources needed to obtain it” (Lindlof, 1995:146). In the course of a six-month period of discontinuous observations, I specifically obtained from Nollywood filmmakers information directly focused on the industry’s transformations and their responses to state interventions via policies and aids. The challenge with applying econo-ethnography to this research was the informality of activities within the industry. The sporadic nature of their productions meant that I missed certain productions either because they clashed with others or I was unaware of them.

Interviews are most effective when combined with observations, as data gathered from one illuminate the other (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Interviews aim at understanding the meanings of information and opinions provided and interests expressed by the respondents. Conducted through various mediums like face-to-face, telephone and the Internet, the semi-structured interview format enriched my data collection. Unlike the semi-structured interview, the structured interview is rigid and designed in a standardized procedure, posing questions in a pre-determined order, approach, format and words. Its formality according to Brennen (2013), allows little or no interruptions, improvisations or deviations. My first few interviews were structured. Running into the trouble of over-

stretched interviews with the constant struggle to avoid asking questions already answered and little room to ask clarifying questions, I eventually settled for the semi-structured alternated with unstructured interview methods. I provided in the appendix some of these interviews, protecting the comments of the interviewees.

An unstructured interview, applied to collecting complex information about complicated issues and sensitive topics, is highly informal (Brennen, 2013; Bertrand & Hughes, 2005; Patton, 1990; Longhurst, 2010). The delicacy of topics, which the interviewer seeks information on as well as the emotional involvement of the respondents, explains the unstructured nature of the interview. This means that information is elicited randomly, warranting long sessions and twists that redirect questions posed. Although flexible like the semi-structured interview format, the unstructured interview requires great skill to spot openings and avoid leading questions. Unlike with other filmmakers, I had two interview sessions with Okechukwu Ogunjiofor, producer of *Living in Bondage* (1992) and *Queen Amina* (2017). Starting off with the semi-structured interview, I realised how emotionally attached he was to the *Queen Amina* project. His refusal to share information gathered over a period of twenty years convinced me the project was sensitive and personal to him. Establishing trust and rescheduling another informal, unstructured interview session was helpful to achieving his relaxation. Although he requested a letter of indemnity, he eventually released some pictures of the project.

Between the structured and unstructured interviews lies the semi-structured interview. Based on pre-established set of questions like the structured interviews, semi-structured interview permits greater flexibility and specificity. It allowed an alteration in the order of questions I posed as well as follow-up questions where necessary. The written list of predetermined questions notwithstanding, my semi-structured interviews carried a casual quality like the unstructured interview. Eschewing the rigidity of the formal or structured

interview, they unfolded in a conversational manner, allowing my respondents and I opportunity to explore issues we felt were important (Longhurst 2010). Semi-structured interviews were most suitable approach, as the information sought required clarifications and opportunities for these often presented themselves at unexpected times. But this also meant constant digressions and long circuitous, sometimes unnecessary discussions. And since filmmaking is about creativity, the style of interview required flexibility and creativity, rather than formality and rigidity. There were situational, unplanned interviews occurring in the course of observations. They were often spontaneous, seeming more like a casual exchange rather than a formal interview. I constantly readied myself, carrying the necessary interview recording tools. Essentially, I interrogated filmmakers in their offices, made clarifications while on observations and gathered further information while on break, developing new lines of question when anything of interest occurred.

4.3 Data Collection and Interpretation: Doing Econo-ethnography

The approach described in the section above outlines a way to research evolving film economies. This section will illustrate how to do an econo-ethnography using my employment of the method in this study as an example. Before embarking on the fieldtrip, I began preparations by watching more Nollywood films in order to immerse myself in industrial output. Although my research plan was structured, the informal and unconventional nature of the industry required flexibility in plan and approach. Being away from the location of interest at that time made gathering contacts somewhat challenging. However, preparations towards eventual meetings and interactions were in place before my return to Nigeria. Once in Nigeria, I acquired contact details when I was invited to the annual general meeting of the Directors' Guild of Nigeria (DGN). Having been introduced as a researcher,

directors readily accepted to be observed. Although part of the agenda for the meeting was to elect a new DGN president, over seventy-five percent of my selected directors were absent. While I was not permitted to distract the members with interviews in the course of the three-day gathering, I was given the DGN directory.

The videos watched were obtained via online channels like Netflix, YouTube, IrokoTV, nollywoodmovies.tv, among others. These are mediums readily available to me abroad. And the filmmakers, in no particular order, included Obi Emelonye and Lonzo Nzekwe, representing Nollywood filmmakers in the diaspora, Kunle Afolayan, Kenneth Gyang, Emem Isong, Stephanie Linus. These, among others, constitute Nollywood filmmakers who are, according to Jedlowski (2013), revolutionizing the industry, instigating aesthetic, narrative, and economic transformations. Interested in the motive behind these recent developments and the implications for filmmakers and the industry, I concentrated on recent films and their makers. Without restricting the study to these developments and to fully understand them, I also studied films made prior to the second half of the 2000s, which according to Jedlowski (2015) marks the inception of these changes. The essence of studying these films was to highlight the disparity in the filmmaking approaches, textual content, and aesthetics and not necessarily to decide which was superior to the other. I planned to interview filmmakers who have remained in the filmmaking business from the times of the old Nollywood. These include, but not limited to Tunde Kelani, Teco Benson, Tchidi Chikere, Lancelot Imaseun, Kenneth Nnebue. As confirmations of participation had not been received from these producers and directors, I embarked on the research appreciating that some other filmmakers could replace those on the list. And indeed, unable to reach Tunde Kelani, I settled for Mahmood Ali-Balogun and Opa Williams, veteran filmmakers who have, until recently insisted on celluloid filmmaking. Kenneth Nnebue was replaced by Okechukwu Ogunjiofor who, although not a prolific filmmaker in recent times, is one of the change

agents in the industry with his forthcoming *Queen Amina* (2017). Observation took place on Tchidi Chikere's set, but because he still occupies many roles in his productions and so inopportuned, I interviewed Stephanie Okereke-Linus – New York film academy trained director and co-producer of *Dry* (2015). I engaged a total of twenty-five industry players in formal interview, observed five productions, visited four cinemas, attended the director's guild annual general meeting and observed their presidential election.

Although not a requirement for the adopted method, I used recording devices while carrying out the fieldwork. These include audio recorder for oral interviews, video camera for both interviews and collecting footages from the production (subject to the filmmakers' agreement) and photo camera for taking still images. Interestingly, while the so called new Nollywood filmmakers permitted collection of still and video footage of their productions, old Nollywood filmmakers made no attempt to disguise their scepticism. They feared piracy, hiding the titles of their productions even from their crewmembers. The engagement of these items proved valuable and effective considering the intensity of data collection demanded by econo-ethnography. It guarded against loss of important visual data and cues. It served as a visual note-taking or diary-keeping method. In addition, they differentiated my adopted method from the conventional ethnography, which relies on field-notes. Video recordings, in addition to documenting non-verbal behaviour such as facial expressions and emotions, recorded and preserved activities in their original form. Considering that every filmmaking process is unique and such data could be non-recurring and rare, video recording allowed for preservation of data for future validation and further research. While visual and audio-visual materials collected for this research proved essential to the analysis of data collected, the entire fieldwork, neither engaged them extensively nor depended on them wholly for data collection. The need for visual recording, arising in the course of observation, became essential for easy recollection of events, reactions, and nuances especially because a number

of different productions were to be observed. Although a powerful tool for enquiry, ethical issues over video recording abound, questioning professional bias and the interests of the researcher-cum-filmmaker. This explains the minimal use of video recordings.

To effectively do an econo-ethnography, there is need to focus on specific workplace and/or practice. Workplace ethnography provides an insight into doing econo-ethnography. Besides helping to identify and understand the research setting, workplace ethnography is detailed and in-depth investigation of human groups and societies, their workplaces, culture and practices. My method adopts Nollywood as a workplace with an ethnographic emphasis on individuals, corporate bodies, practices, societies and cultures that give it form. As with all forms of ethnography, including my method, workplace ethnography requires the formation of useful field relationships to last the long duration of the research. Out of choice, rather than a requirement for econo-ethnography, I have deliberately allowed some of these relationships to linger beyond the fieldwork for the sake of future and further research.

To further describe how to do econo-ethnography, I shall discuss the data collection and analysis processes under the following sub-headings: setting, participants (selection and background), observation, interview, and textual analysis.

4.3.1 Setting

Econo-ethnography requires a definite workplace as research setting. With my workplace established as Nollywood, it is paramount to establish what Nollywood stands for. As noted in chapter three, Nollywood represents a sector of Nigerian film industry, which produces films and videos (in English or subtitled in English) targeted at a general, rather than regional Nigerian audience, Nigerians in diaspora, and international audiences. This is an operational definition. Constitutively, Nollywood refers to the Southern Nigerian video film industry producing films in English (Jedlowski 2015). The inclusion of a geographical delineation

gives better idea of this research's regional coverage and scope. Some filmmakers within the industry argue against a geographical mapping as they maintain that Nollywood ought to represent the entire Nigerian film industry. This study however, adopts Jedlowski's (2015) geographical delineation in the choice of films selected, productions observed, and directors interviewed.

Choosing a research site or setting, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) "is a negotiation process to obtain freedom of access to a site that is suitable for the research problems and feasible for the researcher's resources of time, mobility and skills" (43). Located in no particular part of the country, Nollywood is everywhere in Nigeria based on production location. The major states where production takes place include Lagos, Abuja, Enugu, Delta, Cross River and Plateau. Distribution sites, often excluding the Northern region to include Lagos, Anambra and Abia, does not suggest that the videos are not consumed in Northern Nigeria. The production sites are states I have travelled in the past and are still parts of the country rarely affected by insurgency. With issues of security thus sorted, I travelled mostly around Lagos, Abuja, Delta and Enugu states for data collection. Filmmakers currently own registered film production companies and individual filmmakers distribute their films through such established companies. A typical example is the Royal Art Academy. Established by renowned filmmaker Emem Isong, the RAA grooms aspiring filmmakers and actors in its film academy, and distributes films made by independent filmmakers and star actors turning directors and producers. As only registered companies are able to access either the Nolly Project Fund, the project ACT Nollywood grant or even bank loans (further discussed in chapter six), professional filmmakers are establishing physical sites for their companies and equipping them adequately. Award winning producer, director and actor, Kunle Afolayan, besides his large office space in Ikeja, Lagos, is in the process of instituting a proper studio.

Having a setting is important in econo-ethnography as it helps determine the suitability of the method to the study and what forms of ethnography to combine with the tools of analysis. With econo-ethnography, prior or background knowledge of the research setting is imperative since a field visit is often short-term. This boosts confidence in the researcher, helps him/her look for the right things thereby saving time.

4.3.2 Research Participants

The research participants were mostly filmmakers who are the human agents stimulating the transformations reshaping Nollywood. As noted earlier, because contacts and confirmations were not established prior to embarking on the fieldwork and considering that new professional filmmakers continue to make entry into the industry, the initial list of filmmakers to be observed and interviewed witnessed some adjustment. Borrowing criteria from Jedlowski (2013), I categorised the participants under Nollywood and new Nollywood filmmakers. Jedlowski (2013, 2015) intimates that the new wave Nollywood films are characterised by higher budgets, improved production values and transnational collaborations, leading to transformed aesthetic and narrative features. Using data collected, however, this study, in chapter five, critically analysed these characteristics.

While emphasis was on particular directors and producers, other members of the production crew were equally considered. Thus, photography, editing, costuming, casting, and location management, among others, were factored in during the observation, interview and analysis processes. Considered the head of the team, the director was given important position in this research as other members of the team often work towards actualising his/her directorial concept. Actors were not disregarded, especially those who have participated in productions of both eras. As no specific cast or crewmember, except for directors, was outlined for interview, I made my selection from members readily available in productions

being observed. In other words, my selection of research participants, outside of the directors, was purely based on purposive sampling. Prominent actors interviewed included Segun Arinze, Desmond Elliot, Sam Dede, Francis Duru. Once in Lagos, I attended one of the actor's guild monthly meetings in Lagos uninvited. Unfortunately, after an hour long wait, I was informed the meeting may not hold as the executive members were yet to arrive. This confirmed tales of and complaints over disorganisation within the group and other such guilds within the industry. My interest in speaking with actors was to find out how they perceived and responded to government policies, aids and support for the industry. And how they were contributing to attempt to gentrify Nollywood.

Other proposed participants for this study included government officials, policymakers and implementers and industry players who serve as guild representatives for the government. While I reached guild members with little difficulty, scheduling interview appointments with state officials and policymakers proved difficult. For instance, on a number of occasions I tried to reach Peace Anyiam, president of the MOPICON bill review committee, but she would not speak about the duties assigned to her committee by the government. This is despite being some months past the three-week deadline given them by the minister of information and culture after their April, 2016 inauguration.

4.3.3 Observation

Econo-ethnography informed my observation for this study. As noted earlier, I paid attention to filmmakers who are reshaping the economic specificities, key narratives and aesthetic features of Nollywood (Jedlowski, 2015). The methodology informed the choice of filmmakers selected for observation as well as the observation itself. Kenneth Gyang (of *Confusion Na Wa*, 2013) appeared to be either running a 'guerrilla' (partly unplanned) production or never wanted to be observed, because on the occasions I contacted him for the

location of his production, he was unsure, promising to reach me once confirmed. Failing for four consecutive days, I gave up waiting on him as Lancelot's production was starting off in Abuja. Being an econo-ethnographic study, I observed seven directors and their crew for as long as I was permitted, recording, not only what was being done, but also how it was being done. Guided by reflections on and references to texts (literary and visual), my observations and interviews anchored on current debates within the industry and how they might be understood as gentrification.

Restricting observation to films made in the English language and shot within the Southern part of Nigeria was necessary for security reasons (discussed further under ethics) and language barrier issues. Over the period of six months, I was able to follow three productions to the final days of shooting. The other four productions were only beginning when my fieldwork time elapsed. Besides visual and audio-visual recordings of observation, I kept a reflexive journal in which I noted my experiences, thoughts, feelings and opinions. It accounts for transparency and reflexivity, checks assumptions and goals and clarifies beliefs and subjectivities (Russell & Kelly, 2002; Ortlipp, 2008). Like the semi-structured interview, observations had no strict order. However, I ensured that there was an introductory conversation with participants prior to interviews and observations. Most importantly, I let participants choose the best location for interviews because according to King and Horrocks (2010), besides building rapport with an interview participant, comfort, privacy and quiet are three aspects of a physical environment that are especially important to successful interview. Interviews, despite having become a ubiquitous aspect of contemporary life, could go wrong and be ineffective when conducted poorly. Aware of this, I sought the best time and place for interviews, and observed shootings from a distance that neither made information indistinct nor inconvenienced the production crew.

Despite transformations discussed in the next chapter, I found during my research that majority of Nollywood filmmakers still do not have production calendars detailing their monthly or yearly activities. For instance, in April, 2016, renowned filmmaker Tecu Benson, stated he was concentrating on finishing his television soap and had no plans for any feature. However, between May and July, 2016, he completed two features released to the cinema. While this is often the case with filmmakers who are able to single-handedly finance their production, a few others take a long time to plan productions. These inconsistencies and instabilities in the industry demanded a flexible methodology as mentioned earlier in the chapter.

4.3.4 Data interpretation and writing

For efficiency in data interpretation, I reviewed audio and visual recordings of interviews at the end of the sessions and day, transcribing and making useful links. I aimed at understanding each production in the light of other productions, their similarities and differences. These findings, in conjunction with the analyses drawn from the interviews, were then examined within the context of gentrification. Guided by the economic base theory and political economy analysis, I evaluated these as well as policy documents to ascertain the state's role in the industrial gentrification and its motivation. Understanding that gentrification is resultant from the sustained process of regeneration, this research engaged in discovering how the industry might be regenerating and the sustainability of this process. This was achieved partly from data collected from interviews and from understanding the current political economy in which the industry exists.

I wrote down important details and information, which later became useful for creating the first draft of my thesis. However, because this warranted comparing notes written down over a period of six months, new ideas and links emerged. These memos,

refined overtime, contributed towards making my analyses progressively stronger, clearer and theoretical. I aimed at unbiased interpretation and analysis of data collected from which fresh arguments emerged. While writing up, I decided against ethnography as an over-running writing style. Being a part of the community under observation, adopting ethnography as a writing style could present the thesis as a self-referential writing. A self-referential writing according to Gubrium (2015) refers to the researcher's personal experiences in the course of the writing, featuring his/her place in the research and thus distracting the reader from the subject matter in view. However, this proved difficult especially while reflecting on my experiences as a participant-observer.

Data interpretation was guided by econo-ethnography's economic base theory and political economy analysis. The method informed the discourse on current debates within the industry. It provided insight into the old and new Nollywood debate and how they could be suggesting change in behaviour and perception towards and within the industry due to efforts to reposition Nollywood in the basic economic sector. A major limitation, however, was that due to bureaucratic challenges and the problem of poor documentation within the Nigerian film industry, certain information remained inaccessible. This posed some difficulty because at the time of data collection, majority of the key agents of the MOPICON bill initiative for instance were unwilling to discuss it. While key actors and industry players readily shared their sentiments over such government strategy, the state's position remained unclear due to an existing communication gap. From this emerged another major limitation. Lack of communication breeds uncertainty over the model of change expected with such initiative as the MOPICON bill for example. This uncertainty has generated mixed feelings, heated arguments, outright rejections and further separations within the industry and among industry players. Their sentiments draw from the established lack of faith and trust in the Nigerian government known to have consistently and successively formed new agencies on political

rather than functional reasons (Heymans & Pycroft, 2005; Miller, 2016). In an interview, industry critic, Prof Femi Shaka⁵, forthrightly avers that “Nollywood is lucky that the government is not involved. Anything that the government is involved in comes with misgivings. I have no faith in the Nigerian state. Many things they go into, they bungle it”.

These limitations notwithstanding, political economy analysis suitably lends insight into understanding the structure and power struggle within Nollywood since it is concerned with how groups or individuals control others, how they gain acceptance to retain such control and gives explanation to motivations to cooperate or not within and without groups. According to Acosta & Pettit (2013), four key elements shape power relations, and these shall be adopted in this study as the tenets of political economy analysis considering that they consist of quintessential segments under which structure and power struggle in the industry could be adequately discussed. These elements include:

- The formal and visible structures, norms and “rules of the game”
- The informal and invisible structures, beliefs and narratives
- The actors, interests and strategies
- The processes of cooperation and contestation

They inform and structure discussions especially under sections 6.2 and 6.3 which consider the interplay between visible and invisible powers in the state’s effort to identify and empower a private sector beyond oil.

My major challenge in the course of data collection and analysis stemmed from being an insider-researcher. As illustrated by the work of Ugor (2007), being an insider-researcher comes with difficulties ranging from bias and sentiments to over-familiarity and assumptions that views are widespread and representative. Besides the demands for higher expectations, the insider-researcher faces the challenge to objectively analyse a culture he/she is part of

⁵ Oral interview with Prof Femi Shaka on 22 March, 2016.

(Kanuha, 2000; Serrant-Green, 2002). I overcame this by occupying the ‘space between’ (Kerstetter 2012:101), conscious of those things which made me an outsider (Smith, 1999) like being a PhD scholar and an industry researcher and critic. Like Larkin’s (2008) combination of theories and methods, my study combines a selection of concepts, methods and theories to give new insight to media, political economy and urban studies. Unlike Larkin’s (2008) method which gravitates towards historical analysis, my approach leans towards the economic growth analysis. The economic base theory along with ethnography, assessed Nollywood as the economic base of the Nigerian film industry. While Larkin’s (2008, 2004a, 2004b, 2002) studies focus on the structure of Kanywood, this study investigates Nollywood’s political and economic make-up and the state’s attempt to formalize it into a national industry capable of returning taxable revenue.

4.4. *Ethical Considerations*

Ryen (2011) postulates that when a researcher engages in a study that involves other people, he/she inevitably enters into a relationship with them; a relationship which comes with some responsibilities (Marvasti 2004). Entailing more than mere courtesy and the right attitude, ethics scrutinizes the morality of human conduct. Concerned with the moral principle that governs the conduct of an activity that involves people, ethics refers to “the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process” (Edwards & Mauthner, 2008:14). Complex and demanding, ethical issues sometimes raise moral dilemmas that are not very easily resolved, hence the outlining of basic ethical considerations in most professions, including academic research. While the question of who determines what is ethical or not may be raised, the presence of basic ethical consideration ensures uniformity in the code or principles of conduct applied to carrying out research in specific fields or profession.

Having understood British basic ethical considerations and in keeping with Birmingham City University's ethical policy, all information gathered from participants is safe and kept confidential. The basic ethical considerations of informed consent, no deception, right to withdraw from research, debriefing on research aim, before and after data collection and confidentiality were duly followed. Although there was no risk to individual identities, participants had the freedom to choose between being identified by their real names or pseudonyms. No information sought was too sensitive, however, I requested consent for video coverage, both for the interviews and observations. While I opted to video-record all my interviews, participants' choices were respected. Thus, I only audio-recorded with participants who were uncomfortable with video. Where filmmakers did not allow video-recording during observations, I took notes and still photographs. I maintained confidentiality to build participants' trust, safeguarding identities as well as information obtained from them. As some participants requested, I transferred copies of their recordings to them. To minimize risks on participants and to avoid the possibilities of causing harm, I let them choose what time and place they prefer to be interviewed. Discomfort, anxiety, and invasion of privacy, according to Bailey (1978) are possible harm on the participants. They were informed of their rights to withdraw from the research at any time, decline to respond to any question they felt was objectionable, request the removal of their responses from the research and/or ask me to stop recording when they felt necessary. Although I had no such incidences, I encountered overprotective filmmakers who, being piracy conscious, would not permit video recording, however short nor release still photograph from their footage. As noted earlier, for security reasons, I restricted my movement to states in Southern Nigeria and Abuja in the North central. Although I had no reason to be in the North with its high incidents of Boko Haram bombings, I followed all precautions provided whenever I was in a large gathering.

Like Berger (2014), King and Horrocks (2010), Kumar (2005), among others suggests, while making sure to avoid deception of participants, I endeavoured to remain honest in the research design and unbiased in reporting the findings, since “fabrications, fraudulent materials, omissions and contrivances” (Christians 2003:219) are unacceptable, inappropriate and unethical. Eschewing the positivist and adopting the participatory researcher stance, I involved the participants the entire period of the research and conducted myself professionally in keeping with the ethical demands of the university. Most importantly, I intend to uphold my promise to my participants that no part of their recordings, audio or visual, will be made available anywhere else but the university.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how I researched transformations in evolving film economy using a data collection method that I term econo-ethnography. As stated above, the method combines economic base theory, political economy analysis and selected aspects of ethnography. Econo-ethnography requires observation of the industry, interaction with the industry players as well as policy makers and understanding of changes in industrial political economy. It is applied to the study of a specific workplace and is particularly useful for researching processes of evolution in creative industries. Although the researcher does not have to be a part of this workplace, it is important that he/she has an understanding of the culture under study. This is because the period of observation and data collection is usually short and intense. The method equally serves for data analysis, employing economic base theory and political economy analysis as tools for data interpretation.

The essence of combining and adopting this method is to address recognisable limitations in studies focused on Nollywood evolution. Like Haynes (2007), I observed in chapter three that Nollywood studies are often repetitive and given to cross-referencing. This,

I found, is a fundamental problem arising from the research methods adopted by the researchers. I suggested that studies such as Haynes (2016), Miller (2016) and Jedlowski (2013) among others, that manifest ethnographic involvement with the industry are limited from depending on interviews and observations. They are also limited from being carried out by non-insider researchers. Being an insider, a fan as well as a researcher provides access, gains trust and helps maintain critical distance. My dissertation therefore presented econo-ethnography as a way to address the limitations of past studies and to study evolving film economies such as Nollywood. The idea of econo-ethnography emerged from evaluating as gentrification the state's attempt to rebase Nollywood's economy. The method is important to emerging film economies and their analysts as it provides information on political economy and what impact transformations may have on the industries.

The chapter highlights methodological differences between this study and previous ones on the industry. Having therefore established the gap and weaknesses in previous studies as a result of methods applied, this chapter presents econo-ethnography as an alternative methodology for researching cultural industries. Focused and thus short-ranged, it suits the dynamism of evolving film economies. However, the dynamisms of evolving film economies also present challenges or limitations such as the difficulty I encountered trying to reach and speak with the state and policymakers. Positioned outside the formal economy, Nollywood's informality and disorganization equally posed a challenge to data collection process⁶.

Prompted by previous studies carried out by Jedlowski (2013), Haynes (2014) and Okome (2014), the following chapters draw from my primary data to examine Nollywood's transformation and its implications for the industry. Chapter five undertakes a critical

⁶ I missed observing two of Tecu Benson's productions because he did not have a production calendar.

examination of these transformations in the light of new labels and debates emerging within the industry as it evolves. It addresses the question of nation, nationhood and national ideology and how they matter in the making of a national cinema. Chapter six engages with issues of policy, state involvement and formalization in Nollywood and how this might imply gentrification of the industry. The rest of this study considers the underlying rationale behind Nollywood's transformations, the place of government in industrial affairs and its implications for the filmmakers.

CHAPTER FIVE

NOLLYWOOD IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN FILM INDUSTRY: CURRENT DEBATES

Introduction

This chapter attempts to redefine and reimagine Nollywood in the contemporary Nigerian film industry, giving context to the chapters that follow. It considers current debates arising from Nollywood's segmentation along lines of aesthetics in the course of its evolution. This re-imagination draws from data collected using the method of econo-ethnography described in the previous chapter. My choice of method is informed by limitations of past ethnographic studies such as Haynes (2016) and Miller (2016) and builds on Jedlowski's (2013, 2015) position on a possibly gentrifying Nollywood. The chapter draws on data collected during my fieldwork and interrogated using economic base theory which is incorporated in my method, questioning the state's interest in restructuring Nollywood's political economy and evaluating industry players' reactions to this move. The chapter investigates Nollywood sectoring as resultant from transformations instigated by the state. It identifies economic and structural tensions existing between two identifiable sectors – the old and new Nollywood. It answers the research question – 'what transformations are evident in Nollywood and how are they restructuring the industry'? It contributes to answering the overarching research question by providing insight into the structural make-up of contemporary Nollywood. Chapter six follows on this by examining the power struggle that emerges from policy and structural adjustments within the industry and seven evaluates implications of these and other changes for the industry and the filmmakers. In other words, chapters five, six and seven examine gentrification in the state's attempts to formalize Nollywood through policies, funding, and improving production, distribution and consumption standard.

Nollywood's transformations, highlighted under the old and new Nollywood labels are examined in this chapter in terms of production, distribution and consumption. I suggest that labelling every innovative transformation as a sector within the industry is unnecessary. I propose McGahan's (2004) theory of change in industrial trajectory as alternative way of understanding Nollywood's transformations without labelling. The chapter equally evaluates the notions of nation, nationhood and national ideology as perceived in contemporary Nigerian film industry. It contributes to chapter six which appraises state interest in Nollywood as contributing towards the making of a national cinema. Divided into four parts, this chapter discusses how the politics and economics of filmmaking in Nollywood are being restructured.

5.1 Old Nollywood in context

Nollywood, as identified in chapter three, has held a stereotypical or single definition in majority of literatures. Only in recent times has there been discussions of transformations in the industry. Prior to this time, Nollywood has represented an industry characterised by informally trained, semi-professional filmmakers translating poorly developed scripts into films of low production value. While this is noted as a common tradition, my research shows it did not constitute the general practice. Criticisms of Nollywood, Prof Femi Shaka⁷ notes, "come from people who are not well informed about the circumstances within which Nollywood emerged". A conscious effort, made by both existing industry players and incoming young filmmakers in response to these criticisms, has engendered the characteristic differences in production, distribution and consumption within the industry. Convenient labels have been drawn up to capture this change in the industry. Hence, the old and new Nollywood which has generated more controversies within the industry than within

⁷ Oral interview conducted with Prof Femi Shaka on 22 May, 2016.

Nollywood scholarship. Among my interviewees, diverse views exist over what the old Nollywood implies. While some are certain old and new Nollywood bring about unnecessary class divisions, others provide a clear distinction between them. Nollywood's major formal distributor of DVD, Gab Okoye⁸ of G-Media Distribution believes that in addition to class, the label represents practice. He says, "if your practice is obsolete, then you are old and they are new in the sense of brand new talent – brand new in experience and technical know-how". Shaka perceives the old Nollywood as a class of video-films produced from 1992 until the inception of high quality films like *Ije* (2010), *Mr & Mrs* (2012), among others. Scholars have discussed this sectoring from different focal points. Adejunmobi's (2015) engaging attempt at distinguishing the ideologies highlights the new Nollywood simply as an extension of old Nollywood with differing emphasis on content and greater value on aesthetics. Although Gab Okoye does not perceive the development as sectoring and Prof Hyginus Ekwuazi⁹ sees no controversy in the label, in this chapter, I evaluate it as a possible trajectory change in an evolving industry. While Ekwuazi believes this change is related to technology, I evaluate it as gentrification instigated by the state and enforced by the filmmakers in an attempt to stimulate film economy and/or rebase the national economy.

Nollywood represents the significant shift from celluloid to video in the Nigerian film industry. Embracing the celluloid once again as well as film and high definition video technology, the era of making films in standard definition video format is becoming old, conventional or orthodox. Denoting evolution in progress, old Nollywood implies persisting with the regular production and distribution patterns with which the industry began. Teco Benson¹⁰ offers that the change which brought about old Nollywood rests on criticisms. He posits, "they (filmmakers) had a lot of criticisms, mockery and negative comments. Some

⁸ Oral interview conducted with Gab Okoye (Igwe Gabosky) on 19 April, 2016.

⁹ Oral interview conducted with Hyginus Ekwuazi on 22 April, 2016.

¹⁰ Oral interview conducted with Teco Benson on 11 April, 2016.

people are not happy with that. They thus claim to be new, distancing themselves from the negativity”. Kenneth Gyang¹¹ believes the sectoring arises from politicising the industry, but Ekwuazi argues that politics, format, content and quality notwithstanding, mode of distribution determines what sector a film, not the filmmaker, falls into. Ekwuazi’s earlier submission that the sectoring in Nollywood is technology implicated corresponds to this section’s exploration of the industry’s transformation as a change in trajectory. Although technology impacts on modes of distribution available within the industry, I discuss in the next section, following Ryan Connor’s¹² argument, that mode of distribution alone does not adequately determine what sector a film falls into. As Adejunmobi (2015) argues, in terms of production, distribution and consumption, the old Nollywood has a differing ideology from the new Nollywood.

The following section discusses the major identifiable features of old Nollywood as perceived by industry players. This discussion is aimed at highlighting the elements differentiating old Nollywood from the new Nollywood. Charles Okwuowulu¹³ suggests that beyond a newness, there exists economic and structural tension between the sectors. Filmmaker Ugezu J. Ugezu¹⁴ terms this a revolution. I discuss it as gentrification. Once these tensions are established, this chapter will investigate how these changes are restructuring the industry, affecting power relations and impacting on the industry and its players. This exploration of major identifiable features draws on both primary and secondary data and will provide insight into the political economy of the industry. As gathered from industry players and underscored in these characteristics, old Nollywood constitutes a dysfunctionality and

¹¹ Oral interview conducted with Kenneth Gyang on 29 February, 2016.

¹² Email conversation with Ryan Connor on 4 June, 2016.

¹³ Oral interview conducted with Charles Okwuowulu on 22 May, 2016

¹⁴ Oral interview conducted with Ugezu J. Ugezu on 11 March, 2016

lack of structure and standards which select industry players are hoping to address through the MOPICON bill discussed in chapter six.

5.1.1 Old Nollywood: Production, Distribution and Consumption

Fundamentally, scholarship attributes the rise of video-film experiment to the collapse of celluloid filmmaking in Nigeria. Okechukwu Ogunjiofor¹⁵, producer of Nollywood's first successful video-film adds that the ingenuity which spurred the production of *Living in Bondage* (1992) was driven by a quest to stall unemployment; to maximize available limited resources for gainful investment. Its small or limited budget size, affordability, popular audience target, small screen distribution (straight to video) and profitability boosted and sustained the format. Although varied studies, as reviewed in chapter three, have re-echoed the small budget characteristic, none has critically defined what constitutes small budget or set a benchmark on it (discussed further under section 5.2). Old Nollywood is essentially about cheapness of production and distribution with a high profit target. Its potentials to regenerate notwithstanding, old Nollywood, according to director and producer Opa Williams¹⁶, will always find a cheap way of actualizing high production value.

Made essentially for home consumption, and therefore released straight to VHS/VCD/DVD, old Nollywood films are designed for a distinct mode of distribution. Unlike the new Nollywood films made with a large budget, entered in film festivals and screened in local and international cinemas, old Nollywood films have only begun to tighten storylines, produce better picture quality and engage formally trained filmmakers. However, its significant increase in budget size still does not compare to that of the new Nollywood. Its limited budget and small screen ideology tend to highlight its audience target – the popular

¹⁵ Oral interview conducted with Okechukwu Ogunjiofor on 8 August, 2016.

¹⁶ Oral interview conducted with Opa Williams on 14 April, 2016.

masses living in rural areas and who have no access to movie theatres and those unable to afford the cost of a cinema ticket. According to Gab Okoye¹⁷, pirate market impedes accessibility to original DVD and VCD copies which are presently available at affordable prices. He adds that a pirated DVD containing between twenty and forty Nollywood films sells for the same price as a single original Nollywood film.

The medium of video, which has been hyperbolically described as “the AIDS of the film industry” in Nigeria (Barrot 2008:1), has enabled the creation of a viable industry and a star system that has contributed to further development and expansion of Nollywood beyond Nigeria and West Africa. With a production rate of over 1500 films per annum, old Nollywood, according to actor Sam Dede¹⁸, has extensively explored Africa’s rich storytelling tradition but less of filmmaking art. Storytelling in old Nollywood is reminiscent of the Nigerian people. According to veteran filmmaker Ali-Balogun¹⁹, oral tradition informs Nollywood’s filmmaking, explaining its dialogue driven storylines (Chamley, 2012). Acting and role interpretation share similar relationships to the lives and character of the people. Although prototyping is a noteworthy problem in the industry, stories are created based on audience demand. Hence Ayakoroma (2014) observes an increase in the production of films similar to one with a noted commercial success. Like the Onitsha market literature, Nollywood films are popular among the local audiences due to their thematic emphases and relevance to their daily life affairs. Besides the semblance to daily affairs, stories are created in a dialogic narrative that provides too much information. Again like the Onitsha market literature and the television soap operas before the advent of video films, words are used to describe every event and action. Elaborate gesticulation accompanies a high pitch rendition

¹⁷ Okoye (CEO of G-Media), is one of Nollywood’s major registered movie distributors.

¹⁸ Oral interview conducted with Sam Dede on 23 March, 2016.

¹⁹ Oral interview conducted with Mahmood Ali-Balogun on 30 June, 2016.

or delivery of lines. Accordingly, actor, director and lecturer, Obi Okoli²⁰, opines that such was typical of Nigerians. Actors are lively, boisterous, ‘non-plastic’ and full of energy. Also idiosyncratic of Nollywood narrative is what Ayakoroma (2014) describes as the parts or sequel syndrome. While the author believes this to be a trend borrowed from soap opera - the precursor of video film tradition in Nigeria, planned or purposeful obsolescence theory (Bulow, 1986) offers an economic explanation to the syndrome. Here, the manufacturers produce goods or services with shorter physical or psychological life “than the industry is capable of producing under existing technological and cost conditions” and sell them by instalments (Gregory, 1947:21). An example will be Chidebe Collins’ *Nkoli Nwa Nsukka* (2013) which is currently in its twentieth ‘season’ or part. Although this video retains the same title for all its parts, Ugezu J. Ugezu notes that some videos are given different titles despite being part of a whole.

Old Nollywood maintains a tradition that relies on stardom. The Nollywood star system according to Tsika (2015) did not emanate overnight and overtime, and has been one sure method of attracting and maintaining audiences. Producer and director, Opa Williams, agrees that Nollywood expanded as a star driven industry where audiences cared more about the stars featured than picture or sound quality. New Nollywood filmmakers tend to explore and experiment with newfound actors. During the call for audition for his forthcoming musical movie, Ali-Mahmood Balogun sought for “dancers who can act as well as actors who can dance”. He had an actor and a choreographer on the casting team that spent over five hours screening forty-seven dancers-cum-actors. The director/producer emphasized the relevance of casting the most suitable persons for the right roles. His willingness to experiment with new actors notwithstanding, Balogun also stars top actors who have appeared in what is now called the old Nollywood films. Although my observations from

²⁰ Personal conversation with Obi Okoli on 23 February, 2016.

supposed old and new Nollywood filmsets highlight that there is less chaos on a new Nollywood set, actor Francis Duru disagrees. He opines, “I have worked both here and there (old and new) and there is no difference”. Nevertheless, the *Rattle Snake* (2009) star does not interpret the difference in terms of organization or role interpretation, but storyline; an aspect which Tecu Benson and Opa Williams believe still remains a challenge in the industry.

While one can comprehend the new Nollywood as a taxonomy constituting geographic location, approach to filmic language and the political economy of production, distribution and consumption, ‘old’ Nollywood appears ambiguous. Preoccupations with the characteristic differences in taxonomy and the inherent political economy of both factions, have warranted diversion of attention from the context in which ‘old’ is appropriated in the idea. Like other such debatable concepts, ‘old’ lacks a singular universally acceptable definition. More often than not, it is viewed from a biological reality perspective especially because it is dynamic and beyond human control. ‘Old’ in whatever sense it is conceived, engages a chronological play on or passage of time, implying a point in existence when active and meaningful contribution is barely feasible.

The idea of new and old Nollywood could be studied as a process of obsolescence as well as regeneration (regeneration implies revival and obsolescence indicates replacement) (Tischleder & Wasserman, 2015). Regeneration brings renewal into an industry and obsolescence, which makes a practice outdated, is often generated by threats on industry’s core activities and assets. In a forceful economy such as Nollywood, purposeful or planned obsolescence symptomizes industrial maturity and signifies an approaching old age (Gregory, 1947) made manifest through industrial core activities and/or assets. Lee & Lee (1998) posit that technological innovations threaten or reduce the economic life of durable products. Nollywood’s core activities had historically and continuously generated profits until the

video boom. With the video boom, rising speed in globalisation and engagement with the outside world, supply and consumption remained relevant, although a sector of the consumers and suppliers (filmmakers and distributors), being saturated with the old Nollywood model, desired an alternative. Hence some producers began to adjust the original industry mission – which according to Ogunjiofor involved taking cinema to people’s homes. Entertainment began to move back to cinema. Ugezu J. Ugezu believes this to be “the standard film release path”, but Nita George understands it as catering for a certain class. The industry’s core assets, which includes capital, technology, resources, exposure, and learning witnessed changes but not necessarily threats. These changes, necessitated by the availability of enhanced technology and rising number of enlightened industry players and consumers cognizant of criticisms, could be understood as a trajectory in industrial transformation.

The process is a revolution capable of diversifying and gentrifying rather than portending an end to the video tradition within the larger Nollywood industry. Hence, Sam Dede²¹ argues during our formal interview, “they (old and new) are going to co-exist. There is no pushing aside (old) Nollywood”. Understood therefore as a creative revitalization rather than a threat of obsolescence, Nollywood’s industrial change presents itself as a natural evolutionary process. The process – a deliberate creative change from amateurism to professionalism in order to enhance or encourage transnational presence, competition and collaboration – brings about, beyond a new and old Nollywood, a redevelopment of assets and resources and hence, a new product value. In essence, Nollywood is undergoing an evolutionary development warranted by a creative change which occurs as a result of threat on the industry’s core assets. As such threats occur occasionally, innovations materialise

²¹ Oral interview conducted with Sam Dede on 23 March, 2016. Dede is an actor and a lecturer.

sporadically manifesting via introduction of new technologies and genres, peculiar technical approach, successful experimentation, etc.

Accordingly, McGahan's (2004) four change trajectories presents Nollywood's evolutionary change as identifiable under intermediating and creative change trajectories. Intermediating change occurs when consumers and providers of service find alternatives made available through access to information. It has less effect on production than on distribution and consumption. The idea of old Nollywood draws from the fact that in an intermediating change, industry players exhibit reluctance to experiment with new forms, presuming that old time consumers of product and service are still satisfied. As filmmaker Ugezu J. Ugezu surmises, beyond the presumption of consumer satisfaction, marketers often shy away from involvement with the cinema because "it is beyond their control". Opa William²² reasons that an increase in the number of cinemas available in the country could demystify the medium. Because industries operate on single change trajectory at a time, Nollywood is best identified on the creative change trajectory. Here, relationships between consumption and distribution appear stable. Core assets, however, remain unstable. Producer, director and actor Kunle Afolayan appreciates the instability in Nollywood's core assets. Understanding the inevitability of technological advancements, he keeps up-to-date by 'upgrading' himself. Nollywood's traditional filmmaking formula remained functional from its inception in 1992 until about 2006/2007 when new technical and creative approach to filmmaking began to emerge within the industry. McGahan (2004) hints that initiators of change are not new entrants but existing industry players who capitalise on their own, rather than established industry models and network of relationships. For example, the filmmaker Obi Emelonye started off his career experimenting with the conventional Nollywood filmmaking model – producing, directing, writing and starring in his films. He equally

²² Oral interview conducted with Opa Williams on 14 April, 2016.

explored established industry network of relationships for production and especially distribution. For his resurgent film – *The Mirror Boy* (2011), he stressed a capitalisation on himself and his personal networks. Mahmood Ali-Balogun independently raised the \$1.1 million budget for *Tango With Me* (2011) in addition to some support from the Project ACT Nollywood fund. The production of *Confusion Na Wa* (2013) springs from a novel assemblage of resources and strategies and the prior friendship between the director Kenneth Gyang and its producer and co-writer, Rowlands-Rees. The difference between these and the existent industry model lies in the formality of engagement and relationship.

Such formal relationships are on the increase in Nollywood film productions. Lancelot Imasuen's *Beyond Your Sight* (2016) was created for and in collaboration with the Nigerian police force. He enjoyed smooth, uninterrupted shoots on the streets of Abuja and within police stations; a rare occurrence in Nollywood. Imasuen cites an instance of possible forestalled challenges, "if the police hadn't been involved, getting the uniforms would have been a nightmare". Besides uniforms that were made available to the cast members, the production team had access to police vehicles and a large budget. This form of formal relationships tends to be available to filmmakers of certain standing. They include veteran filmmakers who have over the years gathered both experience and knowledge. They include filmmakers like Lancelot Imasuen, Teco Benson, Opa Williams, Ali-Mahmood Balogun, among others. Such relationships are equally available to middle class filmmakers, especially actors-turned-directors who have exposed themselves to further training in filmmaking, directing, producing and screenwriting. Among them are Obi Emelonye, Kunle Afolayan, Stephanie Okereke-linus, and Desmond Elliot. These filmmakers have both experience and knowledge to make films that are labelled new Nollywood and attract formal engagements because, according to Imasuen, they "have transcended all the levels". In other words, they have experienced old Nollywood filmmaking style into which they infuse new knowledge,

reactions to criticisms and a consciousness to quality. Filmmakers in both categories share certain commonalities that include middle-class status, national and transnational connections and uphold high production standards while aspiring for international co-productions. Unlike typical old Nollywood melodramatic themes, their films explore mostly serious national and transnational themes like monarchy (*Queen Amina*), fatal disease (*93 Days*), history ('76, *Invasion 1897*). Bank of Industry, which disburses the Nollyfund, has financed a number of films from filmmakers in this category. They include Kunle Afolayan's *The CEO* (2016), Emem Isong's *Ayamma* (2016), Opa Williams' *The Three Wise Men* (2016), Okey Ogunjiofor's *Queen Amina* (2017), among others. These are large budget films expected to yield return on investment in a piracy-prone industry, hence the aesthetics and strategic distribution that puts the diaspora, upper and middle class audiences into consideration.

This class of films, filmmakers and filmmaking became known as new Nollywood; a small scale economy defined by class and aesthetics which tests different approach on the market (McGahan 2004). This economy promises a radical re-organization for the Nigerian Film Industry like that experienced when the video business model overtook celluloid. This warranted video filmmaking settling into a progressive trajectory where neither core assets nor core activity is threatened. It marked the period leading up to the video boom, its point of high efficiency. The rise in individual competitors, the size of production and value for both consumers and producers, marked a period of maturity for the industry culminating in video boom, industry saturation, slowed sales and eventual decline. Jedlowski (in Denton, 2014) pictures the dismal state of the industry, suggesting that the only solution was to increase budget and consider other channels of distribution that catered for classes besides the mass audiences. But the required increase in budget demands state and corporate sponsorship and investment from middle class professionals rather than the marketers. The federal government of Nigeria established the Project ACT Nollywood in order to boost film

economy. Providing fund for production, distribution and capacity development, the project contributed to sectoring Nollywood as only a few privileged filmmakers successfully accessed the fund.

This sectoring engendered the birth of the new Nollywood. Evidently, when filmmakers or producers apply Jedlowski's formula, there will be a re-organization that could gentrify Nollywood. Conclusively, old Nollywood is currently regenerating into a new Nollywood, but as observed earlier in this chapter, emphasis has been on how they differ rather than how they may be portraying the process of regeneration, a change in trajectory and/or political economy. Ugezu J. Ugezu, who typically films for the old Nollywood, highlights a transition that suggests regeneration. He offers, "When I film for myself, I am not always in a hurry to finish. I am not in a rush to put my films in the VCD/DVD market. That is the norm for the marketers". Opinions on movement and negotiation from old to new Nollywood and vice versa differ. While I did not observe old and new Nollywood productions from the same filmmaker, I was on the set of a filmmaker who has produced what could now be classified as old Nollywood, but was making a new Nollywood film. This filmmaker's record indicates that budget size determines the class of film to be made. Film scholar Friday Nwafor, on the other hand, argues that the target audience determines budget and subsequently how filmmakers move and negotiate between the old and new Nollywood. Opa Williams as well as Lonzo Nzekwe counter this argument, submitting that an improperly done movie, whether old or new Nollywood, insults the audiences' intelligence. Teco Benson suggests that old Nollywood often serves as a starting point for beginning filmmakers. Hence, a filmmaker who makes new Nollywood films is not expected to make an old Nollywood film having gathered enough experience. Lonzo Nzekwe indicates that while such contra-negotiation is possible, it could mean displacement for filmmakers who do not "grow with the industry". In other words, any filmmaker who crosses over to producing new

Nollywood is expected to remain in that class or at least maintain its standards, budget size notwithstanding. Since other factors beside budget size define old Nollywood, movements and negotiation are inevitable.

5.2 *The new Nollywood in Context*

New Nollywood, according to industry players, is not a creation of the state. Both Prof Shaka and Tecu Benson opine that it resulted from criticisms of the old Nollywood. Ryan (2015) refers to it as ‘top-of-the-line’ films resulting from sectoring and experimentations aimed at remedying the general fatigue experienced in the industry. It developed from newer opportunities available to filmmakers ranging from exposure to other filmmaking standards, to availability of fund and new investors, education and interactions with corporate organisations. As I gathered from interacting with filmmakers and participating in the 2016 edition of the Nigerian Entertainment Conference, while younger, fresh-in-the-industry artists most confidently adopt the new Nollywood title, established industry players dismiss the separation as unfounded. The old and new Nollywood labels are, according to filmmaker Lancelot Imasuen²³, an attempt to create class and division within an industry actor Segun Arinze²⁴ conceives a leveller. Such divisions are often aggravated by state funding. Kunle Afolayan²⁵ recalls how the Goodluck Jonathan administration (2010-2015), which was “very interested” in the industry simply “threw money” at it causing chaos, divisions, laziness and politicking within the industry. Filmmaker Kenneth Gyang notes a lack of transparency with

²³ Oral interview conducted with Lancelot Imasuen on 16 March, 2016.

²⁴ Oral interview conducted with Segun Arinze on 18 March, 2016.

²⁵ Oral interview conducted with Kunle Afolayan on 13 April, 2016.

the administration's Project ACT Nollywood which caused an uneven distribution of wealth within the industry, economically empowering filmmakers fortunate to reach the fund. Established in 2010, the exact period the administration's US\$200 million fund loan designed for filmmakers was first disbursed remains unclear (Ugor & Santanera, 2013).

The new Nollywood has been described by many other different terms— new wave, new Nigerian cinema, neo-Nollywood. While there are different perceptions of what the new Nollywood stands for and what films qualify as new Nollywood, there is a consensus over its emanating from the urge to challenge the negative and pessimistic image of Nollywood even as world's second largest film producing industry. Thus, Afolayan (2014) defines the neo-Nollywood as “a move away from the cinematic ebullience and mushrooming tendency of Nollywood towards a qualitative and aesthetic transformation of the industry” (26). Borrowing Deleuze's (2000) illustrative distinction between ‘creative’ and ‘commercial’, Afolayan (2014) reiterates the commonly held belief that Nollywood or old Nollywood is commercial while new or neo-Nollywood is creative both in content and practice. There appears to be a contradiction, however, as the author attempts to place the neo-Nollywood in the creative using Boden's (2004) theory of historical and psychological creativity. Afolayan's (2014) aversion that neo-Nollywood is an “extra-ordinary practice that brings the audience into confrontation with their life-world and the filmmakers' depiction of it” (29) questions the function of the old Nollywood film and the practice of the filmmaker. In the event that old Nollywood films and/or filmmakers have been bringing its audiences into confrontation with their everyday life in their own unique creative (albeit commercially driven) ways, the functionality of the adjective – neo comes under scrutiny. If old as well as new Nollywood concerns itself with bringing audiences into confrontation with their day to day lives, everything remains unchanged except for creative approach.

Perhaps Afolayan (2014), in his attempt to define neo-Nollywood, infers a call to revamp and infuse the ‘modern’ in both the process and the product of creativity. ‘Modern’ remains controversial and subjective like other such adjectives as standard and quality. Hence Okome’s (2014) observation that the author defines neo-Nollywood in an uncertain manner. Afolayan (2014), Okome (2014), Jedlowski (2013), Adejunmobi (2015) and Haynes (2014) among other authors, while underscoring the differences between an existent Nollywood film practice and innovations being introduced, separate rather than blend these innovations into the old practice. Hence, rather than conceived as an evolutionary trend, they (old and new Nollywood) are perceived as separate or distinct creative practices - a distinction that exacerbates sectoring within the industry. Jedlowski (2013) welcomes further perspectives to the new trend. Put differently, old Nollywood exists in a political economy different from the new derivatives whether or not the derivative emerged from it. The various definitions indicate an emergence of the new from the old Nollywood as much as they highlight a deliberate distancing of one from the other. In further discussion, Ryan Connor recognizes sectoring of the industry and a categorisation of its audiences, and thus argues that new Nollywood is not a strict category, but a term being shaped as the industry shapes itself. Further buttressing this point, Hyginus Ekwuazi emphasizes the inevitability of sectoring in emerging industries

... today we talk of new generation Nigerian writers, second and third generations. Someone is now asking, if you are talking about English and American writers, what generation are you talking about? Everyone has lost count of this or that generation. How do we talk of American literature today? We no longer say first or second generation. But because we are emerging here, we can talk about generations. They are labels that are functional because we are dealing with an emergent industry. Hollywood evolved a long time ago and so these labels cannot apply.

Thus, as a label new Nollywood represents the filmmakers, as well as films, who are doing things differently (Jedlowski, 2013) and who do not wish their films associated with the

video-films of Nollywood, but cannot withstand the glamour and popularity of the brand – Nollywood. Most importantly, new Nollywood represents a sector of Nollywood that is becoming increasingly formal in the business of filmmaking, a sector that is slowly detaching itself from the industry’s informal political economy. As both local and international phenomenon, Nollywood becomes a platform through which Nigerian films can be recognized by both local and international audiences and critics. Advocating for a non Nollywood label amounts to building a new brand. The adjective ‘new’ thus separates such films and filmmakers from the typically digital video of Nollywood which, according to Ekenyerengozì (2016) “are not world class films, but local movies made for home entertainment of the poor masses and not for the class conscious elites who prefer foreign movies (to) Nollywood movies” (5). Filmmakers with this elite consciousness therefore produce and distribute their films via the theatres located in shopping malls that attract the middle and upper class elites. Such films are sparsely available within the larger popular audience market as they take several months and sometimes years to become available on DVDs. While Kunle Afolayan’s *October 1* (2014) took approximately one year to get on DVD, Mahmood Ali-Balogun’s *Tango with Me* (2011) took three years and Stephanie Okereke-Linus’ *Through the Glass* (2006) is yet to be put on DVD as at mid 2017. The section below discusses new Nollywood in the context of production, distribution and consumption.

5.2.1 New Nollywood: Production, Distribution and Consumption.

According to Jedlowski (2013), the defining factors of a new Nollywood or new wave Nigerian film are high budget and production value, presence of international crew, set in diaspora (although not essentially) and cinema or theatrical release. The question of budget and budget size has remained undiscussed in Nollywood discourses. The limited information

available on it highlights the numerous lacuna in Nollywood study. Despite the overemphasized assertion that Nollywood or old Nollywood films are made on very low budget, no study has successfully produced a budget threshold or benchmark that determines large and low budgets within the industry. As national cinema productions are often defined against Hollywood (Williams, 2002), large and low budgets are adjudged against Hollywood standard budget and against US dollar rather than Nigerian naira. Reflecting on the relativity of high and low budgets as used within the context of Nigerian film industry, Hyginus Ekwuazi queries the classification of Nollywood films as low budget. With minimum wage (monthly) at eighteen thousand naira (currently approximated at 57.14 US dollars), what defines a budget as high or low in Hollywood remains impractical in Nollywood.

Low budget has continued to be the defining characteristic of old Nollywood films. It has remained one of its major basis of comparison to Hollywood just as its quantity of output serves as basis of comparison to Bollywood. Hyginus Ekwuazi argues against such comparison especially since the industries exist in differing economies and the naira currency suffers the prejudice of high and unfavorable exchange rate. Nevertheless, neither a large budget nor the number of stars featured determines or guarantees a film's success either within the industry or globally. Biyi Bandele's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2014), Nollywood's most expensive film till date was produced on an estimated 1.3 – 1.6 billion naira, but grossed only three hundred and forty (340) million naira. Its stars, both of Hollywood and Nollywood and international crew members notwithstanding, *Half of a Yellow Sun* does not compete with *Nkoli Nwa Nsukka* (2014-2016), a low budget 'Asaba' film in as many as twenty parts. While *Nkoli Nwa Nsukka* remains a typical old Nollywood film, *Half of a Yellow Sun* claims the beyond Nollywood title as it employs completely "different aesthetics" (Denton, 2014).

According to Professor Shaka, budget to a large extent is determined by the audience target. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, unlike the straight to video *Nkoli Nwa Nsukka*, targets the elite middle and upper class Nigerian audience members as well as diasporan and international audiences. This is evident in its cast assemblage and its auteur's assertion that it is unfair to call such film a 'Nollywood' film (Denton, 2014). Thus, it demanded being made on a certain format and released to a certain platform that appealed to the target audience. The story equally determines the budget. Kunle Afolayan, producer and director of *Figurine* (2009) and *The C.E.O* (2016) opines that the story and not necessarily the production duration determines a budget. The target audience impacts on the story or its content, which in turn informs the budget. As budget sizes become larger across the industry, I argue that a large budget does not essentially make a film new Nollywood. If theatrical screening does not guarantee the title of new Nollywood, then neither can budget size. Theatrical release basically requires that a film be shot in a given format which the straight to video budget may not cover. Ryan (2015) argues that being screened on cinema does not equal new Nollywood as the cinemas have no yardstick for measuring or ensuring the standards of films released through them. Theatrical release is guaranteed once an agreement is reached between the film distributor (usually individual filmmakers) and the cinema house. If certain films released to the cinema are not new Nollywood, then not all high budget films are new Nollywood.

This suggests that between the old and new Nollywood is another class of films – a class that is too expensive to be old Nollywood, but whose content is too 'genre of the moment' like (Adejunmobi, 2015) to be of the new wave. For convenience I term this category quasi-new Nollywood. Emem Isong's *Weekend Getaway* (2012) comes under the quasi-new Nollywood. Ryan Connor explains that it appears like it could be new Nollywood, but then Isong's company (Royal Arts Academy) puts out a number of lower-budget films as part of its business model. To avoid further sectoring and labels, quasi-new Nollywood films

could be identified as either low budget new Nollywood or high budget old Nollywood. The budget size drawn for production and artists' fees is often determined by story and caliber of actors engaged in the production. Although the budget for a typically new Nollywood like *The Figurine* (2009) is fifty million (50 000 000) naira, benchmark could be placed on thirty million naira, which according to Gab Okoye, is the lowest amount disbursed by the BOI for a film project. While *The Battle of Musanga* (1996) was made on a fifteen-million-naira budget, benchmark could be placed on two million naira being the budget for *Nkoli Nwa Nsukka* (2014-2016). If these are used as benchmarks, figures falling between these budgets could be for quasi-new Nollywood films. However, Kenneth Gyang produced *Confusion Na Wa* (2013) on a minimal budget of twenty thousand (20,000) euros. Although produced in 2013 (at a lower exchange rate), €20,000 currently converts to approximately seven million and seventy-five thousand, two hundred (7,075,200) naira. Made for the cinema and involving international crew members, *Confusion Na Wa* was warmly received at international festivals and won the 2013 best film award at the prestigious AMAA (African Movie Academy Award). This raises further controversy as *The Battle of Musanga's* (1996) fifteen-million-naira budget questions the categorization. In essence, while a prerogative, large budget is much less a determinant of a new Nollywood film in comparison to creative ingenuity. Like Afolayan (2016) proposes, even a new Nollywood film can be made on a smaller budget depending on its story. This implies that an old Nollywood film could equally be made on a large budget depending on the story.

In terms of distribution, Jedlowski (2013) maintains that the new wave films target international and diaspora audiences and thus aim at film festivals as a means of attaining mainstream or theatrical distribution. While this is theoretically true, the Nollywood filmmaker considers it financially unrewarding. Filmmakers acknowledge the 'romance' and 'exotic feeling' that come with festival presence, but admit that it does not help them break

even or provide them with resources for their next project (Chamley, 2012). Director and producer Kunle Afolayan, admits that film festivals do not essentially yield the Nollywood filmmaker financial returns. Although theatrical release is a constant characteristic for new Nollywood films, Ryan (2015) posits that not all films released to the cinema are new Nollywood films. Unlike old Nollywood's small screen cinema tradition, new Nollywood films are made on formats that can withstand large screen projection in theatres (Otas et al 2013). The reason, besides targeting a certain class of audience members and checkmating piracy, is that theatrical release offers greater potential than straight to video which makes a film old two weeks after release (Denton, 2014). Theatrical release promises an extended durability which makes new Nollywood, according to Adejunmobi (2015) more economically sustainable in addition to its stylistically peculiar approach. Theatrical release has become common among recent incoming filmmakers. Every filmmaker, asserts Ugezu J. Ugezu, aspires for theatrical distribution. This is impacting on stories told, film equipment used, calibre of film crew hired and expertise put into the making. Actor and filmmaker Desmond Elliot²⁶ observes a change in filmmaking style and techniques of shooting film with the emergence of new Nollywood.

While the old Nollywood films have ardent fans among Nollywood's popular audience, largely made up of the lower classes, new Nollywood audiences comprise of those who have access to the theatres and can afford the luxury (Denton, 2014). The new Nollywood filmmakers engaged in interviews, from Obi Emelonye to Lonzo Nzekwe, Kunle Afolayan, Stephanie Okereke-Linus, maintain they target everyone, Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike. Although the choice of distribution channel suggests the class of audiences targeted, an initial theatrical release is a business strategy. With high piracy rate, cinema promises a good starting point for investment recovery. Like Manthia Diawara's (2010) new

²⁶ Oral interview conducted with Desmond Elliot on 19 March, 2016.

wave of African cinema which is defined by the intended audience target among other things, the taxonomy new Nollywood targets mainly cinema audiences (Jedlowski, 2013). Although every film eventually ends up as a DVD copy, theatrical release is restructuring the industry. There is a varied window period between the cinema run and the DVD release during which the popular audiences do not get to watch the film. However unintended this disfranchisement, it means temporary displacement for certain audience members.

Besides these key differentiating traits in production, distribution and consumption new Nollywood films are marked by expertise. Adejunmobi (2015) infers an inspiration in new Nollywood filmmakers to acquire Kunle Afolayan's kind of credentials in the quest to mobilize a new wave within the industry. There is currently a preoccupation among filmmakers to acquire further formal training in filmmaking. The Federal Government of Nigeria sponsors such training for filmmakers under the Project ACT Nollywood Capacity Building Fund, with two hundred and forty-seven practitioners benefiting so far (Channels, 2016). The Directors' Guild of Nigeria (DGN) organizes seminars and training to boost expertise amongst its members. A number of film academies are being established to complement the chiefly theory based film degrees acquired from universities within the country. Hence the emphasis on technical details over storyline, a deliberate attempt, according to Adejunmobi (2015), to dissuade the popular audiences from old Nollywood's shortfall in technical aesthetics. The recurring reference to discourse of connoisseurship (Pierson, 2002) or 'high production value', indicates a rising anxiety over technical issues and expertise. Consequently, Jedlowski (2013) suggests that films of new Nollywood, besides having high budgets and production values, are shot with international crew members. The author cites examples in Jeta Amata's *The Amazing Grace* (2006) and *Black Gold* (2011) as well as Mahmood Ali-Balogun's *Tango with Me* (2011) and Stephanie Okereke-Linus' *Through the Glass* (2007). While recent features such as *Dry* (2014), *The*

C.E.O (2015), *Queen Amina* (2017) confirm this postulation, '76 (2016), produced with an estimated eighty million (80,000,000) naira budget, was shot exclusively in Nigeria with entirely Nigerian crew members. Having thus engaged with the characteristics of the old and new Nollywood thereby highlighting industrial transformations, I evaluate in the following section how they are restructuring the industry. the relevance of the sections above and the next one is, beyond establishing the transformations reshaping Nollywood, to address the nescience manifested in studies such as Brown's (2014). Discussed in section 5.4, the essence of highlighting such lacuna is to engage in academic debate that will encourage new research rather than repetitive studies and cross referencing.

5.3 *Old and New: Restructuring Nollywood?*

The transformations taking place within Nollywood are gradually restructuring and reordering activities within it. Dr Sam Dede notes a difference in the manner of telling stories. He observes a trend that copies “American television movies” style of storytelling, producing films with “elitist characters mostly targeted at the middle and upper classes”. According to Stephanie Okereke-Linus²⁷, her *Through the Glass* (2007) caused a paradigm shift in the structure of the industry, raised an awareness with its ten-million-naira box office grossing and impacted on the filmmakers' perception of the industry. She opined that the film raised a standard that, if upheld, could have further restructured the industry. Cinema houses, however, “instead of maintaining the standards, were also accepting any kind of movie” which disappointed the target elite audiences. There is greater awareness within the industry, information is easier to reach and technology has become more accessible and affordable. Kunle Afolayan recalls a time when “so much determined whether you were going to film or not”. With no film labs within the country, filmmaking was very expensive as film

²⁷ Interview conducted with Stephanie Okereke-Linus on 20 April, 2016.

development required travelling abroad. Digital technology currently allows flexibility and experimentation. Actor Francis Duru²⁸ observes that such changes mean that filmmakers now target “global best practice – clean sound and picture and beautiful story”. They equally mean an influx of young professionals into the industry.

The presence of young professionals is the major contributor to Nollywood’s transformations. Gab Okoye opines that they have challenged existing filmmakers to “upgrade” their practice, while those who found the transformation overwhelming “gave up”. Prof Ekwuazi perceives the restructuring of Nollywood in terms of technology, content and expertise. Stories told in Nollywood are changing, especially those of the new Nollywood. As noted earlier, new Nollywood stories draw essentially from myth and history. But filmmaker Zeb Ejiro²⁹ evaluates the transformation of Nollywood from the angles of directing, scripting and acting and still finds problems with scriptwriting. Despite the rising level of expertise within the industry, he insists Nollywood “is still not doing the right thing” in terms of scriptwriting. Opa Williams believes that Nollywood needs a definition of roles and expertise as was previously obtainable during the celluloid era. This will enable the industry to be “better structured, adopt global best practice and meet international standard”. Presently, the producer/director of *Three Wise Men* (2016) notes that the value and knowledge that the industry needs to grow and be better structured are coming into the industry. One major contributor to this, according to Fred Amata³⁰ (current DGN president), is availability of finance. He recalls how much transformation the industry has witnessed since state and corporate funding became accessible. Although the new Nollywood is not a creation of the state, state involvement has contributed to restructuring production, distribution and consumption.

²⁸ Interview conducted with Francis Duru on 14 April, 2016.

²⁹ Interview conducted with Zeb Ejiro on 12 April, 2016.

³⁰ Interview conducted with Fred Amata on 14 April, 2016.

The project ACT Nollywood remains the state's tool for restructuring the industry. It has contributed to capacity building and enhanced film distribution thereby making its consumption modern and elitist. Amata thus advocates for the MOPICON bill to further restructure the industry and intensify state-industry relationship. I investigate this restructuring as having a gentrifying effect on the industry and the project ACT Nollywood as a gentrifier. While the fund was created for the entire industry, not all filmmakers are able to access it. Hence, with only certain filmmakers thus empowered, some are disenfranchised. Being unable to keep up with the pace of transformations within the industry, they could remain perpetually in the 'old' Nollywood or may be out of business. The politics of Nollywood film business and as Miller (2016) argues, the desire to remain relevant and in control, prompted the recall of the bill, another gentrifier capable of disenfranchising new industry entrants.

The MOPICON bill as well as the new and old Nollywood label remain issue of current debate which is creating factions within the industry. They are reorganizing the industry and restructuring the business of filmmaking. Fred Amata reflects on the structures currently in place and evinces that a vacuum still exists between the industry and the government. He is certain the MOPICON bill will fill this gap. Stephanie Okereke-Linus perceives it as an opportunity for industry players to come together and further create a better and lasting structure for the industry with state support. To be discussed further in the next chapter, MOPICON is expected to effectively restructure Nollywood in production, distribution and consumption. It is expected to address lacuna in industrial organization and solidify relationship between industry and state. Like the MOPICON bill, the old and new Nollywood label has generated more dissension than it has created a structure for the industry. It has fostered rivalry, promoting an unprecedented zeal to acquire new knowledge and create better craft. This is said to have been instigated by state interference into the

industry, an act that intensified politics rather than creative prowess among the filmmakers (Kunle Afolayan). There appears to be an ongoing filmmaking gentrification warranting that “those who are stuck with the old ways of (making films) might be left behind thereby losing their source of livelihood” (Zeb Ejiro). These are the filmmakers classified as old Nollywood.

Filmmakers classified as new or neo-Nollywood appear not to appreciate the label. While some auteurs accept it for themselves and their films, my study indicates that majority of filmmakers, including those identified as new Nollywood by previous studies, dissociate themselves from such labels. Acceptance is often subtle and lined with diplomacy, hence my argument that the label has created more dissension than structure. For instance, while Obi Emelonye,³¹ director of *Last Flight to Abuja* (2009) describes himself as one of Nigeria’s new generation of filmmakers “taking the magic of Nollywood to the wider world through quintessential African narrative technique with a universal soul”, Kunle Afolayan, flagged as the new Nollywood poster boy (Afolayan, 2014, Fiofori, 2016), is content with being identified only as a Nigerian filmmaker. Although identified as a ‘beyond’ Nollywood filmmaker by virtue of his residing outside Nollywood’s immediate community and his choice of different distribution routes from those of typical Nollywood (Denton, 2016), Lonzo Nzekwe³² opts for ‘proudly Nollywood’ label distancing himself from further labels. This highlights the discordance associated with labelling. It equally highlights an identity crisis inherent in Nollywood’s new structural make-up. Noting that the structural difference between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ Nollywood lies in the freshness of input from a new generation of actors, producers and directors, actor/director Desmond Elliot proposes a classification of films rather than the industry. This will better restructure the industry and organize production than a classification of filmmakers.

³¹ Interview conducted with Obi Emelonye on 08 January, 2016.

³² Skype interview conducted with Lonzo Nzekwe on 09 February, 2016.

Film ranking will justify the categorization of Tunde Kelani's *The Dazzling Mirage* (2014) and Ali-Balogun's *Tango with Me* (2011) as new Nollywood (Fiofori, 2016 & Jedlowski, 2013). Besides being in the Nigerian film industry longer than Nollywood, Kelani, but essentially Ali-Balogun, has always adhered to the basic professional principles and modalities of filmmaking (Fiofori, 2016) and both have ceaselessly enjoined the return to celluloid filmmaking. Ali-Balogun, however, admits that celluloid is cumbersome and expensive. Like most of his films, *Tango with Me* (2011) was shot with a large budget of over one hundred million naira and on 35mm. Although he proposes to go digital with forthcoming *Yesterday*, from observing the auditions, he does not treat his digital projects with less dedication. Film ranking using standard assessment scale such as the Ulmer scale³³ for instance, will filter and provide a benchmark for selecting films to be screened at the cinemas. Up till now, cinemas in Nigeria screen films upon reaching agreement with distributors.

So far, this chapter has concentrated on current debates in Nollywood especially as it concerns sectoring within and the state of the industry. Having evaluated the new and old Nollywood as discussed in literatures and perceived by industry players, I conclude that the idea, in addition to being divisive and distractive, is unnecessary labelling for an evolving industry. For a cinema in a nation riven by ethnic divisions (Haynes, 2007), sectoring and/or mergers are expected. However, rather than deliberately creating new sectors, proving studies on the industry numerous, but shallow, attempts should be made to intensify study on already existing sectors and how they are evolving. Attention needs to be given to films that cut across regional boundaries while addressing national and topical issues like female genital mutilation (*Dry*, 2014) and women empowerment (*Queen Amina*, 2017). Issues of

³³ Ulmer scale tracks, measures and ranks the star power.
<http://www.ulmerscale.com/aboutUS.html>.

separateness and divisions are often sensitive in Nigeria as they are reduceable to ethnic rifts. Besides, from observing the turn of events within the industry, the old and new Nollywood labels are resulting to identity driven politics prodded on by social, technological and political changes. This shall be discussed further in the next chapter. Having thus concluded that the old and new Nollywood idea matters very little to the industry, scholarship on industrial evolution needs to adopt an encompassing approach. The numerous sectors currently springing up within the Nigerian film industry calls attention, distracting comprehensive studies on the industry as a whole. A lack of such studies, warranted mostly by unavailability of reliable data and figures on the industry has resulted in uncertainty over subjects of nationalism, nationhood and ideology in Nollywood.

5.4 Crippled Cinema of a Crippled Nation?

The subjects of nation, nationhood, nationalism and/or national ideology in Nollywood are best discussed within the context of Brown's (2014) incited description of Nollywood as the crippled cinema of a crippled nation. Although borrowed from Osaghae (1998), Brown's submission substantiates the lack of comprehensive and updated study on the industry resulting in repetitive cross-referencing. This section not only proves true Haynes' (2010) assertion that even in "academic work written by specialists, there has been too much repetition" (106), but also provides new knowledge on contemporary Nollywood. Scholars like Brown approach the study of Nollywood with a "developed world's interest in seeking its own mirror image in developing countries" (Wang, 2004:11). Such engagements extenuate Brown's (2014) perplexity at Nollywood's economic contribution to the state and the state's contributions to the economic infrastructures of the national cinema. These cannot be determined through cross-referencing as previously existing scholarship rarely address the Nigerian entertainment industry's contribution to the overall national GDP. With the

inclusion of Nollywood in the recalculation of gross domestic product data in 2013/2014, Nigeria ranked above South Africa as Africa's largest economy. Although not the largest contributor to the national GDP, it revitalized state interest in the industry, leading to the establishment of the project ACT Nollywood. Although the present administration has not continued with the project, it served as an example of the state's attempt to boost film economy and make Nollywood a base economy in the face of failing oil prices.

Divided into three arms, the project was created to fund film production, capacity development and film distribution. Already massively consumed within the country, the project was meant to boost Nollywood's consumption beyond the country and continent. As base economy, Nollywood will contribute to city and national formation, causing national economic growth. To address Nollywood as a national cinema, it is pertinent to refer to the root words – nation and cinema. Advocating for a descriptive approach, White (2004) argues against stances like Brown's (2014) who embarks on an essentially evaluative or criticism based approach to national cinema. Thus, rather than describe or adopt a history based approach, Brown assesses industrial weaknesses while determining Nollywood as a national cinema. As observed in chapter three, nation identifies a large body of people unified by similar attributes like history, language, custom, ethnicity, art, culture, common descent or inhabiting a territory. A nation is an imagined politically and even culturally solid community moving up or down history (Anderson, 1991). A nation exists, not in the total absence of cultural systems, but in their subtle presence. Such subtlety differentiates the formation of Nigeria from that portrayed by Anderson (1991) of the British society. The Nigerian society differs remarkably from other western nations because, rather than create such nation where religious, cultural, traditional values are repressed, they are upheld to be passed down to posterity. Such values are held by smaller groups who define their identity based on them.

Hence while nation defines the large body of people, national identity is formed in smaller groups marked by shared values, culture, religion, language, ethnicity, ancestry and so forth.

Unrepressed religious, ethnic, cultural or linguistic differences may be unhealthy for building a nation, but they do not inhibit a national cinema. National cinema, according to Rosenbaum (2002) does not express the entire, but something of the soul of a nation from which nationhood is gained. The Nollywood video *Living in Bondage* (1992) illustrates this. Consumed nationwide, the home-video marked the starting point of Nollywood despite being produced in a local language. Although no study on the video-film's promotion of nation, nationality or nationhood was discovered at the time of this research writing, *Living in Bondage* promotes an ideology that resonates with the Igbo people besides being produced in the Igbo language. Therefore, beyond being made in Nigeria by a Nigerian director, the video is identified a national cinema if, by expressing a shared value, the sense of nationhood is gained. Rather than question the industry's ability to project an imagined politically and culturally solid space via film content, it is worth considering the effect of a film in the re-imagination of Nigerian-ness. In essence, rather than evaluate the production, product or industry, attention should be paid to the consumer's perception of nationhood or construction of national identity upon viewing a film. Accordingly, Higson (2002) advises that while considering national cinema, emphasis be laid on consumption and use of film rather than its production. Higson further argues that national cinema...

involves a shift in emphasis away from the analysis of film texts as vehicles for the articulation of nationalist sentiments ...to an analysis of how actual audiences construct their cultural (and national) identity in relation to the various products of national and international film and television industries, and the conditions under which this is achieved. (65)

It is worth emphasizing the paucity of audience study in Nollywood and Brown (2014) makes no effort at engaging the audience in order to determine how much Nollywood films foster

nationhood and their impact on the formation of national identity. In an essay of forty pages written on supposed contemporary Nollywood, the author refers to only *Living in Bondage*.

As noted by Higson (2002), a coherent national identity can only be formed when internal differences (in religion, ethnicity, linguistics, class) are successfully repressed. In a nation like Nigeria where a single affiliation to national identity is non-existent, individuals and groups form their identities based on their affiliations. A nationwide consumption of products projecting these separate affiliations fosters a second-rate national identity where different groups understand other groups' point of identification with the nation. However, Larkin's (2002) study invalidates the possibility of a national consumption of Nollywood products. Brown (2014) thus proposes an indigenous language industry to be consumed by all linguistic groups, manifesting his lack of knowledge on the consumption habits of the Nigerian audiences. Although *Living in Bondage* was produced in Igbo language, it was consumed across the nation. Film has its language; it speaks through pictures rather than words. Larkin (2002) discusses the popularity of Bollywood films among Hausa people of Nigeria. The unfamiliarity of Hindi language notwithstanding, while defining their social mobility and making Kanywood films, Hausa people look eastward just as the Southerners look westward. Brown's (2014) call for a single linguistic category so as to create a sense of imagined community contradicts his anticipation of Nollywood films incorporating different local languages in films (to widen audience base). This expectation indicates the author's limited knowledge of industrial products such as Kunle Afolayan's *Irapada* (2007), *Araromire/Figurine* (2009), *Phone Swap* (2012) and *October 1* (2014). I make deliberate reference to Kunle Afolayan's films alone to highlight Afolayan's (2014) negligence to Brown's (2014) claims. Both authors manifest ignorance of the popular Nigerian auteurs' relentless attempts to "evolve a Pan-Nigerian film that will communicate people's sociocultural diversities in a linguistic cooperative where many tongues are stakeholders"

(Adeoti & Lawal, 2014:197). While not representing the over two hundred and fifty local languages in Nigeria, Afolayan's films attempt to depict the three major tribes' affiliations to national identity. Adeoti and Lawal (2014) emphasize Kunle Afolayan's experimentation with and exploration of languages as a way of "raising consciousness about national identity, national cohesion, national integration and other aspirations of post-independence governments" (211).

Brown's quest for a sense of the national cultivated through the promotion of a single linguistic category or class over language, purports a lack of nationhood within the industry in particular and Nigeria in general. Suggesting that Nigeria is no nation, Brown (2014) opines that "achieving a nation will only be possible when the Nigerian state has a clear idea, or at least a clear debate, about what kind of nation it wants to be" (283). Such national ambition translates to its ideology which becomes its national cinema's main concern. While the Nigerian nation may lack an all-inclusive national ideology, it is not totally ideologically bankrupt as Brown suggested. Like Haynes (2007) notes, regional division bedevils Nollywood as much as it does the Nigerian politics. Accordingly, Obajei (2014) accounts that colonial policy of divide and rule sowed seeds of discord, fear, distrust and suspicion among regional champions leaving the nation with regional rather than national ideologies.

With Hausa and Yoruba film industries representing the Northern and Western regions, Nollywood represents a sector of the Nigerian film industry that produces in the nation's official language. 'N' in Nollywood might suggest Nigeria. However, while the originator Norimitsu Onishi had Nigeria in mind, local language industries like Kanywood and Yollywood prefer not to be part of it. Inasmuch as this suggests failure of the state to cultivate nationalist sentiments and ideology, their separate existence does not imply lack of it. Shortly after the first world war, *national* underscored anything controlled or at least regulated by the government (UNESCO, 2016). Today, national bears the idea that nations be

represented within territorially defined states. This requires a portrayal of value, cultural, religious and linguistic distinctions that become mediums of identifying a nation state. It is important to emphasize that Kanywood, Yollywood, Nollywood and other minor ‘woods’ within the Nigerian film industry together make up the Nigerian national cinema. In comparison to the content, language of production is insignificant.

Brown’s (2014) prescriptive rather than descriptive approach to defining a national cinema depicts an outsider’s inadvertent attempt to measure one society with another. The direct comparison of Nollywood to other national cinemas will culminate in such question as

Given that Nollywood uses different technologies, given that it neglects – even flouts – the technological, structural and representational methods of the global cinematic standard, is Nollywood even cinema? (Brown, 2014:285).

In film, the ‘global cinematic standard’ or what Williams (2002) terms Tradition of Quality (17) does not constitute global benchmark of excellence. Every nation has or ought to have its own. The term ‘quality’, ‘standard’ or ‘proper’ cinema as used by authors and filmmakers require elaboration. While ‘quality’ or ‘proper’ often goes undefined, its context implies that characteristic ‘old’ Nollywood storytelling style is obsolete. The suggestion that Nollywood filmmakers tell their stories in a more international style apparently drives the new and old Nollywood separation. Hence, new Nollywood filmmakers are categorized as those who tell stories that are more digestible to transnational audiences, films that could be taken to international film festivals and could attain international distribution (Jedlowski, 2013).

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the transformations reshaping contemporary Nollywood and examined how these could be restructuring the industry. It highlighted the Project ACT Nollywood and the MOPICON policy document as possible gentrifiers. It gathered from

filmmakers how production, distribution and consumption habits are changing as a result of newer and better funding opportunities available to them. Unevenly distributed across the industry, state/corporate body fund creates class gap, resulting in sectoring such as the old and new Nollywood labels. Although sectoring makes quality control and monitoring easier, it disenfranchises filmmakers who are unable to access such support. Telling stories that are digestible to transnational audiences equally disenfranchises the local audience. Therefore, the state's attempt to boost film economy or make Nollywood a base economy can be said to be a mechanism gentrifying the industry. When filmmakers access state fund and corporate sponsorship, they are able to migrate to new Nollywood. Old Nollywood continues to serve the local audiences while the new Nollywood filmmakers attempt to entertain transnational audiences.

This chapter contemplated the new and old Nollywood ideas within the purview of business or economics, examining them as change in industry trajectory. It unveiled the tension among filmmakers and power struggle highlighted by the use of such labels within the industry. With policies rarely implemented and funds unevenly distributed, inequality is inevitable. The state's inconsistent attempt at enhancing film economy will transform a sector of the industry into a base economy because it will witness increased formal exportation of films and transnational presence than the other sectors. Although this will increase revenue and film activities within the non-base sector, only a few filmmakers stand to benefit from economic activity within a gentrified Nollywood. Filmmakers within the old Nollywood, non-base sector may suffer greater loss from being placed on the same tax scale as new Nollywood filmmakers. The chapter equally considered other often overlooked issues like the place of Nollywood in national cinema discourses. Addressing this gap illustratively, this chapter used a sample literature to highlight the need for less repetition in scholarship and to reiterate Haynes' (2010) invitation for scholars to engage one another in scholarly arguments.

Thus establishing the position of Nollywood in issues of nation, nationhood, nationalism and national ideology, this chapter noted further gap in audience studies especially for substantiating the industry's role in ideology and identity formation. Located outside the scope of this research, this is not deliberated upon in this study.

The questions of new and old Nollywood, nation, national identity and ideology currently arising in the industry further prove the regenerative process introducing formalization, professionalism and the quest for transnational presence in the industry. With the influx of young, formally trained filmmakers who do not hesitate to distance themselves from old Nollywood, causing a chaotic separation and power struggle among filmmakers, efforts towards formalization appear doubled. Although this is resulting in healthy competition among filmmakers, there is tension, scepticism and uncertainty over the idea of a Nollywood with some level of state interference. While state involvement will contribute to Nollywood being readily perceived a national cinema (Ganti, 2012; Brown, 2014), loss of faith in government has created further factions beyond the new and old Nollywood label. As indicated by the Project ACT Nollywood fund, disbursement of state funds is often unreliable, with access readily available to those with godfathers either in the government or the guilds. For this reason, in addition to the informality that permits tax free income, filmmakers are opposed to state attempt to engage with and formalize the industry. Building on this, the next chapter will, in addition to investigating the sustainability of regeneration, discuss issues of power struggle and structure within contemporary Nollywood. It shall be scrutinized from the industry players' perspective.

CHAPTER SIX

STRUCTURE AND POWER STRUGGLE IN CONTEMPORARY NOLLYWOOD

Introduction

In this chapter, I investigate how policy, power and power relationships contribute to the gentrification of Nollywood and what political economy repositioning means for the industry and its filmmakers. It attempts to understand the Nollywood filmmakers' perception of and relationship to the reformations identified in the previous chapter. It highlights recent state attempts at involvement in the affairs of the industry and how filmmakers react to it. In chapter five, I put the old and new Nollywood in context, demonstrating how state and corporate funding contributed to the separation and how this could be gentrifying the industry. I noted that new Nollywood is essentially about not being 'old' in style and practice, a lopsided perception that considers one sector as lacking and provokes power struggle within the industry. Using political economy analysis embedded in my econo-ethnography, this chapter discusses power relations and political dynamism that inform the formation, selection and implementation of initiatives and policies. Political economy analysis is an economic approach used to analyse and understand political behaviours and institutional dynamics. It is most suitable to understanding structure and power struggle within media industries in general and Nollywood in particular as its major features support that institutions, individuals and commitments matter. This chapter contemplates the journey from informality to formalisation within Nollywood and the individuals and/or agents contributing to this change as well as their drive and motivations. The essence of this chapter lies in the discovery of carefully analysed political behaviours, institutions and structures that impact on industry agents and actors in order to determine the possibilities or not of a sustained regeneration within Nollywood.

This chapter interrogates the functions of the state and its policies in Nollywood's formalization. It illustrates this using the controversial MOPICON bill. MOPICON (Motion Picture Council of Nigeria) bill is a policy document drafted to promote professionalism within the industry and create an avenue for formal interactions with the state. The chapter intended to investigate how government involvement in the adoption and implementation of this bill could mean an interference for state benefit. But due to the difficulty of reaching and interrogating government officials, it focuses instead on the filmmakers' perspectives and responses to the policy bill. This perspective will better capture and evaluate the role art and artists play in the gentrification of evolving economies. The chapter evaluates sustainable regeneration which formalization will introduce into the industry and how it could gentrify the industry. The chapter concludes that although gentrification leads to displacement, gentrification in Nollywood will potentially lead to a co-existence of various sectors catering for different classes of audience and migrations from one sector to another.

6.1 The transforming face of an informal industry

While discussing creative industries and informal economies, with Nollywood as the major example, Lobato (2010) maintains the stance of an author rethinking aspects of creative industries and media theories. His appreciation of the industry's capabilities and innovativeness, warranting his conclusion that "Nollywood is now that rarest of things – a viable, popular, and accessible film culture" (26) highlights Nollywood as a unique national media industry that sets an example. However, this uniqueness has generated arguments over the right nomenclature to describe the industry with. Brown (2014) categorically suggests that because Nollywood operates outside the tenets of conventional cinema (in the Euro-American sense of the word), it is no cinema. Lobato (2010) neither describes the industry as a cinema nor envisages the likelihood of it being a conventional creative industry (again like

the Euro-American model) or competing efficiently with Hollywood or Bollywood. Such comparisons, subtle or outright, and the industry's cultural success (McCall, 2012) have cumulated to the changing face of contemporary Nollywood, a change directed towards inevitable formalisation encumbered with uncertain consequences. The quest to distance itself from the "too informal to integrate into dominant networks" (Miller, 2012:31) description and register transnational presence beyond the pirates' black market sale has brought about what is now called the new Nollywood – a step towards integration into the formal economy of Nigeria.

Nollywood's existence in the informal sector of the national economy means that no taxes are paid or accounted for by the filmmakers. Its high profitability and quick turn-over attracted investors leading to the video boom. Because investments were mostly on small scale, infrastructure was minimal and little was reinvested into it. Thus, upgrade of equipment was a rarity. Earlier in 2007, Haynes (2007) noted how few physical spaces the industry had created for itself. In 2016, the author still reiterates these lacks. He notes "it has built no studios..., Nollywood productions cannot afford to rent (sound stages for shoot) and most producers and directors do not know how to operate in them efficiently. Production outfits seldom own much equipment, renting it as necessary from a network of suppliers" (2016:51). While this description forms a general backdrop in the industry, systems of operation are changing and filmmakers are becoming increasingly professional, availing themselves for training and reinvesting into the business of filmmaking. Unlike in the past, filmmaking has become full time employment for some filmmakers, occupying the place of business and passion. Kunle Afolayan³⁴ for instance indicates an interest in establishing KAP (Kunle Afolayan Production) Studio where every film business can be executed from pre-

³⁴ Oral interview conducted with Kunle Afolayan on 13 April, 2016.

production to post-production. With a suitable location acquired in Ikeja, he makes plans to gradually erect structures and relocate from his current detached one-storey office building. Although a more recent investor into Nollywood, Afolayan practically owns more updated equipment than most of his peers. He offered

70% of what we have realized (finance) in over ten years has gone back into the company. Because we are trying to expand and serve the industry, we are not acquiring this equipment just for us (Golden Effects Productions), we also want people at the level of production to have tools to work with. We are not just into production; we are into services. We have postproduction facilities, we have an audio studio, we do basically everything that we need to do in terms of production

Afolayan may be one among the few filmmakers who have the bigger plan to expand into a studio system, other filmmakers are equally upgrading as their finances can permit. A number of them are beginning to acquire physical, fully furnished office spaces for their businesses. While Haynes (2016) notes that for fifteen years Lancelot Imasuen operated “out of a few dark, cavernous rooms in a building shared with a Pentecostal church, with dusty odd objects lying around” (51), he does not update his readers on the spacious bungalow Imasuen currently occupies.

The idea of Nollywood as an informal producer of substandard video films has remained recurrent despite the transformations overtaking the industry. There is a recycling of established knowledge on how untrained amateurs and businessmen run the industry (Ajibade, 2013). The quest for a new definition for Nollywood, a definition that recognizes fresh talent, professionalism, passion and effort in addition to commercial drive, has led to professional filmmakers distancing themselves from the industry. Pat Nebo, an art director of over fifteen years offers, “I’m new to (Nollywood) and I am not part of it. However, I respect it” (Afolayan, 2014:402). He elaborates,

Nollywood refers to people who so much commercialize the act of filmmaking that they can afford to produce up to three films in a week... So if

Nollywood is about making many films at a time, then I am not part of it. But if it is about making a film that is worthwhile, then I'm part of it (Afolayan, 2014:402).

The definition of Nollywood currently recycled in texts stems from a point in the history of the industry. Opa Williams³⁵ opines that Nollywood is an evolving industry which is still being viewed as “that industry of yore – an industry of action, cut – where quality of picture and sound didn't matter”. With years gone by and transformations in place, the definition, besides being unpalatable to individuals making fresh efforts to create a new history, has become a point in the history of the industry. From speaking with directors in the industry, I gather that Nollywood's redefinition needs be independent of all existent yardsticks. Lancelot Imasuen³⁶ opines,

it behoves African film scholars to redefine (Nollywood). It is unfortunate that we have continued to let western world define who we are, what we are and how we should see things. They argue over the verbosity of our films, our gesticulations, etc and I ask, who defined it? Why do you use your own yardstick to define mine?

What Imasuen conceives as a yardstick, film professor and critic, Hyginus Ekwuazi³⁷ presents as point of emphasis. Noting that the idea of defining Nollywood is purely academic, he opines that Nollywood is requiring a redefinition because it remains “sandwiched” between two greater film traditions – Hollywood and Bollywood. Redefinition, Lonzo Nzekwe³⁸ argues, is unnecessary because Nollywood is an evolving industry. He recommends producing quality content as a way of maintaining consistency.

Attempting not to mirror the industry against existing film traditions, director Obi Emelonye³⁹ perceives Nollywood as “a school of thought in international film language

³⁵ Oral interview conducted with Opa Williams on 14 April, 2016.

³⁶ Oral interview conducted with Lancelot Imasuen on 16 March, 2016.

³⁷ Oral interview conducted with Hyginus Ekwuazi on 22 April, 2016.

³⁸ Skype interview conducted with Lonzo Nzekwe on 09 February, 2016.

³⁹ Oral interview conducted with Obi Emelonye on 08 January, 2016.

which attempts to squeeze commercial value out of minimal budget”. McCall (2012) and Haynes (2016) have argued against mirroring Nollywood in the image of the western world. Nevertheless, they hold a view which disqualifies Nollywood as capitalist industry because “capitalism can only be mobilized under conditions of economic formality” (McCall, 2012:10) marked by official documentations and records. Capitalism is marked by free enterprise which features prominently in Nollywood’s political economy. However, because of Nollywood’s informality, lack of records and documentation and perhaps its variance from the operational systems of western capitalism, the industry is classified non capitalist. Nollywood is operating its own market economy model. It operates, however, within the characteristic tenets of capitalism – it is an industry that allows private ownership and investment, freedom of economic choice in a competitive market with little or no government intervention. The industry is recording transformations among which is the gradual availability of reliable data, figures and information due to its integration into the formal economy of Nigeria. Haynes (2016) notes some of these changes, but continues to judge the industry from its unconventional beginning, emphasizing the low budget and lack of documentation.

The industry’s first commercially successful film, Kenneth Nnebue’s *Living in Bondage* (1992) sets the record. Its success notwithstanding, Okechukwu Ogunjiofor⁴⁰, the major personality behind its production as writer, producer, art director and overall production manager, is unable to discuss its grossing. A new wave of professionalism is introducing better record keeping habits and organized calendar of activities among filmmakers. Lancelot Imasuen claims he has his yearly activities, including proposed productions lined up in a calendar from the beginning of the year. Industrial interactions with formal sectors of the national economy require accurate documentation for positive

⁴⁰ Oral interview conducted with Okechukwu Ogunjiofor on 08 August, 2016.

responses. For instance, benefiting from the Project ACT (Advancing Creativity and Technology) Nollywood fund, managed by the Federal Ministries of Finance and Culture and Tourism, demands necessary documentations. Professor Ekwuazi, a former member of the board offers that “what we tried to do was capture filmmakers in the tax nets, bringing them into the formal sector of the economy”. This required company registration, financial records and evidences of tax payment for one year. Among other requirements as gathered from the fund’s website⁴¹ are complete production budget, production schedule, and grant deployment plan. This calls for better record keeping, better plan for pre-production, production and post-production and marketing strategy. One of the criteria for selection is credible marketing and distribution plan. Recollecting some fundamental changes that have occurred within the industry over his years as an actor, Sam Dede⁴² remembers his fee “as an artist being paid to me in cash which does not pass through any bank. So the banking industry is out of it. Companies were not registered as well. Yet there was a lot of money passing round the industry”. Noting the challenges this caused the industry, but which are now being corrected, he concludes, “we need to have the correct data”. Better record and data keeping evidences new knowledge and understanding of practice. Opa Williams acknowledges, “when you start, you start within the frame of your understanding, but if you want to grow, you need to add value and more knowledge”.

The knowledge currently available within Nollywood is transitioning it from an exclusively business hub to one of creativity observable in production, distribution and consumption. Stephanie Okereke-Linus⁴³ postulates that in contemporary Nollywood, production and distribution negotiations are no longer solely business, but also creative initiative as auteurs become informed about intellectual property rights and protection.

⁴¹ www.projectactnollywood.com.ng

⁴² Oral interview conducted with Sam Dede on 23 March, 2016.

⁴³ Oral interview conducted with Stephanie Okereke-Linus on 20 April, 2016.

Production drive and purpose are becoming increasingly incentivized by creativity rather than profit which makes the divide between old and new Nollywood. However, the prefix ‘new’ in new Nollywood does not suggest or imply a new school of filmmaking or artistic movement, but rather a strategy and an aspiration (Haynes, 2016) since it is only an extension of the so called old Nollywood. Kene Mkpuru⁴⁴ of The Filmhouse (cinema) highlights that the general problem of overproduction in Nollywood is being replicated in the new Nollywood. However, the aspiration for creativity and quality in and innovative strategies towards film business feature in the changing face of the industry. Opa Williams, producer of Bank of Industry (BOI) funded *Three Wise Men* (2016) acknowledges the industry’s need to adopt “best practice” and “meet international standards”. He adds, “we are growing to that level. Young professionals are coming in too. Knowledge has come into the industry, theoretical and practical knowledge, and there is the desire to do things right”.

There is noteworthy enlightenment among filmmakers, both old timers and newcomers. With a number of high budget, cinema standard films being released to the Nigerian cinemas, distributed in international cinema chains, satellite televisions and online platforms, the industry requires dedicated state support. Steve Gukas (2016), director of *93 Days* (2016) believes the government could contribute to improving production quality by supporting filmmakers with better distribution network, exhibition infrastructure and production fund. Piracy remains the industry’s biggest challenge to date. The apparent neglect of such pressing issues and the Nigerian government’s typical inclination towards abandoning projects began by preceding government, informs the pandemonium rising within the industry over the proposed MOPICON bill. Divided into two aggressively active groups taking to the media to lend their voices to the debate, the contention within the industry regards quality and regulation of film practice. With the scepticism that trails state

⁴⁴ Lecture delivered at the Pan-Atlantic University in June, 2013.

involvement and the general lack of faith in its activities, the relevance and timeliness of MOPICON comes to question.

6.2 MOPICON: Bail out or Hindrance

MOPICON –Motion Picture Practitioners’ Council of Nigeria has been the subject of so much controversy since the inauguration of the review committee selected to revisit the content of the document drafted in early 2000. As the then Director General of the Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC), Prof Hyginus Ekwuazi felt the need to create MOPICON based on two things. One was to align the motion picture industry to the larger industrial subsector of the national economy and secondly, to professionalize filmmaking – making it bankable. Reflecting on the initiative in 2016, the industry critic posits that besides having been doctored, MOPICON isn’t needed anymore. Judging from the impact of the Nolly-Project fund (with all tales of mismanagement (Onoshe, 2016)), fund and infrastructure remain the industry’s greatest needs. Industry practitioners who hold this line of argument are countered by others who insist that MOPICON, like other sister councils within the country, “is meant to fill the lacuna existing between the government and the practice” (Fred Amata⁴⁵). MOPICON, according to Miller (2016), seeks to formalize the informal industry by requiring that all practitioners have a license permitting them to work as a creative within the industry.

Currently existing in discordance, MOPICON is expected to function as a professional body for film practitioners just like the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) for medical practitioners and the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) for lawyers. This expectation also signifies that MOPICON, like the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), parallels an anticipation for power to control and regulate the practice of motion picture production in Nigeria. A faction of the industry militating against its adoption argue

⁴⁵ Oral interview conducted with Fred Amata on 14 April, 2016.

against ‘control’ and ‘regulation’ of practice or creativity, insisting that the Nigerian Film and Video Censorship Board (NFVCB) is sufficient having been bequeathed powers to censor films and videos produced and exhibited within the country. MOPICON, as envisaged by Lai Mohammed⁴⁶, Minister of Information and Culture, rather than stifle or regulate creativity, will stimulate professionalism and encourage standard practice within the industry. Suggesting a lack of these in the industry, the minister believes MOPICON is a requirement in addressing the industry’s structural deficiencies. It is an avenue, he believes, which will enable him achieve outlined plans which include addressing piracy, establishing national endowment fund for the art and tackling policy issues within the industry (Adedapo, 2016).

Noble as these plans are, they give credence to the people’s lack of faith in the government and its activities. This lack of faith accounts for the people’s preference for informal and invisible structures that are within their control over the formal and visible ones within state control. Lai Mohammed’s plans harmonize with industry demands (Gukas, 2016). However, initial effort has been made by previous governments to make these demands reality. Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) set up Strategic Action Against Piracy (STRAP) in 2005 and Copyright Litigation and Mediation Programme (CLAMP) in 2006 as anti-piracy initiatives being belaboured with the responsibility of administering, regulating and enforcing copyright within the country. With the Commission’s survey on piracy which projected a 58% piracy level within the country in 2008, came a call for further collaborations in the STRAP initiative (Castonguay, 2008). Like most state-led projects, one of its strategies, the hologram stickers, was abandoned when the government ran out of stickers (Lobato, 2012).

⁴⁶ Speech delivered by Lai Mohammed during the April, 2016 inaugural ceremony of the MOPICON draft review team.

Project-ACT Nollywood, established in March, 2013 and managed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism suffices for an endowment fund for the industry with a mapped out three billion naira to cater for capacity building, film production and distribution grants. In need of restructuring to ensure sustainability, the grant has sponsored the training of two hundred and forty-seven film practitioners, offered grants to one hundred and thirteen film projects and supported innovative distribution proposals (Channels, 2016). Although welcomed with disparate reactions from film practitioners due largely to lack of transparency in grant disbursement (Njoku, 2015; Kenneth Gyang⁴⁷, Emem Isong⁴⁸), an endowment fund could be made of it with proper organization and transparency. With existing government bodies already empowered to tackle issues like piracy and grants, further requirement entails empowerment and perhaps restructuring not duplications of office. Hence the fears and heightened disunity within the industry as some practitioners hold that with MOPICON, the industry will experience aggravated rather than shift away from its characteristic personality cult (cartel) system where individuals instead of structure matter (Ajeluorou, 2009).

The Nigerian film industry is made up of numerous guilds, some of them duplicated along cultural and ethnic differences and as a result of disagreements leading to disintegration (Eyengho, 2012). According to Lobato (2012), besides the ceaseless clash between the censor's board and the various groups, a great deal of conflict exists between and within them. In 2007, the Nigerian Film Corporation lists sixteen guilds and associations within the industry and by 2014, Eyengho (2014) identifies over thirty, acknowledging that a number of them had not been registered under Corporate Affairs Commission (of Nigeria). Proliferation of guilds and associations has not contributed to the benefit of both industry and practitioners. In a study dedicated to technical workers within the Nigerian film industry,

⁴⁷ Oral interview conducted with Kenneth Gyang on 29 February, 2016.

⁴⁸ Oral interview conducted with Emem Isong on 10 August, 2016.

Obiaya (2012) establishes the ineffectiveness of the guilds, suggesting that there is no incentive to being a guild member. In 2016, in the course of data collection, members of the Directors Guild of Nigeria re-echo the same sentiment. The guild's 2016 annual general meeting and election recorded a 65% attendance. An unmeasured number in this percentage attended out of obligation to vote for a candidate who had earlier promised to pay their annual dues⁴⁹. Run essentially for personal rather than collective interest, guilds are therefore not in the best position to establish and enforce standards (Obiaya, 2012). Obiaya believes MOPICON has the capability to serve as regulatory body monitoring guilds' activities and those of the industry at large. He adds:

the council is intended to be the regulator of the industry and will be charged with... establishing the entry qualifications and production standards that must be met by practitioners in the industry. It will function as an arbiter in the disputes that might arise among those who work in the industry (115).

Eventually drafted in 2000, efforts to set up the MOPICON, according to Lai Mohammed, began in the early 1990s. He maintains that Nigerian motion picture practitioners then desired a council to foster sustainable development within the industry based on quality and best practice. Their desire for practitioners' right protection and a structure within the industry provoked the move for MOPICON. It is noteworthy that the video phenomenon in the Nigerian film industry began actively in 1992 after Kenneth Nnebue's *Living in Bondage* (1992) commercial success. The video phenomenon was criticized by celluloid filmmakers who perceived it as a damage to their industry (Olayiwola, 2011). The first Steering Committee for the council was set up in 2005, headed by Chief Tunde Oloyede. However, as a result of discontinuation of projects started by previous governments, MOPICON take off was only actualized in April, 2015. Although Tunde Oloyede is currently not an active player in Nollywood, he was a former producer on the

⁴⁹ My sources here prefer to remain anonymous.

NTA (Nigerian Television Authority) series *The Village Headmaster* (1958). Prof. Ayo Akinwale⁵⁰ underscored Oloyede's displeasure with the quality of films produced in Nollywood. He produced *Tightrope* (2010) with a selection of trained and experienced cast and crew members and USAID and The Ford Foundation sponsorship. According to Ayo Akinwale, *Tightrope* portrays perfection in acting, directing, location and storyline.

The above details could suggest that the quest for quality and standard practice is the reason behind agitation for MOPICON. However, judging from the trend of events, a struggle for power disguised as quest for structure and quality can also be deduced. Agitation for MOPICON first emerged with the spread of video filmmaking, following criticisms from celluloid filmmakers. With the collapse of celluloid, MOPICON was abandoned until 2005-2006, a period that marks the beginnings of the decline in video profitability (Haynes, 2012). After its failed adoption in 2009 (Miller, 2016) and with less to no power struggle within the industry, MOPICON was abandoned until the new Nollywood rave. New Nollywood, according to Jedlowski (2013) began to be topical in 2010, suggesting a separation and reiterating the need to agitate for and exert power and control. By April 2015, Lai Mohammed posits, an advisory interim council was set up to facilitate the take-off of MOPICON (Adedapo, 2016). Apparently a power struggle between the old professionals (of video this time) and the young newcomers who classify themselves as new Nollywood, the campaign calls for stakeholders in the industry to set standards for film production. Understood therefore as a reprisal attack and deliberate attempt to subdue young incomers, MOPICON falls out of favour with especially industry hopefuls as well as recent entrants who belong to no established guilds within the industry. At the fourth Nigerian Entertainment Conference held in Lagos in April 2016, there was a larger representation of young

⁵⁰ Speech at the fourth annual public lecture of the National Institute of Cultural Orientation (NICO), August 2013.

entertainers who supported arguments against MOPICON⁵¹. The controversy surrounding MOPICON stems from three major reasons that include structure, state involvement and bill content. The copy of the bill accessed for this study and discussed in section 6.2.3 was uploaded to the internet by Mahmood Ali-Balogun, deputy coordinator of the review committee.

6.2.1 Structure

Nollywood was established on an informal structure and over twenty years later, director, Jeta Amata believes the industry still has no structure (Usoboh, 2013). Organization and relationships within the industry are chaotic such that players fend for themselves, a situation Miller (2016) portrays as “inhospitable to the entry of major multinational entertainment firms” (26). From data collected, the problem of structure recurred prominently. Perceived from different perspectives, the need for orderliness, regulation, accountability, infrastructure, defined relationships, benefits and punishment feature conspicuously in the various interpretations of ‘structure’ gathered. Lancelot Imaseun appreciates structure as established efforts to give filmmakers (both local and foreign) an idea of what to expect in any given circumstance, cutting out surprises. Structure is also seen from the perspective of established bodies such as the guilds and associations who are meant to occupy a position to defend or represent the interests of members, reward and sanction members appropriately. With guilds hardly meeting these expectations, some filmmakers decide to fend for themselves rather than belong to them (Kenneth Gyang). Although justifiable, Teco Benson⁵² posits that such unchecked decisions contribute to the chaos within the industry. Advocating

⁵¹ As at the time of data collection, MOPICON was a current debate within Nollywood. The 28-man review committee was inaugurated in April, but until the end of my fieldtrip in August, no feedback from the committee was made public and committee members neither granted interviews nor addressed the people’s fears and doubts.

⁵² Oral interview conducted with Teco Benson on 11 April, 2016.

for MOPICON, he forecasts, “everyone would have to conform to the stipulated standard. Practitioners would not wake up and walk to the media and say I am old or new (without sanction)”. Advocates of MOPICON thus believe that passing the bill into law would bring sanity, order, conformity, regulation and indeed structure in the industry. However, the failure of various bodies currently existing or created in time past to bring such anticipations to play questions the necessity of a new establishment. Hence Gukas (2016) describes the bill categorically as a waste of time and scarce resources. Aimed at creating the much desired structure, pro-MOPICON advocates conceive the initiative as a lobby for the growth, development and welfare of both industry and industry players (Adedapo, 2016). Anti-MOPICON advocates on the other hand understand it as a lobby for bureaucracy and an opportunity for personal gains while creating with state support, a professional cartel within Nollywood. Thus arguing its needlessness and no success guarantee, Onoshe (2016) reasons that had the guilds and associations been better structured and functional, they would have provided the necessary regulation needed to boost professionalism and standard.

6.2.2 State involvement

Scepticism surrounds the MOPICON bill proposal due largely to the involvement of the government. While state involvement in the affairs of the industry has been long desired, its role in the initiative now comes across as restrictive and unwelcome. Hence the argument that the industry has existed effectively with little or no state intervention (Miller, 2016). Interactions between state and the industry is relevant both for the growth of the industry and revenue generation for the state. Desmond Elliot⁵³, actor/producer and member of Lagos state house of representatives, posits that the Nigerian government has failed to use the industry as a tool to achieve its goal. Some administrations, such as the 2010-2015 administration on

⁵³ Oral interview conducted with Desmond Elliot on 19 March, 2016.

which this study focuses, have attempted to achieve this. Although the administration's formalization initiative (Project ACT-Nollywood fund) for the industry had no vision on tackling piracy, it contributed fund and new knowledge to the industry. It empowered filmmakers, providing them with opportunities to acquire and experiment with new ideas. New knowledge and policies, availability of fund, accessibility of diverse distribution channels, improved and affordable technology are contributing towards restructuring the industry. It promises to regenerate the industry considering the influx of young professionals and formal investors. This is good for both the state and industry as increases in the number of affluent and learned industry players mean better organization within the industry and more taxes received by the government (Bryne, 2003). It could also mean gentrification for the industry; a process often brought about by an influx of new, wealthy and usually learned players. While a gentrification of Nollywood will boost the national economy, structure and formalize the industry and possibly engender inter-industrial co-productions, it could also mean displacement for certain category of filmmakers and audiences.

Nevertheless, state involvement remains undesirable with a majority of industry players. Actor Sam Dede elaborates on the consequence of state interference "the moment we hand over the industry to government regulation, it means the industry finds itself on the table of civil servants who are not filmmakers. Then as a filmmaker, you must comply with all regulations". These fears are justified in the content of the bill. For instance, the bill sets out to determine who qualifies to be a film professional, states clearly (in part 1 sections 10 and 11) how monies shall be accumulated and expended, but does not clarify how to determine the qualifications of the council staff members. Controversies have arisen in the past where supposedly 'unqualified' individuals are appointed into offices. The appointment of Dr Danjuma Dadu as Managing Director of the Nigerian Film Corporation in 2012 is regarded an aberration as he has no specialist qualification in the area of film (Ogenyi, 2016).

Accordingly, he ‘cluelessly’ occupies his office, collecting budgetary allocations that get diverted to “self-promotional activities” (Husseini, 2016). This confirms Sam Dede’s misgivings over state regulation of Nollywood.

MOPICON initiative comes across as an avenue to enrich certain group of people in the guise of working for the industry’s good. Being the usual trend with the Nigerian government prone to self-interest rather than service (Miller, 2016), there is a good cause to mistrust state involvement in the affairs of the industry. Hence prof Shaka⁵⁴ expresses a general lack of faith in the state. Despite these worrying concerns, the president of the Director’s Guild of Nigeria and member of the review committee, Fred Amata, insists that MOPICON is imperative as Nollywood evolves into a sub-sector of the national economy. And like most national affairs, it is fraught with communication gap. Although the committee coordinator Ms Peace Anyiam-Osigwe promised an open session where documents would be made available to stakeholders to clear misunderstandings and misgivings, no such attempt has been made.

Further confirming the suspected hidden enrichment plans of a few, the coordinator offers that MOPICON is not a regulatory body but a lobby group between state and film practitioners. The fact that a lobby group only needs government clearance to function questions the proposal to pass the bill into law. Earlier in 2009, Ms Anyiam-Osigwe opposed government involvement in Nollywood affairs, querying their ability to affect positively an industry created out of tenacity and ingenuity considering their inefficiencies with basic infrastructures and amenities (Miller, 2016). The attempt to establish a state approved mediatory lobby group, funded by the government and the people, comes with a suspicion of self-centeredness. MOPICON is not intended to be entirely under state control, but Miller (2016), as well as young and fresh incomers into Nollywood, understands the initiative as a

⁵⁴ Oral interview conducted with Professor Femi Shaka on 22 March, 2016.

move by established industry players to initiate, perpetuate and benefit from clientelist association established by enforcing their powers and gaining endorsement from the state. Acknowledging that the scheme is opposed to original Nollywood spirit, Miller (2016) notes that the main function the initiative appears to serve “would be to protect the already established movie-makers from competition from newcomers” (109). Industry prominent figures look to government to institutionalize their powers while the state hopes to explore opportunity to gain both revenue and loyalty (Miller, 2016). Celebrities attract media and public attention (Guttman, 2014) and their involvement in the last presidential electoral campaign was covered extensively by the media (AFP, 2015).

On the other hand, considering the failure of the guilds to enforce regulation, the council may require state backing especially as MOPICON is being established to also solve problems of disunity within the industry and to create a centralized body and a voice for the industry (Hembe, 2016). Past events that have involved the state have, however, been short lived and short sighted. Instances include and are not limited to the NFVCB’s (National Film and Video Censor Board) New Distributive Framework (Bud, 2014) and Bank of Industry’s investment into establishing a formal privately owned national distribution chain for the industry (Obiaya, 2011). But privately organized bodies within the industry have not fared any better. Illustrating with FCON (Filmmakers Cooperative of Nigeria) whose history Novia (2012) puts in an extended narrative, Miller (2016) contends that the constituent membership of a body does not determine its success. Constituted of members who are mostly pro-MOPICON film practitioners (some of them currently members of MOPICON review committee) like Peace Anyiam-Osigwe, Mahmood Ali-Balogun, Ralph Nwadike, Fred Amata, Tony Anih, Kingsley Ogoro, FCON, an idea rather than an ideal, failed to restructure distribution or financing as anticipated. Its vision was to completely displace the marketers, but failed as a result of unstrategic planning. MOPICON proposes to undertake the bigger

challenge of displacing informality within Nollywood, but its many shortfalls suggest a delayed if not failed project.

While not forecasting the performance of this initiative based on an effort made in 2003 (ie the FCON attempt), the discordance over the bill, the committee membership, the philosophy behind MOPICON (Adedapo, 2016), but fundamentally, the involvement of government is tantamount to a failure license. While their involvement in the affairs of the industry remains a contentious debate, Miller (2016) agrees that initiatives such as MOPICON, even with state support have the “inability to realize their professed goals” (103). This could be as a result of the self-interest with which leaders occupy positions. A bigger brawl than that recorded by Miller (2016) during a certain Association of Movie Producers’ (AMP) election campaign is anticipated should MOPICON bill be adopted. Haynes (2016) observes that guilds and associations are the industry’s point of interaction with the government. Hence, only those in leadership positions reach the monies quicker. Gabosky, beneficiary of BOI’s 1.8bn naira Special Entertainment Fund mapped out to restructure distribution was “one of the leading early exponents of the original framework” (Bud, 2014:118) created to regulate Nollywood marketing.

6.2.3 Bill Content

Besides negative reactions arising from state involvement and suspicions of self interest among bill proposers, it attracts criticism based on its content. The document dated 2006 is broken into seven parts that detail the function, mission and goal of the council. Part one states the council composition and required qualifications, its functions and avenues for accumulating and expending resources. Part two elaborates on registers and registrations of membership both for nationals and non-citizens. As noted in part three, the council has rights to approve or disapprove qualifications, accredit awarding institutions and vet their

examinations. The council shall therefore provide interested members with list of institutions whose degrees or certifications are acceptable. The benefits of membership and disadvantages of not belonging to the council are contained in part four. Part five indicates that interested guilds must be accredited and every practitioner must belong to a privileged guild in order to be part of the council. While codes of ethics are marked out in part six, part seven contains miscellaneous items. Containing other supplementary provisions relating to the council, the forty-nine-page document, according to Prof Hyginus Ekwuazi, one of its initial drafters, has undergone extensive doctoring.

Aimed at restructuring the industry (Miller, 2016; Obiaya, 2012), the document's opening introduction as an act poised to "regulate the profession of motion picture and for related matters" raises controversy as young industry incomers as well as hopefuls resist the term 'regulate'. Understood as controlling affairs and conduct by means of rules and regulations, 'regulation' of art is seen as a misnomer (Agbana, 2016). Nollywood film scholar, Prof Shaka opines, "in a liberal democracy like the one we proffer to be running, artistic endeavour should not be regulated by the government". President of the Directors' Guild of Nigeria and member, MOPICON draft review committee, Fred Amata insists that practice and not content needs be regulated. Camouflaged compulsory guild membership is the council's first step towards regulating the industry. Non-guild members who are not compelled to register now in order to make contribution in the re-draft process will eventually join a guild upon the bill's adoption. Non-guild, and therefore non-council members are, according to the bill, prohibited from making cinema or straight to DVD/VCD projects (Part IV section 32 No.1).

Resembling the battle for supremacy that ensued among filmmakers following the advent of video filmmaking in Nigeria, the present power struggle and class consciousness within Nollywood aims at curtailing the excesses of industry newcomers (Onoshe, 2016b).

Associate membership requires a minimum of three-year training period under a production company or mentorship under a veteran with at least ten years' industry experience. Such company or mentor must be recognized, accredited and registered by the council. Full membership requires a minimum of one-year full time film education in recognized institutions or three years' experience before adoption of the act. With membership stratified under associate, full and fellow members, class and hierarchy become inevitable especially since older filmmakers have the advantage of many years' experience. Only full and fellow members are qualified to make commercial projects and this is monitored via a bi-annual publication of named practitioners qualified to practice.

This will help the state actualize the goal of formalizing and commodifying the industry. It will equally gentrify the industry by creating class consciousness and separations. Registration of individual production companies and filmmakers has the prospect of making tax evasion difficult. Checkmating filmmakers' qualifications and portfolios can potentially address the overemphasized issue of standards and global best practice. Insistence on formal professional qualification and/or prolonged informal training as eligibility to joining the council, and invariably to practice, goes against Nollywood's norm and can thus restructure the industry. But while such restrictions are conquerable, those on ex-convicts of fraud and dishonesty and minors below the age of eighteen are insurmountable. With such restrictions, Zuriel Oduwole, a fourteen-year-old teenager named world's youngest filmmaker having began her career at age nine, has no place in Nollywood. With four films and five years' experience to her credit (Said-Moorhouse, 2015), she remains unqualified to join the council. In the course of my fieldwork, sixteen-year-old Paschaline Eze employed the services of a registered DGN member to direct her first commercial campus film.

Of greater controversy is the prohibition of non-registered individuals from practice. As proposed, non council members, in whatever professional capacity, are prohibited from

making any project for cinema, straight to video, pay or satellite television. A breach of this rule is punishable by a one hundred thousand naira fine or two years' imprisonment. Adopting the same fight for supremacy tune that has been used by other industry players (Onoshe, 2016b) to address the supposed 'bad eggs' within the industry, Peace Anyiam-Osigwe, remonstrates against criticisms over the two-year term (Onoshe, 2016). Bearing a semblance to FCON to which she once belonged that aimed at displacing Nollywood marketers' cartel, MOPICON aims at controlling entry into the industry, thus making it no all-comers' affair. Despite being profitless, joining a guild becomes compulsory with the adoption of the bill. Nonetheless, as this calls for active rather than passive membership (guilds endorse list of members to be shortlisted in the bi-annual council list of qualified practitioners), there is a likelihood that guilds will become stronger and more functional.

With controversies and discordance trailing the bill, the secrecy surrounding its redraft and scepticism over state involvement as well as uncertainties over interests in money matters, there are concerns about its implication for the industry. Like the FCON which aimed at displacing marketers rather than incorporating them efficiently and formally into the distribution sector, MOPICON aims at controlling entrances and exits into the industry. It equally has the potential to hinder and stifle talent and creativity. Nevertheless, pro-MOPICON industry players are optimistic and share differing opinion. For them, passing the MOPICON bill into law can unroot informality and lack of standard while streamlining industry practitioners' activities and enforcing conformity as well as uniformity. MOPICON, they perceive, has the potential to provide a structure that makes it easy for corporate bodies to interact with the industry. They envisage that dealing directly with the council will eliminate problems of transparency and accountability associated with engaging individuals and/or dysfunctional guilds and associations. With MOPICON, they argue, issues such as the discordance, accusations, denials and secrecy trailing the Project ACT Nollywood fund

(Husseini, 2016; Ogbeche, 2016; Punchnews, 2016) could be avoided. They also anticipate that MOPICON has the potential to foster collaborations between long existing film practitioners and young incomers who despite their freshly acquired know-how, are more prone to funding challenges. However, industry scholar, Prof Ekwuazi believes that since the industry has begun to experience some formality, MOPICON is no longer a priority. And most importantly, the clamour appears a distraction for the industry because when considered against the backdrop of the following criteria, the success of MOPICON appears slim:

1. the failures of groups that have in the past masqueraded as interest representatives of the industry such as
 - (a) FCON (Filmmakers Co-operative of Nigeria) –intended to topple marketers and unlicensed distributors of Nollywood films
 - (b) CONGA (Coalition of all Nollywood Guilds and Associations) a group created for people interested in partnering and/or working with Nollywood industry players including guilds and associations
 - (c) CMPPN (Conference for Motion Picture Practitioners of Nigeria) with Mahmood Ali-Balogun as its founding member, a guise of MOPICON
 - (d) NDLF (New Distribution Licensing Framework) driven by Emeka Mba to regulate marketing and distribution of Nollywood films
 2. the discordant tune across the industry and the lack of unity,
 3. the previous failed attempt at MOPICON implementation,
 4. state’s characteristic inclination to ignore projects began by previous government.
- MOPICON is meant to benefit the entire Nigerian film industry. Ignoring its developments and the restructuring of already established Project ACT Nollywood, the current president, Muhammadu Buhari, proposes a three-billion-naira Kano film village project for Kanywood (BBCNews, 2016; Ciroma, 2016)

5. communication gap on committee activities further confirming fears of self rather than public interest,
6. the disquieting delays and silence since committee inauguration in April, 2016.

Its failure would mean MOPICON was an unnecessary disruption in the affairs of the industry.

In the eventuality of the bill's adoption or not, it is hoped that rather than disrupted, accessibility to existing corporate funding available to practitioners will not only be sustained, but improved. Unlike the Project ACT Nollywood disbursed directly to individuals, corporate bodies, guilds and/or associations as grants with no set out plan on sustainability, corporate funding from banks are better structured as they are refundable, with discounted interest rate. An example is the NollyFund privately managed by the Bank of Industry (BOI) whose mission is to transform the industrial sector of Nigeria through sustained financial and business support. Another is the AccessNolly Fund managed by Access Bank Plc and launched in the first quarter of 2016 (Chima, 2016). While the fate of MOPICON bill is unlikely to affect the funds, better structure within the industry will attract more stable and reliable fund needed to sustain its current regeneration. Securing sustainability, according to Brown-Saracino (2010) is a primary long-term objective for regeneration projects.

6.3 State/Corporate Financing: Step Towards Sustained Regeneration

As discussed in sub-section 6.2.2, state involvement in Nollywood affairs is contributing towards regenerating the industry. While it has been argued that the process of regeneration is irreducible to the broad concept of gentrification (Clark, 1992; Slater, 2006; Lim, et al, 2013; Maloutas, 2012), it is worth considering also as the gradual process that brings about gentrification. According to Brown-Saracino (2010), only sustained regeneration could lead

to gentrification. Considering Nollywood a gentrifying space, this section evaluates the possibility of sustained funding that will result in larger, corporate bodies displacing individual and smaller actors as a result of the “rent gap”. Rent gap measures the disparity between the existing value of an entity and its actual worth (Smith, 1996). The value of such analysis attracts or dispels investors. As noted earlier, the potential value of Nollywood was established with the re-basing of national economy in 2013. Hence the government has begun to intervene, albeit sporadically in the affairs of the industry.

Unlike the Hindi film industry Bollywood, Nollywood has, from its inception been recognized as a sector of the Nigerian film industry. Indian feature filmmaking, despite beginning in 1913, was accorded industry status in 1998 (Ganti, 2012). Unlike Nollywood, however, this recognition transformed the industry from its essentially pedagogical and communicative capacity to a native ingenuity and contributor to economic growth and development. Only at the 2013 re-basing of the national economy was Nollywood, along with the entertainment industry, given a national recognition as contributor to economic development prompting the proposed three-million-naira presidential intervention fund by the Goodluck Jonathan administration. Prior to 2013, Nollywood had remained a tool for communication, instruction, a native ingenuity and an example of a local product consumed locally. Being thus ignored, its potentials remained untapped until the past government. Narrating the challenges he encountered in the making of *Queen Amina* (2017), Okechukwu Ogunjiofor discloses the lack of interest past governments have shown the industry. He recalls his quest for funding started in 1995 with the General Sani Abacha administration until the President Olusegun Obasanjo’s. He was only successful with the launch in 2015 of the Bank of Industry’s NollyFund. The perfunctory appreciation of Nollywood as a sector of a larger industry and indeed, the perfunctory accordance of a national industry status on the

Nigerian film industry explains the industry's inclination towards articulating regional rather than national ideologies.

Corporate sponsorship has been minimal within Nollywood. While marketers are able to invest in the industry its informality notwithstanding (being protected by personal relationships, cartel and guild systems), corporate organizations are not able to do the same. Requiring a lot of documents ranging from evidence of registration with Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria, tax clearance certificates, audited company account to business plan on proposed film project, obtaining corporate sponsorship is rigorous for the average Nollywood filmmaker. Hence, producing a film of global standards in the emerging Nollywood according to Haynes (2016) is not “a game for the fainthearted” (289). The author further notes that corporate bodies connect with the industry in “fleeting and tangential fashion through occasional sponsorships and product placements” (Haynes, 2016:308). The slimness of corporate sponsorships contrast with the number of corporate brands and organizations existing within the country. As Haynes (2016) notes, these companies have shown an appreciable level of involvement in the Nigerian entertainment (essentially music, live shows, competitions and tours, reality and television shows) via sponsorships. Beyond the selection of Nollywood personalities (primarily celebrities) as brand ambassadors, the industry has witnessed limited interactions with corporate bodies.

The quest to take the audiences back to the cinema demands consistent production of good quality, cinema standard films. As Kunle Afolayan suggests, “Nigerians will not go to the cinema to see rubbish films, no matter how cheap they're showing them” (Haynes, 2016:310). This suggests an audience migration. The urbane, educated audiences and sophisticated elites who essentially watch foreign movies in multiplexes now also watch Nollywood films exhibited in cinemas. Studies in Nollywood audience consumption habits have not been carried out in recent times, but on a visit to FilmOne in Ikeja, the ticketing hall

as well as car park and walkways were crowded with university age youngsters who had gone to see movies. Tickets were sold to students on concession at certain hours of the day. On another visit to SilverBird, Lekki, the over twenty audience members who waited amidst grumbles over delays to see Afolayan's *The CEO* (2016) were working class adults, some coming straight from their workplaces. Nollywood is building a new class of audiences. While this attempt may be concentrated in certain localities within the country (due to the limited availability of cinemas), it does not suggest that the targeted audience are limited to such places only. Distribution channels especially multiplexes remain few across the country. While this constitutes a challenge to established filmmakers who currently distribute through them, it frustrates others who have to wait a long time before they get a slot to exhibit their movies. In the course of my fieldwork, I spoke with a young actor who had just produced his second film. It was August, but he has to wait till December before his film premieres in the cinema. While this affords him time for publicity, from a traditional Nollywood economic perspective, it ties up investment funds. Such delays may thwart corporate financing deals since it is essential to provide confirmation of acceptance of distribution before loans, grants or funds are released as is the case with NollyFund. Multiplexes and audience redefinition are key gentrifiers of film industry besides new and young talents and professionals. According to Ganti (2012), the Hindi film industry became gentrified because of the presence of multiplexes that encouraged young filmmakers to make sophisticated films aimed at capturing a constantly sophisticating audience.

In recent times, corporate organizations have contributed to Nollywood productions. But besides Amstel Malta Box Office (AMBO) sponsored movies such as *Sitanda* (2006), *White Waters* (2008), *Cindy's Notes* (2008), all directed by Izu Ojukwu, corporate bodies appear to support rather than completely fund or invest into movies. Mahmood Ali-Balogun's *Tango with Me* (2010) was supported by MTN, Kunle Afolayan's *Phone Swap* (2012) was

co-financed by Glo and his recent *The CEO* (2016) was co-financed by AirFrance. The industry's bigger investors remain individuals and, in recent times, Bank of Industry and other banks. Having co-financed Biyi Bandele's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2014) and Michelle Bello's *Flower Girl* (2013), the Bank of Industry instituted the NollyFund early 2015 (Abimboye, 2015). Set to make funding easily accessible to producers of commercially viable film projects, the NollyFund, Cynthia Nwuka⁵⁵ offers, aims at bypassing issues of tangible collateral and basing loan collateral on the financed film and personal guarantees as well as other forms of non-conventional collateral. In other words, the basis for releasing funds to a producer will be the sophistication and revenue potential of his script. Everyday, conventional Nollywood style scripts will be outrightly disqualified. As tangible collaterals are not required, double measures are taken to ensure that scripts can potentially yield not only investment, but also return on investment. The fund promises to be more sustainable compared to the 2007 *Project Nollywood* intervention fund, envisioned by Charles Novia and launched by Ecobank (Novia, 2012). With a team comprised of Ecobank, Charles Novia, Chico Ejiro, Fidelis Duker, Fred Amata and Barrister Emeka Utulu, the fund was closed to only the involved filmmakers. Formed on the spur of the moment, with interest based entirely on yield, important aspects of *Project Nollywood* were taken for granted. The hurriedness with which the project was executed and its eventual failure due to distribution lapses, discouraged other corporate bodies from investing into a clearly structureless industry.

In contrast, the Bank of Industry's NollyFund has a mapped out plan for production and distribution. With selected production and distribution companies registered under the project, the bank is able to monitor fund utilization. Although publicity and advertisement is left to the expertise of the producer, its plan and cost are required by the bank. Zero collateral is therefore backed up by stringent measures to ensure accountability and success. Investing

⁵⁵ Written interview conducted with Cynthia Nwuka on 16 July, 2016.

also in distribution sector, the bank has in the past ensured the digitization of selected cinemas (Silverbird, FilmOne and Genesis) and DVD distribution. Gab Okoye⁵⁶ (Gabsky) of G-Media was able to set up his DVD distribution chain across twenty-one states with the help of the bank. Bank of Industry ensures that participating cinemas project sponsored films at primetime and remunerate the right amount for exhibition. A collection account is opened with a commercial bank where all proceeds are domiciled and from where loan repayment is charged. Bank of Industry remains the sole signatory. Thus planned, continuity is assured as it is expected that films sponsored return both principal and interest.

What appears to be neglected remains the complications of piracy. There is a clear plan on protecting the master copy from pirates, but upon entering the DVD market, the film runs its course like other Nollywood films. Gab Okoye reports poor sales on long awaited, 35MM cinema standard film like Mahmood Ali-Balogun's *Tango with Me* (2010) due to pirate operations. He offers "filmmakers of high budget cinema films do not recoup their expenses through DVD distribution... DVD is only a fulfilment of business passion. I encourage them to explore other channels of distribution – pay TV, internet, etc before going on DVD". Judging the success of a film and hence its returns by script quality and strength of its proposed business plan, Bank of Industry considers checkmating piracy secondary and the responsibility of select governmental agencies.

Cynthia Nwuka believes that the initial fund size of one billion naira could be increased. In the eventuality of that not happening, sustenance is guaranteed from loan repayment and interests accumulated. Unlike private or individual sponsorship, corporate funding such as that provided by the Bank of Industry has the potential to further formalize the industry. Being accessible only to registered or incorporated businesses, accountability and reliable figures are attainable. Although it is a strategic and sustainable investment in

⁵⁶ Oral interview conducted with Gab Okoye on 16 July, 2016.

Nollywood, NollyFund provides producers limited choices of production and distribution companies. While working with them guarantees safety of master copy, quality of services rendered and promptness, Kenneth Gyang opines that rentals and services come at a much higher price than usually obtainable in the market. He surmises, “at the end of the day, you not only have a loan, but get told how to spend or invest it. Eventually you may not realize any money since you spend more renting equipment than you ordinarily would”. Knowing that twenty million naira is provided as basic loan for equipment hiring, publicity and advertisement (Gab Okoye), participating production companies’ inflated rates also mean an unnecessarily higher budget. The fund is not for young, incoming professionals since an applying producer is required to provide at least three years’ company audited account.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I examined structure and power struggle within Nollywood. I appraised filmmakers’ perspectives and responses to state interactions with the industry. It highlighted the cynicism attributed to industrial association with the state and the industry players’ lack of faith in the government. The chapter evaluated the proposed MOPICON bill and its implications for industrial growth and development. It demonstrated that through MOPICON, the state is attempting to formalize the industry, make it taxable and a befitting national industry. MOPICON is designed to displace Nollywood’s lack of structure, cause guilds to sit in council in order to enforce legislations. Formalization within the industry, the chapter highlights, encourages corporate bodies to invest into Nollywood. When sustained, it brings about regeneration, attracts young, affluent professionals into the industry and in the long run, gentrify all economic aspects of Nollywood. This chapter concludes that call for adoption of MOPICON bill, besides being aimed at providing structure, illustrates incessant struggle for power and supremacy within the industry. As Nollywood transforms its practices

from informal to formal, it is worth considering possible gentrifiers and their roles in bringing about a possibly gentrifying industry. Having considered in this chapter transformations, structure as well as sustained funding which is key to the process of regeneration, the next chapter will contemplate the fusion of these elements in contemporary Nollywood and how the state employs them to gentrify the industry. It will examine how the differences in the production, distribution and consumption of *Living in Bondage* (1992) and *Queen Amina* (2017) manifest gentrification in Nollywood.

Chapter Seven

From *Living in Bondage* to *Queen Amina*: A Gentrification of Nollywood?

Introduction

In this final chapter, I use two select Nollywood films to further investigate the industry's formalization and regeneration as gentrification. Lim, et al (2013), Maloutas (2012) and Slater (2006) have argued that regeneration and gentrification have become synonymous, conceptualizing the same phenomenon. I therefore examine issues of class, quality, standards and displacement in the production, distribution and consumption of Okechukwu Ogunjiofor's *Living in Bondage* (1992) and *Queen Amina* (2017). It builds on the last two chapters that assessed factors contributing to the regeneration of contemporary Nollywood. Chapter six engaged with issues of policy and funding which are necessary integrants in the gentrification process. I concluded that although state funding may be too sporadic to sustain the gentrification process, its policies, individual filmmaker's determination to leave a legacy and corporate sponsorship can sustain the process. I now investigate the implication of this for the industry and its players.

Drawing on data collected using my method of econo-ethnography introduced in chapter four, I discuss how the new Nollywood is about class and aesthetics manifested through plotline, choice of distribution channel and audience target. I equally discuss how labels are bringing about divisions and tensions within the industry and what state/corporate involvement implies for the industry and industry players. I inquire into the rise of middle class filmmakers in the industry, a trend that is causing low quality, low budget films to become less in demand among a class of audience members. This analysis will be approached from a production perspective with focus on possible winners or beneficiaries and losers or displaced rather than from an audience or consumption point of view. Building

on the challenges of incorporating Nollywood into the formal political economy highlighted in chapter six, this chapter examines the challenges of effectively gentrifying the industry.

In the light of the ongoing gentrification process within the industry, the chapter begins by re-evaluating the video industry. It then discusses distinctions in production, distribution and consumption practices resulting from the gentrification process. It reconsiders McGahan's (2004) theory on industrial change trajectory discussed in chapter five, suggesting that industrial sectoring can also occur as a result of gentrification process.

7.1 Re-evaluating the Nigerian video industry

In terms of production, Nollywood has recorded transformations since *Living in Bondage* (1992). However, its definition as a poor quality, low budget video industry has remained continually replicated despite these being the characteristics of a period in its history. Texts such as Miller's *Nollywood* (2016) highlight this omission. The author suggests that formal education is unlikely to influence or impact on the industry's artistic inspiration. Invariably, Miller (2016) is suggesting that further training and education cannot impact on established art and business models existent in Nollywood. But recent reforms in artistic and economic models within Nollywood in the light of exposure to training and formal education, prove that Nollywood essentially lacked technical abilities and infrastructure. After Haynes' long periods of engagement with the industry, he observes that infrastructure and technical know-how are the industry's biggest challenges (Haynes, 2016). Miller (2016) herself notes that Stephanie Okereke-Linus, a one-time student of the New York Film academy, grounded her peers and instructors on the art of low-budget, breakneck speed, movie making. Professionalism, according to Elman et al (2005), is the by-product of professional

development or formal education. For example, actor and filmmaker, Desmond Elliot⁵⁷ admitted that his training at the Colorado Film School enhanced his creative abilities. Compared to his *Finding Mercy* (2013) and *Apaye* (2014), *Knocking on Heaven's Door* (2014), released after his training, manifests improvements in creative abilities and directorial capabilities.

Formal training as against the traditional short-term informal training historically associated with the industry, is part of the new structure planned for Nollywood for which state support is being sought. As proposed by the MOPICON bill, Nollywood will be defined by professionalism. According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), a professional's characteristics include, among others, membership in professional organization and acquisition of technical skills through prescribed professional education. From speaking with directors such as Opa Williams, Obi Emelonye, Lonzo Nzekwe, Kenneth Gyang, among others, I discover that knowledge acquisition is a major contributor to the transformations reshaping the art and business of filmmaking within Nollywood. Education, value and regulation equal professionalism (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), a key ingredient in the process of gentrification of the industry.

Having investigated and discovered possibilities of sustained regeneration in Nollywood, I evaluate in this section potential gentrifiers and how they might be the state's attempt at gentrifying the industry. Transformation in film industries is sporadic. Hence Hallett (2013) considers the transformations of Hollywood over a five-year period and recounts that the industry's evolution from "a giant weed-like industry, crude and unformed, into an art has been one of amazing revelations" (104). Such periodic evaluation of Nollywood is infrequent in Nollywood studies. Traced from 2009, the marked increase in large budget, improved quality, large screen pictures which characterize new Nollywood

⁵⁷ Oral interview conducted with Desmond Elliot on 19 March, 2016.

films has become the focus of recent publications (Jedlowski, 2013; Haynes, 2014; Afolayan, 2014; Denton, 2014; Adejunmobi, 2015; Okome, 2014; Connor, 2015). However, focus has been neither on the new Nollywood as an era in the evolution of the industry, nor on its political economy. Instead, it is discussed as a separation, an isolation from the atypically low budget old Nollywood.

In chapter five, I evaluated this development as a possible change in trajectory, the evolution of an era that marks the beginning of the end of a phase in the history of Nollywood. Continuing on this line of argument, I investigate factors such as the state contributing to this evolution as gentrifiers and consider how they are affecting the practice of filmmaking in Nollywood. Re-thinking filmmaking in contemporary Nollywood is essential because, although not complete and entire, Nollywood filmmakers no longer indulge “poverty of creativity, ideas, innovation and a coordinated strategic plan” (Iroh, 2009), nor produce predictable, multi-themed stories drawn from family and society (Balogun, 2011). Currently witnessing some formalization attempts from the state, the industry, its films, but essentially, the filmmakers are cultivating auteur personalities (Charles Okwuowulu⁵⁸). From data collected, I discovered a number of factors that have contributed to this transformation in practice. Notable among them are Hollywood, technology, film school, state/corporate organizations and publicity. I now discuss these below.

7.1.1 Hollywood

All of my interviewees at a point or two referred to Hollywood primarily in comparison to their own industry. Texts in world cinema do not fail to discuss industries in a comparative ‘Hollywood and other’ perspective. Parkinson (2012) categorically states “without Hollywood, there would be no Bollywood, Lollywood (in Pakistan) or Nollywood (Nigeria).

⁵⁸ Oral interview conducted with Charles Okwuowulu on 22 March, 2016.

There also wouldn't have been variations on the studio system in Britain, France and Japan” (54). Although there exists amongst scholars and Nollywood filmmakers those who believe comparing Nollywood or any other industry to Hollywood is an anomaly (Haynes, 2016; McCall, 2012), such comparisons remain the major driver among filmmakers who constantly aim at ‘international best practice, standards and quality’. While introducing the Australian cinema, O'Regan (1996) notes that all national cinemas interact with one another and partake in broader interaction with Hollywood by imitating and indigenizing its genres, artistic movements and influences. Jamiu (2016) discusses a number of notable Nollywood directors whose films appeared to be inspired by Hollywood or Bollywood films.

Nollywood does not gain only artistic inspirations from Hollywood. Its peculiar business structures are being discarded for a formal, western-style one where individuals and corporate organisations are making plans to adopt the studio system. Understanding the challenges faced by Nigerian and indeed African filmmakers who travel abroad for studio services, Kunle Afolayan⁵⁹, filmmaker and entrepreneur posits, “I am looking to expand, start a film school, have a proper studio where I can serve not just Nigeria, but Africa”. Although right behind Bollywood and Nollywood in terms of production output, Hollywood maintains a level of influence over the development of other national cinemas, dominating over them both culturally and commercially. Parkinson (2012) claims this predominance will remain unchallenged for a long time to come. In urban geography, the position Hollywood occupies would be described as a world or global city – that city with predominating influence over continental and worldwide economies. Hollywood is not an ambition of the state in Nollywood's gentrification process, but it serves as a model for the Nollywood filmmaker reinventing his practice. Hence filmmaker and lecturer Charles Okwuowulu tells me, “the new Nollywood tries to copy classical Hollywood narrative technique”.

⁵⁹ Oral interview conducted with Kunle Afolayan on 13 April, 2016.

7.1.2 Technology

Ebenezer Aka⁶⁰ defines gentrification simply as the process of upgrading devalued property. In the film business, along with talent and expertise, technology undergoes regular upgrade. State and corporate bodies boost Nollywood gentrification by providing fund for technological upgrade. Besides funds mapped out for capacity building and production, the state, under the project ACT Nollywood, provides fund for technology-based solutions to the industry's distribution challenges. The Bank of Industry partners with production studios who, although expensive to use, provide quality service and guard intellectual properties against piracy. Technological upgrade remains one of the turning points in the evolution of Nollywood. From speaking to filmmakers such as Zeb Ejiro, Fred Amata, Gab Okoye, among others, I noted a transition from cumbersome film equipment to portable digital cameras. Inexistent during the soundless and colourless era, Nollywood has benefited from proliferation of portable cameras that are not only less cumbersome, but affordable encouraging importations. It has encouraged the influx of filmmakers into the industry too as modern models are easier to operate. Fred Amata⁶¹, current president of the Directors' Guild of Nigeria, traces the technological transition in the Nigerian film industry and concludes that it has been as much blessing as it has been the industry's downfall. He cites

In the late 80's, the equipment available was the U-matic camera. It was difficult to capture a picture without knowing what you were doing or having a team that understood it. In the 1990s, technology improved tremendously which affected production. There was the transition from u-matic to betacam before the digital to HD cameras. U-matic was cheaper to hire, betacam cost more, but then the high cost reflected on the picture quality. Digital format facilitated easy shoot which brought about mediocrity.

⁶⁰ <http://www.nssa.us/journals/2010-35-1/pdf/35-1%2001%20Aka.pdf>. Accessed 12/01/17.

⁶¹ Oral interview conducted with Fred Amata on 14 April, 2016.

Amata explains that mediocrity was evident in the prevalent three-point camera shoot at the video boom era – master shot, medium shot and close-up. Further training to balance knowledge of arts and technology brought about experimentations with not only scripts, but other technological innovations such as camera rigs, drone, special effects, animation. The internet and exposure are availing filmmakers opportunities to meet with others from around the globe and learn of new inventions. Nollywood filmmakers now have the opportunities to choose what technology best gives expression to their project. In a predominantly digital age, Izu Ojukwu chooses to shoot '76 (2016) on 16mm. Ojukwu elucidates that his choice was prompted by a desire for the dirt of 16mm (Robinson, 2016). With handheld portable cameras like the blackmagic URSA mini whose resolution and range contend that of a super 35mm, camerawork becomes fluid, creative and manipulative. Although not every Nollywood filmmaker can afford to purchase such high definition cameras, studios exist that rent them. They also offer production and post-production services. In the face of the rising debate on quality and standards within the industry, investors as well as filmmakers are continuously aiming for the best quality they can afford to produce.

7.1.3 *Film school*

Marcuse (1985) offers higher education as a defining characteristic of the gentrification process. He further observes that the process is accompanied by reduction in demand for labour which particularly affects the unskilled workforce. To remain relevant in the industry, a drive currently contributing to the gentrification process, filmmakers and actors are availing themselves to formal training. Formal film school and training are among ideas the state uses to gentrify the Nigerian film industry. Kunle Afolayan however, observes that while formal training is relevant and offers the basics, proper filmmaking art is learnt on the job. Hence, in the controversial MOPICON bill, informally (training by apprenticeship) trained filmmakers

may belong to the council upon meeting the required training duration. Beyond training organised by guilds and associations, conventional film schools are emerging across the nation, offering short and long term programmes to graduates and secondary school leavers. Notable ones among them are run by prominent Nigerian film and television practitioners like Stephanie Okereke-Linus, Olu Jacobs and wife, Joke Silva, Emem Isong, Wale Adenuga, Zeb Ejiro. While Okereke-Linus' Del-York partners with the New York Film Academy, Jacob's Lufodo Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA), Isong's Royal Art Academy (RAA), among others are locally and solely run. Their curriculums may differ, but they emphasize the fundamentals of filmmaking – from acting to directing, cinematography, set design, editing, animation among others. However, informal training by apprenticeship still thrive as cost of enrolling into formal film schools within the country remains unaffordable to certain class of individuals. While tuition fees at the Royal Art Academy is 100,000 naira (\$318) for a four-month class, Del-York charges 3,500 US dollars for a four-week intensive class. Affordable essentially to the upper class, Del-York, aims at assisting rich “Africans attain ingenuity, creativity and beauty”⁶². Although the difference in the quality of training offered remains unassessed, the difference in fees charged and Del-York's affiliation to the New York Film Academy further contributes to issues of class associated with gentrification. The academy trained seventy-one candidates sponsored under the project ACT Nollywood capacity building fund.

Training are contributing to the transformation of contemporary Nollywood and those who can afford the cost travel abroad from South Africa to India, United Kingdom and the United States. Opa Williams⁶³, director of Bank of Industry sponsored *Three Wise Men* (2016), suggests that the industry is quickly absorbing fresh talents with some level of

⁶² <http://delyorkinternational.com/ceo.html.21/>. Accessed 13/11/16.

⁶³ Oral interview conducted with Opa Williams on 14 April, 2016.

training and exposure. Ajayi Osagho⁶⁴, cinematographer, colourist and director of photography for Lancelot Imasuen's *Beyond Your Sight* (2016) highlights the importance of further training

Most of us learnt the art informally. I started from the street, grabbing ideas online and from people who appeared to know better than me. But I got to a point when I needed further creative upgrade, so I went on to further studies outside the country (South Africa). That is not to say those who are unable to study outside Nigeria are no good. But further training and education are relevant because technology changes all the time, if not, the DOP could be left behind.

In Bollywood, Ganti (2012) observes that education and training, evidenced in filmmakers' portfolio and class backgrounds, played an important role in the transformations that gentrified the Hindi film industry. Tracing its influence on Russia, the Soviet film industry (through film school alumni Sergei Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin) and across Europe, Parkinson (2012) concludes that the proliferation of film schools across Europe impacted on the United State's film industry.

7.1.4 State & Corporate Bodies

A study carried out by Zuk, et al (2015) suggests that gentrification results from an in-flow of capital and people. In chapter six, I examined the sustainability of regeneration within Nollywood and concluded that although state sponsorship appears sporadic, corporate sponsorship is sustainable and capable of gentrifying the industry. According to Hackworth and Smith (2000), gentrifiers are empowered by government agencies, corporate bodies, federal administrations. In addition to natural phenomenon and market forces, gentrification results from government policies shaped and informed by "strong pro-development interests" (Levine, 2004:89). State-led gentrification occurs when state activities and interactions with an industry bring about gentrification. Uitermark, et al (2007) believe such gentrification is

⁶⁴ Oral interview conducted with Ajayi Osagho on 17 March, 2016.

caused by a coalition of state and members of the industry. Coalition between the state and industry came to the fore through the Project Act Nollywood and is currently witnessed in the proposed MOPICON bill which intends to, according to Fred Amata, bridge the gap between the state and the industry. Miller (2016) portrays it as a means to an end for both industry players and the state. As a policy document, MOPICON is expected to pacify tensions in the various guilds, enhance state-industry relationship, formalize and structure the industry, making commodification and taxation possible. As discussed in chapter six, although the sustainability of government's sporadic investment in the industry remains uncertain, corporate sponsorships are stable and increasing. Filmmaker Ugezu J. Ugezu⁶⁵ postulates that funding problems explain Nollywood's poor sound and picture quality. Given large budget, Stephanie Okereke-Linus⁶⁶ opines, most Nollywood filmmakers would make quality films. These quality films are, however, distributed through channels that are not readily accessible to a certain audience class. While some filmmakers understand this as a necessary, but temporary displacement, others argue against displacement understanding it as economic choice for business sustenance.

7.1.5 Publicity and Distribution

Director Teco Benson⁶⁷ observes that contemporary Nollywood, represented in the new Nollywood, uses publicity as its major selling point. Besides high production value, new Nollywood filmmakers invest in publicity and advertisement. Its flamboyance contrasts with what was previously obtainable. Actor Francis Duru⁶⁸ describes it as a "trendy red carpet show-off". He hints on the tensions existing between the so called new and old Nollywood

⁶⁵ Oral interview conducted with Ugezu J. Ugezu on 11 March, 2016.

⁶⁶ Oral interview conducted with Stephanie Okereke-Linus on 22 May, 2016.

⁶⁷ Oral interview conducted with Teco Benson on 11 April, 2016.

⁶⁸ Oral interview conducted with Francis Duru on 14 April, 2016.

especially in terms of economic and political choices and decisions. For instance, in recent times advertisements in the form of trailers, are carefully constructed to play on the audience's obsession with novelty, and familiarity (Parkinson, 2012) to lure them to the cinemas. Niyi Akinmolayan's *Kajola* (2010) had a teaser so good that Silverbird Television aired it almost every hour for free. At the Silverbird cinema, it was shown before premieres. However, like typical new Nollywood films, the film opines "only provides good camera movements, better picture and sound without a story that can be recollected or transform lives" (Ugezu J. Ugezu). Publicity and advertising have become a bedrock for contemporary Nollywood that financiers like the Bank of Industry map out specific amount to cover for equipment hiring and publicity and advertisement. Realising the power of publicity, contemporary high budget Nollywood filmmakers give publicity and advertising serious consideration. Madichie (2010) believes that the industry's lack of box office appeal stems from poor marketing communications, publicity and advertising and poor product quality.

Despite being one of the industry's major challenges, different distribution channels are being sampled by filmmakers. The short shelf life of straight to DVD production, the dishonesty of marketers who double as distributors and sometimes producers, the need to protect intellectual property rights, a desire to reach wider, transnational and diaspora audiences, maximization of digitalization, all contribute to filmmakers' exploration and experimentation with forms of distribution other than straight to video. In other words, the typical scenario where "films are produced in ad hoc fashion, recorded directly on VCDs, DVDs or the VHS tapes and sold in the local market places without recourse to any official distribution strategies" (Uwah, 2008:89) is changing. Although most films are still distributed straight to DVD without strategized distribution plan, large budget filmmakers insist they follow strategic distribution pattern in order to recoup their investment. The filmmaker's knowledge equally affects the plans put in place for distribution. Reminiscing on the success

of *Domitilla* (1996) as a result of strategically planned distribution, Zeb Ejiro⁶⁹ says, “I did something unique. I got the partnership of AIT (TV channel) and so the publicity was massive. When I was done with the cinema I then went on to the DVD after which I went to television. At that point in time the new media was not existing strongly in Nigeria”. On his new project, *Pure Instinct* (2016), Ejiro proposes a different strategy that puts the transnational and diaspora audiences into consideration.

In summary, filmmakers influenced by the above gentrifiers are re-considering and re-evaluating their practice. My ethnographic observation of the industry shows that, although previous descriptions of Nollywood as the provider of poor quality entertainment for the masses could still be justified, the industry evidences signs of evolution that appear to be rewriting the history, activities, content and abilities of the industry. As the gentrifiers evolve, the industry evolves. However, studies on the industry reflect this evolution slowly. From interacting with filmmakers, I discovered that the major reason behind select filmmakers’ embarrassment over linkage to Nollywood stems from delayed re-evaluation of the industry and their practice. Having looked at the above gentrifiers, the following section will consider how they affect film production.

7.2 *Living in Bondage and Queen Amina: Stylistic Discourse*

Through a case study of a single auteur’s work, this section considers how the above gentrifiers impact on filmmaking practice in contemporary Nollywood. Aimed at re-assessing the dominant image of the industry, this section discusses predominant practices currently observable in the industry that were not previously obtainable. With a focus on two selected films, this section evaluates professionalism and organization as against the previously obtainable amateurism and high level of disorganisation and informality within Nollywood.

⁶⁹ Oral interview conducted with Zeb Ejiro on 12 April, 2016.

As noted earlier, the changes discussed in this section and indeed the entire thesis are not whole and entire, but observable among filmmakers who are revolutionizing the industry and creating a new history for it. These include middle class filmmakers who have ready access to state and corporate or formalized sponsorships. While certain authors tag them ‘new Nollywood’ filmmakers (Jedlowski, 2013; Haynes, 2014; Denton, 2014; Afolayan, 2014; Adejunmobi, 2015; among others), my study highlights that rather than be labelled as such, a majority of these filmmakers prefer to be perceived simply as Nigerian filmmakers driven by passion and ambition rather than profit.

In this section, I discuss their views by evaluating the personal journey of a specific industry player. The intention is not to discuss the filmmaker as an auteur, but to draw on the specificity of singularity to emphasize and understand changes taking place within the industry. The choice of films and filmmaker selected for this evaluation is informed by knowledge gathered from previous studies. Although as noted in the literature review chapters, arguments have risen over the pioneer film or filmmaker of Nollywood (Olayiwola, 2011), I agree with authors like Onwuzulike, 2007; Ebewo, 2007; Ogundele, 2000 and Haynes & Okome, 2000 on the choice of *Living in Bondage*. While not the first video film to be produced during the decline of celluloid filmmaking in Nigeria, *Living in Bondage* (1992) provided the characteristics that form the paradigmatic qualities that have shaped filmmaking within the country over the past twenty years (Nwosu, 2016). The get-rich-quick theme of *Living in Bondage* reflects a slice of the familiar society – a familiarity which every class could relate with. Having thus set the standards for all future Nollywood productions, *Living in Bondage* proves adaptable to the discourse of practices of distinction now observable within the industry.

Advancement in technology and availability of more resources to the filmmakers have warranted that Nollywood now produces blockbusters that differ remarkably from

Living in Bondage. Nevertheless, despite their unique cinematic approach (Barlet, 2008), contemporary Nollywood blockbusters continue to combine affective spectacle, reflect socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions of the nation and employ special effects (Arthur, 2014). Retaining similarities to *Living in Bondage*, contemporary Nollywood blockbusters also differ from it in ways that give a new definition to the industry. To highlight these departures from a specific filmmaker's perspective, I selected *Queen Amina* (2017) as a representative of contemporary Nollywood blockbuster. Produced by the major personality behind *Living in Bondage*, Okechukwu Ogunjiofor, *Queen Amina* (2017) represents a flamboyant recreation of *Living in Bondage* in an age of technological advancement and availability of new knowledge. The twenty-five years between them notwithstanding, *Queen Amina* promises the “affective spectacle and the acute reflection of Nigeria’s social, economic, and political climate” (Arthur, 2014:113) which are the typical defining characteristics of Nollywood blockbusters.

Queen Amina is a flamboyant story that addresses women empowerment. Titled after the protagonist, *Queen Amina* tells the story of the first daughter of a legendary warrior and a kingdom builder, Barkwa Turunku, who ruled an empire that stretched across thousands of acres. In an age of female subjugation and oppression, Amina dreamt of ruling her father’s vast kingdom. Tracing her journey from being a girl child turned a warrior to a supreme military commander, the film engages with Amina’s ability to suppress and conquer natural femininity and manifest dominance over thirteen emirates. It is an aesthetically appealing film that captures the cultural undertone of Zazzau (currently Zaria) Kingdom in the 16th century. *Queen Amina* aims at celebrating the female child in order to inculcate into her the values that could inspire her to build the nation. It refocuses available stories on the warrior queen, setting right misconstrued records about her. Amina, despite being born into royalty, must face a world of brutal conflicts, suppressive age-long customs, scandalized traditions

and heroic exploits in order to prove herself capable in male dominated society. Yet to be released to the cinemas (as at the time of writing this thesis), *Queen Amina* is an aesthetically tasteful display of battle grounds, spectacular palaces and royal courts. It is a thrilling epic movie that recaptures the 16th century in a graphic depiction of the contrast between the daily lives of the desperately poor and affluent upper class. *Queen Amina* is a national call to not only celebrate the woman, but to inspire in women heroism and patriotism.

Living in Bondage was born out of a desire to find a new and economical way of doing old things. At a time when celluloid was the peak of filmmaking, *Living in Bondage* was told with limited resources, amounting to its being shot on a super VHS camera. Its producer, Okechukwu Ogunjiofor, recalls the technological history from *Living in Bondage* to *Queen Amina*. Emphasizing that production decisions at the time of the straight to VHS video were inspired by economic survival, Ogunjiofor suggests that *Queen Amina*, shot on an Alexa digital camera, is a return to status quo after the creation of the Nollywood franchise. He posits, “the qualities are not the same, but *Living in Bondage* helped to carve out a niche for the industry and when tweaked just a little bit with sustainable financial support and technical knowhow, we will have a brand of filmmaking like the Indians and Americans have”. Unlike *Queen Amina* which received ready financial support from Bank of Industry and other corporate organizations, *Living in Bondage* was produced at a time when corporate industries neither believed in nor supported filmmaking (especially in the video format). It tells what Ogunjiofor calls a universal story, relatable to by every young man searching for means of survival. It centres on Andy, a young working class man who consistently makes wrong choices in blind pursuit of wealth. Impatience and worsening financial situation drives him into seeking help from his best friend who lures him into ritual killing for blood money. He sacrifices his beloved wife, Merit and becomes wealthy. He does not enjoy his ill-gotten wealthy as Merit’s ghost haunts him. Produced in two parts, the film finishes in a

denouement that sees the downfall of the satanic cult, death of its key members as well as the greedy women they were involved with. Andy, who becomes mentally deranged, is saved by a former prostitute and taken to church where he confesses to his atrocities.

While *Queen Amina* was researched for twenty years, properly scripted and had scheduled auditions and specially constructed set pieces, *Living in Bondage*, Ogunjiofor adds,

was not a story written as a script, but a narrative written out in sequence outline. We gathered people (in Lagos) who are fluent in the language (Igbo) and who could interpret the roles. We taught them the scenarios, the idioms and expressions of the language and positioned them to act them out the way we wanted.

Dialogue for *Living in Bondage* was created spontaneously during rehearsals as the scenarios were being discussed. This style of filmmaking continues to be popular among Nollywood filmmakers including famous directors like Tchidi Chikere. Currently classified old Nollywood, the informal style is sometimes mixed with conventional filmmaking practices. For instance, while on Tchidi Chikere's set in April, 2016, he found a problem in his script. Addressing this problem led to an alteration that introduced two additional scenes for which no dialogues were written. The cast was given a half hour break for briefing, rehearsal and making up the needed dialogues before shooting resumed. Beside the above stylistic differences between the select films, the following sub-section will investigate the filmmaking practices prevalent at the time of their productions. This is to highlight how Nollywood as an evolving economy is gentrifying.

7.2.1 From *Living in Bondage* to *Queen Amina*: Practices of Distinction

Okechukwu Ogunjiofor wrote, produced, technically directed and edited *Living in Bondage* (1992). Often referred to as Kenneth Nnebue's, *Living in Bondage* was produced at

a time of “high level of ignorance” within the industry (Okechukwu Ogunjiofor⁷⁰). With only oral agreements in place, film rights were easily shifted. This may explain the eventual authority executive producers who often doubled as marketers or distributors exerted on the industry. Although a major player in its making, Ogunjiofor realised approximately three thousand naira from the successful video believed to have sold over seven hundred and fifty thousand copies (Arthur, 2014). Ogunjiofor trained at the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Television College, Jos between 1983 and 1985, graduating at a time when the few filmmakers in the country were trained abroad. Narrating his challenges that included disparity in level of knowledge and competence, lack of equipment and finance to hire experts and transport film stock from and to countries abroad, lack of employment, Ogunjiofor learnt improvisation as a means of survival. Capitalising on the embargo on employment, recession, insecurity to lives and properties, lack of finance and the nose-diving cinema going culture within the country, he decided to re-invent the modus operandi in order to remain relevant. With financial support from Kenneth Nnebue and directorial experience from Chris Obi Rapu, *Living in Bondage* was created, revolutionizing filmmaking within the country, setting new standards and providing a cheaper alternative to capital intensive celluloid filmmaking that was in vogue at the time.

Ogunjiofor fits into the old Nollywood description having been involved in the production of popular supposedly old Nollywood titles like *Living in Bondage* (1992), *Circle of Doom* (1993), *Nneka the Pretty Serpent* (1994), *Brotherhood of Darkness* (1995). By Adejunmobi’s (2015) standards, he equally fits into the new Nollywood description. Having availed himself for further training in filmmaking, Ogunjiofor possesses what the author calls “‘read-write’ multimedia literacy”, overtaking the old “generation of Nollywood ‘professional’ with ‘read-only’ multimedia literacy” (Adejunmobi, 2015:43). Although I

⁷⁰ Oral interview conducted with Okechukwu Ogunjiofor on 8 August, 2016

choose to borrow her ‘read-write’ and ‘read-only’ description to justify the placement of Ogunjiofor under the new Nollywood label, I disagree with the author that old Nollywood filmmakers are ‘read-only’ multimedia literate. Hartley (2009) as well as Lessig (2008) used the terms ‘read-write’ and ‘read-only’ to describe abilities to produce and consume and consume only respectively. The ‘read-only’ old Nollywood producers, Adejunmobi argues, usually lack formal training in filmmaking, directing, acting, and financing. However, what they lacked in formal training, they made up with informal training, experience and doggedness in mercantilism. Consumer only does not appropriately describe entrepreneurs like Kenneth Nnebue for instance who produced numerous video-films despite being semi-illiterates or illiterates (Haynes, 2007). Nnebue trained informally, hanging “around productions, participating in various ways and learning about movie making” (Haynes, 2011:204). According to Haynes (2011), Nnebue’s creative contribution to *Living in Bondage* and *Glamour Girls* imparted on the foundation of the video industry. Ojiofor Ezeanyanchie of OJ Productions, according to Haynes (2011), also “evolved from using his power to meddle in films he produces to coming up with storylines and finally to writing and directing his own films” (205). With only a thin line separating the old from the new Nollywood, such western theories may not adequately describe or categorise filmmaking and filmmakers within Nollywood.

Its large budget, flamboyant story, extensive research and by Jedlowski’s (2013) standards, involvement of international crewmembers, fit *Queen Amina* into the new Nollywood class. However, its producer, Okechukwu Ogunjiofor prefers to label it as simply Nollywood. He argues

If it is a new Nollywood film, its maker pioneered Nollywood, so where will you categorize me? If you talk of old Nollywood, in terms of what I have done, I am the oldest. But here I am today doing a film that none of them has been able to attempt.... I am always a trailblazer. If they say new Nollywood movies are the ones that go on cinemas, well, an old Nollywood person has

made a new Nollywood film. That demystifies the new and old Nollywood saga.

The choice of films is essentially based on their production periods and their linkage to a single producer. The difference in directors remains inconsequential since the study is not a content but context analysis.

One recurrent question posed to over twenty filmmakers in the semi-structured interviews I conducted was their perception of changes that have reshaped the industry. Responses were diverse but fundamentally included time, technology, knowledge acquisition, understanding and perceptions of the profession and industry, among other things. One significant change is the increasing budget size. While *Living in Bondage* cost one hundred and fifty thousand naira (£377, \$477) to make, *Nneka the Pretty Serpent* (1994) had a budget of four million naira (£10044, \$12717) and *Brotherhood of Darkness* (1995) was produced on an estimated four million, five hundred thousand naira (£11299, \$14306). As I gathered from my interviews, the industry witnessed an influx of television and theatre practitioners. This transition resulted from better remunerations from independent productions and the ban on National Television Authority (NTA) staff from participating in such productions; a ban that explains Chris Obi Rapu's reluctance to use his real names in the production of *Living in Bondage*. Opa Williams elaborates,

At that time, I also left NTA. My point is that a lot of us acquired the technical knowhow from NTA. The stars and talents were also those who came from NTA, stars that featured in soaps like *Ripples*, *Checkmate*, *Third Eye* ... that was how the evolution started from nothing and disarrangement.

However, the regeneration was not sustainable due to certain logistics that were constrained by dishonesty and greed. Inasmuch as filmmakers like to blame marketers for the deterioration of the industry, Opa Williams maintains that producers instigated duplicity and distrust within the industry by defrauding marketers, diverting film fund to personal use. A

possible regeneration of the video industry was halted as marketers took over production. Kenneth Nnebue, the prolific marketer of both Yoruba, Igbo and English video films for instance, started off as the executive producer of *Living in Bondage* (1992), producer of *Glamour Girls* (1994), among others, and multi-tasked in *The Maid* (2004) as the executive producer, producer, writer, director. Rather than witnessing a sustained influx or presence of professionals, the industry recorded an exit of formally trained filmmakers who abandoned the industry to learn-on-the-job and amateur filmmakers. This led up to the video boom era and eventual decline of profitability due to oversaturation within the industry. Bearing semblance to a slum in need of revitalisation, the industry required an overhaul of its filmmaking practices. By 2009, Okechukwu Ogunjiofor narrates, “we realised we could not do anything to revive the industry but to go back to the cinema”. At the time, multiplexes were already being opened by Silverbird and filmmakers were gaining further training to better their craft. Films like Stephanie Okereke-Linus’ *Through the Glass* (2008), Kunle Afolayan’s *The Figurine* (2009) and Chineze Anyaene’s *Ijé –The Journey* (2010) were produced after their graduations from the New York Film Academy. This was a prompt for other filmmakers like Obi Emelonye⁷¹ who then believed that “Nollywood was ready to appreciate everything I had wanted to bring on earlier”.

Universality, professionalism, distinction, aesthetics and elitism distinguish contemporary or new Nollywood filmmaking practice from the old. Old filmmaking practices that informed and shaped *Living in Bondage*, according to Emelonye, valued commercial viability and populism in production and consumption and these in turn were predicated on the technology and level of knowledge available in the industry. The filmmaking practice from which *Living in Bondage* emerged was neither “about making beautiful work, a work for the discerning few nor to be kept in a museum” (Obi Emelonye). The practice was crude

⁷¹ Oral interview conducted with Obi Emelonye on 08 January, 2016.

and there was ignorance, not film of business, but in the art of professional filmmaking. Ogunjiofor acknowledges that the blockbuster was an oral transaction with no written agreements, no written script (except a sequence outline) and no regard for standard filmmaking practice. Akin to a guerrilla production, the film makers “gathered people who could interpret the scripts and are fluent in the (Igbo) language. We taught them the scenarios and directed them on what to do, especially on idioms and expressions and where to drop them” (Okechukwu Ogunjiofor). The industry’s crudeness resulted from the social and economic situation of the country at the time. Shooting on and distributing straight to VHS cassettes was an economic decision that re-defined filmmaking within the Nigerian film industry. It targeted the common man.

Elitist in nature, filmmaking and filmmakers are abandoning issues that surround and affect the common man. Unlike *Living in Bondage* that tells a global mass story relatable to by any person in Nigeria, Africa and beyond, contemporary Nollywood stories tackle issues which may not be un-relatable to the masses, but primarily affect the elite and wealthy class. Steve Gukas’ *93 Days* (2016) centres on the importation of the Ebola virus into Nigeria by a foreign diplomat and the sacrifices made by the middle class to contain it. *Queen Amina* (2017) may be the tale for the girl child and aimed at empowering her, but it focuses on a certain girl born into monarchy. Amina’s story, according to Ogunjiofor, has the capacity to inspire both the rich and poor. However, it has an immediate relatability to the upper class. With rising comparison of filmmaking practice in Nollywood to that of Hollywood, practice in the industry is becoming concerned with middle class acceptance and respectability. Professor Shaka⁷² opines that the changing filmmaking practices are driven by filmmakers deciding to make films for specific audiences “as obtainable in Hollywood”. Charles Okwuowulu adds that contemporary Nollywood imitates classical Hollywood narrative

⁷² Oral interview conducted with Professor Femi Shaka on 22 March, 2016.

techniques, emphasizing production values and abandoning traditional Nollywood overacting archetypal characters.

The amount of research, budget size, expertise and planning that went into the creation of *Queen Amina* substantiates the quest for quality, improvement, flamboyance and innovation which characterize contemporary filmmaking practice within the industry. Ogunjiofor's twenty-one-year research on the project brought him into communication with five successive governments of Nigeria, beginning with General Sani Abacha's administration (1993-1998). It connected him with the twelve Northern Emirs who set up various committees to assist him with the research and brought him in contact with researchers from the Washington Research Institute. As a story centred on a wealthy protagonist rather than the typical working class, urban poor or poor rural dweller, *Queen Amina* required huge budget to portray the affluence she was born into. Unlike *Living in Bondage*'s minimal budget provided by one investor, *Queen Amina* required more than Bank of Industry's maximum loan of fifty million naira (£119,344). With eighty-six crewmembers and over five hundred and twenty cast members, and requiring a fresh reconstruction of semblances of Amina's royal dwelling, constructions of props and costumes, the project, at its final stages of post-production, gives Ogunjiofor a twenty-one-year worth of satisfaction. *Queen Amina* (2017), shot exclusively in the North and with five hundred and twenty Northern artists, is expected to bridge the dichotomy between the Northern (Kanywood) and Southern (Nollywood) film industries in the country.

Since making *Living in Bondage*, *Nneka the Pretty Serpent*, *Circle of Doom*, *Brotherhood of Darkness*, Ogunjiofor has availed himself to further training in filmmaking at the University of Southern California, a step which he agrees has impacted on his creativity and filmmaking skills. Upgrades in camera technology has warranted that pictures can be captured and stored in high definitions. Innovations in editing allows for colour corrections

and sound filtering. *Living in Bondage* was recorded on super VHS, a camcorder popular for amateur and semi-professional productions. Justifying the twenty-three years between them, *Queen Amina* was shot on an Alexa digital camera with extended capabilities, producing sophisticated image and better noise management. Produced after long and thorough planning as well as research, Ogunjiofor believes *Queen Amina* will outdo *Living in Bondage*. His target that the latter film would, in 1992, reach a hundred homes at the cost of three hundred naira (£0.75p, \$0.95c) was exceeded as *Living in Bondage*, according to the filmmaker, sold over twenty-million-naira (£50247, \$63583) worth of videos. In essence, *Living in Bondage*, sold directly to the consumers on VHS, reached an approximated sixty-six thousand, six hundred and seventy homes. *Queen Amina*'s cross-cultural theme, quality as well as the benefit Nollywood as a brand now offers, promises a wider audience. Given the amount of planning that has gone into its production, it is expected to have a wide distribution following the industry's current pattern of festivals, international and national cinema distributions, Video on demand (VOD), pay per view TV (PPV TV services), online platform distributions, corporate exhibitions, and perhaps community centres before it eventually gets on the DVD. This distribution pattern purports that unlike for *Living in Bondage*, mass audiences will have to wait until the film gets on the format they are able to afford. Thankful for mass audience patronage, Ogunjiofor believes its time to professionalise the industry, including film distribution.

Professionalizing production but essentially distribution implies that cinema becomes the first window of distribution. Since the state has not made any provision for local cinemas, especially in the rural areas, this will potentially disenfranchise Nollywood's original mass audience from immediate consumption of products upon their release. Conversely, professionalism will warrant that the industry enjoys further interactions with corporate organisations. As noted in chapter six, the involvement of corporate bodies ensures sustained

financing and effective state policies guarantee structure. However, these will equally bring about a regeneration that will further sector the industry or translate to gentrification that will displace informality as well as some filmmakers and audience members. An anticipation of the later brings about the tension between filmmakers and the state. Already state involvement in the industry is creating class separations indicated in the old and new Nollywood labels. I discovered that industry players relate to these labels as a category for individual filmmakers. They fail to perceive them as an evaluation of practice, a transformation evident in evolution. Ironically, they appreciate that the industry is evolving, but perceive the labels as an attack on practice, derogatory and separatist. There is thus a general belief among them that rivalry exists between the old and new Nollywood. While the new Nollywood looks to the state and formal organisations, old Nollywood continues to resist state involvement on the grounds that the industry began and existed outside state interventions. There is concern therefore over the consequence of regeneration or gentrification on the filmmakers.

7.3 From Old to New Nollywood: Displacement and Sectoring

The filmmakers interviewed for this study offer disinvestment as part of the reasons for abandoning straight to video distribution in favour of cinema. The piracy susceptible model of distribution remains unfavourable for large budget filmmakers and reliable structure of cinema distribution provides investors with opportunity to redevelop the industry. Disinvestment and redevelopment cannot be dissociated from the gentrification process which leads up to displacement. Gentrification in urban development occurs following a period of marked disinvestment in infrastructures providing investors an opportunity for gainful redevelopment; a redevelopment that results in the influx and expansion of professional middle and working class population within the areas. The renewal which their

presence introduces into the area develops into a regeneration that transitions into gentrification with sustained funding, media promotion and favourable policies, bringing about displacement of the initial occupiers of the area. Like urban gentrification, underlined by renovation, aesthetics and progression, media gentrification highlights glamour, quality and aesthetics. Accordingly, Ganti (2012) offers, gentrification in the film industry manifests via “quality, improvement, and innovation” that displaces the “poor and working class from the spaces of production and consumption” (4). With these qualities currently observable in the new Nollywood, I examine in this section the implication of regeneration and gentrification for the industry players and their practice. As noted in chapter six, although regeneration and gentrification have come to mean the same thing, I adopt regeneration as a step below gentrification.

Having discussed in chapters five and six manifestations of gentrification in contemporary Nollywood, in the above section, I now discuss this in the production of Ogunjiofor’s *Queen Amina* (2017). With over twenty years of planning, a budget larger than the Bank of Industry’s fifty-million-naira loan could fund and a cross-cultural African story, expectations are high for the Nollywood picture which upholds womanhood and promises girl-child empowerment. Unlike *Queen Amina*, *Living in Bondage* enjoyed a straight to video distribution. Telling a mass audience story and sold directly to the homes of the target audiences, it benefitted from wide patronage. The masses have been recognised as Nollywood’s major audiences within Nigeria and Africa. They have remained faithful and dedicated consumers of the product, its quality notwithstanding. Opa Williams posits, “up till now, some Nollywood audiences see any kind of film no matter how badly done because they do not comprehend quality sound or picture. Their interest would be in the stars

featured". Lonzo Nzekwe⁷³ corroborates, recalling his experience while searching for a local distributor for his *Anchor Baby* (2010)

One of the marketers I met told me my packaging was too sharp, too clean, too good for his audience. He literally explained to me that his audiences were dumb. He said my film was too high class for them, ... He wanted a story 'dumped' down for the audience.

Professional filmmakers are currently overlooking this group of audiences, reserving them for the last while targeting the socially elite and the middle class audiences who can afford the luxury of purchasing cinema tickets. While interacting with filmmakers, I gathered two sets of responses as the possible explanation for the change of interest in audience target. One set believes it is a measure for recouping investment. With larger budget, audiences need be sought at different distribution levels, starting with those who can afford to pay more. DVD as last distribution channel becomes both an economic strategy and intellectual property protection scheme. Unanimously they cite lose of products control to pirates once they hit the DVD market. These set of filmmakers hold that they make films for the consumption of everyone who desires to see them. Kunle Afolayan offers that he tells stories with universal appeal, hence his films travel far and wide. To make return on his investment, he distributes his films strategically.

Those who cannot afford to go to the cinema can see it on the TV when you sell the TV right. Somehow everybody is catered for eventually, but to have return on investment, you have to first of all explore the first level of distribution where you get to sell at premium.

Zeb Ejiro, who has successfully experimented tiered distribution with *Domitila* (1996), offers a similar strategy to filmmakers who target the broad-based audiences. For *Domitila*, beginning with middle class resident areas like Ikoyi and Victoria Island, Lagos, Ejiro's viewing centre exhibition went down to the then Ajegunle slum before eventually making the

⁷³ Skype interview conducted with Lonzo Nzekwe on 09 February, 2016.

VCD run. For his *Pure Instinct* (2016), Ejiro proposes a cinema-high institution-community centre distribution pattern which equally forestalls need for the DVD. However, due to the limited availability of community viewing centres across the country, DVD sales promise easier, better and wider reach to audiences, especially in the rural areas. Moreover, the interval between exhibition at the different distribution levels presents possible disenfranchisement.

The second set of directors and producers believe that every filmmaker needs to decide on a target audience for each picture and tailor distribution according to their means. Opa Williams strongly thinks films that are put straight to the DVD are targeted at the mass audiences while those made for the cinema target the elite and urban middle class who can afford the luxury and enjoy the proximity of cinema houses. Every picture tells the experiences of its target audience and must therefore choose a distribution method most convenient for the audience it addresses. Stephanie Okereke-Linus corroborates on the necessity of understanding target audience in the business of film. She put the award winning *Dry* (2015) on DVD in November, 2016 for easier reach to its universal audience target. Her *Through the Glass* (2008), however, is yet to be put on DVD.

Although every film ends up eventually on DVD, this section investigates the interval between the initial release of a picture and the time it finally gets to the mass audiences on DVD as displacement resulting from gentrification of practice. I question the apparent neglect of the mass audiences in favour of the wealthier class. While filmmakers argue that this does not amount to displacement, they agree that sometimes, a certain class of audiences will have to wait longer before seeing a film. The Indian cinema once experienced such shift in audience imagination. Ganti (2012) posits that in Bollywood, “the shift from targeting mass to targeting niche audiences is celebrated by filmmakers, journalists and economic analysts as a sign of the maturation of filmmaking” (316). For Nollywood filmmakers, the

rising number of cinemas and multiplexes in the country and the increasing opportunities to screen in cinemas across the world are changing the dynamics of film production, distribution and consumption within the industry. Like in the then gentrifying Hindi film industry, films are now essentially made for “masses and classes or only for the classes” (Ganti, 2012:314).

Nollywood is regenerating into an audience target conscious industry. The Asaba film makers cater for the general masses and thus distribute their films straight to DVD, maintaining the *Living in Bondage* blueprint. The campus film genre according to Haynes (2014), also adopts the blueprint, but primarily targets a younger generation whose affluence and differing tastes and cultural orientation inform the content. Pointing out Emem Isong as the major upholder of such films, Haynes (2014) adds that campus film genres are fundamentally romantic comedies and drama that project the new urban rich young men and women. Isong’s films discuss issues that surround the lives of young urban rich. Examples include *Lagos Cougars* (2013), *Weekend Getaway* (2012), *Champagne* (2014). The large budget, high class films form a third category that caters for the classes only. Catering for the classes does not suggest they do not eventually get to the grassroots. Haynes (2014) believes sectoring is a necessity for the industry. Although the author does not expatiate on why he believes so, he notes that targeting specific audience class has the capacity of limiting patronage. Sectoring will imply that certain class of audiences are left out at certain points in the distribution plan of a film.

I further argue that the influx of young professionals into the industry, the recent availability of reliable funding for filmmakers with viable stories, the move to incorporate the industry into the formal political economy of the nation, the constant call for structure, standards, quality and global best practices, are regenerating the industry. The arts are a major driver of regeneration (Cameron & Coaffee, 2005) and when sustained, culminates in gentrification. Having established previously the sustainability of regeneration in Nollywood,

a gentrification of audience imaginaries may translate to displacement in terms of consumption. Glass (1964) argues that once gentrification begins, it goes on rapidly “until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed” (xviii). The change within Nollywood is perceivable and the sectoring signify the gradual and subtle displacement or relocation of consumers. As an industry originally targeted at the mass audiences, but currently only partly services them because it has to cater for the gentry and niche urban audiences, Nollywood could be said to be displacing its original audiences in its process of gentrification. Complaints of industrial deterioration as a result of the presence of untrained amateurs, culminating to the proposition of the MOPICON bill is akin to pre-gentrification observations such as recorded by Smith (2002) - “we have lost control of our towns and cities, allowing them to become spoilt by poor design, economic dispersal, and social polarization” (438). The observation called for an urban renaissance, which in Nollywood was the call for professionalism and global best practices based on those exemplified by the cinematic lingua franca – Hollywood.

The impact of sectoring on the industry as well as the effect of the interaction between these sectors remains unassessed. In the light of Nollywood’s industrial renaissance and its regeneration, filmmakers believe that they are creating audiences. In essence, that later films copied the film’s blueprint and therefore maintained its audiences, does not suggest that every filmmaker should retain same audience, especially since the blueprints now differ albeit slightly. One of my interviewees, Fred Amata, believes that as film and television audiences have demarcated themselves and co-existed, so will Nollywood’s sectors grow audiences and filmmakers that will co-exist. Thus, rather than have a displacement of audiences or filmmakers, there will be a migration from one sector to another. Teco Benson posits that the elite and grassroots audiences speak different languages and the films targeted at them need to speak such language that they understand. He adds, “it is a big challenge as it

is difficult to see someone who can cut across both the elite and the grass root”. Hence, filmmakers choose carefully their target audience and create their story based on the language such audience understands and equally distribute the films via a medium that gives them easy and convenient access.

Some other filmmakers engaged in this study believe they make films for global rather than target audiences. While discussing his film *Anchor Baby* (2010), Lonzo Nzekwe says to me, “my film was not made for a class. My film has a primal element and so appeals to people of all class”. Believing gentrification, and therefore displacement, is impossible in consumption, but inevitable in production, he adds that the filmmaker

has to move with the time and the pace things are moving. If you are doing so, then there is not going to be any type of gentrification happening and if you don’t, you have yourself to blame. Gentrification usually affords you no choice. But this one, you actually have a choice to avoid being in that statistics by improving your practice, respecting your audience, telling better stories and moving with time. Actually what you are doing is growing with the industry and growing yourself.

From my interactions with industry players, this study highlights that the sectoring in production, distribution and consumption results from Nollywood’s regeneration. It transforms Nollywood into an industry stratified according to social class. I conceive this stratification in production, distribution and consumption as gentrification-caused displacement. I define gentrification-caused displacement in film as the involuntary disenfranchisement of filmmakers/consumers from film production/consumption as more affluent producers/consumers compete for desirable economic activities. Although some filmmakers insist displacement does not occur, filmmakers like Stephanie Okereke-Linus, Teco Benson propose that filmmakers choose their target audiences and plan production accordingly. For filmmakers, availability of film fund determines what audience class they produce for. Popular audiences who do not go to the cinema due to accessibility or cost are displaced from consuming high-budget films.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined how transformations in filmmaking practices could potentially be gentrifying Nollywood. I explored factors contributing to this process of gentrification and how the government is controlling them for this purpose in order to formalize the industry, commodify it and make it taxable. I also explored the context of film production in contemporary Nollywood and how it differs from time past in order to understand the gentrification of informal film economies. Because gentrification is hard to measure (Wyly & Hammel, 1999), with no hard and fast indicators to the process, I adopted in this study, an approach that assesses distinct filmmaking practices in Nollywood over the period of its existence. An examination of these distinct filmmaking practices or contexts establishes the foundation for paralleling changes in Nollywood to gentrification which begins as regeneration. Regeneration ushers in the process of gentrification that initiates displacement, although not automatically. In urban renewal, gentrification has been broadly defined as the creation or production of space for the more affluent user (Hackworth, 2002), usually at the detriment of poorer working class. Now a global process (Lim, et al, 2013), gentrification applied to the film industry assesses the production of entertainment for the more affluent or elite class. This chapter has concerned itself with determining the effect of this state-led gentrification on film production and consumption.

I discover a potential sectoring in production and distribution whereby filmmakers distribute films via channels that are readily accessible to certain classes of audiences. According to Okechukwu Ogunjiofor, Nollywood's original mass audiences were designed to be home-based consumers rather than cinema goers. For this reason, my study concludes that a potential gentrification of the industry will have a number of implications for both industry, industry players and the consumers. Nollywood's gentrification will create tension

and class separation noticeable among the industry players and their consumers. An unsuccessful attempt will create as much division within the industry as class separation would. For Nollywood, state-led gentrification will potentially be a major challenge. This is not because gentrifying a film economy is challenging, but because of inconsistencies in policymaking and implementation and the inabilities of incoming government to takeover projects initiated by outgoing government. Formalization will transform Nollywood into a base economy, taxable and a source of revenue for the government. Whatever implication gentrification holds for Nollywood, the shift back to cinema is a necessary development. Besides aiding to protect intellectual property right and enforcing formalization within the industry, it provides opportunity for wider distribution. It offers dependable structure and better returns, but creates delay for the DVD market. Industry players involved in my study argue that this is a structural adjustment aimed at formalizing Nollywood rather than disenfranchising the mass audiences. Nonetheless, restructuring or redeveloping Nollywood in order to formalize it and accommodate higher end consumers invariably means gentrifying it. Disenfranchisement or displacement is only an involuntary and unplanned by-product of gentrification.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to understand state interest and involvement in the affairs of Nollywood. From researching the political economy of Nollywood using econo-ethnography for data collection, I have found that this is aimed at formalizing the industry in order to commodify and economize it; an attempt that is gentrifying Nollywood. Having investigated factors such as tensions between the industry and the state, the sporadic nature of state support, increase in corporate sponsorship, and an influx of professionals, I discovered that the attempt to gentrify Nollywood had two implications based on combinations of certain factors. First, due to the sporadic nature of state sponsorship and inefficient policy formulation and implementation, the gentrification process in Nollywood has been delayed. This has resulted in the creation of such labels as the new and old Nollywood. Each label represents a different class of production and consumption. This suggests that displacement is inevitable. However, I call this ‘migration’ rather than displacement because this movement is sometimes voluntary. For example, filmmakers who are waiting to recoup expenses from large budget films often decide to invest in small budget films. Second, sustained regenerative input from industry players, state and corporate bodies has led to a revamp in production quality as well as audience re-imagination. This implies displacement for producers, marketers, and potentially the popular audiences who are unable to produce/access films targeted at the upper/middle class. And it opens avenue for further research on this group of producers, marketers and audiences and how they are affected by the gentrification process.

I used the concept of gentrification to understand class separations, power struggles, aesthetics and commodification in Nollywood. To achieve this, I engaged with an extensive participant observation of the industry and interaction with select filmmakers, understanding their roles in and giving voice to their perspective of the industrial transformations. In the

first three chapters, I enquired into the political economy of film industries and the attempt to gentrify Nollywood into a national cinema. In them, I reviewed past academic works on the theories of political economy and national cinema, and the concept of gentrification which make up the theoretical framework for this study. While chapter four outlined the steps taken and methodology employed for data collection and interpretation, chapters five, six and seven considered transformations and current issues of debate in the industry and filmmakers' reactions to them. Chapter four introduced my econo-ethnography method and covered ethical consideration. Chapter five put traditional and contemporary Nollywood in perspective while arguing for a reassessment of the industry in the light of its regeneration rather than consistently defining it from a single point in the history of its development. The chapter equally engaged with questions of definitive labels, national identity and ideology that reinforce a regenerative process introducing formalization in place of the industry's pronounced informality. I found that greater state support and involvement in the affairs of the industry is contributing to a speedy formalization and elevation of the industry to a national cinema status.

Chapter six highlighted the industry's lack of faith in state involvement despite calls for government intervention in the proposed adoption of the MOPICON bill; an attempt which previously failed (Miller, 2016). The policy document is examined as an illustration of structure and power struggle within the industry with a consideration of its implication as well as benefits to the industry. Drawing on chapter one, chapter six discussed political economy of Nollywood and power struggle between different groups of filmmakers with differing interests and ideologies. I queried industry players' present infatuation with 'quality' and 'standards' as relative aspirations that could be likened to urban gentrification's fixation with 'ideal' cities. I deduced that although young, fresh incomers are united against the bill, it could be in their interest considering the challenges young, independent

filmmakers face in the industry. MOPICON has the potential to provide them with a structure that makes funding, collaborations and alliances easier to access. It could be for them, a reliable and sustainable guarantee to funding. Sustained corporate sponsorship has the capacity to introduce further structure and formalize the industry.

In chapter seven, I traced the evolution of the industry and its transformations in a discourse of quality and/or standards as observable in the productions of *Living in Bondage* (1992) and *Queen Amina* (2017). The films are significant as they symbolize distinct periods in the history of Nollywood and are produced by the same individual. I explored production and distribution processes within the industry with the aim of determining possibilities of displacement in production, distribution and/or consumption. I suggested that at this point in its history, Nollywood is gentrifying into a class conscious industry that distributes films via channels that are not readily accessible to its popular mass audiences. I concluded that this gentrification is instigated, but not led by the state and corporate organisations whose investment into the industry is bringing about a class consciousness among the filmmakers.

This study contributes new knowledge on how to incorporate gentrification to studies on emerging industries in order to understand the roles industry players, governments and corporate organizations play in the formalization and commodification of industries. State and corporate body interest in industries manifested through funding and policies contribute to transformations that regenerate an industry, making way for gentrification to occur. My approach will help decipher whether evolving economies are gentrified in the same way or differently across global industries. From looking at the process in film studies, I showed how the concept can be adopted in fields other than urban geography. By applying it to Nollywood studies, I have demonstrated how research in film economies could be further developed. I have suggested that the gentrification of evolving film economy will reposition the industry in the formal political economy, tackle the challenges of piracy, protect

intellectual property and increase revenue for filmmakers and the government. Applying the concept of gentrification to film studies prompts a closer investigation into the political economy of the film industry, an aspect of Nollywood that is scarcely discussed in academic study. Ethnographically studying the political economy of film industries provides understanding into how policies and economic decisions contribute to their evolution.

My major challenge was getting the right contacts in the government and scheduling interviews. The few contacts I was able to reach in the course of my fieldwork were irresponsive. Top industry players who served as representatives to the government offered different excuses for their inability to address questions that directly involved the state and its policies. This highlights the communication challenges between the leaders and the led within the country and the informality in the industry. For instance, the MOPICON review committee chairperson, Peace Anyiam-Osigwe, would not comment on the position of the state and/or her committee four months into a proposed three-week assignment. She maintained that her committee believed it was too early for interviews and statements. This sort of challenge not only impacted on the focus of my study, but also posed a limitation to my adopted methodology. Doing ethnography of the political economy of any industry requires an engagement with the law, custom and government. My inability to collect data directly from the state impacted on my use of political economy analysis which draws from data collected to create an understanding of political and economic systems and how they stimulate development within the industry under study. Nonetheless, econo-ethnography provided a platform for understanding and reflecting on the challenges and the political economy of emerging industries in the developing world.

Further research in this field should focus on how the audiences might be displaced. It is an important element in the study of evolving film economies gentrification, but falls outside the scope of my work. While I employed ethnography in this research, further

studies, especially on film/screen could explore other methodologies as well as narrow or expand the scope to which gentrification is applied. My study contributes towards understanding ideas and aspirations such as quality/global standards and how these can bring about a gentrification of aesthetics within film/media industries. This study opens avenue for further research on areas such as the role of audiences in the development and formalization of Nollywood, the transnationality of the industry, the prospects of distribution, especially streaming technology and the impact of gentrification of aesthetics on production and consumption. Besides diversifying film/screen/media/creative industry studies, further research in this field will help to understand how various creative elements come together to gentrify industries, their products, players and consumers.

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APPENDIX

I have selected sample interview material that include transcriptions of one face-to-face interview, one skype interview and an email interview. The face-to-face interview was with Hyginus Ekwuazi, a professor of film and broadcasting at the University of Ibadan, Oyo State. He was formerly director of the National Film Institute, and Nigerian Film Corporation. He is a filmmaker, film critic, industry consultant, a lecturer and once served as an adviser to the government on film industry matters. The skype interview was with Lonzo Nzekwe, a Nollywood filmmaker in the diaspora. Email interview was with Cynthia Nwuka, a representative of the Bank of Industry.

Extract One

Interview with Professor Hyginus Ekwuazi, conducted on 22 April, 2016 at Theatre Arts Department, University of Ibadan, Oyo State.

Interviewer: Could you kindly introduce yourself and your relationship to Nollywood?

Ekwuazi: I'm a professor of broadcasting and film at the University of Ibadan. Before I became a professor I was the pioneer director of the National film institute, Jos. I set up the institute. For a tenure, I was the director general of the Nigerian film corporation in Jos. What this means in effect is that I have seen the industry from the policy – as the chief policy adviser to the federal government on film matters. Before I went to the film cooperation and in that role, I chaired the national technical committee that drew up the national film policy. I have related to the industry in a number of ways. I teach the course, I

have consulted in and for the industry, I have been an adviser to the federal government in which capacity I have made a lot of films, I have produced a lot of films and have set up a curriculum for the BA, and Diploma in film in the country.

Interviewer: What transformations are currently reshaping the industry?

Ekwuazi: When you look at Nollywood today, you would think it became Nollywood overnight. It has gone through a process of change. We started with celluloid films. People forget that we had reversal filmmaking in this country and that was very cardinal to the birth of Nollywood. What happened with the reversal was this - by the time celluloid died off like you know, there was a vacuum, nothing was happening. So the Yoruba travelling theatre practitioners went into reversal filmmaking. By the time they exhausted the film they had in NTA, there was nothing else to do.

Someone now used the VHS and we had Nollywood directly. We went from the cine into reversal and then the home video. We are looking at the march of technology alright, but we are also looking at the way people entered the industry. For instance, during the celluloid era, you had to be a trained filmmaker to be an industry player because at that time, people shot blindly. There was no screen to view what you were shooting. You had to be trained scriptwriter, director or editor. There was nothing you simply came into during the celluloid era. So we had a core of trained people. During the reversal filmmaking era, it wasn't like that because we had the video correct – you could correct anything on video. The thing was that there was no shelf life to the reversal. It would change to virtually all the colours of the rainbow and then stop. It meant that the technology was not compliant, but it was immediate and available. When that was going, we had the VHS which took the format of the reversal in terms of you needn't be trained to do everything. It democratized the space in the industry; anybody could come in and become a player. So you see a transformation that was both technological and that was also content driven as well as the people who produced the content.

When we talk about the new and old Nollywood for instance, I wondered if there was going to be any controversy in that because there is none. It is not so much like I want to make a new Nollywood film and it becomes a type of film. No it is technology implicated. That is my understanding of the new and old Nollywood. If I make a film today and I go straight to the theatre, that is new Nollywood and if I go straight to video release, that is old Nollywood. Rather than content, you use distribution to determine the old and the new. It may seem like its content implicated because 75 – 80% of the films that go to cinema are of higher quality in terms of content. And they are of higher quality because you are dealing directly with the audience. They come there and buy the tickets and if they not like what they see, they demand their money back. It has happened in Lagos whereas, if they bought it (VCD/DVD)

out there, you cannot ask for a refund. You only discard it if not the major thing. It is distribution that makes old Nollywood the old Nollywood.

Interviewer: Can we say that some of these transformations are gentrifying the industry and thus disenfranchising certain class of audiences and filmmakers?

Ekwuazi: The audiences are not getting displaced. If you take the Hollywood tradition as an example, every work (film) ends up as a shelvable copy of a DVD. It is simply about the time it gets there, not that it does not get there. Even the films that go straight to the cinema still end up on DVD. There is that rather frightening statistics released that for every single legitimate DVD sold, there are nine cloned copies. It means that the pirates have 90% of the sales.

No one gets displaced. At the end of the day, you are looking at the man who made the film. Film is first business before it is anything else. How soon do you get your money so you can make another one? That determines where you show your film. You see it as a case of displacement because you are looking at the audience while I am considering the filmmaker. It will ultimately get to the audiences at all levels and so no one is deprived of anything. And when they eventually get on DVD, they don't sell at a higher rate despite the fact that everybody is eager to see them. If you say there is a shift, I'd agree. Does it better the filmmaker? Yes, it does. Does it professionalise the industry? Yes. But does the audience get displaced? I tend to disagree and it does widen the audience space.

Distribution is a private sector business. The federal government, under the leadership of President Goodluck Jonathan, released the Nollyfund for filmmaking, film infrastructure (ie, if you show evidence that you had a functional theatre, you could get fund to build another one) and there was the training fund (with which some filmmakers were sponsored to the US for three or four weeks). The government did the best it could. Distribution can not be organized by the government. Take Emeka Mba's New Distribution Framework (NDF). It was the government trying to establish a channel of distribution. He tried to structure film distribution like the banking sector. He created distributors on national, regional and community levels, but they never functioned. It is private sector business and the best you could do is provide and enabling environment for it to work. The framework, barely two or three years old, was stillborn.

Interviewer: Is 'old' and 'new' Nollywood a separation that is class implicated?

Ekwuazi: Old or New Nollywood is not demarcating. If we try to compare it to Nollywood or Bollywood we would be looking at a different kind of history entirely. It is totally different. Like I said, we are looking at technology that is available as well as the distribution channels available. No matter how you stretch the argument, that is what determines the old or the new. Remember that when you want to have the cinema run, you go into contractual agreement

with the cinema house. First and foremost, you won't put it on DVD until it has finished the cinema run. There are too many things that are implicated that call for professionalism. You could then argue that these films (new Nollywood) are better in quality. But it doesn't always follow that way. I could make a shoddy film and decide to take it to the cinema. It will depend on which cinema wants to accept it given the kind of agreement I did sign with them. But if someone claims he's making a film where the production values are differently driven, therefore I am making a new Nollywood film, that is buncombe.

New Nollywood, old Nollywood, big Nollywood or small Nollywood – where the English, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba make up the major or big Nollywood and anything of the other tribes – Benin, Nupe, Igbira etc make up the small Nollywood. They are convenient labels to make things easy for comprehension. It's no big deal. You could have an old hand make a great film and distribute straight to the DVD on a quality better than somebody who goes to the cinema. That you are old does not necessarily make you worse than someone who is new. It is a label on how the film was distributed. And those who go to the cinema, they tend to be people with their art on other distribution channels and then feel confident

New Nollywood, old Nollywood, big Nollywood or small Nollywood – where the English Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba make up the major or big Nollywood and anything of the other tribes – Benin, Nupe, Igbira etc make up the small Nollywood. They are convenient labels to make things easy for comprehension. It's no big deal. You could have an old hand make a great film and distribute straight to the DVD on a quality better than somebody who goes to the cinema. That you are old does not necessarily make you worse than someone who is new. It is a label on how the film was distributed. And those who go to the cinema, they tend to be people with more courage. People who are sure, who have tested their art on other distribution channels and then feel confident that they can do it this other way. So it begins to look as though they make better films.

Interviewer: Are these sectoring and labels relevant?

Ekwuazi: It happens in an emerging industry. Even today we talk of new generation Nigerian writers, second and third generations. Someone is now asking, if you are talking about English and American writers, what generation are you talking about? Everyone has lost count of this or that generation. How do we talk of American literature today? We no longer say first or second generation. But because we are emerging here, we can talk about generations. They are labels that are functional because we are dealing with an emergent industry. Hollywood evolved a long time ago and so these labels cannot apply. Take Kanywood as instance which dissociates itself from Nollywood. These are characteristics of emergence. In Hollywood there are also ethnic (or minority)

films. But here, they distance themselves from the larger body. At the end of the day if you are making a Nigerian film, it is a Nigerian film. It doesn't matter whether it is made in Igbira.

Interviewer: Bearing this emergence in mind, how do think Nollywood should be redefined to factor in boundaries?

Ekwuazi: Why would you want to redefine the industry? Lawyers define everything in a contract and then define the definition and they lose you in the process. What is Nollywood? There has been this question raised on the nomenclature. Why are they not simply called Niger films – films from Nigeria. Take the films as they are and then see that it is that makes a Nigerian film. There wont be a global definition of Nollywood. It all depends on what emphasis you are laying. That is what would attract you to a particular definition. Someone would say Nollywood is an industry that tells Nigerian story. Yes, that is what you are looking for at that time, so you take that. The whole idea of defining Nollywood is purely academic. When I teach film class, not film studies class, that issue doesn't bother us. Are we breaking our heads today over African literature? Don't we know what African literature is today? Simply because we didn't try to see African literature sandwiched between two greater literary traditions the way Nollywood has been put between Hollywood and Bollywood. An American coming to define Nollywood would lay emphasis on the low budget. Why? He is converting. When people say that Nollywood is a low budget film industry, I laugh. Considering the amount of money available to an average Nigerian family, will you call it a low budget film? So, you see, we are using a term that doesn't apply. Five million naira is spent on a film and it is called low. Low in relativity to what? To the minimum wage?

Interviewer: What is MOPICON and what is its relevance to the industry?

Ekwuazi: The MOPICON idea came from the hope that the guilds would sit in council in order to enforce a legislation. MOPICON was drafted in the year 2000. While the document has undergone some doctoring, between then and now, my attitude towards it has changed. I was at the forefront advocating for its implementation, but I am not keen on it anymore. Its not that MOPICON is not relevant, there are more immediate things gov't can do. Why do we need MOPICON? Hollywood does not have it, but it is a heavily guilded industry. My argument for the establishment of MOPICON was based on two things. One was to align the motion picture industry to the larger industrial subsector of the national economy and secondly, to professionalize filmmaking- to make it bankable. The industry was not bankable until a few years ago. These two needs have already been met. The pressing need of the industry right now is fund. The Nolly project fund proves that if the filmmaker has access to funds,

he can get as professional as he can be. We don't need MOPICON anymore, but an endowment for the arts. In the US for instance, if I made a film that would project a positive aspect of America culture, the board of trade would waive any fee for me to export it. That is how government buys into film. What we need is how government can buy into production and generate money for filmmakers. The urgency we had to call for MOPICON is no longer there.

Interviewer: What does it contribute to the repositioning of Nollywood in a formal political economy?

Ekwuazi: How do we determine that Nollywood is not positioned in the formal political economy of the country? When Ngozi Okonji-Iwuala was speaking on rebasing the economy, film figured prominently. And you talk of an industry that exists outside the formal sector of the economy, yet it contributed massively to the rebasing of the economy. You need to re-examine the whole economic tenets. Textbook economics don't work here. You say this industry is outside the formal sector and yet it is used to rebase the national economy. While we were in project Nollywood, what we tried to do was capture filmmakers in the tax nets, bringing them into the formal sector of the economy. That validates my point that MOPICON is not an immediate need. The industry is already subtly being formalized, registering with the formal affairs commission already captures you. An evidence of tax payment for one year is enough to kick start the formalization process. There needed to be a lawyer.

Interviewer: What is the place of Nollywood in National cinema discourse?

Ekwuazi: Film is first business. When my classmates in the US shoot films, you will find accountants, lawyers on set, making sure you are keeping within the production budget, contract, etc. this is because you are dealing with business. Nollywood too is business. Everything we are doing, everything the government is doing including MOPICON is to make film business. Nollywood is redefining filmmaking in Africa. It is the greatest thing we have in Africa today. In conventional discussion, national films are taken to be films that have been successful reflective in the box office grossing. It is what is called the concept of the classic. The concept of the classic is different in film from any other work of art. Dickens, Shakespeare, Achebe are classics. This means that more people have read Achebe now than read him when he first came out. That is the concept of a classic. A film is designed that more people will see it as time progresses. What happened with films like *Gone with the Wind*, *Four Funeral and A Wedding* or *Sound of Music* is that it

subverted the classic. So instead of more people seeing it upon release, more and more people are seeing it as it goes back into time.

So on the question of a national film, you are asking for that film that could be termed a classic. Not in terms of the heartbeat of the culture. No filmmaker sets out to make a national film. He'd rather set out to make a classic. That way he would be smiling to the bank.

END

Extract Two

Excerpts from interview with Lonzo Nzekwe, Nollywood filmmaker based in the diaspora, conducted via skype on 9 February, 2016.

Interviewer: Could you kindly introduce yourself and your relationship to Nollywood?

Nzekwe: I am a Nigerian filmmaker based in Canada. I am a self taught filmmaker. I taught myself how to make films just by watching a lot of behind the scene footages and online tutorials on how to make films. I also trained as an editor and music recording engineer which I have certifications in.

Interviewer: What does 'self-taught' mean in Nollywood?

Nzekwe: Self taught is subjective. In this day and age, you do not necessarily sit in a school for four years. I read audio books and do that while I work or drive. It therefore depends on individual. Perhaps the so-called 'self taught' filmmakers simply picked up a camera and began shooting. That is not being self taught. I am proudly a Nollywood filmmaker. Nollywood is a lifestyle. A lot of people are only trying to separate the industry that has been built and we are fortunate to come to. Granted that there were no cinemas when the industry started, but there would still not be cinemas now if the industry hadn't started.

Interviewer: How do you perceive the old and new Nollywood separation? Where do you belong?

Nzekwe: There are Nollywood films that are classics that inspired a lot of actors and filmmakers. I do not want to be put in any type of box named new or old Nollywood. I think the titles are created by a bunch of people who want to separate themselves from something that they don't like. It is an evolutionary

process. Things evolve and Nollywood is evolving. It can never remain on that level as it was when the film *Rattle Snake* was made. Things are supposed to get better with time. If you look at the industry from the beginning of time, you can see the trajectory of that growth. It is not static, but constantly evolving. Old or new Nollywood, it is still Nollywood. Take out the Nollywood and you have old and new which do not make any sense. Granted, we are the new filmmakers making films now, but it is that same industry. The only difference is that we have better cameras, we have more money now, we are taking more risk and the world is seeing Nollywood more. Eventually Nollywood would grow to be on the same level with Hollywood as people see it now, but as it stands now, Nollywood cannot be thrown aside because the old ones are untrained.

Take old Hollywood films like *The Bicycle Thief* and others for example. I mean take a look at that and what they are doing now, I mean the quality and all, but there are still classics among them. Up till now, there are still crappy movies coming out of Hollywood. There are old filmmakers who make bad films and new filmmakers who make horrible movies too.

Interviewer: Nollywood is constantly evolving. As a player, how would like the industry to be redefined?

Nzekwe: Since the industry is evolving, if we redefine it now, we need to keep redefining it everyday. The only way to redefine it is by making quality contents. To make a quality content, the story is key before anything else. If you have a great story, the audience can forgive you for having the bad camera or not having enough money to shoot the project.

I differ from other filmmakers because I respect my audience. If I think you are dumb, I will feed you with stuff suited for the dumb. I was at Alaba market in 2011 while trying to do a DVD for my film *Anchor Baby*. So I went there with my package. One of the marketers I met there told me my packaging was too sharp, too clean, too good for his audience. He literally explained to me that his audiences were dumb. He said my film was too high class for them, but he hadn't seen the film. He only heard the buzz and wanted to market it. He wanted a story 'dumbed' down for the audience. I asked if he understood that the world we live in is evolving and getting smaller as a result of the internet. I made him understand that in a couple of years from now, he wouldn't have a market as a DVD seller because audiences are connecting online and are learning. You never get a perfect movie, but if I see my audience as smart, it will take me a lot longer to make sure my script is on point so that I don't feed you with something that would make you question my intention. This separates the great filmmakers from others.

Interviewer: Are contents such as yours and the channels of distribution aimed at certain audience class?

Nzekwe: My story appeals to everybody. If you look at every great story, there is a primal element that anyone, regardless of race, can connect with. If you tell a story with a primal element in a universal way, then the story is pretty much for everybody. Obviously when you are doing business, it is targeted to a point, but you need to play by the rules of the particular industry. It is a strategic business. You need to play by the rules in order to reach a wider audience. Going transnational does not necessarily formalize the industry. Going transnational only allows more people to know about the Nigerian film industry; it broadens the scope and lets more people see Nigeria and Africa in a different light. I think the industry can still be formalized without it going transnational or even if people like me were not making films.

Interviewer: Is going transnational as well as formalization of the industry evidences of a gentrifying industry?

Nzekwe: I do not really see what is occurring as gentrification or possible gentrification because same way films have been released in the past is same way they are still being released today in Nigeria. The only difference is that first window now becomes the cinema – before it used to be straight to DVD. My film *Anchor Baby* still went to DVD. People still get to see these movies. My film was not made for a class. My film has a primal element and so appeals to people of all class. And with advancement in technology, it is only a matter of time and people in the rural areas and villages will get online and have access to VOD which is the new DVD. I think people have more phones now in the villages than they had DVDs. With time people can watch movies on their cellphones. They therefore will have more access to films than when they had DVDs. Eventually data would be cheap for people to have access to watch films. That gentrification is not going to be happening in terms of the audience.

At the pace technology is moving now, if you want to use the term gentrification, then that's on the filmmaker. He has to move with the time and the pace things are moving. If you are doing so, then there is not going to be any type of gentrification happening and if you don't, you have yourself to blame. Gentrification usually affords you no choice – poor people moving out and rich people moving in – just like what happened in Brooklyn. But this one, you actually have a choice to avoid being in that statistics by improving your practice, respecting your audience, telling better stories and moving with time. Actually what you are doing is growing with the industry and growing yourself.

Speaking from experience, I was the first Nigerian filmmaker to get on iTunes and the first to put a film on some VOD platform, I mean the TVOD (transactional VOD). A lot of people were scared to do it because they were being weary of piracy. But if I don't make it accessible for the people to see, when you find a pirated copy, you will buy it anyway due to its publicity. My job as a producer, director or writer of a film is to put that film where it is available to the consumer at a price he can afford.

I do not think it is a strong argument to make because in this day and age, people have better access to films than in the past. People in the villages, if they can afford a phone, they can afford to pay 300 naira for a movie. I know people that are poor and I know people that are rich and I know that Afrinolly makes films available at about 100 naira (subscription fee). Yes, data is expensive. I actually paid more for data in Nigeria than I pay here in Toronto, Canada and I still didn't get great quality. But eventually it would come down. Google and Facebook are planning to put balloon satellite Wi-Fi to give internet to people around the world. When this happens, people will have better and easier access to movies than they did when we had VCRs and DVD or VCD players.

Interviewer: How is the government contributing or could be contributing to this process of formalization?

Nzekwe: One political way the state could intervene would be something they are currently doing, but not doing correctly. And that would be distribution. They could help business people in Nigeria set up distribution channels like the cinemas, VOD platforms and other distribution avenues that can allow filmmakers recoup the cost they used in making the film. When there are enough screens to showcase the movies, it becomes easier for people to invest. When I released my film, there were only seven cinemas in the whole of Nigeria. Today, there are over twenty cinemas. It is gradually growing, but more should be done even before giving filmmakers money to make films. Even for people in the rural areas, instead of waiting for the movie to get on VOD or DVD, it would be worthwhile to bring the cinema window to them. Community centres could be built and the audiences charged less for viewing films at the same time as other people in the major cities. The government has to sustain the industry.

Look at the OSCARS. Look at the great guys that did not get any nominations. Why? Because they do not have an industry, they have no power, no say. We have that in Nigeria and it is called Nollywood. We have to respect that. Even if I do not like a filmmaker who made a crappy film twenty years ago, I still respect that hustle. The hustle of someone who refused to look at other industries, but created his own to tell stories the way he wanted. You could buy professionalism, but not the hustle of that dude who created Nollywood. It

is called passion and you cannot pay for it. They therefore deserve respect for what they have done. Look at what it has become. If someone like me comes in 20 years down the line and start talking down the side of my neck, that is disrespect. People will come after us who would do better than us. Will they say Lonzo was garbage? I wouldn't want that. I would want them to recognize my work like I recognize films like *Rattle Snake*. I know what I am capable of, so I don't need to denigrate other people's work to come to draw attention. We are simply being creative. It is not real and so not worth the castigation.

END

Extract Three

Excerpts from an interview with Cynthia Nwuka, a representative of the creative industry group in Bank of Industry, conducted via email on 16 July, 2016.

Interviewer: What is BOI and what are its objectives?

Nwuka: The Bank of Industry Limited (BOI) is Nigeria's oldest, largest and most successful development financing institution. It was reconstructed in 2001 out of the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB) Limited, which was incorporated in 1964. The bank took off in 1964 with an authorized share capital of 2 million (GBP).

The International Finance Corporation which produced its pioneer Chief Executive held 75% of its equity along with a number of domestic and foreign private investors. Although the bank's authorized share capital was initially set at N50 billion in the wake of NIDB's reconstruction into BOI in 2001, it has been increased to 250 billion in order to put the bank in a better position to address the nation's rising economic profile in line with its mandate.

Following a successful institutional, operational and financial restructuring programme embarked upon in 2002, the bank has transformed into an efficient, focused and profitable institution that is well placed to effectively carry out its primary mandate of providing long term financing to the industrial sector of the Nigerian economy.

Kindly visit www.boi.ng for a comprehensive information on BOI's objectives. Some details are provided below:

Vision

To be Africa's leading Development Finance Institution operating under global best practices.

Mission

To transform Nigeria's industrial sector by providing financial and business support services to enterprises.

Mandate

Providing financial assistance for the establishment of large, medium and small projects as well as the expansion, diversification and modernization of existing enterprises; and rehabilitation of existing ones.

Interviewer: What is BOI's relationship to the Nigerian Film Industry as a whole and Nollywood in particular.

Nwuka: The BOI's roles with the Nigerian Film industry are dual-purpose:
Funding of commercially viable projects.
Capacity building for entrepreneurs
The Bank developed a special funding window known as NollyFund to support film makers/producers. Details of the fund are available on BOI's website.

Interviewer: What is NollyFund Project?

Nwuka: The NollyFund was BOI's initiative to make funding easily accessible to film producers with commercially viable film projects/script. Its aim is to ensure that the issue of tangible collateral is removed and the loan collateral is based on the financed film and personal guarantees among other forms of non-conventional collateral.

Interviewer: How does BOI disburse and guarantee return and continuity of this fund?

Nwuka: Disbursement: The funds are disbursed based on pre-agreed format. For instance

The Bank accredited some production companies who provide standard equipment for film production and post-production. Part of the project's budget for this is deducted at source and paid to the selected production company. The fund earmarked for the actual cast and Publicity are paid directly to the producers.

Guarantee Return: The Bank engaged with all the cinema operators to ensure that the films financed under NollyFund enjoy primetime at the cinemas. The revenue sharing from the cinema runs are also better than what obtains normally.

Collection account with a commercial bank is opened where the film proceeds are domiciled and from where loan repayment are charged.

Continuity: It is expected that the films financed will pay back both interest and the principal sum. With repayment, there will be continuity.

The initial fund size is N1.0billion which would be revolving and as repayments are made the fund size is expected to grow.

In addition, the amount could be increased in line with performance of disbursed projects.

Interviewer: How does this impact on the political economy of the industry.

Nwuka: The Fund is accessible strictly by registered/incorporated business entities. It is a business relationship between the Bank and a customer. It is expected that MOPICON would bring additional sanity and professionalism into the film industry which in turn will positively impact the fund.

Interviewer: How is the Fund the bank's best way of investing into the industry? How long is this project expected to last?

Nwuka: There is the Federal Government Project Act, a grant scheme which is to support the industry. The NollyFund is the Bank's initiative. It is the best initiative presently and a good start given the fact that there are no conventional collateral requirement attached to the fund.

The fund is expected to remain one of the Bank's special products.

BOI is a Bank and is playing its role of providing financing and advisory services while other governmental agencies saddled with the other responsibilities are also expected to play their roles accordingly.

However, the Bank plays some advocacy roles from time to time on various policy and developmental issues.

Interviewer: How accessible is the Fund?

Nwuka: The Fund is open to all eligible film producers who meet the set criteria and whose script is considered to be commercially viable by the ten (10) man Advisory Committee set up by the Bank to review such scripts and other documents.

NollyFund is for the entire film industry (Filmmakers / producers).

Interviewer: What projects have been sponsored so far and how successful have they been?

Nwuka: The Bank has financed about five (5) films which are at various stages of post-production. From market review indications, it is expected that the films will be successful at the box-office.

There is hope for the industry in terms of sustained funding and support from well-equipped studios.

The Bank is addressing the distribution challenges by financing cinema chains across the country. The Bank has also financed five (5) cinema companies, a DVD distribution company. Additional investments in this regard by the Bank are expected.

Interviewer: How much control do you exercise over financed projects?

Nwuka: BOI financed some selected film production companies to ensure that the equipment that are hitherto not available in the country are procured and made available to avoid travelling outside the country to rent equipment or do post-production.

Under the NollyFund scheme, Filmmakers who apply are expected to use one of these studios for the production and post-production services. The rationale is to ensure that filmmakers/producers use some of the best equipment for quality output and to ensure strict adherence to standards.

Furthermore, there is need to ensure that the Master Copy of the films are protected from piracy and quality control is adhered to.

In the absence of a tangible collateral, this option is the best way the creative freedom of the Producer is maintained and the quality of films are not compromised.

Furthermore, the second window of funding, which is backed by tangible collateral gives filmmakers/producers the freedom to work outside the laid down rules of Nollyfund and have flexibility to use any medium to product their films.

Interviewer: Does BOI intervene in distribution agreement between the sponsored filmmakers and cinemas to ensure balanced profitability for all parties and to avoid rip-off?

Nwuka: BOI has a special arrangement with the distributors on revenue sharing. This is documented in the distribution agreement signed with the distribution companies.

The agreement has better terms than what is obtainable in the industry.

END