
Adediran Daniel Ikuomola¹

School of Social and Government Studies
Northwest University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa

Rashidi Akanji Okunola²

Department of Sociology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Adeshina Francis Akindutire³

Department of Sociology, Ambrose Ali University-Ekpoma, Nigeria

RITUALISED (DIS)ORDER: STREET CARNIVALS, TRANSGRESSION AND EXCESSES IN NIGERIA

Abstract: Carnival as an annual event has transcended numerous culture. A number of studies have principally investigated the intended economic, entertainment and/or leisure components of carnivals; neglecting the unintended social, moralistic and behavioural consequences it has on society. This study therefore examines the social vices associated with street carnivals in selected neighbourhoods. Major narratives revealed that nudity, sex, gambling, fanaticism, hooliganism, alcohol and drug abuse were major reoccurring challenges facing street carnivals in Lagos. It was also observed that the concentration of youths on weekends around football viewing centres (FVCs) contributed to the high wave of violence during carnivals. Similarly, the impact of globalisation and acculturation of foreign ideas and behaviours into street carnival was described as negative on youth and adolescent. Data for the study were collected through observations and in-depth interviews with residents and organizers of street carnivals in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Keywords: carnivals, globalisation, behavioural consequences, violence, acculturation

Introduction

Carnival has evolved to become an issue that cannot be discussed alone within the limit of a single discipline or national discourse. It has become international in many respects with the celebration and artistic display of arts, culture and glamour since the Notting Hill Carnival attracted some 1.2 million

¹ diranreal@yahoo.com

² mayeloyecaliphate@yahoo.com

³ akindutirefrancis@yahoo.com

visitors in 1999 (Batty, Desyllas and Duxbury 2002). Though attributed to the West Indian street celebration first held in 1964, it has nevertheless become a model celebration in Nigeria, especially in the streets of Lagos, at the end of every year, precisely in the month of December. With the increasing population in attendant a number of socio-cultural anomalies usually accompany the fanfare. Tensions between the residents, those who manage the Carnival, the police and local authorities and even amongst different types of visitor have grown overtime. Going by the level of Nigeria's development since independence, the country has experienced not only an enormous urbanization of its population, but also an equally spectacular real physical development and expansion of its existing cities in favour of street carnivals and major festivities (Okpala, 1984; Obadan, 2004). Street carnival in contemporary Lagos State and other parts of Nigeria has its roots in the cultural expression of the African-Brazilian returnees on the Lagos Island.

Oral tradition has traced the introduction of carnival in Lagos to a "fill-gap" incidence among the early returnees (free slaves) in the coastal locations in Lagos Island which dates back to the close of the nineteenth century and gained prominence in the twentieth century (Simpson 2007). Lagos Islanders were claimed to have reached a decision on the need to introduce one of the events that were observed and which had "kept them going" during their sojourn on the slave land. It was seen as a way of breaking the monotony of adjusting to a new environment (Simpson 2007). The strains that were involved in the adjustment procedures, coupled with the desire to be associated with some form of culture that was identified with them motivated the returnees to introduce, first the *Careta* carnival, a socio-cultural activity that was practiced in the time of slavery. Secondly, the *Fanti* carnival emerged out of the "*Careta*," which is widely accepted as the Portuguese expression for "mask" (Simpson 2007, 10). Also, it has been associated with the name "Fancy" especially among the Ologbowo residents, given its highly decorative pattern as commonly reflected on participants' costumes and environment. It started mainly, in an atmosphere of jollity as embodied in the festive terrain of dance, music, colourful costumes, typical African-Brazilian cuisine, display of competitive float and diverse entertainment acts, but not without some pockets of violence (Okoli 2012). In the ecstatic, marginal, chaotic acts of carnival, damage is done, people are hurt and some 'pleasurable' performances reflect on or articulate pain. In other words carnival can be both violent and law breaking. Within the period of carnival the negotiations between the powerful and the people are common, rehearsal becomes a ritual in the streets (or the social domain), and not with solemnity but laughter.

The laughter comes through the breaking of societal rules which are deriding, revitalising, ambivalent or Janus-faced. According to Presdee (2000, 33); under the 'unbearable' rationality of modern life, acts of carnival become a

daily need for social survival. Its entertainment and tourism potentially cannot be overemphasised, regarding the amounts of foreign income generated in the Caribbean and in Europe (Nurse 2007). This paper posits through empirical evidence that carnival is one among many ways to interrogate acts of excesses, excitements, social deviance alongside criminal activities. Many scholars in the tourism industry advocate that being safe on holiday is an expected requirement for any visitor in a carnival cum tourist destination (Esu and Arrey 2009). However, it has been observed that places that develop an unsafe reputation can be substituted by alternative destinations that are perceived as safer for tourists as well as for those who reside in the neighbourhood (Bach 1996; Smith 2004).

In Nigeria, towards the end of every year, most carnivals notices are flagged off on the streets' signpost, while sometimes through the media, depending on the economic might of the residents. Irrespective of this notification and publicity, organisers of carnivals do not put adequate measures into basic logistics such as security at the planning phase of most street carnivals unlike government organised carnivals (Brunt *et al.*, 2000). The issue of crime is enormous in many developing countries especially in Nigeria where youth unemployment statistic is put at over 20 percent (World Bank 2013). Situation such as this, no doubt has got negative implications to disrupt social events and threat to socio-economic peace and stability in expected behaviour among community members during street carnivals. It is from this background that this study examined carnival as a ritualised mediation between order and disorder. Specifically, it interrogates key concerns and unintended consequences associated with street carnivals among residents in selected streets in Lagos State.

The study was conducted in Surulere a residential and commercial area located on the Lagos mainland in , Nigeria, with an area of 23 km². It is part of Metropolitan Lagos. At the last census in the year 2006, there were 503,975 inhabitants, with a population density of 21,864 inhabitants per square kilometre. The city began in the fifteenth century as a Portuguese trading post exporting ivory, peppers, and slaves, and comprises settlements that have grown from predominantly farming and fishing villages to highly urbanized settlements with a population of over 10 million people (Lagos State Government Statistics 2006). Specifically four streets (Adeshina, Ijesha, Omilani and Olakunle) were purposively selected for the study. The selection criteria were based on the regularity of street carnivals and the residential characteristics of the community. Data collection was basically through in-depth interviews with three (3) key informants and ten (9) residential landlords. The focus group discussion sessions comprised of fifteen respondents living in the study locations (six females and 9 males). Field observations of the selected streets were carried out in the last two weeks in December, 2010, 2011 and 2012. The main data was collected during and after the 2012 street carnival. The age

range of respondents was between 18 and 75 years. Content and ethnographic summaries were employed in the analysis and interpretation of data.

Street Carnival, Freedom and Immorality

Associated with Carnival festivities are the comic spectacles and rituals, involving individuals irrespective of age. In full participation were youths and children in their numbers. The active engagement of the elderly was evident during the day, but as night time comes, the atmosphere changes with the youth becoming more dominant, dressed so sporting and sexy, making it somewhat tempting to classify everyone involved in street carnival as youth. Nevertheless the involvement of adult/aged population is not left unnoticed. Thus an electrifying atmosphere charged and connected with the lined up activities for the street carnival. Though as a temporal liberation, Bakhtin (1984) sees carnival as a time in which people come together to relieve themselves from the prevailing truth and from established order. It has also been described as a good time to oppose official feasts, marked with the "suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions" (Bakhtin 1984, 10). Just like in the Caribbean, street carnival in Nigeria is gradually becoming marked with the display of nudity and sexually. Evident are sexual inscriptions on dresses and ornaments taken as part and parcel of the glamour carnival brings. Similarly, for deviant and criminal activities are noticeable around the street corridors, while people are gathered watching the live performances of musicians and celebrities on the podium. The crowded scene is not devoid of close bodily contact, young boys and girls smooching one another coupled with the excitement of seeing an admired celebrity; some attendees get engrossed and forget themselves, giving room for pickpockets to operate. The scenery thus creates an escapist route for deviant, immoral and sexual pleasures and fantasies to prevail. Flirting among youths, adults, married and unmarried were discussed as very prevalent and not limited to carnivals alone but also common in major events

The Lagos streets' carnival as one of such events, revealed much freedom in the atmosphere, the sight of children, boys and girls, women and men, the old and the young entangling and hugging one another, with hands across shoulders and waists, some watching the musicians and deejays on parade, with keen attention, while others are keenly glued to the acrobatic display of young gymnasts, dancers, and passersby in their new and attractive gowns, jeans, paintings, tattoos, and all forms of skimpy dresses. Uncommon and the craziest dresses/fashion created uproar and generated side comments. Such unheard comments were reflected in participants' facial expression and gestures. The oldies constituted more of the conservatives who frowned at every provocative dress code, while the youth constituted bulk of those smiling at every new,

funny and sexually enticing dresses or makeup. Thus mood swings were on display depending on the two categories (conservatives and liberals), which differentiate the youth from the old.

Carnival and Flirting Opportunities

As the evenings progressed into nights, coupled with the numerous lined up activities going on simultaneously; a more conducive atmosphere is formed for people to flirt around with one another with little or no attention in the different hideouts in the streets. Night time sees less of the elderly in view. A common description by adult respondents showed that 'carnival is for the youth', 'it is a time to show love', and 'a time for all nonsense called 'love'. With the multitude of people on ground it was very difficult to capture all activities simultaneously; nevertheless, the night time was well captured through respondents' views. Engagements and participation at night time were described as a time people indulge more in all sorts of jealousy, gossips, flirtations and sexual immoralities. These were prominent in the interviews and discussions with respondents 'as normal features at carnivals; which often create room for accusations and counter accusations between lovers'. This affirms (Yarab, Allgeier & Sensibauugh 1999) findings about flirting in relationships as potential for conflict and unimaginable violence. Facial manoeuvrings showed that jealousy is always ingrained as flirting goes on in carnivals especially when individuals try to outsmart one another. Despite the violent nature flirting could take in Street carnivals, Mr. Akeem was of the opinion that it could sometimes be free of all negative and violent act 'when it is done in agreement or permission in specific situations or with known persons or certain specified categories of 'safe' people'. Thus flirting may be sanctioned as often the case in pub (Fox 2004). Majority of the female interviewees and discussants highlighted flirting as one of the opportunities street carnivals bring. This was also common among all unmarried respondents (two-third of the total respondents).

In one of the narratives, it was specifically mentioned that the relaxation of society's rules and morals during carnival days or nights was just too captivating for one not to have capitalised upon. For Ekaete: 'Carnival comes just once in a year', I believe, one must take advantage of it, especially when one is still single and searching for would be husband. On display at night were young boys and girls going the extreme in whatever they were doing, male and female dancers danced in ways totally Eurocentric in nature, different from the customary African style. A key informant and a religious bigot described such dance styles as 'dirty claiming that the devil is using carnival as a medium to possess humans all in the name of carnival'. The overall impression from the young and few elderly persons was that 'street carnival is a time

to do the things one would not have done normally'. Same was also said of men who seek for women and sexual pleasures in the open, while drunk.

The one thing we (the researchers) did not find prevalent was sex, though it was evident in some of the statements made by key informants and landlords. Nevertheless, the youth were on the defensive debunking the issue of 'sex' in street carnivals as 'a mere rumour meant to scare people away from carnivals'. Lemi: 'The rumours about sex and sexual abuse have always been there, I do not know the origin and I am yet to set my eyes on any victim or perpetrator caught in the act'. In the course of this research, children and youths were described by the elderly as gullible and susceptible to pull and pressure of what they see on carnival days'. The tendency to exhibit and take away behaviours and fashion displayed at every carnival as a trend in everyday life were described as morally corrupt and damaging to the African society. Parental vigilance and harsh reactions to children who were skimpily dressed, and those with excessive makeup affirmed that they (the elderly) were becoming more and more apprehensive and uncomfortable with the liberty associated with street carnivals.

Carnival and Sexual Exploitation: A case of a young school girl getting pregnant

During carnivals a lot of activities, planned and unplanned do take place. Many of which could not be captured in a single research or by multiple researchers. Notwithstanding this limitation, the researchers interrogated the reoccurring concerns of parents on sexual deviance in street carnival. Among the many concerns of parents, was the issue of sexual exploitation of young school age girls during street carnivals by boys and men old enough to be parents of their victims. The act and consequences were described as bringing shame to the streets, parents and the community in general. Mrs Agiri (a retired principal in Adeshina Street) narrated some of her displeasures and shock about the issue of sexual immoralities engulfing street carnivals:

...Can you imagine, children and youths cleverly hiding themselves under the cover of costumes and makeup to expose their private parts? In 2011, the carnival at Omilani street, an adjacent street, saw a girl of 14 years, raped, without anybody knowing, not until she became pregnant months later and she revealed that some boys had sex with her while the carnival was going on at night (31st of December 2011). Till date the girl cannot even identify who the boys were, because she was said to have been drunk. Same thing last year (2012), some boys and girls were caught romancing themselves just by the corner of a giant size billboard, all in the name of street carnivals.

vals. In no time the term 'carnival babies' will become an issue in Lagos as the case of ECOMOG babies⁴ in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Considering the age, the community and the psychosocial trauma the girl in question must have passed through, such as dropping out from school, the associated stigmatization in a society where teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers are frowned at, coupled with the fact that the study area is a relatively poor settlement, the hardship can better be imagined. Another, interviewee, an active participant and carnival organiser in the Ijesha-tedo street carnival did not in any way deny the atrocities a lot of persons engaged themselves in during carnivals. To him, it is the 'Caribbean, European and American influence' fancied by a lot of youth in contemporary times:

...You see, for the last two days of every carnival week (Friday and Saturday) everything changes. Youths in the streets in Lagos go wacky, with European, American and Caribbean mode of dressing and dancing. The cultural and societal norms we are used to are literally suspended, and new rules apply. For ladies, it is the time or place they meet men they do not know from Adam. Men simply walk up to available ladies, for a bottle of drink or food. Apart from the carnival what other time of the year would a man actually get back his gestures from a woman? Where else would a randy man be seen frolicking in a G-string and nipple pasties, flinging wine on all and sundry! It is only in carnivals.

Street Carnival: Display and Displeasure of Nudity

Several and consecutive field observations between 2010 and 2012 revealed that street carnivals and morality are two opposites, that do not associate with one another. The suspension of moral values was obviously in display among youths who indecently expose their bodies. Both males and females were seen with different haircuts, boys piercing their ears and noses, girls with multiple earrings, tattoo of different manners and designs inscribed and others engraved on various body parts of the body. The females were radiating in all forms of makeup, putting on skimpy dresses, short, hot panties, and others with transparent slit clothing. The elderly, parents and little ones were more conservative in their attire, approach and participation. They were adorned with local fabrics popularly called *ankara* which added more colouration to the carnival. The need however for caution was highlighted by the elderly in the community. An elder

⁴ Children born of Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) Soldiers sent for peacekeeping in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s

statesman was of the view that there is need for such fanfare, but not to the detriment of the African values and decorum:

"We need to be very careful with the way carnival is being organised. Cultural values are being threatened with the way people dance and expose their private parts and body indecently. There is no longer shame among our women, even the boys and men! There is lack of modesty! Women staying almost naked only with pants and brassieres, I don't think it is good for this state or any part of the nation; it is not our culture and I believe strongly that we should not encourage indecency into street carnivals.

From the religious point of view, a religious cleric and a landlord, warns that street carnivals brings about disrespect for the woman folks as well as making society to be loose in morals:

"In our culture, women should be respected, all their bodies should be covered, I always feel bad every December, when carnivals are being staged. "Apart from being a Muslim and a religious leader, African culture, does not permit nudity. It is unacceptable. It is bad. When something is bad we need to condemn it else society will get too loose for the future generation. Animalistic behaviours such as dancing or dressing nude should not be welcomed. A right thinking person will not accept nudity as fun in Africa."

Looking back at the history of carnival, with particular emphasis and reference to the Middle Ages, the issue of sexual misconduct and other forms of immoralities were found to have been associated with carnivals and religious rites. In Venice, for instance carnival rite was depicted by Carroll (1985) as constituting an official feast and celebration linked to the church, the feudal lords and even the state:

... Carnivals were related to one of the religious rituals, it was the last blowout before Lent. It was a time of excess, when the prohibitions on carnal satisfaction are abolished and popular creative energy is given full expression in the form of costumes, masks, songs, dances, puppet shows, poems, plays, etc (Ibid., 487). Society is in normal circumstances, ruled by the "head", hierarchy is not only suspended but inverted The village idiot becomes king; sinners in priestly vestments preach nonsensical or blasphemous sermons (Ibid., 488).

The reality of carnival as 'youth dominated event' goes beyond their numbers to the energetic and sometimes irrational displays, engagements and performances exhibited. Thus the elder seems to distance themselves from the youths as the street carnivals reaches its peak in terms of celebration, to avoid injuries and disturbances. This also indirectly empowers the youth and lessen

the cultural constrain on youths and adolescents in exposing their bodies all in the name of fun. According to Bakhtin (1973; 1984), Physical displays and exposure of one's body are paraphernalia of carnivals; and a celebration of the connectedness of the human body to the world. For Presdee (2000), carnivals involve the celebration of extreme youthfulness, orifices, sex organs, age, sex, stomachs, birth and death (Presdee 2000, 39). The body exposure (partial or full) therefore has been an important part of the socio-historical engagement and activities in the art, language and imagery that are found in most street carnivals. The period also gives room to young ones, demanding songs with lewd lyrical contents from hired deejays. On popular demands are songs from two controversial musicians

Abass Akande, the self acclaimed 'progenitor of overflowing lewd music in Nigeria' and Janet Ajilore, the "undisputed queen of ex-rated music in Nigeria'. These two artists are known among others for their open celebration of sex, alcohol and suggestive dance steps (Salawu 2012). Consecutively these two musicians' songs were favourites and featured in all the four observed streets carnivals.

Street Carnival: Fanaticism and Expression of Hooliganism

The passion for street carnivals like every other end of the year activities is evident in the number of youths (most especially males) voluntarily giving up other engagements to participate in the beautification of major entrances to the street where the carnival is taking place. Every youth would not want to be left out in the scheme of things. In the process of making carnival and lined up activities glamorous, there are several inputs from different groups of youths, in the form of gangs and fans of various football clubs. Thus there are individuals who identify themselves with specific European clubs and the colours of their Jerseys (mostly red and Blue). In Alhaji Olakunle Street, the fans of Barcelona were evident with their jerseys, caps and robes, while Manchester United fans overwhelmed others in Ijesha Street. Prior to carnival days lobbying is said to have been taken place between various fans and the organisers of the event, which eventually decides the club, logo, posters or colours to be used. Jamiu, a key informant noted that there have been instances where organisers of carnivals were accused of being corrupt and partisan in their selection of clubs and colours. Thus controversies ill feelings often arise from the choice of posters, whenever the use of a particular logo associated with any European football club such as Manchester, Chelsea, Arsenal and Barcelona among others becomes a choice. Supporters of the chosen club or clubs are seen wearing emblems of their respective clubs. Emblems and posters thus serve two purposes: (a) manifestly as a symbol of one's loyalty to a club and (b) latently

as an expression or statement of superiority over other clubs. The latter often raises discussions, heated arguments and the use of abusive words on supporters and fans of rival clubs. Fanaticism through fans behaviours have also been linked as one of the major sources of violence and hooliganism amidst the merriment in street carnivals. Narratives from residents and key informant interviewees revealed that street carnival is full of activities that are not always pleasant. A female landlord at Ijesha-road, noted that carnival has become an event used by unemployed youths and fans of European football clubs to settle scores:

There is no year, you will not hear about a serious case of violence, if not in one's own street it will be one nearby, if not in the community; then be ready to read the dailies or watch the news on television to know where it happened. There was a case of two rival football fans, stabbing each other on the 29th of December, 2012. It was revealed that these two boys were supporters of Arsenal and Manchester United football clubs, only for them to meet and argue over the superiority of their respective clubs. The argument saw them exchanging harsh words over each others, soon than later one of them smashed a bottle on the other. A scene was created.

A retiree in Alhaji Olakunle Street, expressed one of the ugly sides of street carnival in the community, which he captured as 'a time miscreants organised themselves to settle scores between and among rival groups'. In his words:

.... since the inception of street carnivals in Lagos, in the 1990s, various forms of hooliganism do occur among youths, mostly males, secondary and university students. Families are usually scared when it comes to late night programmes during the carnival days. In my own case I always advise my children not to be involved at night, because of several experiences in the past. Five years ago, the neighbouring street had incidences of gang robbery, rape and gun violence, of which a boy was shot dead by the side of a football viewing centre.

The concentration and location of football viewing centres (FVCs) at the corners (hideout) of major streets were issues linked to some of the incidences of violence in street carnivals. Papa Ogunsanwo, a key informant in the study (Adeshina Street) was of the view that FVCs centres create a fertile ground for unemployed and unengaged youths under the umbrella of 'football fans' assemble, discuss and fight over football matches. A situation he described as breeding violence not only carnival days but also on weekends (incidentally all Lagos Street carnivals are staged on a weekend).

...there is almost no street where you will not find a viewing centre, where football matches are being shown every weekend. These viewing centres are usually located in corners, which permits despicable activities during or after a football match. Closer to

the viewing centre you will find a snooker board, petty traders selling drinks, cigarettes and other stimulating substances. In some cases, it is the viewing centre owners who also double as the sellers of these unholy substances. Most especially the boys assemble themselves, with their girlfriends, showing strong support and identifying with their specific clubs. Mere looking at some of the boys and gangs, one can easily conclude that they are wayward children loitering around from one viewing centre to another. In the same way during carnivals, they come to the street and constitute nuisance. Often times they are the ones fomenting troubles and violence with dangerous weapons, prior to and during the carnival.

Based on respondents' narratives, it became clear that perpetrators of violence in Lagos street carnivals are often youths who do not reside in the streets where the carnivals are taking place. Corroborating, on this, a female trader and resident of Alhaji Olakunle Street, noted that the perpetrators of violence are usually young guys who come to hangout with their girlfriends and acquaintances in the neighbourhood hosting the carnival: '...in the event of any slight provocation or confrontation with these guys they feel offended and become violent'. Carnivals therefore create an opportunity for aggrieved youths to flex their muscles, show superiority, vent their anger on one another for past wrongs, or a payback time for perceived foes. More than ever before, there is an indication that FVCs have transformed drastically from peaceful entertainment spots to rowdy scenes of violence. Most times the causes of violence in viewing centres are attributed to the carefree attitude of the operators (Olonilua 2012). Sukunmi, who doubles as a carnival organizers in Adeshina Street and also a owner of a FVC opined that "...in viewing centres where violence breaks out, the operators probably allow their customers to drink alcohol and smoke Indian hemp (marijuana) around the premises". For Jumia, a member of the organizing committee in Alhaji Olakunle Street, alcohol intake and gambling were issues relating to violent behaviour in street carnival:

"... if a man's favourite club loses a match and he is intoxicated, he could cause trouble. "Also, gambling is a major cause of violence during carnivals. When an aggrieved person loses, he could pour out his frustration by causing trouble'.

The link between FVCs, violence and carnivals was attributed to the fact that most street carnivals are organized on weekends, which is also the time for most sporting programmes and football matches. Secondly most FVCs owners were seen to have incorporated petty kiosk and fast food joint as appendages, which are functional every other day, when football matches are not on. The economic activities around FVCs were said to have continuously brought a lot of youths together irrespective of street carnivals. However on carnival days, FVCs serve as meeting points prior to the commencement of activities, usually from midday of Saturday, all through the night to the early ho-

urs of Sunday. The blame on owners of FVCs, as responsible for creating conducive environment for miscreants was described as an unintended function FVCs have on street carnivals. An owner of one of the biggest FVCs, revealed the intended function of FVC, as a place for like minded people to relax and watch football matches:

The major objective of setting up a FVC was to create a near stadium-like atmosphere, where people of like minds would watch sports, share business ideas, seal deals, while having fun. But miscreants have also come to associate themselves with the centres. They are actually the fans who argue a lot, and sometimes engage in violent acts. They are more in number and in patronage. Thus for commercial reasons we find it difficult to chase them away.

In line with the issue of football fanaticism as expressed in the wearing of jerseys and flaunting of several flags of European clubs' (most especially clubs in English Premiership Leagues) further observations from the 2010, 2011 and 2012 street carnivals revealed a complete absence of support for local football clubs in Nigeria. There was no single flag or football jersey of any indigenous club on display or worn by participants. The publicity and support for the European based clubs in street carnivals transcend mere spectatorship or entertainment to creating identity and attachment for individuals, residents and the host streets. The youths in their numbers were seen during carnivals making countless displays of mock trophies, emblems, cartons and portraits of players and coaches. It was revealed that wealthy individuals and residents contributed to the showcasing of wares on carnival days. The exhibition and sponsorships of foreign merchandises by individuals, local and multinational corporations through the media during festive periods have been criticised as imperialistic in exposing Nigerians to foreign ways of organizing events (McPhail 1987; Mohammadi 1995; Udeze 2005; Okhakhu and Ate 2008).

One of such imperialistic criticisms is justified by the huge amount of money spent by a number of multinational companies and corporations in financing trips of their clients and customers abroad for carnivals and football tournaments (Onwumechili and Oloruntola 2013). The last decade has seen the door wide open for major conglomerates in the Brewing, Telecommunication, Food and Beverages industries among others, in financing the broadcast of European Football League (EPL) to the dereliction of Nigerian league matches. Thus multinational corporations use the mass media to colonize the minds of viewers who are mostly youths globally in order to advance the corporation's products, services and profits. The impact on adolescent behaviour is overwhelming as captured in Omoera and Ibagere (2010) analysis of media imperialism in Nigeria:

...Most Nigerian TV stations seem to have accumulatively influenced the attitude and behaviour of Nigerians, especially the youths. Today, it is rife to see Nigerian youths wearing T-shirts, rubber bracelets and caps with inscriptions such as "Chelsea FC", "Arsenal FC", "Man U for Life", "New York Lakers", to mention a few. ... The average Nigerian football fan knows more about football players and their activities in the Spanish League (La Liga), German League (Bundesliga), Italian League (Serie A), French League (Ligue 1), among others, than the Nigerian sporting scene (Ibid., 10).

The point being made implies that gradually the Nigerian television is being trapped in the web of subtle conditioning of the minds of the people, to imbibe values which make their desire for foreign culture, goods, services or ideas to unabated. A strong consumptive attitude towards foreign products was evident in the items used for decorating the street, and also most of the attires (t-shirts, and jeans) were foreign. There is therefore a connection between consumptive social attitude and the globalisation agenda which continuously buoys up the economy of the producing nation (see Boyd-Barrett and Thussu 1993).

Carnivals: Stealing and Senseless Acts

In any major social gatherings, the experiences of excitement, sensation, emotion and pleasure are widely observed, so also is the case where and when carnivals are being organised (Presdee 2000). The pleasure and glamour associated with carnivals were also opportunities capitalised upon by miscreants to steal and inflict pains on residents, participants and onlookers trapped in the excitements. The unemployed and scavengers in the neighbourhood are persons often regarded as suspects whenever cases of robbery are mentioned in street carnivals. Adedimeji was of the opinion that 'apart from the unemployed and scavengers, there are other persons with ulterior motives who perpetrate criminal acts, but often go scot-free'. In Adeshina Street, interviewees highlighted inadequate security as a problem facing street carnivals in Surulere Neighbourhood. Alarape, a resident in Ijesha corroborated thus 'even when the security agents are present, they are often indifferent and get carried away with the events and excitements'. Furthermore another respondent in Omilani puts in opinion this way:

During or after a street carnival in this part of Lagos....it is difficult for residents not to complain missing or stolen items. Smart phones and other expensive portable gadgets are stolen at random, if not properly handled. And it is difficult to accuse anyone because of the crowd. Sometimes the owner of the stolen item finds it difficult to complain, he/she is even blamed for being careless. The police and council officials often do not take such cases seriously and suspects are often let go as soon as possible.

The normalcy of stealing in street carnivals can be deduced from the statement above. Secondly, the anonymity the crowd as a personality provides makes theft cum suspects uneasy to report. Nevertheless stealing at carnival is very much frowned at as a respondent noted:

Stealing at carnival is something organisers of street carnivals often warn against. Once a person is caught or there are clear evidences that a person has stolen an item, the person is beaten till he is rescued or handed to the police. Jungle justice is often netted if the suspects happen to be caught late at night. It is so because stealing spoils the fun in any carnival.

Non residents, the unemployed and scavengers were described as common criminals and suspects in street carnivals. *Funmi*, a respondent in Omilani Street narrated thus:

...most suspects and criminals are the unemployed, young men and women from other locations. There was an incidence three years ago of a boy who was caught entering a house, going straight into the kitchen, picking some aluminium cooking pots and other metallic items into his sack. Luck ran against him, he was followed, caught, beaten and handed over to the police. He was believed to be a scavenger, who took advantage of the fact that people were on the street participating and enjoying the carnival activities.

There were other revelations of people getting drunk to the extent of not knowing when they were robbed of their valuables. A female member of the Adeshina Street carnival group, noted that 'sometimes victims get so drunk that by the time they become aware of being robbed, it is already too late to either inform security operatives or for the security operatives to get hold of the suspects. Instances like these do attract amusement stealing is taken as fun. Moveable household items such as chairs, tables, and artworks left in the verandas, are sometimes not spared by scavengers, during street carnivals. The charged ambience of carnival, excitements, emotions and the relative anonymity the crowd provides create a recipe and platform for first timers (young boys and girls) to experiment and experience the taste and feel of cigarettes, alcohol and other substances.

A number of youths were observed, engaging in deviant activities such as smoking more than one stick of cigarettes at once. The key informant in Al-haji Olakunle Street was quick to point out that 'such behaviours were common with children and youths from other communities, and not necessarily from the host street'. This suggests that some categories of youths would not attempt such acts in neighbourhoods where they are known. These acts were in form of competition between groups. It was more or less a competition of 'showing off', no money at stake, but pride in outdoing one another. As obser-

ved, the movement up and down the street of the elderly person towards 'smoking group' lowers the temple and engagement of youths involved. Sometimes they run away on sight of an elderly person. This is seen as sign of respect or guilt in African culture, in order for them not to be embarrassed. Accounts of participants taking to senseless acts of violence and destruction were not limited to fighting and arguments as described earlier but to breaking of bottles, smashing of windscreen and bashing of cars for no just reasons. These senseless acts are not by anyway features of reasonable minded person. In one occasion a boy of about 17 years, was seen with a bottle of whiskey, drunk and staggering, only for him to be guarded home when he became violent. It was a case of the liberty associated with street carnivals being abused.

Conclusion

The excitements and transgressions experienced in Lagos State Street carnivals cannot be devoid of everyday human actions and inactions as guided by order and disorder in society. Going by the observations and highlights of respondents' narratives about the occurrences and activities surrounding street carnivals, a lot of anomalies seem to have engulfed the annual event. Western and foreign cultural influences such as excessive exposure of the human body (nudity), sexually explicit dress patterns, clothing and costumes are no doubt major features of Lagos street carnivals in recent times. These have been criticised by the older generation as 'a show of shame and display of immoralities' which should be curtailed. Youthful exuberance, uncontrolled freedom, fanaticism and hooliganisms among opposing supporters of various European football clubs, and the nocturnal engagement of youths and children in immoral activities such as smoking of cigarettes, sex, gambling drug and alcohol abuse, were also highlights of the ritualised transgression and excesses in street carnivals. This study therefore calls for proper sensitization and strict regulations of conducts and behaviours during street carnivals. Lastly organizers of street carnivals, residents, parents and owners of football viewing centres (FVCs) should collaborate with the Nigerian police and private security personnel to intensify and fine tune security measures around different venues and hideouts in any street hosting a carnival in Lagos State.

Limitation of the study

The findings from this study are limited to selected neighbourhoods in Surulere Local government area, and therefore may not generally reveal the realities in other parts of Lagos State with higher socioeconomic status and go-

vernment presence. We therefore call for future researchers to conduct a quantitative study that will enable generalisation.

Acknowledgement

The authors appreciate the family of Mr and Mrs Hodonu, for their assistance during the collection of this data and the anonymous reviewers whose comments have improved the quality of this article.

References:

- Bach, S. A. 1996. "Tourism-related Crime and the Hotel Industry: A Review of the Literature and Related Materials". In *Tourism, Crime, and International Security Issues*, eds. Pizam, A. & Mansfeld Y., Y. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1973. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Michigan: Ann Arbor Press.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1984. *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Batty, M., Desyllas J. and Duxbury E. 2003. Safety in Numbers? Modelling Crowds and Designing Control for the Notting Hill Carnival. *Urban Studies* 40 (8): 1573–1590.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. & Thussu, D. K. 1993. "NWIO strategies and media imperialism: The case of regional news exchange". In *Beyond national sovereignty: International communication in the 1990s*, eds. K. Nordenstreng & H. Schiller, 177-192. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Brunt, P., Mawby, R. & Hambly, Z. 2000. Tourist victimisation and the fear of crime on holiday. *Tourism Management* 21 (4): 417–424.
- Carroll, L. L. 1985. Carnival Rites as Vehicles of Protest in Renaissance Venice. *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16 (4): 487-502.
- Eco, Umberto, Ivanov V. V. and Rector Monica. 1984. *Carnival*. The Hague: Manta.
- Esu, B. B. and Arrey V.M. 2009. Tourists' Satisfaction with Cultural Tourism Festival: A Case Study of Calabar Carnival Festival, Nigeria. *International journal of business and management* 4 (3): 116-115.
- Fox, Kate. 2004. *The Flirting Report*. Available from: <http://www.sirc.org/publik/Flirt2.pdf>
- Lagos State Government. 2006. Lagos State population. Available from: <http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng/pagelinks.php?p=6>

- McPhail, T. L. 1987. *Electronic colonialism: The future of international broadcasting and communication*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publishers.
- Mohammadi, A. 1995. "Cultural imperialism and cultural identity". In *Questioning the media: A critical introduction*, eds. J. Downing, A. Mohammadi & A. Sreberny-Mohammadi, 362-378. London: Sage Publishers.
- Nurse, K. 2007. The economics of Bacchanal: The economic impact of Trinidad and Tobago Carnival (Sunday Guardian, 14th March)
- Obadan, M. 2004. *Planning and Budgeting in Nigeria*. New Delhi: Spectrum Books.
- Okhakhu, M. A. & Ate A. A. 2008. Revisiting cultural imperialism theory: Reading the contemporary Nigerian situation. *International Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Scholarship (Special Edition – Motion Picture in Nigeria)* 3-5: 11-19.
- Okoli, Ifeanyi. 2012. *Hoodlums responsible for violent Lagos carnival*. Available from: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/%E2%80%99Choodlums-responsible-for-violent-lagos-carnival%E2%80%99D/>
- Okpala, D. C. I. 1984. Urban planning and the control of urban physical growth in Nigeria: A critique of public impact and private roles. *Habitat Intl.* 8 (2): 73-94.
- Olonilua, A. 2012. *Upsurge in drama, violence at football viewing centres*. Available from: <http://www.punchng.com/feature/upsurge-in-drama-violence-at-football-viewing-centres/>
- Onwumechili, C. & Oloruntola S. 2013. Transnational communications, attitudes and fan identity: studying Nigeria post-media reform, *Soccer & Society*: 1-23.
- Presdee, M. 2000. *Cultural Criminology and the carnival of crime*. London: Routledge.
- Salawu, F. 2012. *10 Reigning vulgar singers*. Available from: <http://nigeriafilms.com/news/17798/29/10-reigning-vulgar-singers-why-they-are-making-wav.html>
- Simpson, A. 2007. *The politics of culture and diaspora settlement in lagos: ethnographic presentation of the African Brazilian fanti/caretta carnival*. Available from: <http://www.diaspora.illinois.edu/news0607/news0607-6.pdf>. retrieved 12/1/2011
- Smith, M. 2004. Seeing a new side to seaside's culturally regenerating the English seaside town. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 6 (1): 17-28.
- Thussu, D. K. 1998. Introduction to *Electronic empires*, ed. D. K. Thussu, 1-14. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Udeze, S. E. 2005. *After the whirlwind: A discourse on international communication*. Enugu: Rhyce Kerex Publishers.
- World Bank 2013. *Nigeria Economic Report 1*. Available from: <http://www.worldbank.org/>

Yarab, P. E., Allgeier E. & Sensibaugh C. 1999. Looking deeper: extradyadic behaviours, jealousy, and perceived unfaithfulness in hypothetical dating relationships. *Personal Relationships* 6: 305-316.

Primljeno: 11.08.2013.

Prihvaćeno: 20.01.2014.

Adediran Daniel Ikuomola
Rashidi Akanji Okunola
Adeshina Francis Akindutire

RITUALIZOVANI (NE)RED: ULIČNI KARNEVALI, TRANSGRESIJA I EKSCESI U NIGERIJ

Karnevali su godišnji običaji koji se javljaju u mnogim kulturama. Postoji niz studija koje se tiču namernih ekonomskih i zabavnih komponenti karnevala koje, međutim, zanemariju nenamerne socijalne, moralne i bihevioralne posledice koje karnevali imaju po društvo. Ova studija istražuje društvene poroke koji su u određenim krajevima povezani sa karnevalom. Glavni narativi pokazali su da golotinja, seks, kockanje, fanatizam, huliganizam i upotreba alkohola i droge predstavljaju najveće izazove sa kojima se suočavaju ulični karnevali u Lagosu. Takođe je primećeno da je koncentracija omladine oko centara za gledanje fudbala (FVCs) doprinela visokom stepenu nasilja tokom karnevala. Slično, uticaj globalizacije i akulturacije stranih ideja i ponašanja u ulične karnevale je opisan kao negativan po omladinu i adolescente. Podaci za studiju su prikupljeni kroz opservaciju i dubinske intervjuve sa stanovnicima i organizatorima uličnih karnevala u Lagosu u Nigeriji.

Ključne reči: karnevali, globalizacija, poslesice po ponašanje, nasilje, akulturacija.