READING BEYOND STATISTICS: THE CONTRIBUTION OF KISWAHILI VIDEO FILM INDUSTRY IN THE TANZANIAN ECONOMY

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Abstract
This paper identifies and analyses the contributions of the video film industry in the Tanzanian economy beyond provided statistics. It highlights the challenges one could encounter in obtaining data which represent 'actual' and 'direct' contribution of the industry to the national economy. The paper also assesses the need for and the possible processes to be involved in formalizing the industry so that it contributes effectively and efficiently to the national economy. Affixing the video film DVDs/VCDs with tax stamps is argued to be one of the strategies to formalize the industry as well as to minimize piracy. This paper therefore suggests the documentation of both social and political contributions so as to demonstrate the development of the industry and its contribution to the national economy.

Key words: *Economy, Kiswahili Video films, Tanzania*

Introduction
Kiswahili Video film industry is one of the fastest growing creative industries in Tanzania. It is labeled as an industry due to the processes that govern the production, distribution and sales of its products: video films on DVDs and a few in VCDs. Creative industries, for example, are activities carried out by creative artists aimed at producing both goods and services for trading. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) categorizes video films as one of the core copyright-based

industries. They are “industries whose works are wholly or totally based on copyright-protected creative works” (Nyariki, Otieno, Sinare, & Lema, 2013, p. 18). This implies that, such works have economic value and contribute to national development. Other core copyright-based industries include photography, music, theatre (drama and dance), literature, crafts, fashion design, as well as advertising. Music and film are among the leading genres in Tanzania (Bakari, 2009; Buitrago & Mo, 2009) even though Nyariki et al (2013) identify advertisement as a leading contributor in the category.

The aim of this paper, beyond the provided statistics, is to assess the contribution of Kiswahili video film industry in the Tanzanian economy. It also unveils some challenges which contribute to the 'poor' statistical representation of the video film industry in Tanzania. Furthermore, it highlights the weaknesses of the economic values based approach as it is used to derive the contribution of the industry since it underestimated the social and political contributions.

This paper employs qualitative analysis, particularly documentary reviews, interviews and participant observation. Documents reviewed included policies, regulations and reports related to arts and culture. Interviews with various stakeholders were conducted in Tanzania between 2011 and 2014. They were conducted in three ways: face-to-face, telephone and phone messages (SMS). Most of the data was collected through participant observation during meetings, conferences, formal and informal discussions. The research involved 33 stakeholders in the film industry in Tanzania. These are seven journalists for newspapers, radio and television, eighteen buyers/viewers, four actor-producer/directors, two duplicator-distributors and two policy makers.

The document is organized into three major parts. It begins with a description of the current state of video film production in Tanzania. It furthermore analyses the contribution of the video film industry in the Tanzanian economy as well as challenges and opportunities facing the industry especially in documentation and in analysis of the data. This discussion departs from the state of the art of the Kiswahili video film industry in Tanzania from 1990s to the present. Video films produced before the year 1990s, the time of an abrupt Tanzanian video film revolution, have been excluded because most of them were not in video film format and a great number were non commercial.

The State of the Video Film Production in Tanzania

Tanzanian video film industry started in 1990s with the release of *Shamba Kubwa* video film in 1995. *Shamba Kubwa* produced by Kassim El-Siagi, had its premier watched in cinema halls in six regions in Tanzania Tanga, Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Mbeya, Mwanza and Arusha. Six agents were given rights to distribute the film in VHS tapes. El-Siagi, also produced another video film in 1998 known as *Love Story Tanganyika na Unguja*. It is safe to say that the booming of commercial Kiswahili video film in Tanzania was launched by El-Siagi not, by rhe film *Girlfriend* directed by George 'Tyson' Otieno, a Kenyan film director, in 2002 as some authors (Kamin, 2011; Mwakalinga, 2010) affirm.

The film *Shamba Kubwa* was produced at the time when Tanzanian markets were flooded by video films from Nigeria, mainly Nollywood (Lagos based English video film industry). At that time not much was seen as interesting in Tanzanian video films (in Kiswahili) as compared to Nigerian, South African, Euro-American and Asian films. Since then, the

industry continued to produce one to three video films a year and at the same time slowly competing with Nigerian products, most of the Producers depended on the Nigerian video films distribution channels. The commercial video films production picked momentum in Tanzania in the mid 2000s when Tanzanian producers and distributors managed to 'establish' a working relationship on production and distribution.

Since then, Tanzanian film producers/directors flooded the markets with multi-parallel films although these video films also known as 'Swahili films' have less interest in the artistic presentation (Mhando & Kipeja, 2010, p. 15). Three major factors, among many, are responsible for this state of affairs. One, the implementation of the neoliberal policies especially the free market economy which provided for the importation of digital video cameras mostly used for production. Two, the shift in various donor policies away from supporting theatre, especially after September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States of America. Thus, the donor funded Theatre for Development (TfD) practitioners which were supported by foreign aids had to seek for an alternative sustenance and subsequently video film became one of them. Finally, the Nigeria film industry products which Tanzanian actors and viewers had been watching for almost a decade since 1990s contributed to such rapid growth of the Kiswahili video films in Tanzania since it arouse the interest of viewers to this genre (Boehme, 2013; Krings, 2013)

As pointed out, the Kiswahili video films distribution companies such as GMC Wasanii Promoters, Mtitu Game First Quality and Mwananchi Production emerged during the booming of the Tanzania video films. Recently, Steps Entertainment, Pilipili Entertainment, KAPICO, Five Effects, Al-Rihamy and Proin Productions have emerged as major distributors who collaborate with actor-directors/producers such as the late Steven Kanumba (The Great), Jacob Steven (JB), Issa Musa (Cloud 112), Vincent Kigosi (Ray), and Single Mtambalike (Richie Rich). These individuals refer to themselves as 'big five'. There are actor/directors such as Mahsein Hawadh (Dr. Cheni), Tuesday Kihangala (Chuzi), Wema Sepetu, Jacqueline Wolper, Yvonne Cherrie (Monalisa), Jennifer Kyaka (Odama), Irene Uwoya, Aunt Ezekiel, Rose Ndauka and a few others.

Most of the commercial video films actor-directors/producers in Tanzania who started their career in theatre groups such as Kaole Art Group later moved to television drama series production and aired their series with Independent Television (ITV) between mid 1990s and early 2000s. As a result, the latter sought to establish their own production companies and got into contracts with different distributors. Their contribution to the growth of the industry cannot be underestimated. The faces of some of these actors, once they appear on cover pages guarantee for the duplicator/ distributor better chances in sales and even higher prices.

Regardless of more than two decades of 'good' performance, the industry faces two major challenges: piracy and infringement. The most popular forms of piracy are pirating and counterfeiting. In pirating, both the content and packaging are sold at cheaper prices, as it does not necessarily need the package; in the counterfeit is made to resemble almost the genuine copy. In reality, the packaging resembles the original (Shule, 2014). To address these problems various mechanisms have been carried out including putting in place some regulations such as Production and Distribution of Sound and Audio-visual Recordings Regulations (GN No. 18 of 2006) also known as Anti-Piracy Regulation (United Republic

of Tanzania, 2006) and Film and Music Products Regulations (GN No. 244 of 2013) also known as Tax Stamp Regulation (United Republic of Tanzania, 2013).

The Contribution of the Video Film Industry to the National Economy

It should be noted that there are no exact figures to indicate the monetary value and the contribution of the video film industry to the Tanzanian economy. Most of the data are based on estimates. For example Nyariki et al (2013, p. 38) estimate that video film industry contributed about 0.002% of the GDP an equivalent of 10.965 million shillings (6,800 US$) in 2009. Despite the fact that this data might be far from the reality, the report was the first one which tried to measure the contribution of the industry in the GDP. The unavailability and inaccurate data is not only a problem in Tanzania; it is an experienced in many African countries as Oladunjoye (2008, p. 63) reports that in Nigeria, “It is easier to extract water from a stone than to get reliable statistics on the home video industry in Nigeria… Even the sector's own regulatory and monitoring bodies only work from estimates and guesswork about its size”.

In our case, the amount suggested by Nyariki et al's (ibid) report although correct according to the research design, is very low. There was therefore a need for further research using the number of produced copies of video films. Kamin (2011) estimates that ten video films are produced in a week in Tanzania (approximately 500 video films a year) out of which 70% enter the market. The remaining are either shelved because some fail to secure distributors or are non commercial. Most non-commercial video films are funded by donors for education or propaganda purposes.

Mwakalinga (2010, p. 122) provides a different figure of

100 films locally produced a month, which gives a total of 1,200 films every year. If the total number of distributed copies in DVD were available they could provide estimates on the number of local and imported DVD copies distributed in a year. Looking at these two research data (by Kamin and Mwakalinga), there is a difference of 700 video films/titles in a year. This is a substantial gap to guess who between the two researchers is correct.

The number of sold copies depends on the main actor in the film. For example it is said that over 68,000 copies (part 1&2 packed together) of Kanumba's film *NdoaYangu* (2012) released after his death were sold on the first day of release and over 200,000 copies in the first month. Some filmmakers can sell as fewer copies as to 500. Assumption one: if on average, 300 films are produced in a year, and that 10,000 copies are distributed and each copy contributes forty shillings through tax stamp returns, then the government collects over 120 million shillings a year.

So far it is difficult to establish exactly how many people are directly or indirectly employed in the production of these video films. This is due to the fact that the human resource involved varies significantly from three people as technical crew to fifteen, and from five actors to more than thirty. It is also difficult to state how much income the participants receive due to the fact that very few are paid according to their wish; the majority are not paid at all or paid as low as ten thousand Tanzanian shillings (10,000/-) per day or per participation in shooting one scene. A complete video film production costs about five to twenty five million. Assumption two: if 300 films are produced and cost on average 15 million; total capital investment is over 4.5 billion shillings. Assuming that taxes are calculated at 18%, then the government collects over 800

million shillings.

On average it is estimated that there are more than 10,000 video parlours across the country. These parlours act as mini cinema halls. They show video films mainly in Kiswahili and European football matches. The majority of them do not have licenses from local authorities. Hence neither do they pay taxes nor royalties for screening (Mhando & Kipeja, 2010, p. 17). Owners make a gross of more than 12,000 Tanzanian shillings a day (Kamin, 2011, p. 16). Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) in collaboration with the Copyright Society of Tanzania (COSOTA) can formalize these video parlours. Assumption three: if these business owners are charged 18% of the gross, a month, in a year, approximately 7.8. billion Tanzanian shillings is collected. Using the three assumptions, Tanzania is likely to collect over 8.7 billion shillings (5.5 million US$).

Statistical Challenges and a Way Forward

Most of the challenges on the contribution of video films in the national economy are either a result of poor documentation or improper analysis of the data. Three major factors explain lack of proper figures on the video film industry. First, there is no country mapping in terms of the video film industry. For example Bakari's (2009) and Buitrago & Mo (2009) focused on music industry. Nyariki et al (2013) who studied all creative industries in Tanzania talked less is on video films. The report also relied on secondary data hence most of undocumented data were not included.

The study by Kamin (2011) on the Tanzanian video film industry which was labeled as Swahiliwood surveyed only five regions: Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Shinyanga, Mbeya and Iringa. According to Kamin (2011, p. 7), “These are also regions in which the funding body behind this research, Tanzania Capacity and Communication Project (TCCP), works”. Mhando & Kipeja (2010) collected their data in 2007. Major changes have occurred including increased number of independent film directors/producers and distributors, decreased prices of DVD from six thousands (6,000/-) in 2007 to two thousands five hundred (2,500/-) Tanzanian shillings in 2014. Also the viewers' interest has shifted from Nigerian to Kiswahili video films.

However, most studies on video film industry aim at fulfilling academic requirements (see Kang'anga, 2006; Leveri, 1983; Mponguliana, 1982; Mwakalinga, 2003; Mwakalinga, 2010). The findings from these studies are not presented or distributed to the key stakeholders of the industry but are kept in the libraries of the academic institutions such as the University of Dar es Salaam and other Euro-American university libraries. Being in English, very few individuals who are not academicians can hardly have interest and access in reading them. In addition, no policy recommendations or policy briefs from the studies reach policy and decision makers. If they are disseminated widely, through workshops, seminars, and conferences these study findings would reach more stakeholders, including artists. Regardless of the fact that copyright-based industries contributed about 3.2% of the GDP in 2009, video film contributed the lowest all analysed parameters that is value added, employee numbers and employment income (Nyariki et al, 2013, pp. 38-40).

As pointed out earlier, the analysis tool should be able to examine other contributions such as propaganda (political) and pedagogical (social) values. Although quantifying them might be difficult, it is not impossible. For example, advertisements have highly contributed the highest in consciousness raising on the copyright-based industries in

terms of value added (57%) and in employee income (97%). There is a lack of mechanism for analyzing video film contribution in the context of advertisement taking into consideration most of the practitioners in the advertisement are film practitioners. It is our hope that the film policy which is in preparation will focus on defining what film means in the Tanzanian context to avoid confusion in the interpretation. Second, most of the distributors are not ready to declare the total number of the distributed video films in DVDs/VCDs arguably in order to evade tax (see Mhando & Kipeja, 2010; Shule, 2013). Even the contracts signed between the actor-producers/directors and duplicator-distributor are controversial, as they are never disclosed. According to one of the interviewed actor-producer/director pointed out that, “in most cases we usually sign one contract with the 50% of the agreed amount. Once we deliver the 'master' copy and collect the remaining 50% we do not sign for it”. This implies that if audited, the amount that to be seen is only 50% of the total amount paid.

Third, it is obvious that video film industry is contributing to the national economy even before the introduction of tax stamps for the sales of DVDs and previously VCDs and VHS tapes. As mentioned earlier, the implementation of the tax stamps might give a rough picture of the video film copies distributed in a year. Although tax stamps were assumed to be a 'most efficient solution' for all challenges facing the video film industry in Tanzania, still its contribution is less as compared to other taxes collected through production processes and video parlours. Looking at the process of locating the contribution of the video film industry in the Tanzanian economy, one can observe challenges and opportunities. Lack of proper profiling of the economic contribution of the video film industry is the major one. It is the role of BASATA, through its research department to conduct/facilitate a thorough mapping across the country which will cover at least all major cities: Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Arusha, Tanga and Mbeya, plus the border regions such as Kagera, Kigoma, Mara, Mtwara and some areas beyond national borders where the Kiswahili video films are viewed.

The mapping can be done in collaboration with other state institutions such as National Film Censorship Board, COSOTA and TRA. Support from private sector will enhance the process. There should be an established system of acknowledging the contribution of the video film industry and other creative industries as one of the key driving forces of the economy. The contribution should not only be identified in terms of figures but also encompassing the social and political contributions of the video film industry. For example, the films can be acknowledged due to their pedagogical contribution (see; Shule, 2014)

The formalization of the Tanzanian video film industry should be extended across the Eastern and Southern Africa regions. At the moment it is only Kenya which has established a film commission, the Kenya Film Commission (KFC). Since most of the video films produced in Tanzania are in Kiswahili, there is a need to integrate the industry with regional groupings such as the East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) so as to strengthen the distribution channels. The request goes to the 'envisioned' East African Film Commission which comprises individual member states' film commissions.

In my opinion, the formalization of the video film industry should go beyond the tax stamps; it has to touch

individual filmmakers. There should be proper investments in terms of capital and training especially on the entrepreneurship aspect for film practitioners. Basically the formalization or institutionalization includes facilitation of company formation, provision of business premises, facilitation of access to capital, markets, knowledge and skills (Ngowi, 2008). Initiatives to combat piracy should take all possible means including awareness raising and law enforcement. The buyers should be educated on the effect of buying the pirated video film copies to the national economy. They should be educated that not all pirated copies are cheap. For example, counterfeited films are sold almost in the same price as genuine. Purchasing a TRA stamped DVD assures the buyer not only that s/he is contributing to the national economy but also assures quality and guarantee.

The distribution channels should also focus on the middle and upper classes earners for them to be part of the market/customer base of the video films. Film producers-directors and distributors should focus on producing content which will appeal to various classes and market segments. This is due to the fact than middle and upper class people at least have enough income to cover basic need and extra to spend buying video film DVDs compared to the lower class majority who bargain between sustaining themselves and buying video film DVDs.

Conclusion

The production of the Kiswahili video films has increased from one film in 2002 to more than 500 a year in 2013. The number of films produced and distributed in Tanzania has tremendously increased now than any other time before the video film revolution which started in 1990s. Even with this improvement, piracy and inadequate and improper distribution channels have remained key challenges. Hence between 2007 and 2013 DVD prices have also decreased for more than 60% regardless of the devaluation of the Tanzanian currency.

At the same time, the contribution of the industry to the national economy is still in limbo as there are no substantial data to establish the 'direct' and even indirect contribution of the video film industry to the national economy. It is expected that the tax stamp introduced in 2013 will achieve not only its aim of broadening the tax base in Tanzania but also igniting the process of formalizing the video film industry. The implementation of the tax stamp is the point of departure to know exact figures of the distributed video films not only in Tanzania but also across the region where there is a large market for Kiswahili video films. Yet, all these depend on the collaboration between filmmakers, BASATA, National Film Censorship Board, COSOTA and TRA.

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THEATRE AND THE CHALLENGES OF OUR CHANGING WORLD: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Introduction

The global recognition of the import and impact of the performative arts in the affairs of man underpins the eternal relationship of the creative arts, science, technology and society. This glaring symbiotic relationship and partnership of the creative arts and man is continually refreshing, innovative and dynamic as man contends with the vicissitudes, tribulations and successes of life. Therefore, the performing arts are intended primarily to sensitize, educate and bring global attention to the vital role of theatre in the affairs of man, socially and politically.

Brett Bailey's World Theatre Day 2014 message draws ample attention to the irresistible spirit of theatre especially in the deconstruction, reconstruction, amelioration and sustenance of the developmental needs and challenges of man in a world plagued by poverty, injustice and inhumanity of man to man. Our topic, "Theatre and the Challenges of our changing World: The implications for Africa in the 21st century", derives inspiration from the indestructible spirit of theatre as educator, builder and molder of society, especially the African continent, where our world is plagued by poor governance, endemic corruption, poor management and allocation of natural and national resources. These factors have led to unexplainable injustice, inequality, youth restiveness, religious conflicts and wars in Africa.