

**ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

## **Cultural Statistics, the Media and the Planning and Development of Calabar**

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**Abstract:** This paper, “Cultural Statistics, the Media and the Planning and Development of Calabar, Nigeria” stresses the need for the use of Cultural Statistics and effective media communication in the planning and development of Calabar, the Cross River State Capital. This position is anchored on the fact that in virtually every sphere of life, there can be no development without planning, and there can be no proper planning without accurate data or information. Cultural Statistics, and effective use of the media thus become imperative in the planning and development of Calabar, especially as the Cross River State capital, is fast becoming an internationally recognized cultural city due largely to its annual Calabar Festival and Carnival. The paper among other things argues that cultural statistics and the use of the media will reposition the city of Calabar, not only in terms of development, but also in marketing and branding, taking into consideration the new economy and globalization which involve technology, creativity, human capital and capacity for innovation. The paper concludes that although some effort has been made by the Cross River State government in gathering and publishing some cultural information in brochures and other periodicals, there will be need for deliberate and conscientious effort to be made by the relevant government authorities to collect, collate, analyze and interpret cultural data in Calabar and project same in the media with a view to enhancing the planning and development of the Cross River State capital so as to truly make it a tourism and cultural haven in Nigeria and in the continent of Africa.

**Keywords:** Cultural Statistics, Media, Planning, Development, Calabar

### **INTRODUCTION**

In virtually every sphere of endeavour, there can be no development without planning and there can be no proper planning without useful data or information, just as the media play crucial roles in between. This fact thus underscores the need for this paper: “Cultural Statistics, the Media and the Planning and Development of Calabar in Nigeria.”

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural organization, UNESCO, has identified culture as both a means for development, i.e., as a means to the end of promoting and sustaining economic progress, and as an effect of development, i.e.,

giving meaning to our existence, as it can generate revenue through tourism, crafts and artifacts and contribute to the sustainable development of a region and a country (11). It is thus acknowledged that culture influences people's behaviour, their contribution to the process of economic development, their social development and their well-being.

One key way of assessing the impact of Culture in the planning and development of any city, and in this case, Calabar, the city under review, is through the use of Cultural Statistics, and the media which should among other things provide information as to how Cultural assets support local development and indeed revitalization. This is particularly so as UNESCO has since established the fact that culture offers opportunities for people to participate in productive activities, especially as several cultural industries are predominantly made up of small businesses or family businesses that are well suited for local development, just as culturally sensitive policies can help to preserve traditional practices and address the needs of socially disadvantaged groups or indigenous peoples (12).

It is also a fact, that most states in Nigeria, rich as they are culturally, do not have reliable Cultural Statistics of their states and cities, and this no doubt hinders and hampers not just the Cultural development of those states and cities, but to a large extent affect their planning and overall development. It is therefore with a view to enhancing the proper planning and development of Calabar, the Cross River State Capital through Cultural Statistics, that this paper becomes imperative using the analytical approach.

## **A BRIEF ON THE CITY OF CALABAR**

Calabar, the capital of Cross River State is a city in South- South region of Nigeria, located on the bank of the Calabar River. The city is watered by the great Calabar and Qua Rivers and Creeks of the Cross River from its inland Delta. Popularly known as "Paradise City," Calabar has an estimated population of about 1.2 million residents. The indigenes are the Efik, Efut and Qua people, who are remarkably famous for their artistic skills, rich food, culture and traditions.

Calabar is reputed to be the cleanest city and number one tourist destination in Nigeria especially with her annual one month-long Calabar Carnival Festival that attracts tourists from all over the world to the city. Apart from the popular Calabar Carnival, the Cross River State Capital is also recognized as a cultural haven, host to the popular museum with slave history and other cultural artifacts.

## **UNDERSTANDING CULTURE**

There are varied definitions of culture. Williams for instance, says there are three general categories in the definition of culture (48). According to him, there is, first, the "ideal," in which culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal value. For him, the analysis of culture under this definition is essentially the discovery and description, in lives and works of those values which can be seen to compose a timeless order, or to have permanent reference to the universal

human condition.

The second definition, he says, is the “documentary,” in which culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded. He stated that the analysis of culture based on this definition, is the activity of criticism, by which the nature of thought and experience, the details of the language, form and convention in which these are active, are described and valued. Such criticism, according to him, could range from a process very similar to the “ideal” analysis, the discovery of “the best that has been thought and written in the world.” This process which is interested in tradition, takes as its primary emphasis, the particular work being studied, including its classification and valuation, being the principal end in view, to a kind of historical criticism, which after analysis of particular works, seek to relate them to particular traditions and societies in which they appeared.

The third and final definition of culture by Williams, is the “Social” definition aspect, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning, but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour. The analysis of culture from this point of view, according to him, is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture.

Such analysis, he says, will include the historical criticism always referred to, in which intellectual and imaginative works are analyzed in relation to particular traditions and societies, but will also include analysis of elements in the way of life that to followers of the other definitions are not “Culture” at all.

To him, it therefore means that the analysis of culture by the third definition will include the organization of production, the structure of the family, the structure of institutions, which express or govern social relationships, including the characteristic forms through which members of the society communicate.

Again, He adds that such analysis ranges from an “ideal” emphasis, the discovery of certain absolute or universal or at least higher and lower, meanings and values, through the “documentary” emphasis in which clarification of a particular way of life is the main end in view, to an emphasis which, from studying particular meaning and values, seeks not so much to compare these, as a way of establishing a scale, but by studying their modes of change to discover certain general “laws” or “trends”, by which social and cultural development as a whole can be better understood (49).

There is value in each of the definitions, especially as it seems necessary to look for meanings and values, the record of creative human activity, not only in art and intellectual work, but also in institutions and forms of behaviour.

But to put matters straight, and aid better understanding, we may have to adopt UNESCO’s definition of culture “as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs”

(9).

This means that Cultural Statistics will have to encompass forms of culture listed in UNESCO's definition of culture, even though UNESCO also recognized the fact that it is not always possible to measure beliefs and values directly, it added however that it is possible to measure associated behaviours and practices, resulting from the beliefs and values of a society or a social group.

## **MEDIA, THE MEANING**

Media in the context of this paper means the various channels of communication through which individuals or the public could be reached with messages, such as news, entertainment, advertisements, information amongst others. Such channels include, but not limited to the electronic or broadcast media made up of radio, television and even movies or videos and films, the print media, made up of Newspapers, magazines, books and journals etc. Other aspects of media include the social or new media, most of which are internet based.

It is important to note that the media generally construct or create messages with embedded values and disseminate such messages with a target audience or specific portion of the public in mind. And it is when these media messages are consciously constructed and disseminated for consumption by a target audience that media communication becomes effective.

## **THE CONCEPT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Planning, like most terms, has diverse meanings. The free Encyclopedia, says planning is the working out of sub-components in some degree of elaborate detail, just as it could as well refer to the planned use of any and or all resources for the attainment of certain objectives(2). The Business Dictionary defines planning as a basic management function involving formulation of one or more detailed plans to achieve optimum balance of needs or demands with the available resources. It adds that the planning process should identify the goals or objectives to be achieved, formulates strategies to achieve them, arrange, implement, direct and monitor all steps in their proper sequence. Also, Assar in stressing the importance of planning, adds that planning bridges the gap from where we are to where we want to go, especially as it involves deciding in advance what is to be done, when, where, how and whom it is to be done. For him, Planning includes a selection of objects, policies, procedures and programmes from among alternatives (2). O'Donnell on his part says "planning is an intellectual process, conscious determination of course of action, the basing of decision on purpose, facts and considered estimates" (2).

Going by these definitions, we can thus agree especially with Assar that planning is an intellectual process of thinking in advance, deciding the future on the series of events to follow, where a number of steps are to be taken to decide the future course of action with the aim of achieving described goals.

There are a number of advantages associated with planning, including effective and proper utilization of resources, as it identifies all available resources and makes optimum use of these resources. Planning also facilitates the achievement or attainment of set objectives, as well as help in innovative and creative thinking.

Similarly, development, just like planning not only has its varied meanings, but several different definitions, depending especially on the context.

Business Dictionary defines development as the systematic use of scientific and technical knowledge to meet specific objectives or requirements and also as “the process of economic and social transformation that is based on complex cultural and environmental factors and their interactions” (11). Development, it says, is a progression from a simpler or lower to a more advanced, mature or complex form or stage,” just as it is a gradual advancement or growth, through a series of progressive changes, as a path towards achieving certain goals. Okorosaye further posits that

Development does not necessarily stop at economic prosperity alone, but transcends beyond it to include psychological, social, political and environmental change for the betterment and well being of the society, adding that development is of the people, by the people and for the people, as it is people-oriented and therefore society has established specific institutions to create and recreate itself towards a desirable society (3).

From whatever perspective it is considered, it will therefore be safe to say that development is the act of improving, expanding, enlarging or refining for the better.

Furtado identified three basic criteria for measuring development and they include increase in the efficiency of the production system of a society, the satisfaction of the population’s basic needs and the attainment of the objectives sought by the various groups in the society, insisting that these criteria translate into economic, social and political development (636).

## **CULTURAL STATISTICS, THE MEDIA AND THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF CALABAR, NIGERIA**

Drawing inspiration from the definition of statistics by Rachman and Mescon as a mathematical discipline which is concerned with methods of collecting, analyzing, interpreting and presenting numerical information, it can thus be said that Cultural Statistics means the art or act of collecting, collating, analyzing, interpreting and presenting quantitative and qualitative information about the culture of a people (453). Cultural Statistics will therefore refer to the collection, collation, interpretation, analysis and presentation of data on Cultural enterprises or sector, Cultural goods and Cultural participation.

This is especially so, considering the fact that not only has culture been identified as an economic activity or as a potential for developing the well-being and social cohesion of a people, but especially for the fact that Calabar is fast becoming a

## Cultural City.

This is in addition to the fact that such approach will be in line with current trends for cultural planning and development of cities across the world as identified by the United Nations habitat in its state of the world's cities report (2004) which states thus:

...the growing trends of refurbishing and re-branding cities as cultural havens, a creative attempt by many local governments to revitalize economies in need of urban renewal mechanisms... whether or not a city has a cultural heritage to draw upon, or merely a survivalist's need to succeed, banking on the financial draws of culture, be it artistic, historic, athletics or religious - has proved to be a blessing for many urban officials and planners... on the assumption that culture can be a motor of employment, growth, governments are directing investment toward new cultural industries and districts, including public spaces whose cultural amenities are intended to harmonize different social interest and improve the quality of urban life.

Cultural Statistics, with the aid of Media and proper planning, will thus reposition the city of Calabar especially in marketing and branding, taking into consideration the new economy and globalization in which technology, creativity, human Capital and capacity for innovation are key factors, especially as the so-called new economy affects both the nature and structure of a place, thereby causing positive re-evaluation of assets. As a matter of fact, partners for livable communities, a United States Organization involved in Business Improvement District (BID) initiatives recently recognized the fact that:

Traditional urban characteristics such as density, diversity, turn of the century architecture and vacant industrial and commercial warehouse, space which were negative location factors in the old economy – are potentially positive factors in the new economy because they are attractive to those who bring with them the potential for economic growth (3).

Mercer even identifies those who bring with them the potential for economic growth to include youth who are culturally diverse, and intellectual property owning or exploiting-knowledge-based workers of the new economy, who are also significant consumers, are increasingly populating urban centres or cities for work, residence and play, and are being affected by certain features, known as “the social structure of creativity” (3).

And Mercer quoting Florida sees “the social structure of creativity” as:

... a supportive social milieu that is open to all forms of creativity, artistic and cultural as well as technological and economic. This milieu provides the underlying ecosystem or habitat in which the multi-dimensional forms of creativity take root particularly cultural institutions like a cutting-edge music scene or vibrant artistic community, for instance. It helps to attract and stimulate those who create business and technology (3).

The point to be stressed here is that, the quality and diversity of amenities, including cultural amenities of a city like Calabar have become city assets and are capable of attracting people from diverse backgrounds to the city thereby enhancing the growth of

the economy. And this can only be enhanced through Cultural Statistics and proper city planning and development, with the media as a key tool in achieving this objectives. Much more, Cultural Statistics, along with the effective use of media could enhance the restructuring of the Calabar city for good as it could bring to prominence the strategic significance of Cultural and or creative or artistic industries or enterprises as exemplified by the establishment of Marina Resort and the Tinapa Business Resort, both located in Calabar, the Cross River State Capital.

Cultural Statistics and the media are therefore imperatives in the planning and development of Calabar as it will enhance the centralization of Cultural and artistic activities within institutions of government, just as more systematic approaches will be adopted in the collection of Cultural data which will eventually lead to the full integration of Culture into all facets of the city planning and decision-making and indeed the main stream public policy.

This is apart from the fact that it will encourage renovation or development of historical or cultural sites that were hitherto not given attention, and eventually develop human and social capital, including skills and creating more beautiful infrastructure for the city as well as a distinctive identity and brand for the city and state.

Social inclusion will also be promoted in the application of cultural statistics in the planning and development of a city such as Calabar, as that will create a more positive relationship between cultural diversity and productive diversity. This is particularly so as Culture and the arts are generally fast becoming strategic partners in city planning and development, especially as it pertains to physical or town planning and recreational housing development. And as noted by Mercer, planning is the organizational foundation from which all other functions flow, just as Cultural planning in particular for a city, must be strategic, integrated, responsible, comprehensive in scope and must be able to address the role of traditional arts resources, address also a developmental logic in form of Cultural tourism strategies, Cultural industry development, leisure and recreation planning, which can be greatly enhanced by Cultural Statistics, an approach which will naturally stimulate economic development and a process of city self-definition and rediscovery (7).

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper argues in favour of the use of Cultural Statistics and effective media communication in the planning and development of Calabar, the Capital city of Cross River State in Nigeria. It is no doubt that some appreciable effort has been made by Cross River State government in gathering and publishing some Cultural information in brochures and other periodicals, and projecting same in the television. But this is not enough to make the required impact. Thus, the need for deliberate and conscientious effort to be made by the relevant authorities to collect, collate, analyse and interpret Cultural data in the city of Calabar, making effective use of media, with a view to enhancing the planning and development of the Cross River State Capital, which is fast

becoming a tourism and Cultural haven, due largely to the internationally – recognized annual Calabar carnival/festival.

To achieve this objective therefore, there will be need for consultative and rigorous process of Cultural assessment and cultural mapping of the city of Calabar with effective use of the media with a view to enhancing the proper planning and development of the city popularly known as the Paradise City.

This will of course involve detailed research into both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the diverse Cultural resources, including cultural industries and the human infrastructure that support them, including producers and consumers and indeed the cultural needs of Calabar. All these cannot be achieved without cultural statistics, especially as it will involve some testing and or analyses in the cultural field, just as the media should not be undermined in the process. When this process is complete, then will it be possible to know what cultural resources and or potential cultural resources exist in the city of Calabar. This will only be when the relevant authorities are armed with this information to be able to effectively do a thorough cultural planning and development of Calabar and reposition it as an undisputable cultural and tourism capital city in Nigeria and indeed Africa.

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