

**THE IMPACT OF CALABAR CARNIVAL IN NIGERIA (2004 – 2015)**

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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
BENIN CITY**

**JANUARY, 2023**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF  
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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **Abasiama Emmanuel Udoeden** of the Department of History and International Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under my supervision.

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**Mrs. Bridget O. Omoruyi**  
Project Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Dr. Frank Ikponmwonsa**  
Head of Department

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to the almighty God and my parents.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am thankful to God for his mercies, provision, comfort, and protection during my time at this university as well as for guiding me to the successful conclusion of my research project.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

In a bid to develop cultural tourism in Nigeria, a number of states across the Federation instituted carnivals in which they showcase aspects of Nigerian and popular cultures in street performances. Cross River State, Rivers State, Lagos State, and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja are at the forefront of this initiative. The Calabar carnival in Cross River State as it stands now, holds the position of dominance and fame among the rest, judging from the organization, publicity, patronage, utilitarian thrust and artistic profile of the carnival.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of organization, it is run by a commission made up of technically competent members who are either drawn from the performing and visual art industry/academia or are connoisseurs of the arts. The commission also collaborates with and draws technical manpower from the well-established carnivals of Trinidad and Tobago and Rio in Brazil. As part of technical manpower development for the Calabar carnival, workshops and series of interactive sessions have been held over the years for creative personnel involved in costume production, float construction, headgear production and other technical activities. In 2012, a part of a band from Brazil participated in Calabar carnival to strengthen the technical partnership, amidst providing a different variety of cultural performance<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, varieties of promotional jingles are shown in numerous national and international media networks prior to the carnival. The ripple effects on the indigenous culture are remarkable, particularly in cultural dances, arts, local craft and musical performances<sup>3</sup>. The thrust of the carnival appears to be utilitarian to a large extent, and this feature is unique. This is exemplified in the fact that every year, the carnival theme addresses a particular development issue within society. The fact is that Calabar carnival has been developed to become a medium through which societal shortcomings can be addressed<sup>4</sup>.

Carnival is defined as a public celebration or parade combining some elements of a circus, masks and public street party. Carnival, creates room for organization and expression of thoughts towards improving the lots of the society. Calabar carnival shares the burden as a theatrical form to find links and connections to all committed to the power of theatre in making a difference in the human life span. The carnival is in the mold of applied theatre, about which creates a practice that seeks to debate vital issues and see those concerns transformed into new stories, to provide people with a means to work their way through difficult periods.

The acclaim of the carnival also arises from the nature and quality of artistic display or performance. The carnival is an assemblage of visual and performing arts displayed as costumes, make-up, dance, choreography, props, and carnival float on wheels, special effects and sound production. Many of the

presentations are products of complex creations usually put together by groups of artistic and technical personnel with the aim of depicting indigenous culture<sup>5</sup>.

This study is set to therefore examine the impact of the Calabar carnival in Nigeria from 2004 to 2015. This study systematically lays out the general themes of the carnival and the various impacts it has in Nigeria through the period of study.

### **AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study seeks to examine the impact of the Calabar carnival in Nigeria from 2004 to 2005.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. This work examines the origin and people of \calabar
2. The study discusses the origin of the Calabar carnival (2004 –2015).
3. It gives a proper insight to the level of accommodation and hospitality that the Calabar carnival affords various cultures and peoples from all over the world
4. It examines the impact of the Calabar carnival, on organization, culture and expression of thoughts towards improvement the lots of the society.
5. It provides a base for further research adding to existing literature as well

## **SCOPE OF STUDY**

The scope of study takes its root from the inception of the carnival in Calabar, Cross River state by its former governor Donald Duke in 2004 down to 2015.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research work employs the use of qualitative analyses as emphases will be laid on primary sources to include; Oral interviews, reports, articles, unpublished works etc. The Secondary data will be obtained from materials such as Newspapers, Internet resources, seminar papers, Textbooks. These will in no doubt give a holistic approach to achieving the objectives of the study.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This literature review centers on the biggest carnival to come out of the coast of Africa from 2004 to 2015 as a number of articles and publications have steamed forth from various people of different professions and works of life as the review below will show.

In a journal written by Amalu, Titus E. and Ajake, Anim O titled “*An Assessment of the Influence of Calabar Carnival on the Economy of the Residents of Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria,*” they wrote that “tourism is sustainable when its development and operation include participation of local population, protection of the total environment, fair economic return for the industry and its host community, as well as a mutual respect and gratification to all involved parties”. This clearly gives credited to the importance of tourism in

the sustainability of an event of is able to attract individuals from all works of life to a particular place and also the use of the locals in sustaining the event for a long period of time which would subsequently metamorphose as a form of culture for the people.<sup>6</sup>

In another journal by Oku Jacquelyn Inyang titled “*Calabar Carnival as a Tool for Nation Building in Nigeria,*” she emphasised on the fact that the speciality of the carnival throughout the years because of its evolvement from being the event that locals of Cross River state took great pleasure in to one that now includes other indigenous Nigerians to the point where it draws in Nigerians from the diaspora.

Additionally, with the aid of bands like the Wise up Band, a group that supports public health, awareness of HIV/AIDS is raised. Top sponsors of the band include Meditrix Development Foundation (MDF), the Office of the Wife of the Governor of Cross River State, Education for Vaccine (Eva), Excellence Community Education Welfare Scheme (ECEWS), State Agency for Control of AIDS (SACA), Cross River State Ministry of Health, Cross River State Primary Health Care Development Agency, UNICEF, Medical Women Association, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).<sup>7</sup>

She also spoke about the various bands that grace the Calabar carnival each year together with the theme that each year carries. The competitive bands' contributions to the condition of national integration have been significant in

every regard. Each band in Nigeria performs regional dances from different tribes in one manner or another. For instance, a certain band performed the Tiv traditional dance at the 2017 event; the Tiv are a tribe in the state of Benue. A band presented a Fulani drama with their dance the previous year. Such a beautiful scene. When you look at these bands, you can see how the many ethnic groups who joined together to showcase another traditional dance demonstrate to everyone watching that we are all one and that we can all coexist.

The numerous Calabar Carnival themes over the years have helped Nigerians feel more like themselves. For instance, the 2018 topic of Africanism served to promote our sense of solidarity by telling the history of the African people, enabling us to recognize one another as a country despite our many cultures, tribes, and religions. The importance of the Calabar carnival to Nigerians goes beyond only the themes.<sup>8</sup>

Endong, Floribert Patrick C in his journal titled “*Nigerianess versus Foreignness in the Calabar Festival and Carnival Calabar*” expressly emphasized on the near nudity and sometimes full nudity that the carnival portrays and how it affects the people. In his words “Nigerian women participants quickly [have been adorning] themselves with such see-through panties so as to catch attention. Dancing step-by-step and dexterously to the carnival music, thousands of onlookers, especially young men, said it loudly how provoked they were by the seductresses from foreign lands”. It is crucial to stress that nudity and

pornography, in whatever form, have typically been viewed by (conservative) Africans as a product of western permissive society. On the basis of this concept, the incorporation of such artifacts as nudity and pornography to any traditional African cultural activities may likely and primarily be seen as a type of western culture contamination and a heinous attempt at cultural imperialism/cultural synchronization. Accordingly, the majority of religiously minded conservative observers and opinion leaders from the riverine towns of Cross River State have labelled the Calabar Festival and Calabar Carnival as powerful ambassadors of foreign culture, mostly due to its nudity-related themes. The majority of the cultural practices on display during the Calabar Festival and Calabar Carnival have been sharply condemned by these observers and disowned. Bishop Archibong Archibong, the chairman of the Christian Association of Nigerian (CAN) Cross River Chapter, is an example in point. He criticizes the Calabar Carnival on such cultural grounds in an acerbic manner. He hurriedly and hastily links the incident to obnoxious nudity, a lack of modesty, a lack of morals, and sheer westernness.<sup>9</sup>

Rowland C. Amaefula & Bernard Eze-Orji in their journal titled *“Costuming for African Values: A Reassessment of Un-African Ideals in Calabar Carnival”* explained the importance of costumes in the carnivals and the colour it brought to the carnival. The costumes worn during Carnival in Calabar are lavishly diversified and vibrant. At actuality, the importance of costumes in

carnival events is incalculable. It always implies that a carnival cannot exist without a suitable outfit. The articles of clothes, accessories, and adornment worn by the actor or actress for the aim of defining character and establishing the conditions of the character's existence by positioning him/her in time and location are referred to as costumes.

The foreign impact on African traditional value systems, which it should represent as an African or Nigerian brand, is one significant drawback of the Carnival Calabar costumes. Traditional institutions as well as the general public are quite concerned about the costumes worn by the majority of international participants and even the locals. Since carnival Calabar has developed into a global brand as a result of its multicultural appeal, it has become important to handle the problem. After the 6.0-magnitude earthquake that struck distant Malaysia on May 30, 2015 that was caused by three tourists, including Elanor Hawkins and her siblings, who took nude photos on the holy peak Kinabalu, one is abruptly brought back to reality. They pled guilty to "...obscene behavior in a public place to the irritation of others," received a three-day sentence, and a \$1,000 fine. However, their attorney countered that they were unaware of these people's traditions. An entire nation was ravaged by an earthquake as a result of four people's celebration, which was considered sacrilegious because it went against custom. After the scandalous costumes during the Calabar Carnival,

efforts should be made to prevent a similar catastrophe by promoting clothing regulations that honor African traditional values.<sup>10</sup>

Jacob Udayi Agba in his work “*The Performing Arts and the Carnival, Calabar: Implications for Human Rights Protection in Nigeria*” talked on the issues surrounding performing arts and its implications especially in the area of human rights. For him, some citizens' rights are infringed during the event, such as when they are denied entry to certain routes, while minors are abused while being used as hawkers along the routes, and even when hoodlums rape women and girls. Again, it is undeniable that through time, western culture has encroached on Nigerian culture in relation to Cross River State culture. Determining the performing arts' beneficial contributions to the event is further challenging because the carnival draws a large number of on-site attendees who may not be specifically there to enjoy the performing arts.<sup>11</sup>

Edisua Merab Yta was keen and critical about the display of near nudity and objectification of woman and this he expressed in his journal titled “*Objectification of women in carnival Calabar: an emerging paradigm*”. In his work he highlights the various costumes worn by various ladies from different countries, the dance they performed and how the ladies kept the crowd on top of their toes constantly with their erotic dances and near nude dressing.<sup>12</sup>

Apeh Columba in his journal “*Sociology of Tourism, Carnival and Processional Arts in Nigeria*” expressed the fact that the Calabar carnival

steamed from masquerade festivals in the 1980s. The origins of Carnival Calabar may be traced back to the 1980s, when locals and tourists alike flocked to the roundabout to see cultural performances by the Ekpe masquerades, known at the time as the "Ekpe Festival." Every real son and daughter of the Efik kingdom in Nigeria looked forward to the Ekpe masquerade celebration. In his words,

*“Carnival Calabar therefore, according to him, is a gradual progression of the Ekpe dance to a higher even that is being put together by the state government for the celebration of both Christmas and end of the year”.*<sup>13</sup>

Felicia Ebeyin Odere and Felix Ojong, *“The socio-economic importance of Calabar Carnival on the economic development of Cross River State”* highlighted the importance of tourism and how it could be of advantage to Calabar. The Calabar Carnival Festival has the potential to increase tourism and play a key role in the development of Cross River State's infrastructure, the production of jobs and money, as well as the state's general growth. For this to occur, the social welfare, socioeconomic, and security of Nigeria, where Cross River State is located, must be appropriately handled, and the nation's public perception must be improved; otherwise, discussion of making Calabar the nation's tourism hub would remain a pipe dream. Furthermore, as the study indicates that the Calabar Festival stimulates infrastructure development, including rural people in the carnival would be a means to guarantee the healthy growth of Cross River State.<sup>14</sup>

Joseph Ushigiale, in his publication on the ThisDay newspaper titled “*For Survival of Calabar” Carnival* he was of the opinion that there should be detailed security system that would ensure the safety of people that come en-masse for the carnival. In his words,

*“Initial carnivals were programmed to end before midnight so that law enforcement would be able to effectively provide a right of passage for revelers and protection from predators, pickpockets and hoodlums who usually loitered around event centres to steal and cause mayhem. Thus, the present timing makes the revelers vulnerable to attacks from criminals with law enforcement overstretched to effectively react to such attacks”.*

He further addressed the fact that the Calabar carnival commission be metamorphosed into a limited liability company that would run independent of the government interference so as to ensure accountability and transparency. Because there is no public audited accounting at present time, no one is certain how much it costs to stage the carnival and how much money is received from sponsors each year. If the carnival were incorporated as a limited liability business, it would be in a better position to assess the value of various carnival events.<sup>15</sup>

## **CHAPTERIZATION**

### **Chapter One – Background to the Study**

This chapter provides an introduction to the background to the study, stating the relevance of this study, with its aim and objectives, the methodology used in carrying out this research work, the scope of the research and the various literatures reviewed in relation to this research.

### **Chapter Two – The Origin and Peoples of Calabar**

This chapter talks about the origin and people of Calabar, the various ethnic groups, the geography, the cultures and different traditions that has been practice and is still in practice in Calabar.

### **Chapter Three – The Calabar Carnival and its Origin**

This chapter talks about the Calabar carnival, its origin and the idea behind its birth. The chapter further gives an insight as to how the carnival is carried out each year with its various activities.

### **Chapter Four – The Impact of Calabar Carnival in Nigeria (2004-2015)**

This chapter explores the various impacts of the Calabar Carnival in Nigeria and its societies at large. The positives and the negatives would be looked upon in this chapter.

### **Chapter Five – Conclusion**

This chapter scrutinizes the general overview of the entire research work.

## ENDNOTES

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14. Felicia Ebeyin Odere and Felix Ojong, The socio-economic importance of Calabar Carnival on the economic development of Cross River State, *Integrity Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 4, 2021, 85.
15. Joseph Ushigiale, “*For The survival of Calabar Carnival*”, ThisDay, May 23, 2018.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE ORIGIN AND PEOPLE OF CALABAR**

The capital of Cross River state in the southern Nigeria is the popular place called Calabar, formerly referred to as old Calabar. 5 miles upstream from the Calabar River's entry into the Cross-River estuary, it is situated along the Calabar river. The town, founded by the Efik branch of the Ibibio people in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, developed as a hub for trade between Europeans on the coast and Africans further interior.

Calabar was the name given to the tribes on this portion of the Guinea coast by Portuguese discoverers in the 15th century when they arrived, when the district's current inhabitants were unknown. The Efik people did not migrate from the Niger River area to the Calabar coasts until the early 18th century, owing to civil strife with their Ibibio kin. Queen Victoria signed a covenant of protection with the king and chiefs of Akwa Akpa, then known as Old Calabar to distinguish it from New Calabar to the east, on September 10, 1884.<sup>1</sup>

Calabar has been an international seaport since the 16th century, exporting out products such as palm oil. During the Atlantic slave trade, it became an important port for the trafficking of African slaves, and the Spanish dubbed it Calabar. Despite being a minority among the ethnic groups in the region, Igbo people made up the bulk of enslaved Africans sold as slaves from Calabar. Calabar had been a recognized international sea port since the 16th century,

shipping out goods such as palm oil.<sup>2</sup> It later became a major port in the transportation of African slaves during the era of the Atlantic slave trade. The majority of slave ships transporting slaves from Calabar were English, with approximately 85 percent of these ships being from Bristol and Liverpool merchants. Old Calabar (Duke Town) and Creek Town, 10 miles northeast, were important slave trading towns at the time. HMS Comes may have been the first British warship to sail as far as Duke Town in 1815, where she captured seven Spanish and Portuguese slavers.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1725 and 1750, over 17,000 enslaved Africans were sold from Calabar to European slave dealers; between 1772 and 1775, the number increased to over 62,000. [10] Old Calabar (Duke Town) and Creek Town, 16 kilometers (10 miles) northeast, were important slave-trading settlements at the time.<sup>4</sup> HMS Comus went at Duke Town in 1815 as part of the British blockade of Africa against the slave trade, capturing seven Spanish and Portuguese slave ships.

### **NIGERIA'S FIRST CAPITAL CITY**

After the abolition of the slave trade in the mid-nineteenth century, Old Calabar's economy was based on the export of palm oil and palm kernels. Following the chiefs of Duke Town's acceptance of British protection in 1884, the town, known as Old Calabar until 1904, served as the capital of the Oil Rivers Protectorate (1885–93), the Niger Coast Protectorate (1893–1900), and Southern Nigeria (1900–06) until the British administrative headquarters were relocated to

Lagos. It remained an important port (shipping ivory, timber, beeswax, and palm produce) until it was surpassed by Port Harcourt, the railroad's terminus (1916), 90 miles (145 km) west.

Calabar has long been a center of learning. Its first church school, established in 1846 by Reverend Hope Waddell of the Free Church of Scotland, influenced the Ekpe secret society to pass a law prohibiting human sacrifice (1850). Calabar is now home to the University of Calabar (1975), a college of technology, a teacher-training college, and a slew of secondary schools. The city was once the capital of the Niger Coast Protectorate, the Southern Protectorate, and the Oil River Protectorate. As a result, it is effectively the first Nigerian capital city.

Bakassi was founded around 1450 by the Efik of coastal south-eastern Nigeria, and it was incorporated into the political framework of the Calabar Kingdom, along with Southern Cameroons.

On September 10, 1884, during the European scramble for Africa, Queen Victoria signed a Treaty of Protection with the King and Chiefs of Calabar. As a result, the United Kingdom gained control of the entire Calabar territory, including Bakassi. The territory was later de facto annexed by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, though the border was never permanently defined. Interestingly, even after Southern Cameroons voted in 1961 to leave Nigeria and become a part of Cameroon, Bakassi remained under Calabar administration in

Nigeria until the International Court of Justice's verdict in 2002, which declared Bakassi a part of Cameroon.<sup>5</sup> Calabar held Nigeria's first competitive football, cricket, and field hockey matches<sup>6</sup>

The city is home to several museums (including the Slave History Museum), a botanical garden, a free trade zone/port, an international airport and seaport, an integrated sports stadium complex, a cultural center, one of the country's most prestigious universities – the University of Calabar, a slave history park, and several historical and cultural landmarks. It also has a number of standard hotels, resorts, and theme parks. Former Liberian warlord Charles Taylor lived in the city's old colonial palace under an agreement that brought his country's civil war to an end, before fleeing extradition to Liberia in March 2006.<sup>7</sup>

Every year, thousands of people from Nigeria and beyond attend the Cross-River State Annual Christmas Festival. The festival features performances by both local and international musicians. The Calabar Carnival, a boat regatta, fashion shows, a Christmas Village, traditional dances, and the annual Ekpe Festival are also annual events.

Calabar people are primarily people from the old Calabar province – Calabar South, Calabar Municipality, Akpabuyo, Bakassi, Biase, Odukpani, and Akamkpa – but the term "Calabar people" can also refer to people from Greater Calabar as well as people from the original South Eastern state of Nigeria, who are now the people of Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State.

## **ETHNIC GROUPS AND CULTURES IN CALIBER**

Calabar, the capital of what was then South Eastern State and is now Cross River State, is a three-ethnic town with the Efik, Efut, and Qua ethnic groups. These ethnic groups all had and still have monarchs who were eventually elevated to the position of Paramount Rulers in order to maintain government power. The Obong belongs to the Efik, the Muri Munene to the Efuts, and the Ndidem to the Qua. The unity of opposites, however diverse in certain aspects, that has devoured some cultural traits of the Efik and the Qua may be regarded as the union of opposites. Though unique in certain respects, they are nevertheless interconnected, resulting in a connection of coexistence.

### **THE EFIKS**

The Efik are a people who primarily live in southern Nigeria and western Cameroon. The Efik can be found in Nigeria in the present-day states of Cross River and Akwa Ibom. The Efik speak the Efik language, which is a member of the Niger-Congo language group's Benue–Congo subfamily<sup>8</sup>. The Efik go by the names Efik Eburutu, Ifa Ibom, Eburutu, and Iboku.

Efik society is made up of numerous clans, formerly known as "Esien Efik itiaba" (English: Seven Efik Clans) and later renamed "Esien Efik Duopeba" in the twenty-first century (English: Twelve clans of Efik). The original seven clans are Iboku (Duke town, Henshaw town, Creek town, and Cobham town), Obutong, Adiabo, Mbiabo (Mbiabo Edere, Mbiabo Ikot Offiong, Mbiabo Ikoneto), Enwang,

Usukakpa, and Abayen, and they are spread over Cross River and Akwa Ibom states<sup>9</sup>. Ibonda (an Efut clan) is one of the seven Efik clans frequently added to Adiabo. The majority of the Enwang and Usukakpa live in the present-day state of Akwa Ibom.

Efik society nowadays is a melting pot of people from all backgrounds. Efik towns had a significant rate of inward migration from Sierra Leoneans, Lebanese, Cameroonians, Jamaicans, and other populations due to the emergence of Calabar as a commercial centre from the 18th century. Children with Efik maternal ancestry are nonetheless considered Efik and have made significant contributions to the development of Efik society. Many other ethnic groups, such as Kiong and Efut, have been seen as being one with the Efik due to the extent of cultural contact<sup>10</sup>.

At Old Calabar, secret organisations contributed in the upkeep of law and order. Ekpe, Obon, and Nsibidi were among these secret societies. Among the Efik people, the Ekpe society is regarded as one of the most prominent institutions. The society is thought to have arrived in Calabar via Usahadet. The Ekpe society was modified and changed to suit the demands of the Efik people when it was added to their list of secret societies. Ekpe is an Efik word that means "leopard" and is thought to be a forest ghost. The Ekpe spirit is symbolised by Idem Iquo, a masquerade dressed in Esk, a multicoloured costume with various customary embellishments that the uninitiated cannot see. Nkanda, Oku akama,

Nyamkpe, Okpoho, and Ebonko are the five main grades in the community. Each grade has its own chieftain or an Obong. According to E.U. Aye,

*"Originally Ekpe Fraternity was for religious purposes, but as the Calabar community became complicated owing to the new wealth which the early trade with Europeans brought it was quickly adapted to fulfil other economic and civil functions. It proved to be the source of supreme authority in all Efik towns, and its institutions provided, in the past, the highest court whose verdicts transcended all else. Ekpe could take life and could give it; it could condemn a whole town to a heavy fine and was promptly paid; it could punish offenders and could forgive; even kings and Obongs could never escape Ekpe laws and edicts".*

The Ekpe society of Old Calabar was changed into the Abakuá cult in Cuba, the Bonkó cult in Bioko, and the Abakuya dance in mainland Equatorial Guinea as a result of the Obutong massacre of 1765 and other tragedies<sup>11</sup>.

The Efik people are recognised for their many different cuisines. Ekpang nkukwo, Edikang Ikong, Afia efere, Anyan Ekpang, Afang soup, and other dishes are among them. Onions (Oyim mbakara) were once uncommon in Efik dishes. In Efik cuisines, large amounts of pepper were likewise uncommon. Crayfish was used to make foods spicier before the arrival of manufactured cubic-shaped seasonings like maggi and the likes. Yam was used in several meals, including Usu abia, Iwk abia, Afia abia, sb abia, Edifrai abia, and fp abia. Children and the elderly with no teeth or brittle teeth were served Iwewe meals. Iwewe is a boiling yam that has been mashed with a little palm oil and mixed with a spoon. Iwewe is also thought to be a sacrificial banquet made for Efik gods. The main sources of

protein in Efik cuisines are meat and fish. Goats, chicken, and dogs are common ingredients in Efik cuisine. Cow meat was consumed as well, but Efik local cows were rarely eaten or milked. The Efik native cow (English: Ena Efik) was held in high regard and only slain on rare occasions, such as the feast for the installation of a new priest king. The Efik also produce a variety of beverages, including Mmn Efik (palm wine), Uffp (native gin), Nnyannyaa (lemon grass tea), and Mmn Eyop (palm wine) (Eyop wine). Tapping is the process of creating an incision on a palm tree to obtain palm wine. The wine is left to ferment for five hours after it has been tapped. The red bark of Edat (*Sacoglottis gabonensis*) can be added to the wine to raise the alcohol concentration. Uffp (local gin) is made from palm wine and is occasionally blended with Edat bark to enhance the flavour<sup>12</sup>.

The Efik wore Raffia loincloths before the arrival of European-styled garments known as Ndam. The fibre from a palm's leaf stem was spun into a thread and sewn into clothing and bags. Raffia palm clothes (Ndam) may be exported from other villages, particularly if one group produced the greatest raffia apparel. Ikpaya is a form of royal garment made of raffia. During the traditional coronation ritual, an Obong-elect now wears Ikpaya. On their legs and arms, women wore a slew of brass rings. Wealthy women wore ivory bracelets (Mme). With the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade, Efik society was exposed to a variety of exotic clothing. According to oral tradition, the first fabric imported

into Old Calabar was a style of apparel called as "Itu ita." The Portuguese are thought to have imported this substance (Oboriki)<sup>13</sup>. Smit, brutanya, isadh, and nkisi are some of the other clothing brands that have recently entered the market. Women's clothing in Efik society changed as a result of the missionaries' arrival in 1846. Several forms of English clothing, such as the Victorian dresses known as nyny in Efik, were imported to Efik ladies. The Victorian costume has been altered over time to give it a dignified African appearance. Nyny is worn on different occasions in modern-day Efik society, such as weddings and traditional festivals. Necklaces and earrings made of coral beads are frequently used with the garment. At least two distinct nynys are worn by the bride at weddings. A white long-sleeved shirt, a long broad soft neckerchief or scarf of pricey cloth (kpmkpm), and a wrapping knotted around the waist are the typical outfits for men known as Usobo<sup>14</sup>.

## **MARRIAGE CUSTOMS IN EFIK**

When this subject (Efik marriage) is brought up, the old 'Fattening Room' tradition comes to mind. The fattening room tradition of the Efik people was/is the solitary instruction provided to maidens in preparation for womanhood, albeit it has been substantially modified for today's age. Efik girls are sent to the fattening room six months before marriage to be pampered with massages from head to toe, fed as much as they want to eat, and educated on the ins and outs of marriage. Instead, they are to consume delectable dishes, engage in meaningful

discussion, and sleep, as well as have three daily massages to enhance their natural endowments because the Efik people believe that a lady with a full figure and a healthy waistline is attractive. In addition to the activities in the Fattening Room, the girl receives domestic instruction in home management (such as cooking, child care, and housekeeping) as well as how to respect and please her husband and his family. It is the responsibility of older women to provide counsel based on their own marriage experiences in order to ensure a happy marriage.

Cultural dances (Ekombi), folklore, folktales, songs, and other types of entertainment are also incorporated in the instruction. Artistic designs on the calabash and other materials are also taught. She is also taught about sex here, with the goal of providing good enjoyment to her husband. People from all over are invited to honour her triumph in surviving this experience at the end of the six-month term, which also marks the end of the seclusion days.

Traditional Efik dances (Ekombi) and other forms of entertainment are performed at this celebration. Families, friends, and well-wishers express their excitement and happiness by giving presents and making donations to the bride throughout the day and night. Finally, she and her future husband embrace and dance, greeting their well-wishers who have come to share in the festivities<sup>15</sup>.

## THE RELIGIOUS LIVES OF THE EFIK PEOPLE

Some Efik genuine names/ata enyin represent the people's religious beliefs. These names represent "the very complicated inter-relationships and interdependence between things (material or matter) and spirit (gods and deities)"<sup>16</sup>. Religion-related names among the Efik can be traced back to the ndem worship that was prevalent in the community. There is a supreme being named 'Etinyin Abasi' and his wife 'Ekanyin Abasi' in the Efik cosmos. Smaller gods/deities known as ndem exist between them and man. The ndem mmon - the deity/god linked with water (the sea), from which they (the Efik) obtain their source of sustenance – was/is the common Efik ndem. 'Ekpenyong' and 'Ekanem' are Efik names derived from 'Ekpenyong Abasi' and 'Ekanem Abasi' respectively, the male and female water deities/gods<sup>17</sup>. Inyang, Anansa, and Ndem/Andem are some other names for sea gods. Religious connotations can be seen in names like "Ukpong" (soul) and "Ekpo" (spirit), which are widespread throughout the various Efik houses/families. They are tied to the idea in reincarnation, which underpins ancestral veneration in the end. Other names with religious connotations include;

Oku -Priest

Abasi-anwan - female deity/god

Ndem/Andem - deity/god

Mutanda - a deity

Idem - a sacred object

Adim - a religious cult

The Ekpe cult is another religious component that has influenced the choice of Efik personal names. The Ekpe cult, according to Aye, is linked to animism, or animal worship. In this example, the leopard is referred to as "Ekpe" in Efik.<sup>18</sup> "The leopard itself [whose] name the fraternity adopts is an enticing gorgeous and quick animal, albeit fierce and dangerous," according to Aye. He goes on to say, "I believe that:

*"Originally, Ekpe was for religious purpose but as old Calabar community became complicated owing to the new wealth which the early trade with Europeans brought, it was quickly adapted to fulfil other economic and civil functions".<sup>19</sup>*

**Some Efik names are drawn from the Ekpe worship and Ekpe titles. Such names include:**

Ekpe - to celebrate the characteristics of the animal itself

Eyamba - the highest Ekpe title.

Ise - an Ekpe Grade

Idem - the Ekpe masquerade/ the symbol of Ekpe

Nakanda - to reflect the feather (ntang nkanda) which initiates stick in their hair or on their cap.

It is important to highlight that given or genuine names cannot be assigned at random. Every Efik family has a list of names from which to choose. The choice of names, on the other hand, is made by the paternal relatives, who are the

traditional name givers and must have their names evaluated first. The actual name (Usio enying/Ata enying) issue among the Efik has been noted to be socio-politically and historically significant. It makes it simple to locate an Efik person among his or her relatives. Some genuine names/or combinations of real names are taken from name banks that are unique to specific Efik communities or towns.

### **ABANG DANCE**



Fig. 1: Abang Dance of the Efik people

This "Abang" dance is performed by the Efik people of Nigeria's Cross River State. The word "Abang" means "pot," and it represents fecundity. This dance is a tribute and celebration of respect and gratitude to the earth goddess Abasi Isong, who is responsible for abundant resources, fertile land for growing crops, and clay for pottery. It originated in the worship of the water goddess Ndem. Abang dance emphasises flexibility and grace while displaying beauty and femininity. It's a space, rhythm, and unity dance that draws and holds the audience's attention while giving them a sense of lightness and balance. Ibuot

Abang, a headpiece embellished with brilliant colours of red, green, and yellow raffia, is worn by lead dancers at all times. Bird feathers are sometimes used to embellish these, which are arranged in five forms and connected to flexible cane stems known as Basinko. Several silk scarves and handkerchiefs are strung from the basinko to provide support to the lead dancer. The Abang dancer undergoes some alteration while wearing the Ibout Abang, taking on the spiritual and physical obligation of embodying the Ancestors or Spirits. As she carries the Ibout Abang, she remains completely silent during this period. Her neck is covered with beautiful colourful beads known as Nkwaesit Itong as part of her costume. Her arms are draped in colourful raffia called Ekpaku Ubok, and she wears bright coral beads called Anana Ubok across her shoulder. Her legs are also adorned with raffia and Mkpato Etim bells. An Akasi made of cane is worn around the waist of the dancer. This represents the ideal beauty of a full-figured Efik woman with a healthy waistline. As the dancer moves their body, the Akasi is covered with a huge piece of fabric to portray beauty, femininity, and grace.

## Masquerades



Fig. 2: Calabar Masquerades at the Calabar Carnival

Masquerades are one of Africa's oldest and most traditional cultural gatherings. Chants, music, and dances are performed in the background. Because of its strong roots in traditional religion, this important holiday is immensely popular among the Efik people in Cross River State. Masquerades are worn for a variety of occasions, including the Obong's (Calabar's) coronation, burials, Chieftencies, and other seasonal celebrations and rites. The Ekpe Masquerade is the most prestigious and highest of all masquerades. It consists entirely of guys and is only performed on special occasions<sup>20</sup>.

Among the Efik people, the Ekpe society is regarded as one of the most prominent institutions. The society is thought to have arrived in Calabar via Usahadet<sup>21</sup>. The Ekpe society was modified and changed to suit the demands of the Efik people when it was added to their list of secret societies. Ekpe is an Efik word that means "leopard" and is thought to be a forest ghost. The Ekpe spirit is symbolised by Idem Iquo, a masquerade dressed in Esk, a multicoloured costume with various customary embellishments that the uninitiated cannot see. Nkanda, Oku akama, Nyamkpe, Okpoho, and Ebonko are the five main grades in the community. A chieftain, also known as an Obong, is assigned to each grade<sup>22</sup>.

*"Originally Ekpe Fraternity was for religious purposes, but as the Calabar community became complicated owing to the new wealth which the early trade with Europeans brought it was. Quickly adapted to fulfil other economic and civil functions. It proved to be the source of supreme authority in all Efik towns, and its institutions provided, in the past, the highest court whose verdicts transcended all else. Ekpe could take life and could give it; it could condemn a whole town to a heavy fine and was promptly paid; it could punish offenders and could forgive; even kings and Obongs could never escape Ekpe laws and edicts".<sup>23</sup>*

The Ekpe society of Old Calabar was changed into the Abakuá cult in Cuba, the Bonkó cult in Bioko, and the Abakuya dance in mainland Equatorial Guinea as a result of the Obutong massacre of 1765 and other tragedies.

The traditional secret society "Ekpe," which literally means "Lion," was founded by the Ekoi tribe in Cross River State. Calabar and the Oron nations of Udung-Ukko, Mbo, Urue-Offong Oruko, Okobo, as well as the Eket and Uruan

local government districts in Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria, and even western Cameroon, are the epicentres of the masquerade practise. The Efik (Calabar) caste hierarchy of Ekpe begins with the most basic masquerade - Idem Ikw to Nyamkpe, which is only worn by senior mantle bearers at the highest level. Along with the traditional monarch, members of this sacred cult are empowered as keepers of society order.

Unlike "Ekpo," the Ekpe is not a collection of masquerade cults, but rather a single traditional cult with the same core values known by various names - primarily Ekpe and Mkpe - in different parts of the country; and it is always the highest and most prestigious masquerade in the area where it exists, just as the lion is known to be the king of its habitat. Women are generally barred from proximity to any portion of the cult, except for wives and daughters of high-ranking members who are ceremonially introduced as distant viewers rather than participants, because many Ekpe rituals and ceremonies require ultimate masculinity, celebacy, and purity. Women, on the other hand, have high-status matriarchal communities such as Abang, Ekombi, and Moni-Nkim, from which men are absolutely prohibited.

The Ekpe parades are held at the end of each year for seven days (Ukabade Isua), during which many ekpe execute spiritually guided walks that involve the Iyiro/Nyiro (random spins) from a specific starting location in town to the traditional ruler's palace. The ruler and a senior member of the cult would

perform libations of white wine or other spirits to honour the founding fathers by calling out their names after the expression "Oje Oje Bari Bari" (which means "order" in old Ejagam language), followed by the subject - names of proximal clans and localities in which the cults dwell, implying unity.

The masquerade itself is the most noticeable element of the Ekpe cult artform, which is traditionally red and black but also (though rarely) with a large round glituan worn at the upper body section to represent a lion's mane and small versions around the ankles called "mkpat etim," and smaller versions around the wrists called "Itong Ubok Etim." In the left hand, the masquerade holds a bouquet of oboti leaves, and in the right, a lengthy staff. Beyond spiritual authority and leadership authority, what the two represent cannot be entirely established. However, in ancient times, it was widely believed that if the Ekpe struck a person with the leaves, it signalled that the person had been cast out from all sort of evil.

Though it appeared to be only an art form during the Ukabade Isua celebration, the Ekpe cult worked as a whole civilised society within a wider civilization, serving as law enforcement, justice, and even spiritual consultation, making it one of the most distinguished masquerades in West Africa. According to legend, the cult's top members also initiated, trained, and coronated the country's kings. Even if the cult's influence is fading due to globalisation priorities and a lack of enthusiasm among young people in continuing the practise, the Ekpe remains the protector of Efik cultural legacy<sup>24</sup>.

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## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE CALABAR CARNIVAL AND ITS ORIGIN**

Calabar Carnival, often known as "Africa's Biggest Street Party" or "Pride of Nigeria," takes place in Nigeria<sup>1</sup>, is an annual carnival held in Cross River State, Nigeria's south-south region. The carnival is conducted every December and was designated by the then-governor, Mr. Donald Duke, as a Christmas celebration activity, with his vision being to make Cross-River a center for tourism and hospitality in Nigeria and Africa. The quality of this celebration has improved over the years, and it is now an international festival and Nigeria's largest carnival. It used to be a month-long festival that started on December 1st, but when Benedict Ayade was elected, he cut it down to two weeks the day he was elected. Governor Ayade stated in his statement at the 2017 carnival that the carnival is meant to promote Africa as the richest continent and a wonderful location where young people should be happy to call home. The carnival has always been a promising one, with various competitions and large monetary prizes, and it has always been a colorful one<sup>2</sup>.

Governor Donald Duke of Cross River created the Calabar Carnival in 2004 as a strategy to encourage tourism and boost the local economy. "The carnival aims to include more components of local heritage and culture while also strengthening the capacity of the community to engage in an economically

productive way.”<sup>3</sup> The carnival is being **separated into four parts** which includes the following:

1st – 10th December is the **Millennium Week**,

12th – 17th December is the **Sports Week**,

19th -24th December is the **TINAPA Family Festival**,

25th -31st December is the **Carnival Week**.

It is fairly uncommon for families to choose Calabar as their yearly Christmas vacation destination, causing the carnival to expand by leaps and bounds. Calabar Carnival in Nigeria, commonly known as "Africa's Biggest Street Party," was established as part of a plan to make Cross River State, Nigeria, the number one tourism attraction for Nigerians and visitors from around the world. Every iteration has thus far featured five competitive and other non-competitive bands. Former leader and founder of Passion 4', Mr. Chris Agibe, who was previously the Executive Secretary of the Cross-River State Carnival Commission, has a new band leader, Barr.

The committee in charge of tourist and cultural activities draughts the events of the carnival every year, and new proposals are proposed every year. Carnival Committee staged "Carnival Cup 2009," a football game amongst five competing carnival bands - Seagull, Passion 4, Masta Blasta, Bayside, and Freedom – in December 2009. The annual Calabar Carnival, Boat regatta, current

trend shows, Christmas town, traditional promenades, and the annual Ekpe Carnival are all annual events that attract thousands of tourists.

Other projects planned for the year, according to their work design, include the second edition of the Essay Writing Affair, which will involve both secondary and tertiary students and will begin in a few weeks. These projects are aimed at reviving the state's reading history as well as instilling the carnival culture in the youth.

Top Nigerian singers, Nollywood actors, politicians, and international creatives have all attended the event. Over the last four years, international artists like as the late Lucky Dube, Akon, Fat Joe, rapper Jeezy, Nelly, Kirk Franklin, and others have wowed enormous crowds of Nigerians and tourists from other countries. Because of the massive crowds and followers that Nigerian creative people attract, the 2013 Calabar Carnival will focus on them.

The Governor of the State, Sen. Liyel Imoke of Cross River State, declared that the 2013 iteration of the Carnival Calabar Festival, entitled "Ain't No Stopping Us," will hit an all-time high grade during the 2013 Calabar Carnival. Please don't let this opportunity pass you by. Senator Liyel Imoke, the Cross-River State administrator, has reiterated that, despite the fact that the annual Calabar carnival has grown in size each year, the 2013 edition will set a new record. This year's event will be headlined by a Nigerian musician rather than a foreign celebrity. The Festival Design Committee came to this decision after

noticing that Nigerian headliners typically draw larger crowds than their international counterparts. This is a major step forward for the state. Governor Imoke made this announcement in an international press briefing in which he welcomed Nigeria and the rest of the world to Africa's large-scale road party, with Tinapa as the backdrop and with the backing of Nollywood stars and significant business sponsors. The beauty of Nigeria is fully communicated in the Calabar carnival, according to Governor Imoke, and the exclusive emblem should be jealously preserved and promoted by everybody. As a result, he used the occasion to call on the government and private sector to invest more in creative commerce, as it generates a lot of revenue for the country.<sup>4</sup>

December has its own distinct flavor, but there's more to it when it comes to Calabar locals, as the city begins to welcome tourists from far and wide, with the lighting of the Christmas tree on December 1st kicking off a month-long series of festivities. Many television stations broadcast the Carnival event, which attracts millions of people.

The event came in four parts;

1. The Millennium Week takes place from the 1st to the 10th of December.
2. The Sports Week is held from the 12th to the 17th of December.
3. The TINAPA Family Festival takes place from the 19th to the 24th of December, followed by the most exciting and anticipated Carnival Week from the 25th to the 31st of December.

Local and international artists, actors/actresses, senior dignitaries, and others attend the Carnival event.

Each year, the Calabar Carnival has a distinct theme to which the event will be held;

In 2008, the theme of the event was ‘Sustaining Earth’s Treasure Through Our Culture.’

In 2009, it was ‘Land of Our Birth, Our People, Our Heritage.

In 2010 – Our Strength and Resilience; The Bedrock of Our Future.

In 2011 – Endless Possibilities.

In 2012 – The New Dawn.

In 2013 – Ain’t No Stopping Us.

In 2014 – Celebration Time.

In 2015 – Climate Change.

In 2016 – Climate Change – Bigger, Bolder, better.

In 2017 – Migration.

In 2018 – Africanism.

In 2019 – Humanity.<sup>5</sup>

Every year, the Calabar Carnival combines dexterity with color, dancing prowess, and costumes from five different bands. You won't want to miss any of the bands' parades since the uniqueness is so lovely and the buzz is so intense. These bands place a lot of importance on color, which makes it easier for people

to relate to them. The bands are arranged into major bands which compete against each other while the other is called the non-competitive band. The Calabar carnival consist of various bands that show case music, performances, drama and dance. First, the competitive bands are;

1. The Bayside Band
2. Seagull Band
3. Freedom Band
4. Masta Blasta Band
5. Passion 4 Band.

Second, the non-competitive bands are;

1. Wise up band
2. Hit FM Band
3. CNS Band
4. The Governor's Band.

## MAJOR BANDS



Fig. 3: The Bayside Band

The Bayside Band is one of five Carnival bands registered in Nigeria's Cross River State's annual Christmas Festival. All Nigerians and foreigners are welcome to join the band. The Band is immediately recognized by its striking aqua marine colour.

The Bayside Band is a non-profit organization whose goals are to raise money for charity and to keep the carnival parade going. A seven-member Advisory Board and an administrative office led by a Program Manager make up the company's organizational structure. The Advisory Board is in charge of the Band's control and management, and it meets quarterly to review all of the band's transactions. The Band's funding comes from membership dues and profits from

year-round entertainment events such as, but not limited to, theatre plays and orchestra, among others. The Bayside Band is headed by former Governor of Cross Rivers state Donald Duke.



Fig. 4: The Seagull Band

The Seagull Band is one of the Carnival Bands that were registered in 2005 for the annual Christmas festival in Cross River State. It is the most fashionable and well-coordinated organization with the primary goal of developing and sustaining the tourism and hospitality industry, as well as improving the position of the less fortunate through charity. The band parades every year during the Carnival, displaying African culture via aesthetics, abilities, and creativity.

The Seagull Band is distinguished by its eye-catching distinctive colour – red – and maintains a defined hierarchical structure. It is the band that recognizes and celebrates our own Nigerians as well as other artistes, movie stars, and beauty queens. Sen. (Princess) Florence Ita-Giwa (OON) is the band's dynamic and flamboyant leader, who is ably accompanied by Mrs. Affiong Effiom (Fulbright School), Lecturer in Theatre and Media Studies, University of Calabar, Nigeria.<sup>7</sup>



Fig. 5: Freedom Band

In 2005, Capt. Henry Brisibe and Mr. Larry Esin established the Freedom Band, which is known for its yellow colour. The band has always been among the top three in all past editions of the Carnival Calabar event since its inception. The band's grand patron is His Excellency, Barr. Efiok Cobham, the former Deputy Governor of Cross River State.<sup>8</sup>



Fig. 6: The Masta Blasta Band

The Masta Blasta Band, commonly known as "The Orange Family," is the largest and most entertaining of the yearly Carnival Calabar's five primary bands. In December of 2005, the Masta Blasta Band was formed. The band is also known as the "Orange Family," and it has over 10,000 members from all around the world. They are the largest and most entertaining of the five contesting bands in the annual Carnival Calabar parade (the largest street party in Africa).

Through the charismatic leadership of Chief Senator Gershon Bassey, Senator representing Cross River State's Southern district, the band has matured over the years to become a brand name of choice and reference point. The Masta Blasta Band is the only band that caters to the "belonging" needs of people from all walks of life. Their all-inclusive approach to Carnival Calabar fosters an enviable sense of community among family and friends and welcomes both local

and foreign guests to experience the thrills of participating in an international carnival procession.<sup>9</sup>

The Orange Family is the current overall champion of the Carnival Calabar in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016. They hold the record for being the only band in the history of the Calabar Carnival for winning the most prizes in all categories in a single year.



Fig. 7: Band 4 Passion: (Leader Barr. Attah Ochinike)

In the sixteen years that the carnival's competition part has existed, Passion 4 has been the most successful band, having won nine editions and finished second in two others. All of the adjudicators have named Passion 4 Africa's most outstanding band, as the band continues to improve in originality, organisation, and style during Africa's largest street festival.

Mr. Chris Agibe, the former leader and founder of Passion 4 and former Executive Secretary of the Cross-River State Carnival Commission, has been replaced by Barr. Attah Ochinike, the Attorney General and former Commissioner for Justice of Cross River State.<sup>10</sup> The only band that establishes a level playing field for children and adults to have fun is Passion 4, often known as the green band. Every sponsor's ideal platform for cooperation is the band, and the mileage we provide is unrivalled. Recently, non competitive bands were introduced into the carnival as means to create awareness and also sensitize the public of which gained the recognition and acceptance of the indigenous people and visitors at large. The non competitive bands includes:



Fig. 8: The Wise Up Band

The Wise Up Band was formed in 2016 to bring HIV/AIDS campaigns to the streets and reduce the incidence of devastating diseases by 2030, a timeframe

set by the United Nations and World Health Organization. The band has top his sponsors such as: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Mediatrix Development Foundation (MDF). Other of his MDAs and sponsors include Cross River State Governor's Office, Vaccine Education (Eva), Excellence Community Education and Welfare Scheme (ECEWS), State AIDS Control Agency (SACA), Cross River State Department of Health, Cross River State Primary And so on. Health Care Development Authority, UNICEF, fhi360, LOPIN 3, Women's Health Association of Nigeria (MWAN) and many others. The other non-competitive bands include the Hit FM band, The Governor's band and the CNS band.<sup>11</sup>

Carnival Committee organized "Carnival Cup 2009," a football competition between the five competing carnival bands - Seagull, Passion 4, Masta Blasta, Bayside, and Freedom - in December 2009. The festival also featured music performances by local and international artists, the annual Calabar Carnival, a boat regatta, fashion shows (which debuted in 2016), and a beauty pageant (Miss Africa introduced in 2016) Christmas Village, traditional dances, and the annual Ekpe Festival are all annual events that draw thousands of visitors. Other activities at this carnival include an essay writing competition for both secondary and tertiary students. The Millennium Park, The U J Esuene Stadium, The Cultural Center Complex, Marina Beach and Resort, Tinapa, and the Botanical Garden are just a few of the locations where various performances and

entertainment events are presented every evening and late into the night as part of the Calabar carnival. There are no dull moments or wasted days. Every performance is free to all audiences.<sup>12</sup> At the Cultural Center Ground, where the Christmas Arcade is constructed, there is a vivacious festival atmosphere. The arcade, which is also known as the Christmas Village, comprises of a number of temporary kiosks and stores for the sale of fast food and beverages as well as for other types of entertainment. In this cultural hamlet, the arts, crafts, and clothing of the inhabitants are on exhibit and available for purchase by visitors. Additionally, this is where the Christmas fair is held, where purchases are made in specially constructed shops. After a busy day, visitors and locals unwind and shop in this location. Children are given access to a San Grotto where, in exchange for a token, they can meet Father Christmas, get their picture taken with him, and receive a present.

A crucial prelude to Carnival Calabar is the children's carnival. Children are divided into bands and parade a short distance while dressed in vibrant costumes before the main carnival. Children's participation helps to ensure that future generations will continue the carnival tradition. Prizes are awarded to the overall winners in the children's division. The cultural procession along the carnival route serves as a prelude to the main carnival as well. Residents of Cross River State and cultural groups from several states in Nigeria are participating in this march.

The biggest carnival parade in the city of Calabar travels a 12-kilometer circuit and is quite competitive. Judges come from a variety of artistic disciplines, as well as from academia, the entertainment business, and other relevant professions. There are defined parameters for assessing the ability of each band to interpret the carnival theme.<sup>13</sup> The Calabar carnival serves as a sort of relief, entertainment and a vacation venue for locals, foreigners and those seeking to have fun or a change of environment for a short period of time. This carnival affords people of other cultures to get to know about the lifestyle and culture of other places beyond their place of abode or continent at large.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE IMPACT OF CALABAR CARNIVAL IN NIGERIA

The entire Calabar carnival is a cultural/national occasion. It is important to observe the cultural events on exhibit during the festival. However, these exhibits span not only the host state but also the several Nigerian federation states and even the continent of Africa as a whole. Nation building is a highly challenging and dangerous endeavor, especially in a place like Nigeria where there are many different ethnic groups and religious beliefs. For instances activities like sports, singing of the national anthem, interethnic unions, movies, other types of entertainment, and other activities are examples of ways to develop a country. Through nation builders, country building may be accomplished. We can thus confidently claim that Mr. Donald Duke is a nation builder. As it relates to the Calabar carnival, many ethnic groups have well-attended traditional festivals that bring their natives together. Popular cultural events like the Sango festival and Eyo festival (in Yoruba land), the Sharo/Shadi festival (in Fulani land), and the new yam festival (in Igbo land and Southeast Nigeria) are well-known for their originality and artistic/cultural potential.<sup>1</sup>

The Calabar carnival is special because, throughout the years, it has evolved from being the event that locals of Cross River state took great pleasure in to one that now includes other indigenous Nigerians to the point where it draws in Nigerians from the diaspora. Additionally, with the aid of bands like the Wise

up Band, a group that supports public health, awareness of HIV/AIDS is raised. Top sponsors of the band include Meditrix Development Foundation (MDF), the Office of the Wife of the Governor of Cross River State, Education for Vaccine (Eva), Excellence Community Education Welfare Scheme (ECEWS), State Agency for Control of AIDS (SACA), Cross River State Ministry of Health, Cross River State Primary Health Care Development Agency, UNICEF, fhi360, LOPIN 3, Medical Women Association, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).<sup>2</sup> An example of this is the sponsor's creation of jobs exclusively for young people in Nigeria. It is directed at young people, who make up more than 50% of Nigeria's population. The young, or "THE LEADERS About TOMORROW," have used this media to spread awareness of the benefits and drawbacks of sex as well as other contagious illnesses and viruses that have killed a number of people in Nigeria. Through these sponsors, medical professionals, businesses, hospitals, and medical facilities are educated on the usage of various pharmaceuticals, how to administer them, and other issues related to nation building in the health sector. And in a nation like Nigeria, every ethnic group may be found there. Because collaboration among these individuals is necessary for the movement to flourish and for the simple transmission of information, this is a way of nation building. We will put aside our differences and take care of our health even if it means cooperating with everyone since, as they say, "health is wealth."

The Governor's Band, which Governor Ben Ayade founded in 2015, has been utilized to let the public to examine and critique the Governor's efforts. The band stands for openness in government. The governor, his wife, members of the legislative council, and dignitaries from the Cross-River State Government make up the band. The situation of national integration has greatly benefited from the competitive bands' participation in every aspect. Each band in Nigeria performs regional dances from different tribes in one manner or another. For instance, a certain band performed the Tiv traditional dance at the 2017 event; the Tiv are a tribe in the state of Benue. A band presented a Fulani drama with their dance the previous year. Such a beautiful scene. When you look at these bands, you can see how the many ethnic groups who joined together to showcase another traditional dance demonstrate to everyone watching that we are all one and that we can all coexist.<sup>3</sup>

Through the provision of fundamental infrastructure facilities to guarantee the achievement of the objectives for which carnival fiesta was founded, Calabar carnival fiesta contributes to the socio-economic development of Calabar Metropolis and, in fact, the state. Investment in tourist events influences infrastructure development, which may enhance the economy, and the revival of community arts institutions, which helps the industry achieve its goals. Similar to this, it is important to note that a cultural fiesta may have an impact on growth and the creation of initiatives, such as new facilities, that will boost tourism and

provide the host communities with a fresh lease of life.<sup>4</sup> The economic contribution of the Calabar cultural festival is based on the fact that it serves as a catalyst for bringing in tourists and raising their average expenditure and duration of stay. The festival or carnival helps the area become more prosperous and generate cash.<sup>5</sup> This is due to the fact that it creates new job prospects. Experts generally concur that festivals lead to the growth of small and medium size businesses in tourist areas. The development of jobs, community amenities, and tourism marketing are all advantages of the Calabar cultural festival. For both the local population and tourism investors, the Calabar cultural festival generates jobs and commercial prospects. Falassi claims that the labor-intensive Calabar cultural festival business has a lot of potential to generate jobs, especially in Cross River State.<sup>6</sup>

The entire amount of increased spending created within a city that can be directly or indirectly linked to the staging of a significant event is known as the economic effect of the event. This suggests that occasions like the Calabar Cultural Festival have a significant impact on socioeconomic growth, including the creation of jobs. The goal of any economic activity is to provide significant money for the state, according to economic impact studies that focus on the changes that occur in sales, income, jobs, and other factors as a result of economic events. The host village of the Calabar cultural festival greatly benefits socioeconomically from the event. Over time, it has been believed that the event

generates significant cash for the state and thousands of jobs to help combat unemployment in both the state and the country.

This is demonstrated by the fact that the event's potential is turned into opportunities for community economic empowerment and employment development. Investment in the tourist industry has resulted in activities that generate money, such as the development of jobs for the region's growing population.<sup>7</sup> As more hard currency pours into a state, the more growth and wealth that state and its people may create. Cross River State makes a lot of money from the flood of tourists during the festival season. In 2014, the National Institute for Cultural Orientation claimed that cultural events have the potential to bring in unimaginable amounts of money for the nation and boost tourism, but sadly, nothing has been done to turn these resources into financial success. Carnival is one of the biggest money-making events in the world and a dependable way to help small and medium-sized enterprises grow their sustainable economic potential. The Calabar cultural festival offers training in hospitality, money management, and the creation of local trade initiatives for the local traders in order to maximize profits from the increased commercial activity. Greater income creation potential is provided by investing in the festival.<sup>8</sup>

The Cross-River State administration has made sure that essential infrastructural amenities, like as roads, water, power, communications, and hotels to accommodate tourists, are provided via the cultural festival. Thus, the

availability of the fundamental social infrastructures including as roads, leisure areas, schools, hospitals, power, water supply, and communication facilities improves the quality of life for Efik people and fosters sustainable development in Cross River State. According to their study on public-private partnerships, which focused on the Australian experience, organizations of cultural events have contributed to the development of the state's infrastructure system. According to their findings, a well-developed infrastructure system boosts the state's capacity for production and has a positive effect on the state's overall economic performance. The Cross-River State cannot, however, supply all the money required to build and maintain infrastructure, as is becoming more and more obvious. This request for private sector involvement aims to increase the infrastructure's sustainability and efficiency, both of which are crucial for achieving social and economic stability. In order to make the Calabar carnival more appealing, facilities such as the Christmas Village and other similar ones have been built on the ground. Existing facilities have also been reorganized, and new ones with higher standards have been built to meet the demands of future events in the state. These cultural events have also spurred significant economic growth. The cultural festival activities in Cross River State improve the infrastructure to support the tourism sector and host visitors and tourists during the event.<sup>9</sup>

The Calabar carnival is supported by related events, such as the carnival Queen competition, a beauty pageant that raises money expressly for charitable causes, and an essay writing contest designed to spark students' interest in creative writing in elementary, secondary, and higher institutions. Prizes are given out to winners in several categories. The carnival commission arranges a post-carnival interactive session, bringing together the organizers and participants to talk about operational procedures for correcting anomalies, in order to maintain high standards in the carnival. The commission also sends separate delegations to the yearly carnivals in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Trinidad and Tobago to observe production practices with the goal of using the knowledge to enhance the Calabar carnival.<sup>10</sup>

As evidenced by the patronage over the years, the conception of Carnival Calabar and Calabar Festival seems to be favored by both local and international audiences. The number of patrons has been steadily rising, and they come from a surprising variety of international ethnicities. On the carnival path, more bleachers have been built to comfortably accommodate the expanding crowds. Since there are no official statistics to this effect, it is difficult to state in precise terms how many people travel to Calabar each year for the festival and carnival. There are no agencies to track and publish statistics showing the number of visits to Calabar, nor are there templates specifically created to collect data. However, assumptions can be drawn from the fact that the Calabar airport experiences heavy holiday

traffic and that air travelers frequently need to make reservations. Every airline that flies the Calabar regional routes are typically completely booked throughout the holiday season. Additionally, according to media sources, lodging in hotels and guest homes are typically hard to come by since travelers book earlier in the year to avoid the crowds. Traffic in city streets of Calabar also grows, as seen by the December traffic congestion. All signs point to the rush of activity in near the end of the year, Calabar and its surroundings are connected to the festivities in some manner. While some visitors come to Calabar solely to take in the arts and culture on display at the festival and carnival, others may go there for other reasons but also participate in the celebrations as a side activity.<sup>11</sup>

In all cultures, civilizations, and nations, the perception of women has been crucial. The mental picture we have of something or someone is related to patterns that have been passed down via tradition, taken from other cultures, or modified for a new situation; the picture pertains to perceptions, values, beliefs, and ideas. Chombart Lauwe's definition of an image is as follows:

*“A study of how men and women represent themselves...the status of women in relation to different social structures... this term representation must be understood in its broad sense..., a number of factors of social environment related to the experience of the individuals belonging to a particular culture...differences may occur in the perception of objects, situations, and persons according to whether the observer belongs to one or another different social class in one and the same country. According to their perceptions, individuals are clearly conscious of the groups to which they belong, of the various social structures and of their*

*situation in relation to these structures and the images they form are distinctly related thereto. Individuals belonging to the same groups, the same social environment or the same category in the same society usually form the same images”<sup>12</sup>*

The upshot of this is that societies with strong rural traditions would have a different perception of women than those with considerably greater levels of life. The idea of family bonds will have a significant impact on how women are portrayed even when industrialization and economic power may grow but fewer women are in the work force. They convey a complicated sense of the image of women to nations where colonialism and native patterns coexist. Provocative pictures of ladies who were just partially clad were strewn throughout the bands. Passion 4 was the first band to use frontline girls in 2012, and all other bands soon followed. These models go through a thorough screening process before being chosen. They had carnival bodies, the ideal, unreachable standard of white male beauty approved by the global fashion industry. They are chosen through an objectification process where they parade virtually or completely nude, and if their bodies are determined to have physical faults that are unacceptable, they are discarded.

After Caribbean Carnivals, they are clothed in the barest costumes and utilized as a monarch to draw attention to the band performance. In an erotic dance, they writhe, twist, and move their bodies. They serve as the carnival bands' public face. In 2017, the Mexican front light girls of the Governor's band played

"a la curve" while wearing costumes made of peacock feathers in the colors black, blue, and red. The frontline females in every band exposed their bellies while donning short mini or mkpin skirts; others wore bra-like tops only, which was obscene; several of the women had protruding breasts! In the last three years, the Freedom Band has established a custom of performing with groups of women dressed in erotically sensual flared pants with frilled cream, yellow, and black stripes and gold sequins. Another graphically sexual part was the Passion 4 striptease unit. There were several ladies doing sensual dances and donning provocative costumes during the Imo state contingent. Women's carnival band costumes are getting shorter, skimpier, and more exposing now than they were at the start of Carnival Calabar.

The impact of Trinidad Carnival and Brazil has increased. These performers have become more daring in their display of erotic images as well as in their use of the female body, which has elevated planes of sensuality for the audience. The Carnival band's costumes, dancing, music, narrative, and advertising materials all objectify women.<sup>13</sup> The Calabar International Carnival in 2017 was a sex show and an invitation to everyone to indulge in sensual delights. The goddess of sex was praised and adored in a large number of the performances. Costumes, music, and dancing were used to highlight sexual undertones. Nigeria was among the seventeen nations that performed. Eight of the seventeen nations that participated in the exhibition featured overtly pornographic acts! Ghana,

Southern Africa I and II, Mexico, Tanzania, Belize, Brazil, and Swaziland were among them. In their Kente costumes, Ghanaian performers were female.

During the performance, they performed a striptease and stripped, leaving just their bra and underwear. The notorious one corner's soundtrack, which set the audience's brains in a sexual frame of mind, welcomed them into the performance venue. Their dance had elements of acrobatics, energizing steps, and frantic erotic moves. Two teams were on the Southern African continent. The younger maidens of team one emerged with exposed breasts underneath beaded skirts or animal hides. It was a vigorous and heart-pounding traditional Zulu dance. Many male lawmakers gaped in public as these naked dancers generated a huge sensation, as documented by the media! Dancers from Swaziland donned traditional Swazi attire during the First-Fruit Nkwala ritual. The women who exposed their breasts wrapped their wraps in a toga-style, leaving one exposed breast. Tanzanians were completely wrapped in flowing white and green dresses that resembled butterflies, but the entire performance was an Eros dance, with many of the female dancers mating with mother earth while lying on the ground. There was a lot of uproar when one of the female dancers even exited the stage to go where the judges were sitting and start shaking her bum in front of several of the male judges, even touching them.<sup>14</sup>

Belizean women seemed virtually bare in their little underwear and bras. They encouraged erotica. In front of the ravenous crowd, which cried out for

more, the women presented their bodies as merchandise. Brazilian and Mexican citizens dressed in traditional Carnival garb. Mexico's original set of costumes had a variety of hues and a yellow dress. On stage, however, they changed into shades of orange and black slacks with ruffled hands while still sporting bra tops. Behind them, they had lengthy tails. A woman dressed in all white performed the opening glee; she donned gold boots with an orange top and a feathered headdress similar to those used by Abeng women on top of orange scarves. Wearing swim trunks in public settings undoubtedly does generate a lot of attention. Her white swim trunks were quite provocative; some people even dubbed to her as a "Eros angel." Brazilian men wore bigger farthingales with blue and green feathers. women wearing short, green or yellow bikinis over sequined shirts. One of the women was wearing white-winged feathers that showed her flawless butt. As she was spotted bouncing her rear all over the playing area, this white "angel" dancer generated quite a stir. Many of the young female dancers in the Brazil Samba dance displayed their smooth-skinned buttocks in this nudist dance.<sup>15</sup>

Displaying naked bodies casts a bad light on women's perceptions and opinions. Women are shown in the naked images from Carnival in Calabar as cheap, common, possessions, toys, and objects of pleasure that may be found in bedrooms and other spaces. Many people believe that native Efik women are promiscuous. However, some countered that nudity is normal and doesn't "spoil." Native Calabar women are explicitly portrayed as "bad" by Carnival Calabar.

Many believe that the native Efik lady has strong sexual prowess and that males should approach her. Over time, a lot of individuals have arrived to the conclusion that Carnival Calabar influences young people's sexual conduct. Many people are engaging in sexual activity right now! Stealing and drinking are also on the rise. Women are no longer respected by the younger generation, who treat them with contempt. During this time of year, reports of rape, sexual harassment, and violence against women all rise. This time of year, adolescent pregnancies rise as more young people engage in irresponsible sexual behavior as a result of spending so much time together during rehearsals. Some teenage ladies imitate the clothing styles of these Carnival Calabar naked showgirls. Numerous people, particularly church leaders, concur that many demons are sent to Calabar to promote immorality and poverty, and they have asked that Carnival be abandoned in favor of prayers and a music festival to glorify the Almighty. Some claim that there has no spiritual significance. Others concur, nevertheless, that the gods of Africa are revered and are not devils.<sup>16</sup>

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

## CONCLUSION

Culture influences carnival and this is seen with the celebration of the Calabar carnival done every year since the year 2004. The carnival has been able to draw supports from the international community and overtime, lots of manpower from the international community has been invested towards the success of the carnival. The carnival has also helped to ensure that the core culture of the people of Cross River state has not been lost in transit as well as the provision of the provision of workshops that engages both participants and spectators of the Calabar Carnival. However, this study aims at the impact of the carnival in Nigeria.

Calabar is the state capital of Nigeria's Cross River State. It was first referred to as Akwa Akpa in Efik. The city is bordered by the Calabar and Great Kwa rivers and tributaries of the Cross River (from its inland delta). When the slave trade was abolished in the middle of the 19th century, Calabar focused primarily on the exportation of palm oil and palm kernels. After accepting British protection in 1884, the area known as old Calabar served as the capital for the Oil Rivers protectorates from 1885 to 1893, the Niger Coast Protectorate from 1893 to 1900, and the capital for southern Nigeria from 1900 to 1906 until the British moved its administrative headquarters elsewhere.

Furthermore, Calabar has various set of ethnic groups loaded with different cultures but the Efiks stand out among many. The Efiks had settled

around the banks of the Calabar River, the Cross River estuary, and other locations in Nigeria and western Cameroon. They migrated from Uruan in the thirteenth century, and their initial settlement at Ikpaene was during those years. They then moved to Creek Town and the remainder of their current riverine places during those same years. Their origin and settlement history extends back to the fourteenth century A.D.

Respect for authority is emphasized by the Efik ethical culture, which is a component of its social culture. In both private and public settings, juniors are taught to respect their elders in all facets of interpersonal interaction. A senior man must initiate the handshake, although it is a requirement of greeting for a junior guy to use both of his hands. Women typically embrace themselves, their spouses, and close male relatives instead of shaking hands like their male counterparts do. Prospective spouses are discouraged from getting married to someone from a family with a criminal past since stealing is prohibited and carries with it harsh punishment/alienation.

In order to celebrate and promote local tradition and culture to a larger audience, the Cross River State governor, Donald Duke, originally suggested the Calabar Carnival. Duke had a goal of making the state a tourist and hospitality center in Nigeria and Africa. Since then, it has grown far more than expected and is now known as "Nigeria's greatest street party." The committee in charge of tourism and cultural events creates the program each year, and new initiatives are

presented with various subjects picked to promote the carnival. Five rival carnival bands—Seagull, Passion 4, Masta Blasta, Bayside, and Freedom—compete at the Calabar carnival. These bands can be identified by their colors: The Seagull, which is red and is regarded as the most fashionable and well-organized band, Passion 4, which is green and is regarded as the most prosperous band, Masta Blasta, which is orange and is the biggest band, Bayside, which is blue, and Freedom, which is yellow. Previous activities have celebrated Nigerian culture by hosting football tournaments, music concerts by regional and international musicians, the annual Calabar Carnival itself, boat regattas, fashion displays, beauty pageants, traditional dance, and even essay-writing contests.

The carnival suggests the use of event tourism as an engine for local economy. This justification demonstrates the need for the festival to carry on in order to achieve the state's long-term objective for both the government and its population. Both domestically and internationally, the Carnival has to be strategically marketed. The much-needed Naira that will fundamentally transform the state's economic landscape will show up if the proper consumer mix is attracted to the area. Today, tourism plays a significant role in most economies. Moving away from an oil-dominated mono-product economy can help Cross River State improve and diversify her economy (tourism). The tourist industry has the potential to replace oil as the largest employment, just like it did for New Orleans. With so much potential, it is logical to assume that by the time crude oil

in Nigeria runs out, Cross River State would have created a viable alternative economic basis in the sectors of ecotourism and cultural tourism. The tourist industry's subsector will only continue to exist if its potential is achieved. Policies must be put in place to allow for additional infrastructural and human capital development in order to ensure that the local or host community understands and supports the tourism endeavor to contribute its fair share.

The reputation of the city is crucial since the organizers of Carnival Calabar regularly use female bodies as advertisements for their bands. Frequently, the first pictures of the festival and its activities (posted on websites and in promotional materials) show the bodies and faces of women. The increase in female participation in Carnival is evidence that historically male-only spaces are now being occupied by women. Numerous carnival producers exploit women and profit on their bodies. Many of the young people interviewed agreed that the representation of women in the Calabar Carnival is not very favorable and that it has helped to solidify the perception of women as objects and property. Additionally, it has presented a misleading image of indigenous Calabar women. The cultural and social construction of femininity and masculinity is influenced by factors such as family, community, education, public opinion, media, and the arts. We must think about the advancements made by women thus far and the future. Women are increasingly playing a leadership role in the fight for racial, gender, and social justice. This will help to eliminate the unfavorable

preconceptions and attitudes about women in society as a result of the long-term change in how women are depicted in the arts and media.

The way events are transported considerably enhances the satisfaction of customers. Destinations may differ depending on the intra-city method of transportation. In the 2008 edition of the Carnival, it appears that motorbikes are the main form of transportation to the Carnival routes and other tourist spots in the city. The majority of attendees drive their own vehicles to the event location. Because the majority of attendees arrived at the event venue on motorbikes and in private automobiles, it is the destination management company's and the event organizers' responsibility to ensure security, traffic control, and ample parking space during the event.

The travel and tourism industry are a part of the tourism industry. A lot of tourists have been attracted by the staging of the Calabar Carnival, which has raised demand for lodging. Since hotels are the favored accommodation option for tourists, the industry should build more of them to accommodate the market's diversity, which has two implications. As a result, attention should be given to the development of alternative types of accommodation and the promotion of their use. On the other hand, the preference for hotels may be caused by the fact that other forms of lodging are less well-established.

Depoliticizing and privatizing the tourism sector has also been proposed as a way to speed up the growth of the business. To promote private sector

involvement, the government should enact considerate and kind rules and regulations. It is crucial to persuade multinational firms to invest in the construction of the state's hospitality infrastructure at various locations. Government engagement in direct investment should decrease. It is necessary to apply the idea of having the private sector fund events like the Calabar Festival and Carnival Calabar to other well-known eco- and culturally-oriented attractions in the region. It's possible that these tourism-related commodities might someday become self-sustaining with some internal rearrangement. As a general economic tendency, free market systems promote healthy competition among investors. This is a tried-and-true formula for rapid expansion, and it may be applicable to Cross River State's tourism industry just as it has been to other facets of the capitalist economy.

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