DECOLONISATION OF THE AFRICAN FESTIVALSCAPE: FESTIVALS FOR WHOM? (CONCEPTUAL PAPER)

Patricia Mumbengegwi, Jacob Mapara and Forbes Kabote
Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbambwe

Abstract

The African festivalscape has yet to be traversed from the angle of decoloniality, which points to it requiring some 'unmaking' and 'remaking', to transform it into an entity relatable to its environments. Thus, the lagging behind of the African sphere in festival development may be attributed to a misunderstanding of the 'African festival' construct. This is symptomatic of the residue of colonial hangover observed through systems that still personify former colonisers. This conceptual study seeks to advance festival theory development, by offering insights on festival coloniality deterrents and potential opportunities that may accrue from the decolonisation of the African festivalscape.

Keywords: Festivalscape, Decoloniality, Afrocentric

Introduction

Festivals are fundamentally a component of living heritage that has been subsumed and/or modified by the tourism industries for socio-economic purposes. Négrier and Jourda (2007) attribute their rapid development between the years 1975 and 2000 to a plurality of causes, such as the evolution of democratic regimes and the decentralisation of power. This intimation connecting them to politics creates another dimension to the festival studies of countries in the global south. It specifically relates to African nations as the majority of them are former colonies, which experienced drastic changes in power matrices. This former colonial experience means that once an element is viewed from a different imperial perspective, there is a need for a change of lenses. Although festivals can be traced back to all civilisations including African ones, they have largely been taken to be a Western concept (Fjell, 2007). Typical examples would be Mardi Gras, which is celebrated in New Orleans, USA and Cannes Brulees/ Canboulay Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago. Thus, the Western adaptations and requirements have become the yardstick for all festivals, regardless of environment (see Sahu & Mahanta, 2009; Popescu & Corbos, 2012; Cudny, 2014; Ogbenika, 2020).

The need for diversification of the tourism product has seen it subsume the cultural industry. Aspects of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) are now major components of the industry through a process termed 'festivalisation'. Négrier and Jourda (2007) describe the process as the commercialisation of regular, cultural offerings into the now pervasive festival. Van Elderen (1997, p.126) has previously described it as the 'symbolic transformation of public space to a particular form of cultural

consumption' Festivalisation benefits include cultural preservation, employment and development of small businesses, infrastructure and superstructure development all leading to livelihood improvement of host communities in the festival's locality. Countries in the global north have long since festivalised various aspects of their cultures. Consequently, these countries have a plethora of world-renowned festivals that boost tourism and contribute significantly to the destinations' economic growth. Examples of such successful festivals are the Rio Carnival in Brazil's Rio de Janeiro and the Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany (Lopez, 2020).

The rapid development of these events has created a dimension known as a 'festivalscape'. The festivalscape is generally perceived as the environment surrounding the festival in its entirety (Lee, 2008; Gration *et al*., 2011). Gration, Arcodia, Raciti, and Stokes (2011:344) depict a scape as 'the framework within which a scene can be viewed'. This allusion gives the sense that, the view of a scene, is of critical importance as it determines the framework of its existence. In this case, the view of African festival development indicates that the region seems to be lagging in all spheres (UNESCO, 2015; Tichaawa & Makoni, 2018). To date, the African festivalscape has not been viewed from the perspective of African-ness. In view of the continent's colonial legacy, it is in a way construed in the same vein as its former colonialists. This necessitates a deconstruction of the festivals through the process of decolonisation.

As the festival industry gains global importance, it is essential for studies surrounding them to assume different tangents. UNESCO Festival Statistics (2015) reports a dearth of festival research from Africa, a region with a very high concentration of former colonies. Furthermore, festival scholars are of the general consensus that work in the area of festivals as a discipline is still in its infancy, thus, further conceptual studies are required to advance the development of theory (Getz, 2008; Wilson *et al*., 2017; Laing, 2018). Wilson *et al.,*'s (2017) study recommends the use of concepts and theories from more established social sciences to bolster the building of new theories in the area of festivals. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to contribute to the festival theory by conceptualising the disparity of the African festivalscape, consequently, highlighting the need for decolonising the field to advance African festival development.

Research Aim

This review seeks to explore the African festivalscape from the perspective of decoloniality. The article is structured in four parts. The first introduces the study, while the second part puts the element of decolonising the festivalscape into focus by conceptualising coloniality and decoloniality in terms of festivals. The third part presents an overview of the African festivalscape and the final section prescribes insights on the transformation of the African festivalscape through decoloniality. This study is based on the analysis of content from both empirical and grey literature.

Coloniality and Decoloniality

The festivalscape, though a terrain being explored from numerous perspectives, has yet to be traversed from the angle of decoloniality. While the discursive dimension of decolonisation, which focuses on the world's apprehension as people construct, deconstruct and reconstruct it, has primarily been applied to education, Mamdani (2016) suggests that it be extended to include broader concerns related to systemic transformation. It is in light of this observation that this study introduces festivals as one of the broader concerns.

Coloniality

To understand coloniality, we must first address its precursor, colonisation. Mumbengegwi, Kazembe and Nyarota (2019) depict colonisation as an altering process to the life of the colonised through the violation of social and cultural norms. It also involves the taking away of the land and political power of the colonised. Khokholkova (2016) asserts that colonial powers regarded themselves as redeemers of sorts and the success of colonisation was a more mental than physical conquest. Thus, colonisation involved taking away the peoples' way of life and replacing them with those of the colonisers. This was done through the denunciation and destruction of the local culture of the colonised. African festivals encapsulated the adherence to traditional religions as well as the values and beliefs of the people through performances, rites and rituals; thus, it was prudent for the colonial master to demonise them through education, Christianity and socialisation. Since the establishment of African festivals was built on every community experience; it had to be replaced (Dankwa, Asare-Kumi & Eshun, 2019). Davids (2019) concurs with the above, indicating the visibility of colonialism in administrative and architectural structures, military occupation, pillaging of resources, dispossession of land and the control of education. Festival celebrations bequeathed important aspects to the societal construct of African people by promoting cultural education. This was through oral traditions and practices such as proverbs, prayer, cultural values embedded in artefacts, language proficiency, interpersonal relationships, religious articles and objects as well as artworks and symbols, thus, rendering a sense of belonging (Dankwa *et al*., 2019).

Coloniality, on the other hand, is a more abstract concept that is not dependent on the extant power matrix. Maldonado-Torres (2007) aptly defines it as established arrangements of supremacy that are a result of colonialism. He posits that these patterns delineate socio-cultural, inter-subjectivity relations, and knowledge production. Maldonado-Torres (2016) further intimates that coloniality endures colonialism as it is sustained through and among other means of literature, benchmarks for academic performance, cultural precedent and cuisine. In this way, it impacts the way people think about themselves, their common sense, their aspirations, and most aspects of contemporary experiences. According to Davids (2019) descendants of colonialism breathe coloniality perpetually. Because this mental subjugation remains, the African

festival depicts major aspects of coloniality. Festival parameters and dimensions such as ownership, structure and content are steeped in coloniality. How then can an African festival grow and be perpetuated when it is not on its own terms? Due to the disequilibrium caused by coloniality, former colonies find themselves borrowing from their colonial masters (Mignolo, 2007). Festivals in developing countries largely exhibit a lack of originality caused by the 'borrowing' from the colonial world and this needs to be addressed. Examples of such festivals include the Afrochella in Ghana (Adutwumwah, 2020), which follows the Cochella (Nevada, USA) template or the National Art Festivals hosted in several African countries, such as Grahamstown, South Africa (Vallabh & Kutsi, 2018) and Livingstone Arts and Culture Festival (LICAF) in Livingstone, Zambia (Gilman, 2020). Under the guise of celebrating their African culture, they follow a Western structure that is designed to attract tourists and boost tourism.

In retrospect, the physical manifestations of colonisation are well articulated and understood as former colonies continue the battle to redress the situation. However, the subtler undertones of coloniality are reflected in a mindset that is carefully and subtly perpetuated by the colonial masters and still lingers (Davids, 2019; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Through Afrocentrism, Asante (2008), gives an evocative obligation to go back in history to revise the collective text of the African people through the Sankofa ideology (Kissi, 2018). It is in this same vein that Dankwa *et al*., (2019) contend that festivals often accomplish more as they have content that can contribute significantly to the reconstruction of African society. They postulate that festivals can furthermore be effective tools for economic development.

Decoloniality

Decoloniality may be described as the reversal of coloniality. It is a term that is used with reference to the logic, metaphysics, ontology and the matrix of power that was created by the colossal processes and aftershock of colonisation and settler-colonialism. This matrix and its lasting effects, together with the accompanying as well as enduring structures are characterised as coloniality. Put in a more accessible fashion, decoloniality can be defined as a way or avenue for the formerly colonised to re-learn their knowledge that has been pushed aside because of the imposition of Western-cum-colonial epistemologies and has been overlooked, suppressed or condemned by the so-called forces of modernity, settler-colonialism, racial capitalism and the tragedy of the superiority of the white race.

Maldonado-Torres (2016) describes decoloniality as the upset of logic, metaphysics, ontology and matrix of power created by the massive processes and aftermath of colonisation. This school of thought focuses on untangling the production of knowledge from a primarily Eurocentric episteme by offering options for confronting and delinking from the matrix of power rooted in colonialism. It critiques the perceived universality of Western knowledge and in the process, the superiority of Western

culture. This view argues that 'the West' does not have the franchise on knowledge (Mignolo, 2012; Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Decoloniality can further be applied to explain the non-functionality of Western knowledge perspectives on the existence and development of cultural attributes in former colonial countries. It articulates the process by which aspects of African culture such as education or festivals that were ravaged by colonisation go through the deconstruction and reconstruction processes that include other decolonial theories such as Afrocentrism or Afrocentricity. Entities such as festivals may need an Afrocentric perspective to develop to the same magnitude as Western festivals, if not bigger.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) is of the opinion that decoloniality is based on three concepts, namely; coloniality of power; coloniality of knowledge; and coloniality of being. Festivals exude a community's power as contended by Dankwa (2019). Festivals transmit and perpetuate a community's knowledge (Mbalisi, 2021; Dankwa, 2019). Izu (2021) asserts that the festival is not a conveyance of culture, but is a cultural symbol in itself. He notes that cultural norms and values are demonstrated through festivals. Furthermore, festivals embody a community's being. These affirmations demonstrate how festival impacts are considered to be far-reaching in the African settings, influencing kinship, rituals, traditions, livelihoods as well as norms and values (Kuuder, Adongo & Abanga 2012; Dankwa *et al*., 2019; Ogbenika, 2020; Mbalisi, 2021). As such, decoloniality involves re-telling the history of a people from the perspective of the formerly de-humanised. Decoloniality, therefore, entails identifying the festival structures that perpetuate oppression, while also working to shed light on those perspectives that have been devalued by hegemonic systems of Western knowledge and power (Maldonado Torres; 2016). Decoloniality can, therefore, be summed up as a restorative process. Thus, this article attempts to identify the African festival structures that have been debased by colonial knowledge systems and power.

The African Festivalscape

The African festivalscape refers to the environment surrounding the African festival. An examination of the general African landscape shows that it is very different from its Western counterparts. Although globally, festivals have become 'big business' boosting economies, improving socio-cultural aspects of communities and livelihoods, the African sphere is seemingly lagging behind in terms of development. This may be attributed to a misunderstanding of the 'African festival' construct, which is largely symptomatic of a residue of the colonial hangover. This is observed through systems that are still a personification of organisational structures, policies, practices and strategies, lingering from the coloniser (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Countries like Zimbabwe, for instance, revere copy and paste festivals with colonial intonations (Njerekai, 2016; Chihambakwe, 2017). Their events are more concerned with performing for the tourist from the traditional European source markets (colonial

master) than for the locals, thus, the country's failure to maximise the festivalisation of its own cultures.

Some African festival scholars (Mbalisi, 2021; Izu, 2021; Kuuder *et al*., 2012; Dankwa *et al*., 2019; Ogbenika, 2020; Daka *et al*., 2021) posit that the concept of festivals in the African context is deeply enshrined in cultural and social relations. African festivals have spiritual subtexts that are bequeathed from their origins. Festivals in Africa were initially hinged on the community's common characteristic traits and were staged to satisfy specific communal purposes such as, harvest, initiation, commemoration, thanksgiving and entertainment. In that way, African festivals were primarily for cohesive purposes offering a sense of belonging to religious, social, or geographical groups. For instance, some Zambian festivals are ethnic-based and cannot be said to be national in character (Yoshida, 2022; Daka, 2021), thus are originally and primarily for the immediate community. The secondary objective was for disciplinary purposes; religious customs shared through festival activities contributed to the control and a definitive community moral compass. The provision of entertainment for local communities though critical, was a tertiary aspect as this was before the advent of mass-produced entertainment, but it still served to entrench the teachings embedded in the moral thread in the festivals (Ogbenika, 2020). Bonye (2011) underscores this by stating that traditionally, the role of the festival was for the preservation and safeguarding of culture, noteworthy worship of local deities and thanksgiving to ancestors (Dodo, 2016).

Kuuder *et al*., (2012) portray festivals as seasonal occasions. They are recurring and are usually set according to local cultural calendars. In the African context, festivals are used to mark time, for example, harvest, coming of age and to celebrate the new or full moon. An example is Zimbabwe's 'Jenaguru' or full moon festival, which marks the time when the moon is brightest before the planting season or Zambia's 'Kuomboka' that marks the period when the flood plains are immersed in water in the rainy season when the Lozi community moves to higher ground together with their King, the Litunga (Flint, 2016).

Ogbenika (2020) posits that the African festival has a focus on ethnic information and the cultural education of community members thus, perpetuating their traditions and providing a means for unity among families. He further emphasises the importance and involvement of elders in sharing stories and experiences, reciting of tribal history and reaffirmation of values that are cherished by the community.

In African culture, elders are generally revered as cultural custodians who provide standards and a moral compass for the younger generations (Mbalisi, 2021). Baet (2015) contends that modern festivities have been commoditised, corrupted and are in-organic. In this day and age, African festivals can occur disregarding community elders due to politics or religion (Clarke-Ekong, 1997). For example, in the marriage festivities (roora/lobola/umabo/chimalo/magadi) when young people are carrying out the proceedings, you find the church clergy being given centre stage. This has made the African marriage festival un-African and left it open to

exploitation by societal misfits under the guise of economic, social or religious deliverance (Ogbenika, 2020).

Mbalisi (2021;76) brings out another dimension of African festivals as relational. He describes festivals in the context of the 'kinship between people and their proximate neighbours'. Her mention of groupings and immediate neighbours indicates that the 'host community' concept was always extant within the African festival construct. It demonstrates how festival impacts are considered to be far-reaching in the African setting. Mbalisi (2021) and Ogbenika (2020) who carried out separate studies on different traditional Nigerian festivals agree on the 'relational' and 'cohesive' nature of African festivals. Both scholars contend that a major defining feature is that African festivals draw from the pluralistic experience of the African person. There are several ethnicities in Africa with Nigeria alone having more than 250 ethnic groups (Agaba & Orngu, 2016); some are similar and others are very different. Thus, the sum of one's experience is multifaceted as they may be a product of multiple cultures or have assimilated other cultures through intermarriage or spatial interactions. This has a major influence on the African festival programme. Activities such as storytelling, drumming, dancing, singing, masquerades, theatrics, drinking and eating, form the basis of most African cultural festivals across the continent (see ARIPO, 2019; Drammeh & Andersson, 2019). All these activities are dependent on geography and ritualistic beliefs. While modern festivals focus on a plethora of elements such as ambience, theme, design, special effects and audience, the African festival focus was on food and ritual performances. These determined the theme, ambience, the audience and the design.

The consumption of food and drink at African festivals is ritualistic in itself. The production, process, preparation, service and consumption of food at the festivals may be the centre of activities (for example, see Mbalisi, 2021; Ogbenika, 2020; Drammeh & Andersson, 2019). One good example could be that Zimbabweans have a Shona proverb 'Ukama igasva, hunozadziswa nekudya' (Muchinei & Hebert, 2018; Kudejira, 2021) meaning 'Relationships are half full, they are complimented by sharing food to build and sustain them'. What this means is that food and beverages are important connecters in building and sustaining relationships. Kudejira (2021) uses the proverb to describe food as a mediator for mutual social and cultural exchanges. Thus, one of the roles of food at African festivals is to provide a platform for fellowship, a concept modern society calls networking. Coloniality distorted all this; festivals are now often slotted during tourism slumps or at the convenience of international tourists. Consequently, due to the festivalisation that has substituted indigenous and traditional culture with global popular culture, the transition from social gatherings has been commercialised and, in some instances, taken on 'un-African' forms mainly for the enjoyment of attendees who are largely outsiders. These, in some ways, are made to enjoy adulterated versions of African cultural practices, that are packaged as genuine, and because of the love of the exotic, most imbibers of these festivals retain a distorted image of what is African (Huang & Weaver-Hightower,2019).

Coloniality in African festivals can further be noted in the neo-colonialism of the festivalscape. This is largely depicted by a substitution of indigenous, traditional culture through globalised, popular culture, and the transition from 'ritual' to 'spectacle'. This development is clearly related to the increasing competitive festival environment as countries strive to attract consumptive travellers (Pugh & Wood, 2005). Gotham (2002) emphasises that festivals have become commodities that tourism agencies manipulate through marketing promotions. This has led to the festival industry producing events that are aimed at attendees from traditional tourism source markets, detracting from the original festival objectives and alienating the local communities. Traditional tourism source markets are usually the former colonial masters who are credited with developing the tourist markets as they travelled back and forth, from their homes to their colonies. These markets include European countries such as France, Spain, England and Portugal or those directly linked such as the United States of America and Australia (born out of the British Empire). More recently, the continent has been courting Asians and Africans in the Diaspora. Language, place and food are often adjusted to suit the targeted audience while ritual activities that are deemed unsuitable by the courted audience are omitted or banned from the festivals (Daka *et al.*, 2021). In this way, Africans have been inadvertently creating festivals for the global north entailing the suppression of their true objectives to accentuate inherited European ideals and prerequisites.

Determinants of Festival Growth

The global festivalscape consists of several growth determinants that can be broken down into two parts, namely; parameters and dimensions. Parameters are limitations or deterrents to growth or development, while dimensions are the prerequisite boundaries or confines within which a festival will survive, grow or develop well. According to Getz *et al.*, (2010) frameworks for comparative and cross-cultural festival management variables include aspects such as; ownership, content, location, attendees and funding of festivals. However, a perusal of the African festivalscape indicates that there can be more as shown in Table 1.4 below:

Table 1: Festival Determinants Based on the Zimbabwean Festivalscape

Determinant	Parameter	Dimensions	Description
Structure and Composition	Non-community stakeholders gender bureaucracy	Community ownership partnerships	The festival is composed of the administrative structure which includes ownership, stakeholders, organisational structure and constitution
Objective	Poor fit	Continuous transmission reproduction, cultural preservation	The objective is the main purpose of the festival, which will lend to the contextualisation of the event
Scope	Festival content	Theme genre programming	The scope covers the typology, genre, size, and content of the festival
Funding	Costs sponsorship commodification	Bursary, grant, sponsorship, investments	Funding refers to the financial resources available for the festival through partnerships, sponsorship, donations, investments, grants, fundraisers, ticket sales and merchandising
Stakeholder Interactions	Acculturation business exchange	Education segmentation/ attendees	Beneficiaries, participation, engagement, involvement and contribution of resources
Resources	Resource dependency	Infrastructure human resources knowledge	Resources are the available means that are inputted into the festival to ensure its success. While these can be financial or non-financial, focus is on the non-financial resources because those of a financial nature are covered in funding Examples are human resources, equipment, props, festival materials as well as infra and superstructure

Aesthetic Value	Poor design	Good ambience and packaging	Aesthetic value of a festival is truly undermined. The visuals of the event are what lures attendees or gives meaning to the intangibles. For example, décor, design, dressing, packaging, merchandise, advertising and promotion
Time	Poor timing inconsistency poor programming	Seasonality	Time subsumes issues of seasonality, which is when the festival is staged; the frequency, which is how often it is done; duration, how long it lasts as well as the actual timing of the event as per the modern clock. It also covers the preparation timeframe. Time can also be considered a very important festival resource
Environment	Climate change economy politics coloniality pandemics and epidemics	Technology politics	This is the sphere in which the festival is developed and operates in. Aspects of the environment include; politics, technology, economy, culture, climate change, pandemics and epidemics
Perceptions	Beliefs image	Culture beliefs	These are insights on festivals gleaned from observations. These are often shaped by background, expectations or experience. Culture and beliefs manifest perceptions. These perceptions form an image of the festival

Source: Authors' compilation

The structure and composition of a festival is very important. It determines who the stakeholders are and how the festival should be governed. The composition indicates whether the festival should include community members or outsiders; issues of gender

balance and expertise in the particular area of the festivals are also significant. The structure will affect the stakeholder interactions as well as issues of beneficiaries' levels of participation, how stakeholders are engaged and the different levels of involvement. The festival objective is a key driver that will contextualise the event and determine the scope, funding and resources. Its aesthetics influence the attendance as visuals lend to the lure of the event. It is important to consider the environment in which the festival is occurring because it is necessary to adapt the event to the particular situation. It is equally critical to note how stakeholders perceive a festival as it may be necessary to alter their perceptions of certain aspects that may hinder festival development. Lastly, time is a very broad determinant, it not only covers when but also the timeframes involved with the preparations, staging and closure. Dimensions and parameters need to be explored within the African context because to date, the festivals we have inherited have been developed using colonial systems and some are even by non-Zimbabweans like the Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA) and LICAF in Livingstone, Zambia that all appear to be European festivals in Africa.

Transformation of the African Festivalscape

Maldonado-Torres (2016) asserts that coloniality divides the world into zones; the global south being the zone that needs to be 'developed' in many ways. Therefore, the African festivalscape may be in need of some 'unmaking' and 'remaking', to transform it into an entity that is relatable to its environments. Several Western festivals based on their local culture have grown to become hallmark events. Hallmark events are those that are identified with the very essence of a place and its host community. These events become synonymous with the name of the place, and gain widespread recognition and awareness for the destination (Oklobdžija & Müller, 2015). While different scholars have varying definitions of hallmark events, the general consensus points to the aspects of programme quality, identification with the host community's culture, tradition and pride, an inextricable link between event and location, increasing destination appeal as well as increasing profitability for all stakeholders (O'Toole, 2015; Getz, 2005; Getz, 2012; Hall 1989, Oklobdžija & Müller, 2015). Quinn (2009) further defines hallmark events as major, one-time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance destination awareness. They are of special importance both for participants and visitors, as they have proved to be successful in attracting great public attention, thus, contributing to the image of the destination. The hallmark category can be considered to be the ceiling level of growth for festivals.

Hallmark events may also facilitate the maintenance and revitalisation of an area's tradition. These events have also been associated with earning vast tourist revenues and international recognition lending to their popularity with tourism practitioners. An example is the Oktoberfest held annually in Munich, Germany. It is premised on the German Bavarian culture; it has no colonial intonations and is highly successful. The German Bavarian community runs it, to celebrate who they are, attracting tourists and

making money (Jaeger & Mykeltum, 2012; Getz, Svenson, Peterssen & Gunnervall, 2012). Popescu and Corboş (2012) posit that the Oktoberfest attracts more than six (6) million attendees (72% from Bavaria, 13% from the rest of Germany, and 15% are foreign tourists, mainly from Europe, USA, Australia and New Zealand). This is a far cry from the African festival that still tries to duplicate the European festivalscape. An example is Zimbabwe's' trend of copy-pasting events (Njerekai, 2016). The Zimbabwean Government did well in introducing a Tourism Event Strategy in 2010 (Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 2014). However, its implementation saw the duplication of foreign festival constructs. An example is the Harare International Carnival, which even headlined Cuban Samba girls and Trinidad tin bands. This incensed the Zimbabwean local communities and did not attract any international or domestic tourists (see Zhangazha, 2014; Chihambakwe, 2017). Furthermore, the Zimbabwean festivalscape is characterised by several music festivals such as Unplugged that attempted to copy the Western music festivals such as Glastonbury (United Kingdom) and Coachella (USA). How can these African festivals be unmade and remade? To use a metaphor coined by the late Bob Marley in his 1980 hit 'Redemption Song', the African festivalscape needs to be 'emancipated from mental slavery'.

The process of remaking involves going back to the foundation of the festival to check for structural soundness. To transform the African festivalscape, first and foremost, it is necessary to desist from the duplication of Western festivals. In the same way, the education systems in Africa are being restructured according to the milieu, festivals must undergo a remaking process. Secondly, it is important to identify the determinants for festival growth in the particular African environment. While some African environments can be similar, there are differences that should be taken into account; for example, the political climates, economies and cultures, as these have a large bearing on festival outcomes (Popescu & Corbos, 2012; Wilson *et al.*, 2016). Efforts must be made to accentuate the dimensions that allow for optimum festival growth such as defined ownership structures, strategic partnerships and sound policies. Ideally, for the African festival, ownership must lie with the community. The parameters must be deflected as these may lead to poor festival growth, stagnancy or cessation. Great attention should be paid to parameters such as gender. Festival structures generally sideline women; most of these events do not involve them, yet several African cultures were matriarchal until colonisation when females became 'minors' (Chengu, 2015). Women were decision-makers, holding positions such as queens, chiefs, regents and generals. Even in modern society, the buy-in of women will sway the family decision (Alshammari *et al*., 2019). In the African festival construct, women played major roles, an example is Zimbabwe, where elderly women, young girls and mothers played the roles of consultants, conveners, carried out ceremonial rites, prepared the stage, food, beverage and ambience. In addition, even without documentation, women were the institutional memory of the community's festivals.

Another major parameter that must be addressed is that of resource dependency. The African festival is plagued by the 'donor mentality'. The advent of non-government

organisations (NGO) has led the African people to be complacent and wait for aid for most things including festivals. This has perpetuated a beggar mentality where festivals are run on hand-outs. The African festival was self-sufficient, with the communities supplying all the required resources. Ogbenika (2020) bemoans the exploitation of African communities under the guise of economic assistance. Governments should be encouraged to support community festival initiatives through policy implementation and funding, to protect their people. The objectives of the African festival have been marred by the need for profitability at the expense of the community. Festivals are mushrooming in the Zimbabwean environment for strictly monetary purposes. This also raises concerns over another parameter, commodification. Festivalisation exposes and exploits culture. As a result, value and meaning may be lost through staging and loss of authenticity as performers attempt to eke a living African (Huang & Weaver-Hightower, 2019). The staged performances at festivals cease to be about the community as they are more about entertaining the tourist (colonial master). Anything that the people have been indoctrinated by colonisation to consider pagan or disdained by the masters will not be showcased. This contributes to the sustenance of local festivals as part of the aping culture that has gripped the formerly colonised.

Parameters such as pandemics and epidemics are a relatively new phenomenon to the African festivalscape. Like terrorism, the aforementioned are Western constructs, which due to globalisation, the African festivalscape must contend with. Drought and disease, which are indeed features of the African festival milieu were a basis for festivals such as mukwerera (rain requesting ceremony) and mafuwe (festivities) in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, people's cultures and religious beliefs must be taken into account as this can be a major deterrent to festival development. The advent and perpetuation of Christianity in Zimbabwe has seen several local festive practices perceived as profane and rejected.

Conclusion

The objective of this article was to conceptualise the disparity of the African festivalscape highlighting the need to decolonise and transform the arena to level the playing field. The study's exploration of the African festivalscape reflects a strong residue of colonial hangover. It is evident that the current African festivalscape was created using a colonial template, thus the design is for Western attendees. The review further denotes that African festival dimensions and parameters are largely defined by the colonial legacy in terms of ownership, content, scope, attendees and stakeholder interactions. Insights for festival development opportunities that may arise from the decoloniality of the African festivalscape have also not yet been fully explored. More importantly, the article set the stage for the application of decoloniality as a theory in the study of festivals. Recommendations for further research include assessing the impacts of coloniality on the festivalscape and the exploration of festival growth from an Afrocentric perspective for specific African countries using a case study approach.

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