

Celebrity or Just popular?

Identifying the Zambian Celebrity and their display of Economic and Political Power

Elastus Mambwe, Jr.
The University of Zambia
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Introduction

Lost in interpretation:

The concept in Zambia, perhaps most of Africa, one lost in interpretation. Whereas who the celebrity is or is not a celebrity seems easier to define, and what their role is in the economy, in politics, or in society at large is seems to be well articulated in literature.

Knowing full well the different cultural dynamics this part of the word, it becomes important that perhaps a better understanding of the concept is formed.

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Definition

- Holmes and Redmond (2010) - a slippery word with varied connotations.
- Boorstin (1971) - a person who is well known for their well knowness
- Marshall (1997) - people who are given a greater presence and wider scope of activity and agency than are those who make up the rest of the population. They are allowed to move on the public stage while the rest of us watch. They are allowed to express themselves quite individually and idiosyncratically while the rest of members of the population are constructed as demographic aggregates

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Literature

- The celebrity is who they are due to the presence of a wide array of institutions and resources that exists for this purpose and maintaining it. **Fame-generating institutions** (Harmon, 2005, 102).
- Key Framings:
 1. Turner (2010) – Definitions, challenges thereof
 2. Marshall (2006) – Differentiation based on media and actions
 3. Dyer (1979) – Star Theory (Stars are a construction)

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Objectives

- i. To understand who in the Zambian context is a celebrity and examine the rise of celebrity culture in Zambia
- ii. To understand the power that these celebrities have in the economic and political spaces in Zambian society.
- iii. To provide a sound foundation for future research in celebrity culture in Zambia and open up doors to perhaps defining a unique brand of 'celebrity.'

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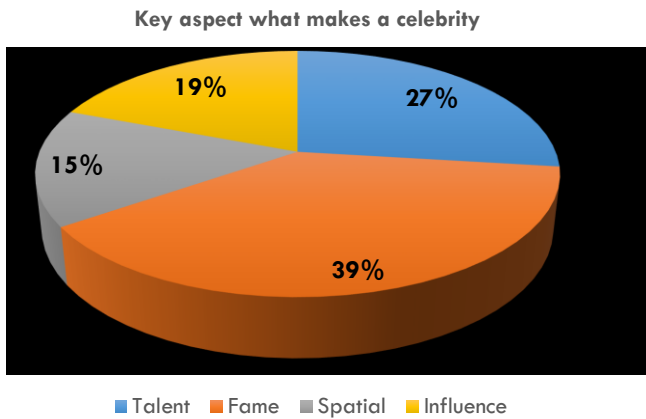
The Study

Draws from various concepts in Celebrity studies, and using quantitative and qualitative methods in data collection such as structured interviews, in-depth interviews, media monitoring and review of literature.

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Findings

What makes a celebrity in Zambia?

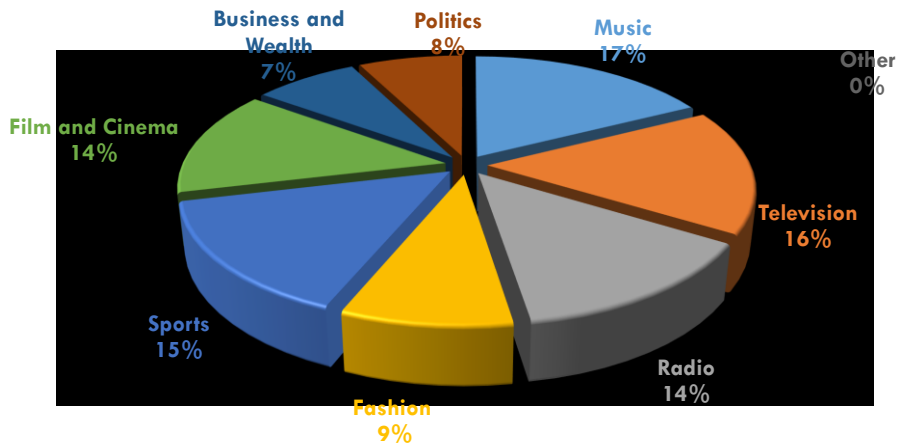


- Fame:** Popularity, Well knowness for good or bad,
- Talent:** Ability, Skills, Unique qualities and achievements
- Influence:** Many followers, opinion leader, financial muscle
- Spatial:** Regional, national, more than one country,

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Findings

Where does Celebrity in Zambia Comes from?



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Findings

Factors affecting the rise of celebrity culture:

1. Growing media landscape and entertainment media: more media and increased internet access
(Makungu, 2003; Banda, 2006a)
2. Access to global media: via internet and satellite TV (Banda, 2006b; Mambwe, 2014)
3. Improved incomes
4. Global exchanges – ‘glocalization’

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Findings

Display of Economic Power:

1. Celebrity Endorsements have increased
2. Wealth: not so much a factor as wealth of celeb is not public knowledge
3. ‘Celebrenurship’ as more celebs diversify or venture in business

Display of Political Power:

1. Increased political activity, endorsement and co-opting;
2. Social commentary via social media and in art forms;
3. Increased civic engagement and activism;

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The Next Steps

- Increasing the scope of the study, to make it more generalizable
- Interrogate the role that social media has played in celebrity-fan relations in Zambia

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Conclusions

1. The idea of celebrity, while it exists, can not be viewed in the same way as it is generally seen in most cases of the word.
2. Defining who a celebrity is in Zambia is still difficult as it is generally, but in Africa, the definition of who the celebrity will most likely include a perception related aspect based on the persons moral disposition and the nature of influence they exert, mostly positive.
3. There is need for more research in this area in Africa so as to establish regional framings of the concept and better understand its spatial implications on social, economic and political power.

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'Natotela'
Thank You