

## Chapter 5

# ‘Accept No Limitations’: Expressions of Diasporic Identity in *Nigerian Idol*

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### Introduction

The issues of identity that dominate many of today’s discourses on media and culture are complex: these are the issues of how cultural representations take form within media and the extent to which identity is constructed through media. This chapter on the Nigerian adaptation of *Idols* brings one of the more dynamic aspects of these discourses into focus: the cultural representations of a diaspora or diasporic identity. The chapter evaluates the expressions of diasporic identity which are present in the first series of *Nigerian Idol*. *Nigerian Idol* represents a diasporic adaptation of the *Idols* format. In this chapter, I distinguish the important dimensions in the first series of the show which establish this position. One of these dimensions concerns aspects of the show’s development that point to the national, pan-regional and international television communities of an African diaspora. The performances of two of this series’ contestants ground another dimension: their indigenous, African and non-African cultural representations draw together the rubrics of this diaspora. While there is a significant body of work that exists which chronicles the diaspora that is relevant to both the development and the production of *Nigerian Idol* (Ekwuazi 1991; Haynes 2007; Esan 2009; Uwah’ 2011), a brief review of diaspora theory indicates that the project of forming a concrete understanding of a diaspora which is paramount to the analysis in the chapter requires some clarification. There are a number of common concepts underpinning this project and yet distinctions in the characterizations of the diasporic experience render diverse notions about what a diaspora is (Safran 1991; Clifford 1997; Tsagarousianou 2004; Bauböck and Faist 2010).

The notion of a community (or a set of communities) is a central concept in diaspora theory. By extension, this concept denotes collective identity. Similarly, the notion that a shared consciousness exists amongst the members of a community is a feature of the dialectical frameworks that are used to define a diaspora. This consciousness – whether its contexts involve ‘origin’ by way of a shared national or ethnic identity – forms the basis within which these members cohere (or by which the members are cohered). The idea of ‘dispersal’ or the movement

of the members of a diaspora is another framework that scholars draw upon to characterize diasporic identity. Yet it is not only people who move – which the early scholarship on diaspora theory attempts to account for – but also media which moves.

For modern diaspora theorists such as Roza Tsagarousianou, media and communication technologies represent ‘complex processes of exchanges’ that are ‘material, cultural and mental’ (2004, 61). These exchanges are the focus of the important scholarship on the rise and reach of the Nigerian media industry which shaped the development of *Nigerian Idol* (Haynes 2007; Esan 2009). In *Nigerian Television: Fifty Years of Television in Africa* Oluyinka Esan (2009) places the exchanges into context for an African diaspora whose communities connect to one another through television and media technologies. Her account of the development of Nigerian television documents the efforts that networks made to meet the technological exigencies of this diaspora. For Esan, these exigencies are the emerging mobile technologies that are in the hands and the homes of Nollywood television and film audiences.

Nollywood is Nigeria’s centre of content development, production and distribution. The importance of Nollywood to the expressions of diasporic identity which emerge through *Nigerian Idol* cannot be underestimated: along with its counterparts of ‘Hollywood’ in the USA and ‘Bollywood’ in India, it is one of the world’s three most prolific media and culture industries. At the heart of this industry is not only the rise and reach of its media, but also the expansion of its cultural content throughout Africa and beyond the continent’s borders. Esan (2008) describes this expansion as content that was previously restricted to national and pan-African audiences which has grown to become a mainstay on cable and satellite television channels whose programming focuses on Black and African audiences. What is intriguing about the expressions of diasporic identity in the nascent series of *Nigerian Idol* is that they present us with a contemporary perspective on the experiences and cultural exchanges of the diaspora to which Esan refers through one of today’s most popular media formats.

In this chapter, I will analyse aspects of the development of *Nigerian Idol*: its aim to find a national star who is also an international artiste and the objective of producer Optima Media Group (OMG) to air the show to a diaspora of Nigerian and pan-African audiences and to international audiences of African and non-African descent. I will also explore the ways in which diasporic identity is constructed (and reconstructed) through various cultural representations in *Nigerian Idol* performances: the audition of a contestant whose speech and song genre are from the Nigerian and Caribbean cultures, and the Western non-African, indigenous Edo and national Nigerian identities that are expressed in the songs of one of the show’s finalists. Much like its tagline ‘Accept No Limitations’, the expressions of diasporic identity in *Nigerian Idol* show us that the project of understanding a diaspora requires a more nuanced conceptual vocabulary than the literal iterations of nationality, ethnicity or dispersal in the earlier scholarship on diaspora make available for identification. Not only do these expressions address the normative

concepts of diasporic identity that delineate what a diaspora *can* and *should* look like but the indicative ones as well – which upon close examination of the diasporic identity construction in *Nigerian Idol* present a call for scholarship on diaspora theory to more rigorously explore what a diaspora *does* look like *vis-à-vis* the interactions of diasporic communities through media.

## Diaspora Theory and Identity Construction

The idea of collective origin is one of the principal elements in scholarly attempts to define a diaspora. While many scholars continue to define origin in terms of a shared ethnicity or a common geographic place of origin, the emerging scholarship on diaspora theory reflects a progressive shift that is taking shape in the ways that scholars conceptualize the experience of a diaspora. This experience defines what a diaspora is and functions as the arbiter of diasporic identification.

William Safran's (1991) accounts of diaspora have their bases in the experiences of immigrants whom he locates in a 'host' society. This experience implies that the creation of a diaspora occurs by means of a specific ethnic culture that is then geographically placed in (or displaced amongst) this society. He presumes that a hierarchy exists that situates a displaced diasporic immigrant community at the bottom of an ethno-culturally mapped totem pole. In this regard, one collective identity has primacy over another. In the immigrant experience that Safran describes, tensions of 'longing' for a home are coupled with an unattainable 'belonging' in a host society. Ethnicity and cultural primacy are the delimiting factors in the conceptual vocabulary that Safran uses to contextualize a diaspora. Neither factor does much to address media or communication technologies as the spaces within which diasporic cultural representations – let alone identity construction – can form.

Ranier Bauböck and Thomas Faist (2010) acknowledge the 'engagements' of a diaspora whose experiences occur in the contexts of transnational media. These experiences lead us to the fact that media is an element of the diasporic experience. Yet Bauböck and Faist locate diasporic engagements across a transnational intersection of borders. Here, the experiences of a diaspora that occur within and outside of the borders of a 'homeland' place diasporic identification into context. Again, diasporic identity construction occurs within migratory, ethno-culturally mapped communities of 'different cultures' (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). A minority sub-culture and, by extension, a dominant culture demarcate what a diaspora *can* or *should* look like (Clifford 1997).

The conceptual vocabulary that Bauböck and Faist use to define diasporic culture is literal: origin and displacement are the constraints, causes and effects that represent a diaspora and its experiences. Diasporic identity is a *fait accompli*. Where these more normative interpretations of origin delimit that which is available for diasporic identification, interpretive approaches have emerged that advance notions of diasporic identity formation. These approaches explore what

a diaspora *does* look like in media contexts (Tsagarousianou 2004). Many of the positions do not remove the notion of origin or the notion of the movement of people as dimensions of diasporic culture; rather they offer a new perspective to the diasporic experience and raise the issues of where, how and amongst whom diasporic identity formation and transformation occurs.

For example, connectivity is central to the diasporic experience that Tsagarousianou explores through media. Her critical interventions shift the diasporic experience from one of geographic territories – or place – to an experience of media space. Borrowing from Clifford (1997), she takes the position that media connectivity is a diasporic experience that ‘deterritorializes’ the social hierarchies that geographic and ethnic notions of home and host essentialize (Tsagarousianou 2004). This represents a departure from the prior scholarship in which a given ‘minority’ community constructs its identity and it opens up a dialogue about imagined diasporic communities and their processes of identification. In this regard, the diasporic phenomenon lacks the relativism of an over-arching world view that restrains its cultural representations. The members of a diaspora can gain and change their frames of reference to a world which they construct.

### **Nollywood and Diasporic Cultural Representations**

Hyginus Ekwuazi (1991), Jonathan Haynes (2007) and Innocent Ebere Uwah’ (2011) provide an historical context of the diasporic experience that Esan (2009) and Tsagarousianou (2004) document. On the expansion of Nollywood content and cultural identification, Ekwuazi describes early Nigerian and African film aesthetics whose iconography and ‘stock of references’ are ‘all drawn from the indigenous culture’ (1991, 103–4). This position suggests that a number of indigenous cultural representations are available to an African diaspora through media. Conversely, the fact that media transmits multiple representations raises the prospect that a diaspora can access and express multiple identities. Uwah’ (2011) poses that Nollywood’s cultural representations are significantly involved in Africa’s identity construction. In ‘Nollywood: What’s in a Name?’ Haynes (2007) examines the export of Nigerian films on video to document the influence on identity construction that Uwah’ advances – which Haynes explains in terms of pan-African and North American audiences:

They are on television in Namibia and on sale on the streets in Kenya. In Congo, they are broadcast with the soundtrack turned down while an interpreter tells the story in Lingala or other languages. In New York, their biggest consumers are now immigrants from the Caribbean and African Americans, not Africans, and Chinese people are buying them too. (Haynes 2007, 106–7)

In conjunction with Ekwuazi (1991) and Uwah’ (2011), Haynes (2007) articulates a diaspora whose communities are indigenous, pan-African, Black

and African (residing outside of Africa) and non-African. They draw together the rubrics of a diaspora in which indigenous and African narratives are located and through which these narratives are transmitted. These rubrics demonstrate that an indelible link exists between global media and diasporic identity construction. They also point us to question the extent to which diasporic identity formation and reformation reflect the cultural representations of the (ethnic or geographic) origin of a diaspora *and* the ethnicities of the communities with which the members of a diaspora interact.

### ***Nigerian Idol***

In November 2010, the first series of *Nigerian Idol* aired in English on 20 channels: nationally – throughout Nigeria, pan-regionally – reaching Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Malawi, Sudan, Eritrea, and South Africa – and internationally – in the UK and in the USA. Voting was restricted to national Nigerian audiences. At the time of its launch, these audiences were able to vote by telephone and by SMS. Etisalat – a telecommunications company based in the United Arab Emirates with mobile and fixed landline services in Africa and a *Nigerian Idol* sponsor launched a voice-only voting capability for the show's viewers. This capability enabled voting by dialling a unique contestant number and awaiting a vote confirmation message.

OMG's initial license for *Nigerian Idol* included Nigerian and pan-African broadcast and distribution options. Upon licensing the *Idols* format from FremantleMedia to adapt this format in Nigeria, the company pursued and secured a partnership with Hi Media Group Limited (HiTV) – another Nigeria-based media and entertainment company that offers pay television programming on more than 30 channels across Africa. HiTV broadcasts of the show extended its reach to international audiences in the UK via cable broadcasts on Sky channel 204 and through an on-demand, online offering via Hi TV's pay-content service – Hi-Player. International broadcasts of *Nigerian Idol* also aired in the USA on channel 650 of Dish Television – a subscription-based cable network.

OMG's stated objectives reveal that diasporic experiences include communities of African and non-African descent. These experiences are important because they suggest that the frameworks of identification that are available to a diaspora do not originate in one central ethnic or cultural space. At press events held throughout November 2010 in Lagos, Nigeria, Tunji Amure – an OMG Business Development Executive – stated the company's objectives for *Nigerian Idol*. These objectives (below) were quickly picked up in online media and entertainment forums:

*Nigerian Idol* is guaranteed to bring exciting African talent and showbiz to UK's huge African diaspora community. ... *Nigerian Idol* has partnered with HiTV to air worldwide, including the UK and America especially to Nigerian/Africans in the diaspora ... *Nigerian Idol* will be groundbreaking

in so many ways, especially that it is the first successful reality TV format with worldwide success imported back to the UK for our primary audience. (The Africa News 2010)

Amure's statements illustrate that a global web of communities forms a diaspora. Specifically, he expresses the importance of these communities to OMG by referring to national, pan-regional and international diasporic communities (in the context of a single diaspora) as *Nigerian Idol's* key audiences. The combination of references that Amure uses to describe a diaspora reveals that a diaspora's global, indigenous (Nigerian) experiences resonate amongst this (African) diaspora and the experiences of a national (Nigerian) community have influence amongst the communities of the diaspora. These references also suggest that other communities – in this case, British and North American – somehow identify with an African diaspora. Here, diasporic identity construction takes form in ways that replace one mode of 'diasporic identification' with multiple modes of identification (Tsagarousianou 2004).

### Fewer of 'Us' Therefore Less of 'Them' to Resolve

The 'primary audience' that Amure refers to is the wider British audience in the UK and not solely the audience in the UK that is of Nigerian and/or African descent. The 'import' of *Nigerian Idol* into the UK refers to the fact that the *Nigerian Idols* adaptation will be aired in the country in which the global format originated. In the Nigerian case of *Idols* then, an African diaspora is made up of national, pan-regional, and international communities of African *and* of non-African descent. This places some focus on the cultural notions of 'us' and 'them'. At one level, the comprehension that media exchanges amongst a diaspora resolve the 'us' of a diaspora and the 'them' that is part and parcel of 'other' cultures is an element of diasporic identity construction. OMG's composition of *Nigerian Idol's* permanent panel of judges augments the explanation of the element of 'us' and 'them' as a dynamic that is also an internal element of a diaspora.

With the development of a diasporic adaptation of the *Idols* format underway, OMG began to screen potential judges for *Nigerian Idol*. The responsibilities of these judges included their attendance at nationwide auditions for the show, their discernment of 'talent' to select 50 contestants from thousands of *Nigerian Idol* applicants and their provision of critical commentary of contestant performances during the show's 17-week programme to choose 10 finalists along with the voting public. The company's screening activities included music artists, entertainment industry executives, DJs, record producers and television personalities in Nigeria. At a media launch held in September 2010 in Lagos, Nigeria, Rotimi Pedro – Optima Media's CEO – announced the selection of *Nigerian Idol's* judges. The company selected a diasporic panel of judges: two of these judges were Nigerian. One judge was singer Yinka Davies and the other was Audu Maikori, CEO of

Chocolate City Entertainment Company – a prominent Nigeria based record label. The remaining judge was African American – singer, dancer and DJ Jeffrey Daniel from the USA. Together, these judges represented Nigerian, African and African-American ethnic identities and cultures.

*Nigerian Idol's* aim reflected the culturally integrative nature of a diaspora that was evidenced in the show's judges' panel. This aim expressed identity within a national context and concurrently set forth an explicit definition of its 'idol' by using a range of cultural references. The aim of *Nigerian Idol* was to 'find the best singer in the country who can be defined as the "National" singer and International Artiste' (Nigerian Movie Network 2010). News releases throughout June and July 2010 interpreted this aim as being a chance for a talented singer to 'be the next 2Face Idibia, Alicia Keys, Rihanna, Asa or Neyo' (Ladybrille Nigeria 2010). 2Face Idibia is the stage name of Innocent Ugah Idibia, a Nigerian singer, songwriter and record producer who was born in Jos, Plateau State. Asa – born Bukola Edemiye in Paris, France of Nigerian parents – is a soul and jazz singer.

On one hand, *Nigerian Idol's* aim suggests that an African diaspora is made up of multiple cultures – Nigerian, American, Caribbean and French. On another hand, this aim points us to the fact that a linguistic element is at hand in a diaspora. 2Face Idibia – who is one of Nigeria's most popular artists – is from Nigeria's 'middle belt' – which is neither definitively Northern and Muslim or Southern and Christian but a region in which a tremendous degree of linguistic diversity exists. In conjunction with Alicia Keys (who speaks and sings in American English and in African American English), Rihanna (who speaks and sings in American English and in a Caribbean dialect of English), and Asa (whose songs feature the English, French and Yoruba languages) a linguistic framework is clearly present in diasporic identification. In this framework, a primary language – or, *lingua franca* – exists around which the members of the diaspora cohere: in this case, English. The framework includes other languages through which the members of a diaspora express themselves. The audition of 21 year-old Daniel Agagha and his selection by *Nigerian Idol's* judges as a 2010 contestant provide us with a vivid example of the ways in which language functions as a dialectical framework that defines a diaspora.

Auditions for *Nigerian Idol* took place in the cities of Abuja, Enugu, Calabar and Lagos, Nigeria. When Agagha – who is from Nigeria's south-east Delta region – took the stage to audition, judge Audu Maikori asked him to describe his objective should he be unsuccessful as a music artist. Agagha's reply was short, nervous, and in English: 'If my music bl' blow up, I'm gonna go back and further my education'. His speech reflected that English was not his primary language but his use of English demonstrated the language in which the show was produced and presented. Judge Jeffrey Daniel then replied, 'OK, alright, Daniel you got it', as he motioned with his hand for Agagha to begin the audition. What came next was a dancehall performance that created a lively conversation for the judges. Dancehall is a music genre that began in the 1990s in inner city Kingston, Jamaica. In *Inna di Dancehall: Popular Culture and the Politics of Identity in Jamaica*, Donna Hope (2006) describes

dancehall's origins and cultural representations whose origins are from Jamaican socio-political issues. Hope notes that dancehall is a genre whose expressions and cultural 'symbols and ideologies ... reflect and legitimize the lived realities of its adherents, particularly those from the inner cities of Jamaica' (2006, 125).

Judge Audu Maikori immediately recognized that Agagha had a strong dancehall voice, recommending that he look to collaborate with General Pype – the stage moniker of Majekodunmi Olayiwola Ibrahim. General Pype is a Nigerian who is one of the best known dancehall artists in Africa. While recognizing the strength of this audition, Judge Yinka Davies proposed that dancehall was not pop. She articulated *Nigerian Idol's* intent to find the next pop music star, and she gave the panel's first vote: 'For *Nigerian Idol*, it's a "no"'. Upon hearing Davies' vote, Daniel replied to Davies, 'It's "no?"', Davies repeated, 'It's "no"'. Daniel then called upon Maikori for his vote. Maikori replied, 'I like it... it's a "yes" for me'. Daniel then stated, 'I think we can represent all different genres of music and I think for the dancehall thing... you pulled it off, so I'm going to give you a "yes" as well...'

As Agagha exited his audition and walked to the 'kiss and cry' interview, he expressed his sentiments about his audition and its challenges. Agagha used a Jamaican speech pattern that was in line with the dancehall genre to recount these sentiments. His use of dancehall as an audition genre and his use of English with a Jamaican inflection demonstrate that the linguistic dimension of a diaspora is comprised of a lingua franca (as either an official, primary or non-primary language) and includes formats that are 'proper' and 'pidgin', dialects and disambiguation. The fact that Agagha so freely flows from one linguistic expression of identity to another and back, makes it possible to more carefully consider the issue of self-agency and the role of this issue in diasporic identity construction.

Glory Oriakhi – a law student at the University of Abuja who is from Edo state – was the first person from the auditions in Abuja whom the judges selected as a *Nigerian Idol* contestant. She went on to become a *Nigerian Idol* finalist, capturing the admiration of millions of *Nigerian Idol* viewers with her performances – especially during the show's theme weeks of 'disco week', 'movie soundtrack week', 'Nigerian Week', 'African Week', 'American legend week' 'Michael Jackson week' and 'ABBA Week' that were integral to the structure of *Nigerian Idol's* finalist performances for its latter broadcasts. Oriakhi advanced into the final weeks of the show's competition. In a performance that she described to the *Nigerian Idol* sponsor Etisalat, Oriakhi sang a rendition of a classic Frank Sinatra song, 'My Way':

It was a challenging song but I am someone who enjoys doing things differently and I welcomed the opportunity to move away from the usual R&B and Soul genres and utilize my vocal skills in this song. I've been singing ever since I was a child and I can assure my fans that there is more where that came from because I'm always up to experiment and challenge myself with new sounds (Etisalat 2010).



Oriakhi's description of her performance establishes that self-agency is a key dimension of diasporic identity formation. Her departure from that which she refers to as a usual pattern of self-expression represents an element of the human condition that looks towards transcendence. The endeavour of pushing against boundaries represents an act of transformation. This endeavour to transform the self means that diasporic identity formation is continually in the process of being shaped and re-shaped. Further, the act of transforming the self suggests that the diasporic experience involves an individual's emotional truths and that these truths actively bring about the processes of identification and re-identification in a diaspora.

Oriakhi remained a crowd favourite throughout the span of *Nigerian Idol* yet she received the lowest support from the public in the voting round that determined the final four contestants. Upon hearing the results of this round, the judges invited Oriakhi to deliver a single performance before departing. She chose to sing 'Joromi' by Sir Victor Uwaifo for this performance. Her selection of this song demonstrates a number of elements concerning indigenous cultural representations and their contexts in diasporic identity. Uwaifo is a Nigerian musician, writer and inventor of musical instruments who is from Edo State. In choosing to sing 'Joromi', Oriakhi expresses her native Edo identity and her identification with the Nigerian expressive arts. She also draws upon a set of indigenous beliefs. 'Joromi' is both the name of a wrestler who was a war champion and the phrase that this mythical champion used to signify his acts of resolving conflict. The wrestler's origins are from Benin mythology. Benin, Nigeria is the centre of Edo culture. Edo culture is also referred to as Bini or Benin culture (unrelated to the African country of Benin). In the myth, Joromi – who has conquered earthly conflict – sets out to conquer spiritual conflict that multi-headed devils represent. Upon seeing that each devil has several heads, he cuts off these heads, uttering 'crrrrrrr, casé casé' and his name as he leaves each devil with a single head. One interpretation of this myth concerns the resolution of conflict which Oriakhi relates to the series of contestants over whom she triumphed during the more than 10 performances that she delivered on *Nigerian Idol*. This interpretation represents her survival to the final rounds of the show and her domination over the contestants whose departures came before hers. Another interpretation of the myth concerns the role of indigenous beliefs in diasporic identification.

Indigenous perspectives of identity represent a cultural vocabulary that is beyond a corporeal existence. Oriakhi uses this vocabulary to witness to her mix of human and spiritual rituals. Through Joromi, she convenes the ideas that human beings are hybrid creatures whose capacity to construct identity integrates notions of spirit and of flesh. In an interview that I conducted with Uwaifo by telephone (2011), he explained that 'tribal voices' can portray a unique 'expressiveness' that represents what is in people's minds. He noted that 'patterns and repetition' of sounds are used to voice expressions of identity in indigenous African cultures. The 'crrrrrrr, casé casé' rhythm which Oriakhi uses to represent triumph represents

an ineffable sentiment that she feels cannot be interpreted outside of the indigenous language but which can be understood amongst the members of Bini culture.

Joromi becomes tired towards the end of the myth and lies down. Though he rests, the devils surround him and extend his hand in an effort to cut it off. However, they miss their chance to remove the hand which took off their heads when Joromi places his hand behind his back. Evil does not prevail and Joromi lives on. As Oriakhi sang, the remaining four *Nigerian Idol* finalists backed her up, joining in on the chance to perform a song that is a recognized classic amongst Nigerians and Africans. Uwaifo explained that the resonance of Joromi amongst Africans and non-Africans could be traced to the fact that music is a universal language.

Oriakhi's inclusion of Bini beliefs in her expressions of diasporic identity points us to the processes of diasporic identification in which the role of indigenous identity is to enable the members of a diaspora to illustrate readings of their own lives in ways that represent an intimate dialogue with their particular community. Indigenous expressions of identity represent the communities of a diaspora that while linked, are also distinct. Oriakhi's performances of 'My Way' and 'Joromi' demonstrate Western and non-African and indigenous cultural representations. In this regard, the expressions of diasporic identity which emerge through *Nigerian Idol* show us that a diaspora draws upon the traditional and ethnic representations that are found within the cultures of its communities as well as the representations of the cultures with which a diaspora interacts. Oriakhi's performances integrate these representations and illustrate that distinction and harmony are elements of diasporic identity construction and reconstruction.

## Conclusion

The expressions of diasporic identity which emerge through *Nigerian Idol* give us reason to look at the notions of cultural exchange, media interactions and self-agency as the crucial forces that frame and reframe what a diaspora actually looks like. The cultural exchanges that are evident in these expressions strengthen the case for a diaspora that concurrently defines and redefines itself. Here there are two subjects for the definition of a diaspora: the subject of a common origin from which the members of a diaspora reference their cultural realities and the horizon of multiple origins – whether ethnic or linguistic – that represent the cultures with which the members of a diaspora interact and from which these members manifest the progressive development of these realities.

Diasporic identification can be seen as the interactions of the cultural realities of a series of communities; this includes self-defining acts of identification. Where these interactions are concerned, expressions of diasporic identity in *Nigerian Idol* show us that one purpose of diasporic identification is to broaden that which the individual member of a diaspora can understand, say and be. In this regard, it is no accident that self-agency is a part of the inner workings of a diaspora. Human beings understand themselves by acknowledging their cultural realities – whether

these are shared or distinct, indigenous, national, pan-regional and inter-cultural – as well as by pushing outwards against the frontiers of their knowledge and experiences. *Nigerian Idol* is a diasporic adaptation of the *Idols* format not simply because its expressions of identity are diasporic. As its tagline suggests, 'Accept No Limitations' brings an important imagining to the settlement of how, where and amongst whom diasporic identity takes form: diasporic identification is at once an act that is private and shared and one that is continually being constructed.

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NB. During the time that the study was conducted all of the websites were available online, however, due to changes in television programming, many websites have been taken offline in the meantime. These websites can still be accessed by filling in the complete URL in the Internet Archive Wayback Machine (<http://archive.org/web/web.php>)