

<b>Institution:</b> University of Stirling
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> D29 English Language and Literature
<b>Title of case study:</b> Africa in Motion: Enhancing Public Awareness of African Cinema in Scotland, the UK and Internationally
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>The Africa in Motion Film Festival (AiM), based in Glasgow and Edinburgh, directly emerged from research led by David Murphy and a community of postgraduate students at the University of Stirling. The festival has attracted new audiences for African cinema (over 20,000 spectators since 2006) and contributed to wider debates about it amongst the general public, NGOs, as well as cinephiles in Scotland and more widely. In particular, two projects on the 'lost classics' of African cinema allowed neglected films to be discovered both by a general audience and influential film critics/journalists.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Murphy's work on African cinema has consistently engaged with the construction of African film history, seeking to problematise dominant genealogies of this body of filmmaking. One of the few scholars working in this field in the UK, he has developed a community of postgraduate students in Stirling who have worked on underrepresented aspects of African cinema (four research postgraduate students in total, two of whom completed in 2010 and 2011 respectively). Murphy's research is a central component of Stirling's Postcolonial Studies research group. Recent editions of AiM have included masterclasses with directors held at the university, which have involved other members of the group, in particular Marshall and Robinson and research postgraduate students who work as interns throughout the festival.</p> <p>Murphy's first monograph (2000) on the Senegalese director Ousmane Sembene (often referred to as the 'father of African Cinema') challenged dominant conceptions of the director's work as representative of a didactic, social realist trend in early Francophone African film. In subsequent research, Murphy's writings have explored lesser-known areas of African cinema, leading to his co-authored 2007 monograph, <i>Postcolonial African Cinema</i>, which examines filmmaking from Francophone sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, Lusophone Africa, and South Africa. In the 1980s-1990s, African film criticism had focused almost exclusively on film production from France's former colonies in West Africa but Murphy's work has played a pioneering role in promoting a more decentred approach to African cinema, and to Postcolonial Studies more widely. In his role as Vice-President of the Society for Francophone Postcolonial Studies, Murphy oversees the selection of an annual film to sponsor—these films highlight issues related to postcolonial research agendas.</p> <p>Within this overarching research, the 'Africa's Lost Classics' project has played a crucial role and has directly led to the rediscovery and wider dissemination of important films which clearly demonstrate that social realism was never the hegemonic form of filmmaking that critics have often claimed it to be. Murphy has received funding for various projects centred on these 'lost classics', which allowed screenings and academic events to take place at AiM in 2006 and 2007: these events brought together a group of international scholars to discuss neglected, largely forgotten works that, when assessed collectively, revealed a far greater diversity in African filmmaking of the 1960s-1970s than had previously been acknowledged by critics. The initial publication connected with this project was a dossier published in the influential film journal, <i>Screen</i>, in 2007, which constituted the first major intervention in the field calling for a new history of African cinema to be developed. The impact of Murphy's research has marked this out as an area of clear, strategic importance for the field: an edited volume for Legenda developing this historical approach more fully is due for publication in early 2014, and is indicative of Murphy's continued prominence as a leading researcher on African film history and Postcolonial Studies. This work has had significant reach, leading to the use of certain of these lost classics in, for example, an arts event at the Tate</p>

Modern in London, at New York's Museum of the Moving Image, and in a major documentary series on the history of film for More 4 by the leading critic Mark Cousins.

### 3. References to the research

#### Outputs

- Co-editor (with Lizelle Bisschoff), 'Africa's Lost Classics', special dossier in *Screen*, 48.4 (2007), pp.493-527.
- Co-Author (with Patrick Williams), *Postcolonial African Cinema: Ten Directors* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2007).
- *Sembene: Imagining Alternatives in Film and Fiction* (Oxford: James Currey; Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000).

#### Grants

As part of the research carried out with the aid of two small research grants, Murphy was able to carry out initial research on the early years of Francophone West African filmmaking. The ideas from this research informed the writing of *Postcolonial African Cinema* (MUP, 2007), particularly the Introduction.

- **Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship** (July 2001-August 2003: £3,300): Funding for research trips to Edinburgh, London, France and Senegal.
- **British Academy Research Grant** (April 2001-March 2002: £2,500): Funding for research trips to Edinburgh, London, France and Senegal.
- **AHRC Small Grant in the Creative and Performing Arts** (June 2006-May 2007: £8,200): Funding for project entitled 'Recovering Lost African Film Classics'. Murphy was PI on this project which brought four 'lost classics' to AiM in Oct 2006 (his then postgraduate student, and AiM founder Lizelle Bisschoff, worked closely with him on the project); leading scholars were invited for a symposium and a round table; the papers from this event were published in the *Screen* dossier in 2007.
- **Carnegie Trust Large Research Grant** (July 2007-June 2010: £23,000): Funding for three-year collaborative project (with Universities of Aberdeen & Edinburgh), entitled 'Locating African Culture'. Again, Murphy was PI on this project, the core strand of which allowed him to continue the focus on lost classics at AiM 2007, this time looking at films by women directors. Funding also permitted the invitation of guest speakers for a round table and a symposium.
- **British Academy Small Research Grant** (Sept 2008-Feb 2011; £7,190): Funding for project entitled 'Making Histories: Towards More Complex Genealogies of African Literature and Cinema'. In Sept 2008, Murphy was awarded funding to carry out further research on the history of Francophone African cinema; this research will inform his contributions to the co-edited volume *Africa's Lost Classics: New Histories of African Cinema* to be published by Legenda in early 2014.

Quality of the research: *Postcolonial African Cinema* was published in MUP's rigorously peer-reviewed Film Studies series; *Screen* is the leading film studies journal in the UK, and it subjects work submitted to extremely rigorous peer review. The MUP book has sold 1000 copies: both it and the volume on Sembene have been adopted as compulsory reading on various North American courses devoted to African film: e.g. Florida State University, University of Victoria, BC, Howard University.

#### 4. Details of the impact

The basis of the research link to impact is twofold. Firstly, Murphy's research has helped to shape programming at the AiM festival, explicitly fostering an approach that extends beyond the standard focus on a limited body of filmmaking from Francophone West Africa. Secondly, the 'lost classics' programmes (featuring pioneering West African directors of the 1960s, and women directors from across the continent) have promoted a more complex genealogy of African cinema and were directly linked to new research. Rather than simply contributing to KE/dissemination, the festival has acted as a conduit for Murphy's research on the need to develop new genealogies of African film. Murphy was on the Board of Advisors of the AiM festival from 2006-11 and has been a Trustee since 2012 (when the Festival gained charitable status): he has advised on the mix of 'classic films' from 1960s-80s as well as more recent works, and has sought to inform and educate festival audiences about the diversity of African cinema in historical, stylistic and regional terms by giving introductions to films and leading Q&A sessions. The Festival has brought many African film directors to Edinburgh, such as Gaston Kaboré in 2008, Jean-Pierre Bekolo in 2012, Newton Aduaka in 2013, with funding from the University of Stirling, and Murphy conducted Q&As with all three filmmakers. Murphy's activities with AiM have given rise to specific planned outcomes, in particular the development and education of audiences, as well as the promotion of a wider understanding of African cinema and its history/diversity. They have also given rise to important unplanned outcomes: in particular, the screening of the films in the two lost classics programmes have led to these films, most notably Mambety's *Badou Boy* being made available to a wider set of audiences by individuals who first encountered them at AiM.

The primary beneficiaries have been cinema audiences across Scotland, particularly in Glasgow and Edinburgh but also in touring programmes in recent years, such as to the Highlands in 2010; Murphy gave introductions to films at the Eden Court Cinema in Inverness in 2009; the festival has also screened films at the MacRobert Centre at the University of Stirling since 2012. In total, since 2006, AiM has attracted over 20,000 people to its screenings, and the audience response (recorded in questionnaires distributed during the festival) indicates that the festival has greatly increased their cultural awareness of Africa: the mix of entertainment and pedagogical elements (through the film introductions and scholarly events attached to the festival) has been a key factor in this process. The festival is the only such event focusing on African cinema in Scotland, and it is the second biggest African film festival in the UK after the recently relaunched London African Film Festival.

The festival's promotion of the 'lost classics' of African cinema has had the most significant impact through the manner in which it influenced the thinking of the prominent film journalist/curator/filmmaker, Mark Cousins, whose documentary series *The Story of Film*, shown on More4 in Autumn 2011, included in the episode on modernism a detailed discussion of *Badou Boy* (dir. Djibril Diop Mambéty, 1970), first screened at AiM in 2006 as part of the 'lost classics' series. Cousins was a Board member for the first three years of the festival's existence, and he moderated a round table on the lost classics programme at the 2006 festival. It was Murphy's archival research that introduced Cousins to these 'lost classics'. Cousins writes in his article for the 2007 *Screen* dossier: 'For [lost classics to become found ones], someone like David Murphy, acting on behalf of something like Africa in Motion, has to go somewhere like the Cinémathèque Afrique in Paris and watch lots of films, select the good, rarely seen ones, hand them to people like Lizelle Bisschoff [...], who will then present them in a festival for people like me to see' (p.510). Murphy acted as a consultant prior to the filming of the sections of *The Story of Film* that took place in West Africa, advising on specific sites in Senegal, Dakar in particular, that had served as locations in landmark African films of the past four decades: his contribution is acknowledged in the closing credits of this episode. The documentary series has been celebrated as a groundbreaking work, charting a new history of global film that gives greater prominence to the marginalised cinemas of Asia and, in particular, Africa. The series has won various prizes (including the 2012 Stanley Kubrick Prize at the Traverse City Film Festival in Michigan) and is scheduled to be screened in up to 10 countries and in multiple languages (it screened in the US in autumn 2013). The 'recovery' of *Badou Boy* at AiM has also enabled a series of unplanned impact activities. It was screened at the Tate Modern in London, in May 2008, and at the *Cultural eXchanges* festival

at De Montfort University in March 2010. In addition, the Tate has archived a clip from the film on its website. The film was screened at New York's Museum of the Moving Image in April 2011, and was the editor's pick on Alt Screen, a resource described by the *New York Times* as 'a comprehensive guide to ... New York film culture as we know it'. Cousins is quoted here, using the language proposed in Murphy's research: 'its sonic complexity, its state of the nation-ness, its Joycean wandering, its allegorical fun, convinced me that *Badou Boy* is undisputedly a lost classic'.

Essentially, Murphy's research has played a key role in allowing the AiM festival to develop an impact strategy that extends beyond simple knowledge transfer. It has developed a clear audience education strategy that has attracted over 20,000 people to its screenings, and has consistently sought to widen understandings of African cinema. Prior to the creation of AiM, exposure to African film in Scotland consisted solely of infrequent screenings of films by a small handful of well-known African directors: this situation has been transformed with a growing audience now familiar with a body of work whose geographical, historical and aesthetic diversity has consistently been promoted in Murphy's pioneering research.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- Africa in Motion compiles annual reports that detail audiences response and attendance figures: copies can be obtained from: [info@africa-in-motion.org.uk](mailto:info@africa-in-motion.org.uk).
- Three sources clearly indicate that the lost classics programme at AiM was the source of Mark Cousins' discovery of *Badou Boy*. See his documentary series, *The Story of Film* (<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/the-story-of-film-an-odyssey>), his top 5 films of year in *Sight and Sound* from December 2006: <http://old.bfi.org.uk/sightandsound/feature/49348>, and his contribution to the *Screen* dossier: 'Discovering Africa's Orson Welles', *Screen*, 48.4 (2007): 507-10. For details of the prizes won by the series and its distribution to various countries, see: <http://hopsotchfilms.squarespace.com/news/category/the-story-of-film>.
- Press coverage of festival. AiM has an archive of press coverage. See: [www.africa-in-motion.org.uk](http://www.africa-in-motion.org.uk) For a sample of coverage, see: [http://www.scottishscreen.com/news/news\\_story.php?news\\_id=1041](http://www.scottishscreen.com/news/news_story.php?news_id=1041)
- For Tate Modern screening: <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/djibril-diop-mambety>.
- For De Montfort screening: [www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/art-design-and-humanities-documents/cultural-exchanges-festival/cultural-exchanges-brochure-2010.pdf](http://www.dmu.ac.uk/documents/art-design-and-humanities-documents/cultural-exchanges-festival/cultural-exchanges-brochure-2010.pdf).
- For the screening at New York's Museum of the Moving Image and Alt Screen Editor's Pick: [www.movingimage.us/visit/calendar/2011/04/09/detail/badou-boy](http://www.movingimage.us/visit/calendar/2011/04/09/detail/badou-boy) and <http://altscreen.com/Saturday2/>.
- In 2010 the Africa in Motion festival was honoured by the Foundation for Subjective Experience and Research (SER Foundation), in the context of the United Nations' International Year of Reconciliation. In 2009, the Africa in Motion festival took 'Reconciliation' as its main theme and the festival screened a range of films on this topic, as well as hosting a symposium and various panel discussions on trauma, conflict, peace and reconciliation in Africa. SER Foundation, which supports worldwide projects in the area of children and youth, culture, inter-cultural dialogue and religion, described the festival as an 'outstanding' project, because it emphasised the need for reconciliation and the necessary steps required to 'build bridges' on the road to a sustainable peace. AiM was named as one of twelve projects worldwide to receive an award, together with 600 euros prize money, at a ceremony in Switzerland in August that year. See: <http://www.ser-foundation.de/index.php?include=100>.