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An investigation into the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia: A reception study of Lusaka viewers.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of a Master of Arts degree in Journalism and Media Studies of

Rhodes University

By

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October 2006

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ABSTRACT

Motivated by a concern as to why Zambians are attracted to foreign media in the form of Nigerian movies, this thesis is a qualitative audience study which investigates the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia with a focus on Lusaka viewers.

Against the dominance of Western media and most especially Hollywood movies, this study explores the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia which highlights the circulation of media within and between non-Western countries. This is an aspect of trans-national cultural flows that has been ignored in theories of media imperialism. The thesis argues that the widespread popularity of Nigerian movies in Africa and in Zambia in particular necessitates a revision of the conceptions of global cultural flows that privilege the centrality of the West but ignore other centres engaged in contemporary cultural production.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dearest daughter, Mbawemi Dimpho Phiri.

I want this work to remind you, Mbawemi that you are not too young, too old nor too busy to learn. The road might be long and winding, the journey arduous, but for the traveller, the joy of the travel is in the destination. May you go all the way when your time comes. Although my name may appear on the title page of this document, you are very much a part of this work. I thought about you always as I did my work. You gave me the love and joy to take me through the day and to strive on. That was your un-measurable contribution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several people contributed in many ways to make this work possible. A few however immediately come to mind. My brother Ernest Phiri, who organised Nigerian movies for my focus groups and organised my very first focus group. You also helped me with fixing the time and venue for the discussions, thank you for your suggestions and support. Pezo Mateo Phiri, my sister-in-law, who read through my proposal, gave suggestions, organised one of my focus groups and gave me the encouragement and support to work hard. Thank you. To Sara Namusoga, course mate and friend, who saw that my research idea was feasible and encouraged me to pursue it. Your IT expertise also helped me whenever my computer and my documents did their tricks. You also helped take care of Mbawemi. To Fortune Sibanda who showed me one or two tricks with the computer and all my other classmates, such as Carole Hungwe and Adelaide Bhebhe, I say thank you. My sister Mwazanji Phiri, cousin Rose Kanunshya, mum and auntie Dailesi who took care of Mbawemi when ever I went out to do my work, I say thank you ladies.

To my supervisor professor Larry Strelitz, I recognise your insurmountable contribution to this project. Catherine Lenaud, the Media Studies Department Head at Evelyn Hone College and my boss, thank you for all that advice. It was you who encouraged me to pursue further studies. I am also grateful for the leave of absence you gave me to do my studies. Hebert Macha and Ceaser Jere, thank you for the encouragement on the road you have trodden. To Linda Mtese, Anna Kagima, Memory Banda, Stepples Muchimba and Priscilla Mubanga, thank you for being there for me whenever I complained. To all my respondents, Jessie Mwanza, the Nsenjes and others I say thank you. Great thanks to my mum and dad who believe in education. I would not have been here writing this acknowledgement if it had not been for you. Thanks Judith Reynolds, for being more than a writing correspondent to me. My sponsors OSISA, I say thank you and all others who helped me through this journey. Thank you for your time and kindness but the greatest thanks go to God for all His love and kindness.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

This study examines the popularity of Nigerian movies among Zambians in Lusaka. It investigates how meanings produced by the cultural industries of West Africa are appropriated in the day-to-day lives of Zambian viewers. The study is located in the field of media and cultural studies.

Significant to note is that while some media such as newspapers and radio are usually local - perhaps even published or broadcast in the same town as the readers and listeners - other media such as movies tend to be created in particular centres such as in America, India or Nigeria but more diverse audiences view them globally. That is, movies are global media in a way that newspapers or even radio stations such as community or national ones are not.

In this thesis, I discuss the media/cultural imperialism thesis, which sees the Third World audiences as passive consumers of global media content disseminated from First World countries like America (Boyd-Barrett, 1977; Schiller, 1976). The media imperialism thesis is based on the premise that messages disseminated globally by Western media overwhelm local national identities and cultures leading to world cultural homogenisation.

I also discuss critiques of the media imperialism thesis, in particular, theories of cultural proximity and regional imperialism. These theories are based on the premise that people tend to prefer what they already know and what they think has relevance to their lives which leads them to seek cultural goods closest to their culture (Straubhaar, 1991). The regional imperialism thesis argues that audiences turn to regional markets in search of products with cultural relevance or proximity to them which may lead to poor countries being dominated by the more powerful countries in the same region, resulting in regional imperialism (Straubhaar, 1991:39). In this

study, regional imperialism is discussed in relation to Nigerian cultural commodities dominating Zambian culture.

In addressing the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia, I further draw on the ethnographic critique of the media imperialism thesis. Ethnographic researchers argue that audiences are not passive consumers of media content, but are active producers of meaning (see for example Strelitz, 2000; Ang, 1996; Skovmond and Schroder, 1992; Tomlinson 1991; Fiske, 1987). That is, audiences decode or interpret media texts, whether global or local, in ways that are related to their social and cultural circumstances (Ang, 1990:160; Fiske, 1987:84).

Consumption of global media messages among local audiences in Third World countries has been the focus of many media theorists over the past four decades (Murphy and Kraidy, 2003; Ang, 1996; Schiller, 1991, 1976; Silverstone, 1990; McNeely and Soysal, 1989; Fiske, 1987; Morley, 1986; Hall, 1980, 1977; Boyd-Barrett, 1977). In reviewing the literature, I will establish the theoretical frameworks under which this subject has been studied and will discuss the common themes running through these studies.

This chapter provides the context of the study and highlights the research problem and the significance of the study. It also outlines the objective of the study, methods used to collect data, and the thesis structure.

1.1 Background to the study

A personal note

Three incidences prompted me to find out what attracts Zambians to Nigerian movies. Towards the end of 2002 when I was at a hairdresser's house in Kabwata, Lusaka, the hairdresser and her friends were discussing the different characters in a Nigerian serial *Super Story* broadcast every Thursday on Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) television. The discussion developed into one about Nigerian movies. The women present spoke about the movies in terms of how Nigerians speak and the style of the clothes they wore. Some of them related what was in the movies to what was happening in their lives.

Another interesting incident occurred in December 2004 when I was in a town called Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia's central province where I had gone to mark the final examination for vocational and technical training. It was there I found the popularity of Nigerian motion productions most amusing. On a Thursday, the women in the women's dormitory I was in, organised a television set and gathered together waiting for *Super Story*. What was amusing about this was that out of all the days we had been there, they had never bothered about organising a television set until Thursday. On that day while waiting for *Super Story* to start, the women discussed the previous episode, which made me realise the depth of their involvement in this Nigerian serial. Once the programme started, there were predictions as to how it would end. Those who had not been following it sought clarification on what had transpired in previous programmes. While Nigerian serials are not the focus of this study, the interest by these women in this serial prompted me into doing my own investigation on Nigerian movies, as they seemed more popular than *Super Story* among both men and women according to my observations. I began to observe how people spoke about Nigerian movies in Zambia. It was clear from my observation that the Nigerian movies spoke to an African identity because of the themes, which concentrated on the African way of life coupled with the African black actors.

The third incident occurred in my family. I noticed my elder brother, coming home with Nigerian movies and speaking about these movies in terms of how traditional African themes had been presented which made him appreciate them. My brother told me that it was interesting how characters made comedy out of issues of property grabbing. Although he did not appreciate property grabbing, he said it made him understand why some people chose to do it. Property grabbing is also practised in Zambia. I also observed that the elderly in my family like my mother, aunts, uncles and grand parents enjoyed these movies. My mother particularly liked issues that had to do with marriage and how characters in the movies went about organising these occasions.

In July 2005, while doing the research methods course for a Masters of Arts at Rhodes University, I had to write an essay on the methods I would employ to conduct a research project of my choice. My interest was in the field of audience studies and

cultural studies as it is concerned with human behaviour. When I mentioned to my Ugandan colleague, Sara Namusoga that I was thinking of doing research on the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia, she told me that Nigerian movies were also popular in her country. My colleagues from Zimbabwe also said the same trend was taking place in their country.

My area of interest was why people in Zambia watch Nigerian movies. I wanted to investigate the appeal of these movies in terms of the pleasures the audiences get from watching them. I also wished to make comparisons between how Zambian audiences watched Nigerian movies and how they watched American movies. This second level was an investigation into issues dealing with African identity, such as 'us' and 'them' issues and how black people prefer to be portrayed in movies and television programmes.

1.2 Statement of the problem and significance of the study

This study investigates what makes Nigerian movies popular among Zambian people in Lusaka. It examines what these audiences do with the cultural products they consume in their everyday lives. This is done by trying to understand "popular cultural practices as meaningful activities: as part of people's ongoing attempts to make sense of their lives and the specific class, gender, race and other identities which they inhabit" (Skovmand and Schroder, 1992:3). This study endeavours to bring out the relationship between media reception and cultural practice, reception contexts and uses of media content.

The research also attempts to understand how West African traditions and systems of belief are played out among Zambian audiences. This research will therefore help understand global media and how they impact on local audiences.

Nigerian movies have not always been available in Zambia. Various externally produced commodities have found their way into Zambia as a result of liberalisation, such as the relaxation of trade barriers, making it easy to import goods into the country. Among commodities that found their way and continue coming into Zambia are video players, Digital Video Disks (DVDs) players, DVDs, videotapes and

television sets. This influx has brought competition and consequently a reduction in the prices of commodities. Among these products are Nigerian movies. Further, a lot of Nigerian movies are screened on the Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) *African Magic* channel. While this explains why so many Nigerian movies are available on the Zambian market, it does not explain why they are popular. This study therefore hopes to investigate what makes these movies popular, specifically among Zambian people, by examining what attracts Zambian audiences to these movies.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The aim of this research is to examine how Lusaka audiences between the ages of 24 and 40 interact with, and make meaning from Nigerian movies. It seeks to answer questions such as: what pleasure do these audiences derive out of Nigerian movies? How do they interact with, and make meaning out of these movies? How do these movies relate to the lived contexts of these viewers? Do they view American movies as well? How do they view American movies compared with the Nigerian movies?

1.4 Methods of the study

This research takes the form of a qualitative audience study to investigate how Zambian viewers in Lusaka make meaning out of the global media messages in the form of Nigerian movies. Qualitative research examines the constitution of meaning in everyday phenomena and allows for a more focused analysis of experiences and perceptions of media audiences (Lincoln and Guba, 1995; Cantrell, 1993).

Bryman (1988:61) notes that qualitative research allows the use of versatile techniques to understand social phenomena and has an express commitment to viewing events and actions from the point of view of those being studied. Thus, I used focus group and individual in-depth interviews to collect data. These followed the semi-structured and unstructured format in which respondents spoke about what they like in Nigerian movies and compared these with how they view American movies. Data gathered was organised thematically as suggested by Hansen et al (1998) and Berg (1998), then interpreted and analysed further in relation with the theoretical framework.

1.5 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of six chapters. In the first chapter titled *Introduction,* I have presented the general background of the study and delineated the factors that prompted me to undertake this research.

The second chapter, *Literature review*, discusses the theory that informs this study namely the imperialism thesis and the critiques of this thesis such as cultural proximity, regional imperialism and the ethnographic critique. I also discuss the theory of realism.

The third chapter, *Social context of the study,* provides the context within which the study is conducted. It discusses how Nigerian movies became available in Zambia and provides a socio-economic description of Zambia. It also discusses the spaces in which Lusaka audiences view Nigerian movies.

In the fourth chapter, *Methodology,* I describe the research methods and procedures I employed in the research. I offer the rationale for the adoption of qualitative methods of data collection and analysis and explain how the data was processed and analysed. I also discuss the limitations of the study.

In Chapter Five titled *Presentation and discussion of findings*, I present and discuss the findings of the study based on responses from the focus group and individual interviews. I explain the findings using the theories discussed in Chapter Two.

Chapter Six concludes the thesis.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has given an overview of the study, providing a background and citing the factors that led to the investigation. It has described the objective of the study and its significance and the methods used to collect data. It has also provided an outline of the entire thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on theoretical arguments surrounding the consumption of global media in the form of Nigerian movies among local audiences in Zambia. The chapter discusses the media imperialism thesis to investigate how it has been used as an explanatory framework regarding media consumption in Third World countries. It then investigates the theories of cultural proximity and regional imperialism to comprehend the ways in which local audiences such as those in Zambia are attracted to global media. In its discussion on cultural proximity, it brings to the fore issues such as the lack of relevance in Zambia's film industry as one of the factors that underlie the popularity of Nigerian movies among Zambian audiences. It also discusses the ethnographic critique of the media imperialism thesis and the active audience theory to comprehend how audiences are active in interpreting texts. The chapter also discusses theories of realism in attempting to explain the popularity of Nollywood (Nigerian movie industry) in Zambia.

This chapter is divided into eight sections. The first section discusses globalisation and then relates it to media imperialism. A discussion of the media imperialism thesis follows to outline how this thesis has been used in communication research since the 1970s. The second section outlines some of the critiques of the imperialism thesis such as the multi-direction flow of cultural commodities. In the third section, I discuss the active audience theory to comprehend how audiences are active in choosing media related to their lived realities. The fourth section discusses theories of realism to explain why audiences choose to watch the programmes or movies they do. The cultural proximity theory is discussed in section five in order to comprehend why popular audiences are attracted to cultural commodities similar to theirs. The sixth section looks at the theory of regional imperialism in explaining how economically powerful countries in the region, such as Nigeria, have dominated the culture and media of less economically powerful countries, such as Zambia. The seventh section presents the ethnographic critique of the media imperialism thesis and relates it to audience research. The three theories of regional imperialism, cultural proximity and

active audience combined provide a critique of the media imperialism thesis. The last section concludes this chapter.

2.1 Media imperialism

This section discusses the media imperialism thesis within a broader context of globalisation because it is precisely through this process that popular culture has spread from country to country. In the first part of this section, I discuss how globalisation (with the help of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and media networks) has provided fertile ground for the growth of imperialism. A discussion of how theorists have used the media imperialism thesis as a framework to research and analyse the impact of global media on local audiences follows. In the last part of this section, I discuss the critiques of the media imperialism thesis.

2.1.1. Globalisation

There are varying definitions of globalisation, but to many people it has been understood in terms of the spread of modernity; marked by change, innovation and dynamism in terms of both economic and cultural practices (Barker, 1999:34). ICTs and other communication networks that include television institutions are at the centre of current changes, which provide the means for world businesses to conduct their activities. ICTs have also enabled cultural industries to reach global markets with their cultural products. Global economic activity is not a new phenomenon though. There has been a growing expansion of Western economic activity into Asia, South America and Africa since at least the sixteenth century, but today we are seeing a new phase of accelerated globalisation (Barker, 1999:35).

Communication provides the infrastructure circuitry for the already immense and still increasing infrastructure flow of cultural industries, which is dominated by the U.S. (Schiller, 1996:3). Through satellite television stations and other communications networks such as the Internet, global cultural products reach local audiences in Third World countries. These audiences thus receive the messages and images of the rich, consumer cultures of the West in the privacy of their homes (Hall, 1992:302; Koelble, 1998:42-43). Through for example television, radios and magazines, diverse and remote cultures have become accessible as signs and commodities to local audiences

(Barker, 1999:36). Supermarkets and shopping centres also enable commodities from other countries to reach far parts of the world. Today, one can go to the shopping centres and supermarkets and find African, Indian, British, American or any other attires and goods as Hall posits:

> "Jeans and trainers – the 'uniform' of the young in Western youth culture – are as ubiquitous in South-East Asia as in Europe or the US...It is hard to think of 'Indian cooking' as something distinctive of the ethnic traditions of the Asian sub-continent when there is an Indian restaurant in the centre of every city and town in Britain" (Hall, 1992:302-303).

Locals are thus now subject to the influence of different places although mostly from America. The global cultural processes have brought about both cultural integration and disintegration and it is now possible to find cultures independent of inter-state relations.

2.1.2. Globalisation and imperialism

Globalisation and imperialism are related as globalisation has enabled the expansion of imperialism as earlier noted. Globalisation has created faster, more extensive and interdependent forms of worldwide exchange, travel and interaction across national borders, which provide a platform for the creation of global culture (Fourie, 2001:593). Many writers argue that this culture mostly contains cultural expressions of America propelled by powerful multi-national corporations such as Coca-Cola and McDonalds (see for example Fourie, 2001:601; Schiller, 1991:22). Even the proportionate use of networks, such as the Internet is not equal; it is dominated by American culture (Schiller, 1996:5). Hall also makes this point when he argues that "it is still the images, artefacts and identities of Western modernity, produced by the cultural industries of Western societies which dominate the global networks" (Hall, 1992:305). It is important to acknowledge that although most scholars write about Westernisation, which includes parts of Europe, they mostly refer to America. In this thesis therefore, I use Americanisation and Westernisation synonymously.

Giddens, like scholars such as Schiller and Fourie, also argues that globalisation looks like Westernisation or Americanisation because "the U.S. has a dominant economic, cultural and military position in the global order" (1990:561). Different scholars have argued that the West sets standards worldwide and dominates other cultures. Schiller

writes that, "America and other developed countries through the modern world system pressures, forces and sometimes bribes Third World countries into shaping social institutions to correspond to or even promote the values and structures of the dominant centre of systems" (1976:9). It can therefore be argued that globalisation is an uneven process that produces winners and losers as well as domination and subordination (Tomlinson, 1999b: 131; Barker, 1999:35).

Schiller (1996:8) further notes that with no significant oppositional pole to the trans-national system now in existence, the poorer and weaker countries are almost defenceless against the economic and cultural manoeuvres of the world business system. He further argues that many of these countries have jumped on board the globalisation bandwagon, expecting to extract some marginal benefits for themselves and their societies. The cultural implication of globalisation therefore is that there is a global culture or cultural homogenisation in which there is the worldwide imposition of one particular culture; namely, the American culture which affects all spheres of social existence, including the economic, the political, the environmental and the cultural (Tomlinson, 1999a: 167). Walter Writson (in Schiller, 1996:4) argues that attempts on the part of governments to protect and insulate a community from global stimuli, which come in several guises, have been futile. Thus, global notions of what constitutes freedom, individual choice, a good life and a desirable future come largely from Western sources (Schiller, 1996:4). These arguments reveal one side of globalisation, which is that it has brought about media imperialism. However, I later argue against the power of media imperialism and show that there is inter-regional exchange of cultural products but I first discuss in-depth how scholars have used the media imperialism thesis as an explanatory framework of the impact of global media on local audiences.

2.1.3. The media imperialism thesis

Efforts to research and analyse the impact of global media on local audiences, using the media imperialism thesis as the main explanatory framework, gained prominence in the 1970s to early 1980s (see, for example, White, 2001; Servaes, 1996; Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1991; Tomlinson, 1991; Salwen, 1991; Schiller, 1976). Predominantly Marxist critical theorists have coined various phrases in reference to notions of

cultural imperialism. These include "media imperialism" (Boyd-Barrett, 1977), "cultural synchronization" (Hamelink, 1983) and "communication imperialism" (Sui-Nam Lee, 1988), but they all refer to the same notion (see White, 2001:1). This is that, through the media's content and technology, international media conglomerates can create global culture in which Western interpretations of reality, beliefs and values are communicated to transform and dominate the cultures of other people (Fourie, 2001; see also White, 2001; McQuail, 1997a; Chaffee, 1992; Tomlinson, 1991; Ang, 1990; Schiller, 1976). I will therefore use these terms synonymously. Boyd-Barrett defines media imperialism as:

> The process whereby the ownership, structure, distribution, or the content of the media in any country are singly or together subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries, without proportionate reciprocation of influence by the country so affected (1977:117).

On the other hand, Fejes (1981:281) describes media imperialism as the process by which modern communications media operate to create, maintain and expand systems of domination and dependence on a world scale. Herbert Schiller (1976) uses the term "cultural imperialism" to explain the way in which large multinational corporations of developed countries, including the media, dominate developing countries.

The media imperialism thesis emphasises global structure, whereby the international socio-political system decisively determines the course of development of each nation (Nordenstreng and Schiller, 1979:7; see also Berger, 2002:1). Whereas earlier models view modern communications media as a tool for development, the media imperialism approach views it as an obstacle to meaningful and well-balanced socio-economic progress in Third World countries. It must be noted that implicit in the media imperialism thesis is a model of one-way flow of cultural influence.

The above arguments point to the significance of media in society. They posit that mass culture has long been a mechanism for the promulgation and reinforcement of the dominant ideology (Flora and Flora, 1978:134). Boyd-Barrett explains that "the media...perform an ideological role and this occurs overtly in the form of explicit propaganda channels; covertly through the expression of certain values in what otherwise appears to be neutral entertainment and informational fare" (1977:132).

Media imperialism is therefore about reinforcing existing economic and political relations between nations.

In particular, Westernisation has been accused of so-called cultural ills such as an obsession with consumption. These tendencies are seen as particular threats to the fragile and vulnerable "traditional" cultures of Third World nations. This is because the expressions of the Western world are very powerful; hence they contribute to global perceptions and understandings of reality and the world as they shape people's self-identities, behaviour, mindsets and views of the world (Strelitz, 2002:461). As a result of such fears, the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) project was established in the 1970s under the supervision of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (Fourie, 2001:416). NWICO is concerned with media content, the meanings signified by the media content and the contribution of media content to global culture (Fourie, 2001:604).

Although there has been a great deal of criticism of Western imperialism, scholars such as Kang and Morgan (1988) and Sparkes (1977) argue that empirical studies suggest not only negative effects of Western media among foreign audiences but positive ones as well, such as the "liberation" of women in male-dominated cultures and increased cultural exchange (in Salwen, 1991:36). But apart from this, there are various critiques of the media imperialism thesis. These are discussed below.

2.2 Critiques of the media imperialism thesis

Media imperialism theorists have been widely critiqued (see for example Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1997 in Fourie, 2001:441; White, 2001:3; Tomlinson, 1999a: 165-176; McNeely and Soysal, 1989:136-143; Fejes, 1981:286-288). These critiques fall under the following themes: global homogenisation, multi-directional cultural flows, cultural proximity, regional imperialism and the ethnographic critique of the media imperialism thesis. Each of these is developed below.

2.2.1. The impossibility of global homogenisation

Tomlinson (1999b: 101-102) argues that there can never be cultural homogenisation because global culture lacks the vital ingredients of common historical experience: a

sense of temporal continuity and critical shared memories. "There are no world memories," he argues, "except those of colonialism, which did not produce global unity" (Tomlinson, 1999b: 102). Salwen (1991:36) supports this when he argues that exposure to Western media alone will not cause foreign people to shed their cultural identities and values in order to adopt Western values. He writes, "at the very least, factors inherent within cultures, such as gender roles, account for different responses to foreign media messages" (1991:36). Salwen quotes Kang and Morgan (1998) and Tan, Tan and Tan (1987) in further arguing that some empirical studies suggest active resistance to foreign media messages (1991:36).

2.2.2. Multi-direction cultural flows

Other critics of media imperialism do not support the idea that there is a linear movement of cultural products. McNeely and Soysal (1989:136-137) argue that to cite the linear direction of culture is to overemphasise that media products only come from one centre and yet this status has altered over time. They argue that there is also an exchange of television programmes from other centres such as Brazil, India and other parts of the world but that the imperialism thesis only focuses on international flows from the West (1989:136). They further argue, "the media imperialism thesis was more applicable to the 1970s when there was a linear directional flow of information unlike today with multi-direction flow of information advanced by ICTs" (1989:136-137).

Other than media being multidirectional, governments in different Third World countries are implementing policies to ensure local content. This means that they want more of local than foreign content although in some instances the viewers may not prefer local to foreign. Writers such as Fejes (1981:286) argue that Third World countries' governments have for a long time been implementing policies of state intervention through the formation of national communication policy bodies to ensure local content in their countries. Fejes further argues that the media imperialism thesis however fails to analyse such communications systems within Third World countries (1981:286). McNeely and Soysal illustrate that governments are making efforts at having their own programmes and are not waiting on productions from America.

They write that the Bangladesh Ministry of Information outlined the basic objectives of television in 1982:

> Programmes shall be formulated on the basis of the state policies and the principles of the Government of Bangladesh... there shall be expression and development of Bangladeshi nationalism... efforts shall be made to reflect Muslim culture, heritage and ideologies... (International TV and Video Guide, 1985:40 in McNeely and Soysal, 1989:137).

Other countries such as South Africa have policies that require their national broadcaster, South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), to have local content (SABC Draft Editorial Policies, 2003). Zambia on the other hand has very little local content. Zambia's national broadcaster, Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) has one local soap opera called *Loose Ends,* which is televised only on Sundays. There was a local soap opera called *Kabanana,* which recently stopped airing because most characters left the cast. On the other hand all of SABC's three channels at least have one local production everyday excluding the news.

The next section discusses the active audience theory, as it is one of the theories that inform this study but which is also a critique of the media imperialism thesis.

2.3 Active audiences

Whereas the media imperialism thesis is built on the assumption that the media exerts a direct effect on society, the active audience theory argues that audiences are active in making meanings from the text they consume (Fiske, 1987:84; Ang, 1990:160).

The active audience theory originated from the uses and gratifications research in the 1950s and 1960s (Silverstone, 1990:177). The active audience thesis discusses the complex interplay and negotiation between audience and production that is at the heart of contemporary culture. It emphasises that the receiver is not just a decoder to whom a movie, or indeed any media product, transmits a message, but is also a producer of meanings (Marshall, 2004:10; Martin-Barbero, 1993 in Tufte, 2000:16). For example Ang (1985:33), in analysing audiences and their watching of *Dallas,* argues that viewers actively chose to watch *Dallas* and derived pleasure and emotional release from it. *Dallas* fans produced meanings that resonated with their

expectations of general living experiences such as rows, problems, happiness and misery (Ang, 1985:45).

Similarly, Radway (1984) in her study on *Reading the Romance* found that media in the form of fiction novels offered its female audiences real pleasure. The women Radway interviewed said they read romantic fiction to escape from the drudgery of serving their families. Purdie (2001:354) notes in her discussion of Radway's findings, that the women interviewed actively got involved with the texts in the novels and drew pleasure and hope from them which helped them to cope with their families.

The active audience approach can also be traced in the debates between James Curran and David Morley during the 1980s and early 1990s, which focused on the claims and counterclaims made for, and against, work within the field of cultural studies on the question of cultural consumption (Curran, 1990). The implicit conclusion of these debates was that the media had only a limited influence on audiences; a conclusion that encouraged some researchers to shift their focus of interest from whether media representations advanced or retarded political and cultural struggle to the question of why the mass media were popular. This debate was between political economy and cultural studies. Research into media consumption encouraged 'readings' of media content that sought to infer the nature of people's pleasure in them and ethnographic studies of audiences that sought to probe the roots of the audiences' pleasures (Curran, 1990:264; see also Jensen and Rosengren, 1990:208-211).

In the next part of this section I discuss the active audience theory in relation to the theory of realism to understand why audiences chose to watch some movies or television programmes but not others.

2.4 Realism

Different definitions of realism exist. There are also different types of realism but this study will only discuss three: empirical realism, emotional realism and classical realism (Ellis, 1982:8; Ang 1985:45). Both Ellis (1982:6) and Ang (1985:34) argue that notions of realism are some of the most enduring means of judgement of film and television creations among viewers.

Emotional realism is the reading of a text at a connotative level. The connotative level of reading a text relates to the associative meanings, which can be attributed to elements of the text (Ang, 1985:42). A film or movie is emotionally realistic when people have an affective response to the characters as they would to a real person (Hall, 2003:635). The capability of the text to evoke an emotional response such as pain, joy, triumph or despair in audiences may be communicated understandably and vividly to the audience, allowing the text to feel real to audience members (Hall, 2003:636). Thus when a text brings the viewer to respond emotionally to the characters in the text, the text is seen to be true or real. The concrete situations and complications are regarded as symbolic representations of more general living experiences: rows, intrigues, problems, happiness and misery (Ang, 1985:45). For example, Ang (1985:45) in her study of the viewing of the American soap opera, *Dallas,* by Dutch fans, found that they experienced its characters as emotionally realistic as having plausible, reasonable emotional reactions.

The other type of realism is empirical realism. This is the denotative level of reading a text in which a literal resemblance is sought between the fictional world of the text and the 'real' world as experienced by the audience member. That is, audiences find a similarity between the realities 'in' and 'outside' a text at some level. What is realistic for them is that, what is in the text is a reflection of the outside world; it is not a distorted image of what is happening outside (Ang, 1985:36). Resemblance to the world outside of the text is sought in for example the discussions between the characters, their actions and their reactions to one another (Ang, 1985:41). Ellis sums up empirical realism as:

> The expectation that particular representation should present a 'realistic portrayal' of characters and events which include: surface accuracy; that it should conform to notions of what we expect to happen; that it should explain itself adequately and that it should conform to particular notions of psychology and character motivation (1982:6-7).

Classical realism is the other type of realism. Here, realism is generated by the formal structure of the text itself. The story itself is told in such a way that the viewer or reader is unaware that the narrative has a narrator. That is, the classical realistic text

conceals its own status as narrative and acts as though the story speaks for itself (Ang, 1985:38).

Thus what constitutes 'reality' of a programme differs for viewers (Ellis, 1982:8; Ang, 1982:35). But according to Ang if a text is seen as 'unrealistic' (however that is defined) it is considered as 'bad' where as that which is realistic is good (1985:36). Because people are able to recognise themselves and therefore experience the text as real, they derive pleasure from it (Ang, 1985:40-47). In the findings of my study (Chapter Five, section 5.1), I will discuss what type of realism Lusaka viewers look out for in Nollywood and whether or not this has a bearing on the popularity of Nollywood in Zambia.

The next section discusses cultural proximity theory with a view to understanding why Nigerian movies are popular in Zambia.

2.5 Cultural proximity

In earlier communication theory, cultural proximity was considered an important "news factor" or "news value" according to which journalists decide what is noteworthy in terms of what affects the reporting country (Galtung and Ruge, 1965 in Trepte, 2003:6). However, the term 'cultural proximity' has more recently been used to describe audiences' preference for local products and the potential of an international audience to identify with a programme (Trepte, 2003:6). Torossian also uses the term 'cultural proximity' to indicate the way that people recognise themselves in local television (2003:1). Cultural proximity is therefore an important term that explains both media production and consumption. However, throughout this thesis, cultural proximity will be used to explain media consumption among local audiences.

One of the most commonly cited scholars on the theory of cultural proximity is Joseph Straubhaar, who did an audience study on television flows versus national television production in Brazil. In his paper entitled "Beyond Media Imperialism: Assymetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity" (1991), Straubhaar re-asserts the concept of active audience theory and a preference among cultures to view

regional or national media products rather than those produced by America. He reinterprets the term *assymetrical interdependence* to refer to the variety of possible relations in which countries find themselves unequal but possessing variable degrees of power and initiative in policies, economics and culture. Straubhaar argues that cultural proximity plays an important role in understanding why viewers embrace or reject programmes (1991, 1997).

According to Straubhaar, audiences in the middle and lower social classes will tend to prefer programming which most closely approximates to their own regional or national culture (Straubhaar, 1991:41, 51). Straubhaar builds on reception analysis and proposes that audiences make an active choice to view national productions/products and, particularly in smaller countries, to view regional products, which approximate to this (Straubhaar, 1991:55). This arguably is because culturally similar products reinforce traditional identities, based on regional, ethnic, dialect/language, religious, and other elements which are relevant to their audiences (Straubhaar, 1991:51). Other characteristics of cultural proximity include a shared history and culture in several senses such as shared identity, gestures and nonverbal communication like what is considered funny or serious or even sacred; clothing styles; living patterns; climate influences and other relationships with the environment (Trepte, 2003:6).

Straubhaar's writing on cultural proximity draws on the past research and predictions of Pool (1977) and Read (1976). These two scholars predicted that local cultural producers would eventually begin to compete with American products, and as these productions increase and become more readily available, audiences would prefer regional or national products to international products (Straubhaar, 1991:41; Tufte, 2000:79). Straubhaar supports Pool's predictions by arguing that local products give power to the audience in terms of selectivity and the active participation of the audience in interpreting media content (1991:41).

In arguing the active audience perspective, Straubhaar quotes Fiske (1987a) who argues that audiences actively read television in order to produce meanings from it that connect with their social experience (Straubhaar, 1991:41). Fiske (1989:2) makes this point when he argues that if the cultural commodities or texts do not contain

resources from which people can make their own meanings of their social relations and identities, they will be rejected and will fail in the market place. This explains why some viewers prefer local programmes. Based on this argument therefore it can be assumed that international movies and television programmes may lack the cultural content which viewers can relate to or use as instructors or conveyors of information (Barwise and Ehrenberg, 1998:19). Thus the cultural proximity theory counters arguments of media imperialism and an implied hegemony at work in developing countries. It argues that people prefer what they can understand in terms of language, culture and aesthetic codes driven by local, political, economic and technological pressures as well as by regional culture (Burch, 2002:577). This is because people like to fall back on familiar choices (Barwise and Ehrenberg, 1998:20).

As earlier stated, it is argued that people with the strongest tendency to seek greater cultural proximity in television programmes and other cultural products are from among the lower and middle classes (in terms of education) (Straubhaar, 1991:51). These people seem to prefer nationally - or locally-produced material that is both closer to and more reinforcing of traditional identities and other elements but if this is not available they prefer regional cultural products. Preference for U.S. programmes is stronger among the elites (better educated) who seem more internationalised (Straubhaar, 1991:51). Straubhaar is however not clear in his definition of what constitutes better education or less education. He also only makes a distinction in preferences between popular classes (middle-working class) and the elite. There is no distinction between the preferences of middle and working class audiences.

Relevant to this discussion is the term "cultural discount" which scholars have used together with cultural proximity. It refers to the reduction in the value of foreign entertainment programmes in the home market (Hoskins and Mirus, 1988 in Trepte, 2003:7). Cultural discount is used to explain the reduction of a programme's appeal due to dubbing or subtitling, and difficulties faced by the local markets "to identify with the style, values, beliefs, history, myths, institutions, physical environment, and behavioural patterns of the material in question" (Hoskins and Mirus, 1988 in Trepte, 2003:7).

Cultural discount also refers to the inability of local audiences to form pan-social relationships or to identify with the characters because of the unfamiliarity of actors. These foreign products thus have reduced appeal in local markets, which leads to their decreased value for local exhibitors and distributors. Hence, for any imported programme, a cultural discount can be accounted for, which further explains why local or regional television products may be preferred.

Three factors determine the success of television shows in different cultures according to Liebes and Katz (1990). The two scholars who conducted a qualitative study on the reception of *Dallas* in Israel, found the three factors to be "primordiality" (the availability of a programme), "universality" (the problems and topics the show deals with) and "polyvalence" (the possibility of ascribing different meanings to one issue) (in Trepte, 2003:8). Critics such as Sinclair, Jacka and Cunningham (1996) hold that these three factors can be applied to all telenovelas and other international fiction programmes.

Although most audiences choose products that are similar to their cultures, it can be argued that most programmes are still dominated by U.S. influence in terms of structure. Straubhaar makes this point when he argues that even small networks in poor countries unquestioningly follow the Western example of broadcasting (Straubhaar 1991:42). Boyd-Barrett also notes that many features of the Latin American telenovela correspond to the Western 'series' (1977:127).

The Brazilian researcher, Omar Souki Oliveira, believes that Brazilian programming imitates Western values, norms, patterns of behaviour and models of social relations (1990). In most Brazilian soaps, Oliveira finds that the American lifestyle is portrayed by "rich Brazilian white faces enjoying standards of living that would make any middle class American envious." "This", as Oliveira concludes, "is not different from U.S. imports, and so the perpetuation of domination continues" (Oliveira, 1990 in Schiller, 1991:22; see also Schiller, 1996:5). This trend is also evident in Nigerian movies. Some are set in opulent surroundings and posh cars although there are those that are set in the village or townships as well (see Chapter Three, section 3.1.2 for a discussion on the content of Nollywood). The objective of these Brazilian products remains the same as in America, to serve commercial purposes by increasing audience

ratings (Oliveira, 1990 in Schiller, 1996:5). The next section discusses regional imperialism.

2.6 Regional imperialism

The theory of regional imperialism argues that audiences turn to regional markets in search of products with cultural relevance or proximity to them. This may lead to poor countries being dominated by the more powerful countries, resulting in regional imperialism (Straubhaar, 1991:39). This is because many smaller nations, particularly in the Third World, have very limited cultural industries; too small to reinforce one another or to exchange artists, writers, directors, actors and musicians. This, in turn, forces these audiences to turn to more powerful countries in the region for cultural products similar to their own culture (Straubhaar, 1991:44). Thus, regional imperialism counters arguments of the cultural imperialism thesis that cultural commodities are being transferred from the West to the rest of the world because the imperialism thesis ignores regional domination of cultural commodities (Straubhaar, 1991:39).

With the advent of new technology, many scholars have assumed that this would strengthen the imbalances of media or information flows around the globe. While videocassette recorders (VCRs), cable TV and direct satellite reception bring more U.S. and European television programmes to elites, the decreased cost and increased flexibility of television production technology has facilitated an increase in both the numbers and the diversity of local television producers (Straubhaar, 1991:47). The drop in film production costs has enabled Third World countries to develop indigenous genres of programming which have become popular, especially in their cultural region, and have displaced some imported programmes (McNeely and Soysal, 1989:140; Straubhaar, 1991:44). Thus, while American cultural products (film, television, fashion and tapes) still dominate cinemas, homes and shops throughout the world, local and regional outputs are also on the increase (Schiller, 1996:5). This is what Tunstall (1977) predicted almost thirty years ago in his book, "The Media is American". He argued that while Americanisation of media - particularly film and television - would continue, there would also be the emergence of new media forms,

such as cable television, cheap videotapes and local radio, which would encourage local productions and diversity.

Audience preferences have motivated television industries and advertisers to produce more programming nationally and to import products with a similar language and culture to their own from within the same region, when such programming is available (Pool, 1977 in Straubhaar, 1991:39; McNeely and Soysal, 1989:136-137). Non-Western producers create texts for their target audiences finding that aesthetic choices differ from traditional Western standards (Worth and Adair, 1972 in Burch, 2002:571). These non-Western producers include for example Brazil, which has succeeded in creating its own telenovelas (Straubhaar, 1991; Tufte, 2000). Therefore, although the U.S. dominates the exchange flow, Third World countries increasingly exchange programmes with one another, particularly at the regional level. Arab countries, for example, import about one-third of their programmes from other countries within the region (McNeely and Soysal, 1989:137).

The same could be said about Zambia and other African countries in which a lot of movies and television programmes are imported from Nigeria (see for example Nwandiko, 2005; Nshuti, 2005; Pasipanodya, 2005; Lawal, 2004; Muchimba, 2004; McCall, 2002; Haynes, 1995; McNeely and Soysal, 1989). Most products from centres such as Nigeria have been nationalised or regionalized in terms of content to address regional or national social concerns (see McNeely and Soysal, 1989:142). This has been done through the use of English and themes, which make them comprehensible to foreign audiences. Banda (2004:32) gives a good example of an attempt to regionise among newspapers. He writes that cultural commodities such as *The Mail & Guardian* (South Africa) and *Mmegi* (South Africa) are beginning to regionalise, reaching out to such countries as Zambia, Zimbabwe and Kenya. Banda further writes that satellite broadcasters are finding ways to regionalise their programmes:

> Transnational satellite broadcasters are finding a way of "contextualising" their productions, as in the oft-used genre of reality television shows. The "pan-Africanisation" of the *Big Brother* and *Project Fame* television programmes are a case in point. Using their local agents, M-NET has been able to cultivate a pan-African audience that stays glued to the screen in order

> to support contestants drawn from different parts of the continent. This is a clever way of "localising" or "nationalising" what is otherwise a segmented, disconnected, dislocated continental audience for such satellite television programmes. Zambians emerged triumphant in both *Big Brother* Africa (BBA) and *Project Fame* television contests! Nigerian productions have also turned out to be darlings of Zambian viewers (Banda, 2005 http://www.bccsa.co.za/7_tobeindependentordependent.htm).

Critics of cultural imperialism are also opposed to regional domination arguing that it is simply another form of imperialism, present only in certain regions (Burch, 2002:577). Two studies document and analyse the development of foreign influences in Brazil and Latin America. They emphasise the decline of North American influence, raising the question of whether the growing export of Latin American fiction to other parts of the world is to be interpreted as an inverse cultural imperialism or not (Antola and Rogers, 1985 in Tufte, 2000:23). Biltereyst and Meers (1998:18-19) reject the thesis of reverse cultural imperialism, arguing that in fact there is an increased localisation of media production developing parallel to greater globalisation and formation of conglomerates, so that Brazil's *Rede Globo* and Mexico's *Televisa* television stations are increasingly in competition with their North American counterparts on the global capitalist market (in Tufte, 2000:23).

It can therefore be argued that the outcome of globalisation is a set of multidirectional cultural flows rather than the simple expansion of Western institutions and cultural formations to the rest of the world (see Barker, 1999:33; Tomlinson 1999a: 172). What these arguments illuminate is that we must not assume that the same patterns of domination of the West over the rest are set to continue. There are now new cultures resulting from the exchange and consumption of national, regional and international products. The ethnographic critique of the media imperialism thesis is discussed next.

2.7 The ethnographic critique of the media imperialism thesis

While media imperialism theorists give important insights into the operations of the media, their findings (as mentioned in Section 2.2) are restricted to textual and institutional analyses only (Strelitz, 2001:49). An area overlooked in such approaches to media research is the role of the audience in making sense of the texts (Murphy and Kraidy, 2003; Ang, 1996; Skovmond and Schroder, 1992; Tomlinson, 1991).

Audience-related research is important as it provides information on "what popular audiences are doing with the cultural products they consume in their everyday lives" (Skovmond and Schroder, 1992:3). It investigates what meanings audiences are making at the point of textual consumption, which is important "given the accelerated process of media and cultural globalisation and the apparent threat that this poses to local cultures" (Strelitz, 2001:49). Media culture poses an apparent threat because it provides the materials out of which many people construct their sense of class, ethnicity, race, nationality and sexuality. It shapes their prevalent view of the world and defines what is considered good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil (Kellner, 1995:1).

Audience-related research utilises empirical methods of inquiry into cultural experiences and the role of the media in society. In this way it has restored the commitment in humanistic media research to studying all the stages in the communication process: production, message/text and consumption, after having turned a blind eye to the audience dimension for decades (Skovmand and Schroder, 1992:3-4). Audiences can be studied in terms of their size, their composition, their responses to media output and even how they have evolved over time (Dahlgren, 1998:298). This study is interested in studying Nigerian movie consumption among Lusaka audiences.

2.7.1 Importance of context in audience research

In order to understand media consumption, one must also understand the cultural context in which the media is consumed. This is because media consumption and generation of meaning is inter-textual. In other words, media messages are always read in the context of other texts that make up the audiences' cultural experience (Fiske, 1987b: 283-286). Wilson argues that "real readers arrive at the text equipped with their own knowledge and accounts of experience and can use them not only to produce new interpretations but to also resist the text's positioning" (1993:2). Understanding the audience's context is therefore important because it is the interrelationship of texts and the 'lived circumstances' that impacts on the production of meaning at the point of consumption (Tomlinson, 1991:61). Tomlinson argues:

> What we make out of a television programme or a novel or a newspaper article is constantly influenced and shaped by whatever else is going on in our lives. But equally, our lives are lived as representations to ourselves in terms of the representations present in our culture: our biographies are partly inter-textual (1991:61).

Tomlinson (1991:61) goes further to argue that the importance of the media as vehicles of culture must not be overstated, as the media are themselves mediated by cultural experience. According to Tomlinson, we can view "the relationship between media and culture as a subtle interplay of mediations" (1991:61). He observes that although the media are seen as the dominant representational aspect of modern culture, they are constantly mediated by, as well as mediating culture as lived experience.

This research hopes to probe the role of the media in mediating cultural experiences and the role of cultural experiences in mediating the media representations. The point of analysis will be how globalisation is played out in relation to particular Zambian traditions, belief systems and texts. How do audiences negotiate global messages locally? How does the consumption of Nigerian movies shape local notions of national identity and values? How do the lived experiences of Nollywood Lusaka viewers manage their perception of Nollywood images and messages? These questions will help understand what makes Nigerian movies popular because people have a real cultural experience in their everyday lives, which manages their use and perception of media messages. That is, the closer the level of experience to those represented by the media, the more the audiences maybe be attracted to the particular media production. These questions are answered in Chapter Five.

Among those theorists who point to the importance of contextualisation is Burch, who argues that media messages are decoded according to the contexts in which they are consumed. She cites Katz's (1984) and Liebes's (1988) studies of the American serial *Dallas,* which showed that varying cultural groups differed in their interpretation of media texts (2002:571). Strelitz makes a similar point when he observes that understanding the context in which media is consumed is crucial in assessing what particular texts mean to particular audiences (2001:52). This is because audiences

decode or *interpret* media texts in ways that are related to their social and cultural circumstances and to the way in which they subjectively experience these circumstances (Ang, 1996:70; Ang, 1990:160; Fiske, 1987b: 84). John Fiske (1987a, 1989) also argues that people from vast shifting ranges of subcultures and groups construct their own meanings within an autonomous cultural economy, enthusiastically embracing the central themes of sovereign consumer pluralism.

David Morley (1980), in his research on *Nationwide*, argued that meaning was constructed through the interaction of the text and the social and discourse positions of audiences. He showed that different groups responded differently to *Nationwide* and that these differences reflected the different discourses and institutions in which these groups were situated. Morley's analysis further revealed that different sub-cultural formations within the same class generate different audience responses.

Thompson (1995), in his critique of the media imperialism thesis, also posits that local audiences resist or appropriate global messages in relation to their social context. Individuals draw on the material and environment available to them, as well as people with whom they interact in their day-to-day lives, in order to make sense of the messages they receive and to find some way of relating to them (Thompson, 1995:172). In the next section, I discuss that texts are polysemic and that audiences derive different meanings from text depending on their circumstances.

2.7.2 Polysemy

Related to the importance of context in meaning production, is Fiske's (1987b: 267) argument that texts contain a multiplicity of meanings (they are polysemic) and that meanings produced are a result of the interaction between the text and the socially- and culturally-situated audience. As such, reception is where meaning resides. Fiske argues that audiences make meanings that are useful to them, so that they can make sense of their own social experience and therefore of themselves (1987b: 267 see also During, 1995:6-7). According to Fiske, the polysemic nature of texts makes them popular because they are open or even contradictory, leaving room for different social groups (subcultures in Fiske's terms) to generate different meanings from the same

texts (see Dahlgren, 1998:299). This enables the texts to have a broad appeal. As Fiske writes:

> All television texts must, in order to be popular, contain within them unresolved contradictions that the viewer can then exploit in order to find within them structural similarities to his or her own social relations and identity (Fiske, 1986:192).

Hall (1980) makes a similar observation on the multiple meanings of texts in his seminal work, "Encoding and Decoding", in which he argues that media texts are capable of being read in various ways by people of varying social backgrounds. In his "preferred reading" theory, Hall posits that there are three reading strategies that people adopt when approaching media texts: the dominant, the negotiated and the oppositional reading. While all media texts may have their preferred meanings, they also offer other possible interpretations that are in negotiation with the preferred reading. This negotiated reading produces a different interpretation of the media text itself (see Fiske, 1987b: 260-261).

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed literature on theoretical arguments surrounding the consumption of global media. It has provided a basis on which the viewing of Nigerian movies in Lusaka can be examined using the critiques of the media imperialism thesis such as cultural proximity, regional imperialism and active audience theories. In reviewing literature surrounding global film or movie consumption by local audiences, I started by discussing the media imperialism thesis and how it has been used as an explanatory framework to investigate how film and television from America has arguably continued to dominate the media of other countries. I then discussed the active audience, realism, cultural proximity and regional imperialism theories along with the ethnographic critique of the media imperialism thesis to comprehend the ways in which local audiences are attracted to regional media. By focusing on Zambian audiences that watch Nigerian movies, the main thrust of this study is to investigate and analyse data at the point of consumption, to investigate what pleasure Zambian audiences derive from their consumption and how they appropriate meanings from global media in their daily lives.

In the next chapter, I outline the context of the research as it has been argued that it is important to understand the context in which viewers consume media productions, because it is in these contexts that meanings are made (Ang 1996:70).

CHAPTER THREE

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

3 Introduction

In the last chapter, I discussed the theory that informs this study namely the media imperialism thesis and the critiques of this thesis. In this chapter, I give the context of the study. It is mainly Zambia's dramatic economic decline, rapid urbanisation and the consequent steps taken to correct the situation that provide the context for my study. This is because the economic hardships that came with the rapid urbanisation coupled with a declining economy prompted the government into liberalising the economy. It also forced people into entrepreneurship and it is precisely through the process of liberalisation and entrepreneurship that Nigerian movies have become available to the Zambian people. This chapter therefore discusses Zambia's socio-economic profile, the different spaces in which Lusaka audiences watch Nigerian movies and Nigerian movies in terms of their production and content.

I discuss the Nigerian movies in the first section giving their background in terms of production and content. In section two, I describe Zambia's socio-economic profile followed by that of the city of Lusaka, the focus of this study. I also discuss what Lusaka residents do in their leisure time in this section. I discuss Nigerian movies in section three in terms of how these movies became popular in Zambia and the particular spaces in which Lusaka audiences consume them. The fourth section concludes this chapter.

3.1 Nigerian movies

3.1.1 The Nigerian movie industry

The Nigerian movie industry, referred to as 'Nollywood,' began in the 1970s and is now the third largest in the world, after the Indian and American movie industries (Okafor, 2005; Muchimba, 2004; Nwachukwu, 1994). By 1997, the Nigerian Censors Board was approving new commercial videos at a rate of approximately one a day (Haynes, 1997 in McCall, 2002:86-87) while in February 2002 alone, more than 400 new titles were released (McCall, 2002:79). In terms of international sales,

Nollywood has generated over U.S. $200 million between 1992 and early 2005 ("Nollywood", 2005).

Nollywood became possible firstly due to the enactment of the Nigerian Enterprise Promotion Decree Number 4 in 1972, which mandated cinemas and other places of entertainment to present indigenous productions. This altered what had previously been a 100% foreign domain (Ogunleye, 2004:80). Secondly, there was the emergence and proliferation of inexpensive VHS video tape recorders, which led to the growth of video-based movie production (Balogun, 2006:1 see also Ogunleye, 2004:81). The advent of the video technology enabled indigenous movie directors and television producers to produce movies at lower costs, which enabled them to make profit on the local market (Ogunleye, 2004:81). Producers also shoot the movies in a few days, which reduces production costs. These movies are then given to the marketers to market them. Most producers finance the movies themselves using private funds. The Nigerian video industry has thus arisen without foreign investment or government support (McCall, 2002:79). The government of Nigeria is only involved at the censorship level (Daniel, 2005:1).

What also made Nollywood possible was the fact that many Nigerian families had already invested in videocassette players. Due to the omnipresent danger of armed robbery, Nigerian families preferred to stay at home at night, rather than going out to the theatre or cinema (Ogunleye, 2004:82 see also Ofeimum, 2004). There was thus a ready market for the Nigerian movies. The home video viewing provided an accessible domestic venue that extended the movie market to diverse mainstream audiences in cities and rural villages. Home video viewing in Nigeria, which had formerly been limited to American action films, Indian melodramas, and martial arts films produced in Hong Kong was now altered (Haynes, 2000:12 in McCall, 2002:79 see also Larkin, 1997).

Larkin observes that home video viewing opens Nigerian cinema to new audiences, particularly women, who were culturally excluded from the older commercial theatres. He argues that Nigerian videos "revolutionised the participation of women in the wider public sphere in Northern Nigeria (2000:227). The increase of female

viewers all over Nigeria may also be related to the emergence of a significant number of female directors and producers in the video industry (McCall, 2002:81).

The Nigerian video film is a traditional dramatic feature shot on video instead of film, marketed on videocassettes and sometimes also publicly exhibited using video projectors. Haynes notes that the video boom is, paradoxically, a consequence of general economic collapse and the videos reflect the ambient poverty: made on tiny budget with insufficient equipment, training and rehearsal (in Ogunleye, 2004:81-82). The commercial nerve centres of video marketing in Nigeria include; Idumota Market in Lagos, Aba, Onistsha and Enugu (Ogunleye, 2004:84).

The modern matrix of Nollywood advertising comprises television, radio, posters, billboards, newspapers, magazines and Internet. The multimedia advertising approach ensures that as many people as possible, know about the release of a movie (Ogunleye, 2004:84). The average sale of each video is in the 20 000 to 25, 000 copy range while poor sales fall at about 10,000 copies per title. Additional revenue is generated in some cases from local exhibition and foreign sales of the movies in West Africa and other parts of Africa, Europe and the United States (Ogunleye, 2004:87). However, with the threat of piracy and video clubs cutting into the profits, most Nigerian producers attempt to make as much money from theatrical exhibitions before releasing the movie on home video (Ogunleye, 2004:85).

The Nigerian entertainment scenario has developed from masked strolling players to travelling theatre troupes then the expensive traditional celluloid film and now video films (Ogunleye, 2004:81). This study does not focus on the political economy of Nollywood but merely gives an overview of what the industry is. However this could be an interesting angle for further research. The next section gives the content of Nollywood.

3.1.2 The content of Nigerian movies

Nigerian movies have become popular in many African countries (see for example Banda, 2005; Nwandiko, 2005; Pasipanodya, 2005; Nshuti, 2005; Lawal, 2004; Muchimba, 2004; McCall, 2002; Haynes, 1995). What contributed to Nollywood

gaining popularity across the borders of Nigeria is that Nigerians travelled with their videos enabling people in other parts of the world to see them and want them as well (Ofeimum, 2004:1). These movies depict realistic everyday situations and identify with the struggling masses as undisputed heroes who have undertaken as their task to 'right the wrongs' in their societies (Nwachukwu, 1994:8).

Most Nigerian movies stress traditional values of acceptance of one's place in life. In most stories, a crime is committed but nevertheless, justice is done. The necessity of following rules is also enforced. In these movies it is because the values of honesty, faithfulness, admission of fault are not followed that the various crises occur. Most story lines reveal what is proper and improper behaviour, good and evil (Nwachukwu, 1994:8).

Most Nigerian movies and television productions tell stories using the various cultures and beliefs in which charms and rituals are used to acquire wealth (Okwori, 2002). In most Nigerian videos, women have substantial roles (Nwachukwu, 1994:85). In terms of content, the story lines are about crises from crime to illegitimate children, to step parentage and to adultery and dishonesty (Nwachukwu, 1994:85,157 see also Ofeimum, 2004). In all these stories however, love is vindicated and so is the power of God. Traditional values are also upheld. There is enough humbleness in the hero/heroine for the readers to identify with. In this way, Nigerian movies teach using stories, an important aspect of African life (Nwachukwu, 1994:201).

Despite Nigerian videos' local character, they remain part of a larger global cinematic discourse (McCall, 2002:80; Nwachukwu, 1994:17). They draw from Hollywood horror genres, comedy and soap operas in terms of structure, which the filmmakers have used to forge their own cinematic language and style making the videos comprehensible to foreign audiences (McCall, 2002:80; Nwachukwu, 1994:4-17, 203). The videos are also given Western titles such as *The Price of Love, Unshackled, Keep Us Together* and *Glamour Girls* (McCall, 2002; Muchimba, 2004; Nwandiko, 2005). The next section outlines the geographical position of Zambia so as to show its distance from the country where the movies come from. This is followed by a

description of the socio-economic profile of Zambia in order to establish how the economic situation in Zambia has enabled the influx of Nigerian movies into Zambia.

3.2 Socio-economic description

3.2.1 The geographical position of Zambia

Zambia, located in south central Africa, is a landlocked country. It is surrounded by eight countries: Malawi and Mozambique to the east; Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia to the south; Angola to the west and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Tanzania to the North. Formerly Northern Rhodesia, Zambia is named after one of the rivers in the country, called the Zambezi. The country has a population of about 11 million people, a third of whom lives in or near cities (Banda, 2001:4). The country is divided into nine provinces – Central, Copperbelt, Eastern, Luapula, Lusaka, Northern, North Western, Southern and Western – and seventy-two districts (Banda 2001: 4). Within Lusaka province is Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. This study was based in Lusaka and it is the viewers of Nigerian movies residing in Lusaka who were interviewed for the purposes of this research. Below is a description of the economic context of Zambia with a particular focus on Lusaka.

3.2.2 The socio-economic profile of Zambia

Zambia's economy is heavily dependent on mining. Copper and other metal exports dominate the country's export earnings (Banda, 2001:4). However a collapse in copper prices, oil crisis and static economic policies in the early 1970s had a devastating effect on Zambia's economy reducing it from one of the highest per capita income countries in the region to one of the lowest (Morna et al, 2005:192; Banda, 2001:5; Hansen, 1997:5, 12).

In an effort to inject competition into the monopolistic economy and to induce growth, the government in 1992 initiated a series of market-oriented economic reforms aimed at liberalisation and privatisation of economic activity (Banda, 2004:7). These included the removal of price controls and subsidies, the relaxation of regulations and trade barriers and the privatisation of state companies. The government further encouraged foreign investment and paid more than $50 million in arrears to the World Bank, enabling the country to draw new funds. Donor countries

such as Britain, Germany, Japan and the U.S. increased their aid to Zambia (Banda, 2004:7).

While liberalisation and privatisation have had positive effects on Zambia's economy, they have also had adverse effects. One of the major adverse effects of privatisation has been the loss of jobs for the large middle class population that had depended on wealth accumulated from heavy copper production (Banda, 2004:7). Most of these people have migrated to Lusaka to find means of surviving, as there is more economic activity there. The next part describes Lusaka's socio-economic profile.

3.2.3 The socio-economic profile of Lusaka

Lusaka, the focus of this study, is the capital city of Zambia. It is the centre of most of Zambia's administrative and economic activity. It houses the National Assembly, government ministries' headquarters, the state house and most business organisations and non-government organisations.

Lusaka expanded a lot after independence with more people moving into the city after the relaxation of travel restrictions to the city. Due to Lusaka's expanding population, which today stands at about 2 million people, the city is now characterised by high formal unemployment, mushrooming squatter settlements and proliferation of informal-sector activity (Drakakis-Smith, 1990; Gilbert and Gugler, 1992 in Hansen, 1997:8). Only 40% of Lusaka's employable population is employed (Morna et al, 2005:194). There has been and continues to be a lot of migration especially from the Copperbelt to Lusaka city as a result of retrenchment in the mining industry (Hansen 1997: 6).

Lusaka residents between the ages of 24 and 40 (the age group of my study) are usually working or doing some activity to raise an income. Among the many things these people do in their free time is socialising with family and friends either at home or in public places such as bars, malls, halls or parks. Most people found in bars are men. They usually watch sport while socialising with family and or friends. The women usually go to kitchen parties on Saturday afternoons or stay at home with family or go visiting friends or family after spending the morning cleaning up or

doing laundry. Some people go to church on either Saturday or Sunday or both. Watching movies is part of both women and men's leisure activities. While there are cinema centres in Lusaka, none of them show Nigerian movies. Most movies shown are the latest Hollywood movies. I will discuss the particular spaces Lusaka audiences watch Nigerian movies in the next section. However, I start by discussing how the socio-economic situation in Zambia led to the availability and consequently the popularity of Nollywood movies in the country.

3.3 Nigerian movies in Zambia (global media/local audiences)

Various externally produced commodities have found their way into Zambia as a result of liberalisation (see Banda, 2004:7-10). As discussed in sub-section 3.2.1, trade barriers were relaxed in Zambia, which has made it easy to import goods into the country. Among commodities that found their way and continue coming into Zambia are video players, Digital Video Disk (DVD) players, DVDs, videotapes and television sets. This influx has brought competition and consequently a reduction in the prices of commodities.

The growing availability of commodities and their growing demand provided an opportunity for enterprising people (most people who had no work, some of whom had immigrated to Lusaka in search of work - see section 3.2.) looking for ways to survive. Some opened mini-cinema centres in high residential/low income areas while others opened retail shops and video rental outlets.

Most Nigerian movies sold or screened in the mini-cinema outlets, are imported into Zambia from Tanzania although it is not the only place from which such goods come into Zambia. The videos bought from Tanzania are pirated and therefore sold to customers in Zambia at lower prices compared to original products. According to the stall owners, I interviewed in Lusaka's Central Business District (CBD), pirated DVDs are sold at a retail price of K40, 000 (US $10), Video Cassette Disk (VCD) K20, 000 (US $5) and K10, 000 (US $2.50) for a videotape.

While Nigerian movies were already known among Zambians, 2002 marked the year in which a notable rise in popularity can be seen. This was the year in which the

national broadcaster, Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), went into partnership with a multinational company, Unilever, and started airing a Nigerian serial called *Super Story* (Muchimba, 2004). *Super Story* became an instant hit when its first series *Oh Father Oh Daughter* was aired in 2002. It was a story of a man who is faced with hard times. His wife stands by him, but when he finds riches, he begins seeing other women and sends his wife packing (Okoli, 2004). A good actor played the main character with so much humour surrounding him while the wife cried to God to forgive her husband. This serial was liked, followed and discussed by a lot of people especially women because it reflected that not all Nigerian movies were based on witchcraft (as most previous ones on *TV Africa* for example) but also on humour, love and Christianity. The interest in Nigerian movies grew also because some of the main characters of *Super Story* were invited into Zambia by Unilever to mentor some Zambian actors. Their coming was advertised on ZNBC as well as the plays they performed with Zambian actors.

Following ZNBC's broadcasting of *Super Story* along with the high number of movies produced and their increased availability especially in Lusaka, there has been growing interest among Zambians in Nigerian movies and television programmes. This interest was also compounded by the launch of the now defunct *TV Africa*, which dedicated at least four hours daily to African movies, most of which were from Nigeria. The availability of Nigerian movies on Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) *African Magic* channel has increased the popularity of these movies as well. Nigerian movies seem to be very popular among audiences in the middle and lower strata of Lusaka's urban population (Muchimba, 2004).

The growth in entertainment commodities enabled many Zambians not only to want them more but to also access them. The desire for Nollywood that had been built by *TV Africa* and ZNBC's *Super Story* could now be fulfilled. Although some people, due to lack of employment, cannot access them, a lot of Zambians are able to buy at least one video. Most people also borrow from friends and or relatives and neighbours. The videos available in Lusaka's CBD include Nigerian movies, Hollywood movies, cartoons and music from all over the world.

Many people exchange Nigerian movies and many intercity buses show them during journeys. It is common to hear people mimicking the way Nigerians speak, and to see both Zambian men and women wearing Nigerian traditional attires.

It can also be argued that Nigerian movies have become popular in Zambia because of lack of entertaining programmes on ZNBC's only television channel. People seem to prefer to go to the movie cinemas, to watch videos, DSTV, Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) or the newly launched *Muvi TV* where they seek content which is more appealing to them (see http://www.africafilmtv.com/pages/profiles/Zambia.htm). TBN is a Christian television channel, hence appeals more to religious people, while *Muvi TV* appeals mostly to the younger people. They are both free to air. Given the economic hardships of the country as discussed above, having a DSTV connection is mostly limited to people in the upper classes. I must, mention that it is difficult to get audience figures in Zambia hence the discussion above is based on my observations and interviews I had with different people. I discuss the spaces in which Lusaka audiences consume Nigerian movies in the next sub-section.

3.3.1 Spaces in which Lusaka audiences view Nigerian movies

Most Nigeria movie fans in the age group of my study view these movies in their homes or friends' homes with either family or friends or both. These fans exchange tapes or DVDs with friends and family at the office or in residential areas. Sometimes the movies are borrowed from video rental outlets or bought, usually on the black market.

Other Nigerian movie fans watch them on DSTV's *African Magic* channel 102, which starts broadcasting at 15:00 hours daily. Others watch them on inter city buses especially those that travel between Lusaka and the Copperbelt province.

Among the 16 people interviewed in the focus groups for this study, four subscribed to the DSTV service, while 12 did not (refer to Chapter Five for interviewee's details). The 12 said they watched Nigerian movies mostly on DVDs, videotapes and

or VCDs and on buses if they happened to travel. Below is a description of the physical location of the study.

3.3.3 Description of the physical location of the study

This study concerned itself with Lusaka viewers who like Nigerian movies to understand why these movies are popular in Zambia. These viewers sometimes sit with other people, usually in a home while they watch these movies discussing, laughing and passing comments as they watch. It is in such viewing spaces that these viewers make meanings concerning the Nigerian movies, cementing their understandings and beliefs and relating the movies to their lived experiences.

For each of the focus group discussions, I made use of the residences of the key participants. These participants were the initial contacts that informed other people of the research. The homes of these participants are located in Lusaka's Mtendere Township, Kamwala and Hill View. Some of the individual interviews were carried out in these same areas while the others where conducted in Lusaka's CBD.

Hill View is a low-density residential area. Many structures are only being built now, hence people who live there are builders and constructors and a few of the property owners whose houses have been completed. Kamwala is a medium density area situated near Lusaka's CBD. Mtendere is a high-density residential area situated on Lusaka's eastern outskirts. It opened in 1967 as a resettlement scheme. The township was conceived with a view to housing people who could afford little in the way of construction and site rental costs and therefore would have to be content with very minimum services such as all weather roads, communal water supply and pit latrines (Hansen, 1997:61). Now Mtendere has big houses with running water and electricity with most services available. Residents of this township are involved in both formal and informal employment from teaching to small scale enterprises such as shops, market stalls, street stands and yard-home-based activities (Hansen, 1997:91). The major contributions to Lusaka's urban growth during the 1970s and 1980s came from increased squatting and the subdivision of plots and construction of rental rooms in low-income areas like Mtendere (Hansen, 1997:185).

The above gives an outline of the physical locations where the interviews of this study took place. Of the people interviewed, a good number own their own houses in the respective locations while a few are renting and some are staying with their parents or relatives.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted the scene of the study. I have given a brief background of Nigerian movies in terms of content and production. I have also described the socio-economic profile of Zambia and Lusaka and discussed the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia followed by a discussion on the particular spaces in which Lusaka audiences watch Nigerian movies.

Having outlined the context that forms the background of this study, the next chapter discusses the methods used to gather data for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4 Introduction

In the last chapter, I provided an overview of the context of the research in terms of the geographical position and economic context of Zambia, as well as the content and background of Nigerian movies. I also gave an overview of Lusaka and the different locations of the audiences I interviewed for my study. In this chapter, I discuss the research design, methods of data collection and data collection procedures and sample selection. I discuss the methodological approaches in line with the theoretical framework and their relevance to the goals and aims of the study. Finally, I highlight the limitations of the study.

4.1 The research design

The study employed qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The techniques I used to collect data were focus group interviews followed by individual in-depth interviews. These followed a combination of semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The next part of the chapter discusses qualitative methodology and justifies its suitability for the study.

4.2 The case for qualitative research methodology

Qualitative research methodology refers to the study of the social world, which seeks to describe and analyse the culture and behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied (Bryman, 1988: 46). Since the aims, purposes and goals of research eventually determine the research methods that are employed during the research process (Bryman, 1988:5), I used qualitative methods, as I needed to have an in-depth understanding of what draws people to Nigerian movies. I thus got those involved to verbalise their practices and experiences in a qualitative research interview (see Schroder et al, 2003:147). As I was concerned with how audiences make meanings from messages they receive, I drew on audience reception as it is concerned with exploring the mechanisms of meaning production (Jensen, 1988:5).

The interpretative tradition of qualitative research helped me explore the ways that people make sense of their social worlds and how they express these understandings (see Deacon et al, 1999:6). This is because qualitative research allows for actual talk and other social actions to be used as raw materials of analysis (Lindolof, 1995:21). As such, the qualitative research allowed me to have a focused analysis of experiences and perceptions of media audiences (see Lincoln and Guba, 1995; Cantrell, 1993).

Qualitative research's flexible nature which, allows for exploration into new leads that come up in the interviews (Susana, 1996:181; Frey, 2000:273), was also important for my study. For example, I was able to ask for elaboration and examples of claims the participants made. I was also able to probe new leads as the interviews progressed. The study also benefited from qualitative research's broad approach to the study of social phenomena in its natural setting such as the living room in which people view television or movies. This natural setting helped me understand human actions in real life situations as Wimmer and Dominick point out, "qualitative researchers conduct their studies in the field, in natural surroundings where they can capture the normal flow of events, without trying to control the extraneous variables" (1991:139 see also Marshall and Rossman, 1999:57). The next section discusses issues of generalisability and reliability of qualitative research to understand whether the findings of my study can be generalised or not. Validity issues are also discussed in the next section.

4.3 Generalisability, validity and reliability of qualitative research

Generalisability refers to the extent to which one can extend the account of a particular situation or population to other persons, times or settings than those directly studied (Maxwell, 1992:293; Bryman, 1988:34). While generalisabilty is a serious concern for quantitative research, it is not for qualitative research. Maxwell (1992:296) writes that qualitative research is more concerned with understanding theory rather than generalising to universals. This means qualitative studies are not designed to allow systematic generalisations to some wider population, rather generalisation in qualitative research usually takes place through the development of a theory that not only makes sense of particular persons or situations studied, but also

shows how the same process, in different situations, can lead to different results (Maxwell, 1992:293 see also Bryman, 1988:123).

Validity is about ensuring that "a measure really does reflect the concept to which it is supposed to be referring" (Bryman, 1988:28), while reliability refers to ensuring that the indices or scales of a study and measurements are consistent over time, which entails administering the research more than once (Bryman, 1988:29). According to Lunt and Livingstone (1996:92), qualitative researchers are more concerned about validity than reliability. They argue that qualitative methods compensate for their lack of reliability with greater validity by exhausting various things to be said on a given topic. This, they argue, is part of the content validity of the qualitative research method, offering a notion of reliability related not to the identity of two runs of the method, but the rate of information gain. This is why more focus group interviews are conducted to ensure a high information gain. Lunt and Livingstone point out that the "major perceived advantage of focus groups is that they generate rich, believable data" (1996:92). In this regard therefore, I ensured I conducted focus group discussions to ensure I collected data regarding my topic until data started repeating itself in the groups. This was after three focus group discussions. The next section discusses my data collection methods of focus group and individual in-depth interviews.

4.4 Data collection methods

I used interviews to collect data for the study. This is because the interview is one of the most common and most powerful ways to understand human beings (Fontana and Frey, 1994:361). It is defined as 'a conversation with a purpose' (Kahn and Cannel in Marshall and Rossman, 1999:108). I used the interview because what mattered the most for this study was the subjective view of the participants of watching Nigerian movies. Focus group interviews are discussed below and then individual interviews.

4.4.1 Focus group interviews

The focus group discussion has gained popularity as a qualitative research method for analysing media audiences since the early 1980s (Deacon et al, 1999:55). A focus group interview can be defined as the bringing together of small groups of people to

discuss issues identified by researchers (Deacon et al, 1999:95). The focus group, in which 5 to 12 people are interviewed simultaneously, with a moderator leading the discussion on a focal topic, is a good strategy for understanding audience attitudes and behaviour (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996:80; Wimmer and Dominick, 1991:145, 1987:151). Group interviews are also advantageous in studying audiences because they are more cost effective as a wider range of people can be interviewed quickly within the same limitations of time and resources.

The focus group interviews in my case were useful in understanding the differentiated meaning audiences advance when watching or consuming media. They allowed me to observe how audiences make sense of media content through conversation and social interaction with each other (see Schroder et al, 2003:152; Hansen et al, 1998:258, 261; Roscoe et al, 1995:92; Wimmer and Dominick, 1991:146; Morgan, 1988:12). This is because conversation among people is important as it fixes meaning and cements people's understanding of their lives through the production and reproduction of meanings of everyday life (Lunt and Livingstone, 1996:85). Focus group discussions in this way help the researcher discover the process by which meaning is socially constructed through everyday talk.

The focus group interview's social orientation aspect is also very useful in studying participants in an atmosphere more natural than artificial experimental circumstances and more relaxed than the exposure of a one-on-one interview (Marshall and Rossman, 1999:115).

The choice of focus group interviews for this study also stemmed from the need to take advantage of group dynamics in producing and stimulating insights that would otherwise not have been available without the interaction found in a group (Hansen et al, 1998:262, Morgan, 1997:2). By being in a group, participants were able to interact together and discuss together enabling ideas to be triggered off that may otherwise not have come up in individual interviews. This is because people often need to listen to others' opinions and understandings in order to form their own (Marshall and Rossman, 1999:114). In this way, focus group interviews produce rich information and insights, which the researcher can follow up. The next section discusses sample selection and number of the respondents I have interviewed for the research.

4.4.1.1 Sample selection and size

Participants were selected using the purposive and the 'snowball sampling' methods. I combined the two sampling methods to suit my theoretical criteria. Using snowball and purposive sampling methods, I first made contact with someone who I knew was an ardent viewer of Nigerian movies, who then helped me generate other contacts. Deacon et al (1999:94) explain that snowball sampling is mainly used where no list of institutions exists that could be used as the basis for sampling. The snowball and purposive sampling methods helped me identify the most articulate and enthusiastic viewers as Radway argues that an audience research should include long discussions with respondents who are "most articulate and enthusiastic readers" (1984:10). These were viewers in my case.

The sample consisted of 16 adults. All were drawn from Lusaka. This is in line with qualitative sampling methods, which operate 'within contexts which have been pre-selected according to theoretical criteria' (Jensen, 1998:238). This means the sample group was not selected for the purpose of ensuring a representation of the population but to ensure rich information was gathered on the reasons for the popularity of Nigerian movies. This is in line with the qualitative research tradition, which is concerned with understanding social phenomenon rather than in generalisation. Hansen et al (1998:265) argue that media studies research has rarely sought to obtain groups representative of the general population. But common to all qualitative sampling procedures is that selection of sample units is consciously shaped by the research agenda (Deacon et al, 1999:54).

After selecting the respondents for the interviews, I told my respondents that I would pay them a minimum fee of K20, 000 (US$5) for their time and that refreshments were also available. This step was taken in line with Hansen et al's (1998:270-271) suggestion that participants should be told if there is an incentive. This incentive was relevant for my study to ensure people turned up for the focus group discussion.

Before the interviews commenced, I asked the participants' permission to record the interview. I then asked each of the respondents to identify themselves and to give relevant demographic details about themselves such as what they did, their marital

status, age, where exactly they lived and how many children each of them had. This information was relevant to my research in order for me to establish the type of people who are attracted to Nollywood movies.

Most of the interviews were conducted in English but one focus group discussion and two individual in-depth interviews with video stall owners, were in Nyanja, the local language used in Lusaka. I speak Nyanja very well so I was able to communicate well with the respondents.

Three groups were interviewed. Two groups had five participants each while the third had six. A separate group was used to pilot the interview schedule and to help me familiarise myself as a moderator. Hansen et al, (1998:276) argue that it is always important to 'pilot-test the interview guide to throw up potential problems with the type of stimuli used, with sequencing as well as the framing of wording of questions'. I chose five members in each group because it was big enough a number to stimulate discussion yet small enough for me to manage (see for example; Schroder et al, 2003:151; Hansen et al, 1998:270).

Participants were grouped in 24-25, 26-34 and 35-40 years age groups. The age group of 24-40 was chosen because it is the group with an income able to buy and borrow the movies from video libraries. The people in charge of entertainment on buses fall in this age group as well as most stall owners. Thus the three groups were deemed sufficient as, according to Hansen et al (1998:268-269), the number of groups depends on the aims of the research and on available resources. I thus varied the groups in terms of age. I carried on with group discussions but when I reached two, no new information was being generated but I still proceeded to the third group. Hansen et al (1998:269) argue that one may continue conducting interviews until comments begin to repeat themselves and little new material is generated.

Although social class was an important variable for this research (refer to Chapter Two), most of my respondents were in more or less the same social class making age and gender the only variables on which to base my comparisons. Thus according to Hansen et al (1998:269) the more homogeneous the groups the fewer the groups one needs.

During the focus group discussion, some participants dominated the discussion silencing shy ones. I therefore probed the shy ones further and arranged an in-depth interview with one of them and another with the respondent who dominated the discussion in one of the group interviews. Apart from this, there were also tendencies in the groups to move towards consensus. In this regard, I took note of the caution advanced by Hansen et al. (1998:263) that participants in group discussions tend to move towards 'consensus' and dissenting or different views might be marginalized. I therefore probed the respondents to get their exact views.

Apart from interviewing ardent and one less ardent viewer of Nigerian movies, I also interviewed three video stall owners to find out which movies were most popular, where they bought the movies from and how much they cost. I further interviewed two intercity bus conductors to find out why they opted to show their passengers Nigerian movies. The other person I interviewed was the Multi-choice Zambia Public Relations Officer to find out why they introduced the *African Magic* channel on which most of the movies are Nigerian. Some of the findings of these interviews are discussed in Chapter Five. I do not discuss the responses from bus conductors, as they are similar to the rest of the findings. The next section discusses the venue of the interviews.

4.4.1.2 The physical location of the interviews

The focus group interviews were conducted in three residential areas in Lusaka, Zambia. These were Mtendere, Kamwala and Hill view all of which are urban areas. Each interview took place at one of the participants' home. Both Hansen et al (1998:271) and Morgan (1988:60) suggest that the best-suited venues to conduct focus group interviews are the researcher's office, at participants' homes or at some neutral site such as a church. I chose the home of the participants as this was one of the natural setting in which movies were watched hence it was appropriate to the topic under discussion (see Hansen et al, 1998:271-272).

Participants' homes were also best for the study as they enabled the viewing of excerpts of a Nigerian movie[1] before the discussion. Hansen et al argue that "the sequence typically followed in media audience research using focus group interviews is that of exposure to selected media material followed by undirected general discussion, moving gradually - under the moderator's direction - toward more specific issues and questions" (1998:275). Thus, after the viewing of the movie, the participants spoke to its contents as they would in normal viewing making associations with their lived experiences and then gradually, under my direction, moved to more specific issues.

Using the interviewees' homes also suited my research as it made the respondents comfortable as they were in their territory. The choice of these locations also reduced transport expenses as I interviewed people within their localities. I felt these locations were also right for the topic under discussion that is, they are places in which people view movies. It must be noted here that some of the participants in the focus group interviews were from naturally existing groups while others were not. This was both an advantage as well as a disadvantage for the study. I elaborate on this later in the chapter under the 'limitations of the study section'. The bus conductors and the stall owners were interviewed at their respective places of business while I interviewed the Multi-choice Zambia Public Relations officer telephonically, as this was most convenient for him. The next section discusses the interview guide and my role as the moderator.

4.4.1.3 The interview guide and my role as the moderator

I used an interview guide to direct the interviews and to enable comparisons between groups (see Knodel, 1993:37) (refer to interview guide in the appendix). However, I did not rigidly follow the interview guide, but allowed the discussion and interviews to flow at length and when it was necessary, I probed the respondents further. My purpose as moderator of the focus groups discussions was to facilitate and stimulate the discussions and not to dominate the proceedings (see Hansen et al, 1998:272; Lunt and Livingstone, 1996:83; Schroder et al, 2003:111). Thus I ensured that the focus

[1] Two groups viewed a movie called *My Best Friend* while the other group viewed *Blood Sister* because these movies are popular according to both stall owners and the respondents.

outlined in the interview guide was covered and that all respondents participated in the discussion not leaving it to just a few people to dominate.

I used a tape recorder to capture data during the interview so that all my attention could concentrate on listening and understanding the discussion although I jotted down issues that I felt needed follow up.

I compiled my interview guide with the help of my supervisor, Professor Larry Strelitz of the Journalism and Media Studies School at Rhodes University (see Appendix 1). Together we came up with themes that we felt could bring out the attraction of Zambian viewers to Nigerian movies and how their viewing of these movies related to their viewing of American movies. In other words, the interview guide was designed to probe issues that emerged in the literature review. The next section discusses individual in-depth interviews.

4.4.2 In-depth individual interviews

Individual in-depth interviews followed focus group interviews in order to further probe the respondents' opinions, values, motivation, recollections, experiences and feelings (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991:148, see also Bryman, 1988:46; Jensen, 1982:240). I conducted individual interviews with two participants from the focus groups, the video stall owners, the intercity bus conductors who are responsible for entertainment on the buses and the Public Relations Officer for Multi-choice Zambia.

The selection of the last three categories of interviewees was as a result of my observation of how these people are involved in making these movies available to Zambian audiences. My point of interest was why they chose Nigerian movies and what particular titles they thought Zambian audiences preferred. I also selected two participants from my focus group interviews to do in-depth individual interviews because one was shy to speak in front of other people while the other had a lot to say about his attraction to Nigerian movies. I did this because the individual interview eliminates the problem of group pressure and generally allows the shy respondent to provide more specific information (see Wimmer and Dominick, 1987:155). The interviewing of one person at a time also enabled me to observe at length the

respondent's nonverbal responses and allowed me to probe carefully each answer given by the interviewee (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991:148).

However, there were moments, as Bryman (1988:46) has noted, where the interviewees did 'ramble'. I took these ramblings as constructive to my study, since they revealed something about the interviewee's concerns and showed the perspective of the people I was investigating. The rambling also provided me with other details that I had left out in the questioning and as a result new issues and questions of interest came up during the interviews.

4.5 Research procedure

Fontana and Frey (1994:367) argue that researchers have to make decisions how to present themselves to the researched. Given that some of the researched were housewives with minimal education background, I had to be careful how I presented myself so as not to intimidate them. I introduced myself in the local language and told them I was a mother like some of them. I, however, clearly stated to the respondents the purpose of the study.

During the course of the study, there were some ethical questions I had to consider. Fontana and Frey (1994:378) observe that traditional ethical concerns have revolved around the topics of 'informed consent' (consent received from the subject after he or she has been carefully and truthfully informed about the research) and 'right to privacy'. I have adhered to all these. I must also mention that all the participants were very willing to speak about their experience of viewing Nigerian movies. There had been some participants that my contact person had brought to me but after realising that they were only interested in speaking because they wanted money, I quickly struck them off my list.

At the beginning of each interview, I explained the purpose of the study to the respondents and their consent was willingly obtained in all cases although some stall owners were at first reluctant thinking I was from the Zambia Copyright Association (Zamcorps) investigating pirated tapes, CDs and DVDs. Their reluctance to be interviewed was because most of their merchandise is pirated (see Chapter Three).

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When I explained the purpose of my visit, they agreed to be interviewed. To avoid getting them into trouble, I have used pseudonyms for the stall owners and bus conductors. The duration of most of the focus group interviews was one hour while the in-depth individual interviews lasted between 20 to 40 minutes.

During the focus group discussions, I learnt that the role of a researcher is very important because he or she is responsible for asking the correct questions as well as probing. The researcher is also responsible for selecting or not selecting from what is said.

4.6 Data processing and analysis

Data gathered was organised thematically as suggested by Hansen et al (1998) and Berg (1998) then interpreted and analysed further in relation to the theoretical framework. The findings of these interviews are the focus of Chapter Five. Translating some of the interviews that were in Nyanja into English posed a problem of losing the exact meaning of what was said. In transcribing, however, I tried to keep the sense of the meaning rather than the literal translation so that the cultural vigour of the conversations was not lost. After the transcription, I used thematic coding as the mode of analysis. This is in line with Jensen's (1982:247) suggestion that it is necessary to have a loosely inductive categorisation of interview extracts with reference to various concepts, headings or themes. This thus made it easier for me to analyse and make reference to the data gathered.

4.7 Limitations of the study

As stated earlier, the problem I faced was with the fact that some of my groups were naturally existing groups. This posed the problem of some people in the group feeling uncomfortable, as they seemed to fear disagreeing with what the others said. I thus had to be very skilful and persistent in asking the feelings of each participant.

Further, when interviewing the housewives (although two of them were in formal employment) the discussion was interrupted as some of them had to go home to check on the children while one had just separated with her husband on the day of the interview. She seemed distracted during the interview and had to leave the interview

once or twice to supervise packing as she was moving from her matrimonial home. I discuss the limitation of grouping people into social class in the next chapter (Chapter Five) but next I discuss some of the practical problems I faced.

4.8 Practical problems

Another problem related to a faulty DVD I showed my first focus group. The DVD kept on skipping so after viewing for a while, I decided that we should proceed with the interview although some of the respondents had first wanted to finish viewing the movie. I also had problems of choosing which excerpts from the movie to show as each movie was a story and showing just a part posed a problem for me of whether the respondents would pick something from there. I could not show the full movie as I had limited time with the group due to other commitments of some of the respondents.

Finding the appropriate time to conduct the focus group interviews also proved very difficult as some of the respondents were in formal employment leaving limited time for us to meet. Those who were housewives were busy too, needing their weekend for other engagements but after negotiations and with the help of my contact people, the time was set for the interviews.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the stages of my research process, sampling and modes of data analysis I employed. The chapter also presented the research procedure, the physical locations of the study and the limitations I encountered in the course of the study. I have also justified my choice of focus group and in-depth interviews.

In the next chapter, I present and discuss the findings of my study based on the interviews. The analysis is informed by the theoretical underpinnings discussed in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5 Introduction

This research is an investigation into the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia: a reception study of Lusaka viewers. I employed the qualitative research techniques of focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews to gather the data. I discussed the methods and other methodological considerations in Chapter Four. In this chapter, I present and discuss the findings from the interviews.

The findings are responses to four main questions:

- What pleasure do Lusaka audiences in Zambia derive from Nigerian movies?
- How do Lusaka audiences interact with, and make meaning out of, these movies?
- How do these movies relate with the lived contexts of these viewers?
- How do Lusaka audiences view American movies compared with Nigerian movies?

The responses from the interviews revealed that there are many reasons for the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia. Each viewer has a unique relationship to the movies connected to that individual's life history, the social situation they are in and their aesthetic and cultural preferences (see Ang, 1985:26). Below I have grouped given responses into dominant themes that emerged from the data gathered during the research interviews. They are:

1. The realism in Nollywood
2. The need for successful black role models
3. Affirming Africa's rich heritage
4. Learning lessons from Nollywood
5. Entertainment and relaxation

I have divided this chapter into six sections guided by the above themes. Even though I discuss these themes separately, there are areas where they overlap. Each of the first five sections deals with a particular theme while the sixth concludes the chapter. In order to understand and explain why Lusaka audiences are attracted to Nigerian movies, I draw on theories of realism (Ellis, 1982; Ang, 1985), cultural proximity as advanced by Straubhaar (1991) and the active audience (Fiske, 1987, 1989). Other theories such as regional imperialism will also be used. As I discuss the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia, I problematise the media imperialism thesis by asking the respondents how they view American movies in relation to Nigerian movies.

I also draw from Liebes and Katz (1990) factors of primordiality and universality, which, they argue, determine the success of television shows in different cultures. Primordiality refers to the availability of a programme while universality refers to the problems and topics with which the programme deals (Liebes and Katz, 1990 in Trepte, 2003:8). Although Liebes and Katz's findings are based on research conducted in Israel, I will argue that they can be used to explain the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia as well. I also explain my findings using the concept of cultural discount, which refers to the depreciation of entertainment programmes in foreign markets as advanced by Hoskins and Mirus (1988:500 in Trepte, 2003:8).

I have used titles (Mrs and Mr) for some of the respondents, as this was the way they introduced themselves to me. In Zambia most married people are not called by their first name but by their married name or as mother or father of so-and-so. It is considered respectful. Below is a summary of the interviewees' details:

Interviewees' details

Name	Sex	Class background	Watch Nigerian movies on
1. Doreen	Female	Working class	DVD
2. Agnes	Female	Working class	DVD
3. Lufaro	Female	Working class	DVD
4. Ernest	Male	Working class	DVD and Videotapes
5. Jessie	Female	Working class	DSTV and Videotapes
6. Constance	Female	Working class	DSTV and Videotapes
7. Ignitu	Female	Middle class	Does not watch any

			more
8. Lungowe	Female	Working class	Videotapes
9.Collins	Male	Working class	DVD and Videotapes
10. Muchimba	Male	Middle class	DSTV and Videotapes
11. Mrs Kaluba	Female	Working class	Videotapes
12. Mrs Mwale	Female	Working class	Videotapes
13. Mrs Tembo	Female	Working class	Videotapes and DVD
14. Mr Nsenje	Male	Working class	Videotapes
15. Mrs Nsenje	Female	Working class	Videotapes
16. Mrs Jamara	Female	Working class	DVD and videotapes

I have included the social class of respondents in my study as it is argued that people with the strongest tendency to seek greater cultural proximity in television programmes and other cultural products are from among the popular classes-the lower, middle class, working class and poor (the less educated) (Straubhaar, 1991:41, 51). According to Straubhaar (1991:51) people in the popular class seem to prefer material that is both closer to and more reinforcing of traditional identities. Thus, I had to classify the respondents in social classes to find out if this was the case in my study.

However, I had a lot of difficulties in grouping the respondents into the social classes because social class can be based on different things such as family background, where the person lives, by profession or education, by culture, by purchasing power and by cultural capital (based on education and family background) (see Bourdieu, 1984 in Straubhaar, 1991:51). Added to the difficult of defining class is the fact that people's values and social class changes over time. One may have been in the working class some years back but may now belong to the middle class. Sometimes people have an upper class background but may not have high purchasing power today. Added to this, Straubhaar's definition of class is vague. Although he defines class by education, he does not say what less educated or better-educated means. Is a person better educated if she or he has a college, university degree or if she or he has completed ordinary level education (grade 12 or matric)? I therefore admit that deciding one's class is problematic.

Nonetheless, I based social class of each of the respondents in my study on their backgrounds such as where they have lived, where they live today and their level of education. I discuss social class and Nigerian movies in section 5.2.

The next section deals with the issue of realism and discusses how the above listed Lusaka viewers identify with, relate to, and get involved with the characters, environment and the set up in the Nigerians movies.

5.1 The realism in Nollywood movies

As discussed in Chapter Two section 2.4, there are various types of realism each with its own definition. These were empirical, emotional and classical realism. In my findings, I found two types of realism: empirical and emotional realism. That is Nigerian movies are popular in Zambia because audiences found them to be empirically and emotionally realistic. I start by discussing empirical realism followed by emotional realism.

5.1.1 Empirical realism

This is the denotative level of reading a text in which a literal resemblance is sought between the fictional world of the text and the 'real' world as experienced by the audience member. Audiences find a similarity between the realities 'in' and 'outside' a text at some level. What is realistic for them is that, what is in the text is a reflection of the outside world; it is not a distorted image of what is happening outside (Ang, 1985:36).

> **Mrs Tembo**: Nigerian movies are about things that happen in real life. There is no pretence so they make sense to me as I can see in these movies what is happening in my community. For example the way a married woman will respect her husband calling him 'baba' or 'father of Swara', for example. That is exactly what happens here in Zambia so when am watching these movies, it is like am watching Mtendere here in Lusaka.

> **Muchimba**: That is right. Nigerian movies show real stories based on Africa – they show that most of us as Africans live in a community. For example in that movie *Togetherness*, the main actor Toby would send his son to ask for transport from the neighbour each time his wife got sick. He also sent his son to his neighbours to ask for things like tomatoes and cooking oil as he said he overlooked such things as a man and in any case all his money had gone to buying medicines for his wife. That resonates with me as an African and the way I live with my neighbours.

Mr Nsenje: These movies reflect real things and most of them are based on true stories. Also these movies are closer to home. I can identify with almost everything that takes place.

Mrs. Nsenje: Even the food and the way they eat is like us - with their hands. They also show the same kind of respect to elders like us. That represent me and how I live. We don't stay in a nuclear family just like what we see in these movies. It is extended... it includes people in the village, my aunt and so on. The things that happen in the movies most of the time you find have happened to you before or may happen later.

Even when someone has died in these movies, Nigerians will depict what most people do when they receive such news (clapping then touching her head) someone will remove the chitambala [headdress] on their head or throw themselves on the ground crying. So in that sense, these movies are real to me.

The above excerpts reveal that the interviewees experience what they watch as real because it represents their lived experiences. Mrs Tembo for instance feels that the movies deal with things that are happening in real life as they reflect her life and her community. The denotative level of reading a text concerns the literal manifest content of the narrative such as the discussions between the characters, their actions and their reactions to one another (Ang, 1985:41). However, it is important to bear in mind that what maybe regarded as empirically realistic to some people may not be realistic to others because people have different experiences.

The realistic nature of the movie or the recognition that what is being shown in the movie actually happens to 'us' or takes place in 'our' environment gives audiences pleasure as it helps them reflect on their daily lives. Ang (1985:40-47) argues that when people are able to recognise themselves in a show, they experience the show as real and therefore derive pleasure from it.

5.1.2 Emotional realism

The interviewees also experience Nigerian movies as emotionally realistic. That is, the audiences are able to share the characters' feelings in the movies. Emotional realism is the reading of a text at a connotative level. The connotative level of reading a text relates to the associative meanings, which can be attributed to elements of the text (Ang, 1985:42). Collins and Mrs Jamera illustrate their perception of the emotional realism of Nigerian movies.

> **Collins**: Nigerian movies are real to me and not fictitious like American movies. Most of the time, the American movies show that people are usually happy and have a good time but the Nigerian ones will show how orphans suffer or how men ill-treat women. It is real problems that happen in our homes.
>
> **Mrs Jamera:** I also like the music that accompanies the actions. They bring out the feelings that come with that situation. When it is really nice I am happy with the characters and when it is sad I cry with them.

These two excerpts reveal the involvement or how the audiences relate to the Nigerian movie characters. A movie is realistic for Collins and Mrs Jamera if they can feel the characters emotions. Mrs Jamera adds that the movies sometimes make her cry as well. Thus a movie is emotionally realistic when people have an affective response to the characters as they would to a real person (Hall, 2003:635). The capability of the text to evoke an emotional response is seen as a marker of realism (Hall, 2003:635). Thus, when a text brings the viewer to respond emotionally to the characters in the text, the text is seen to be true or real. Nigerian movies stir up emotions such as happiness or sadness in their audiences. Audiences watch a problem unfold and then later be resolved.

The pain, joy, triumph or despair that the text provokes in audiences may be communicated understandably and vividly to the audience, allowing the text to feel real to audience members (Hall, 2003:636). The concrete situations and complications are regarded as symbolic representations of more general living experiences: rows, intrigues, problems, happiness and misery (Ang, 1985:45). Thus, what makes the Nigerian movies emotionally realistic for these viewers is that emotions are called up during viewing of Nollywood and it is these that remain with the viewers.

Livingstone (1998:59) notes that analysing audiences' pleasure in cinema and television programmes should be twofold. It must take into account first the enjoyment of escapism and vicarious emotional experience and second the pleasure of recognition and validation of everyday experience by audiences. These experiences, Livingstone notes, function as sort of "cultural myths...connecting with basic human concerns, explaining complex social phenomena, providing categories for thought and moral precepts to live by" (1998:59). I therefore argue that the viewers I interviewed

of Nigerian movies tend to value them as they reflect human concerns, explain complex social phenomena based in Africa, provide thoughts and moral excerpts to live by and also provide validation of their lived experiences. I discuss Nollywood's didactic role in section 5.4. In the next subsection, I discuss how identifying with characters and the environment attracts the respondents in my study.

5.1.3 Identifying with characters and the environment

Identification, which is a process of perceiving similarities with others, is a notion drawn from psychoanalysis and taken up by cultural studies to explain the process whereby we can see ourselves in the images presented to us (Woodward, 1997:14-15). Several interviewees in this study saw themselves in the images that Nigerian movies presented to them. Nwachukwu (1994:157) writes that movies in Nigeria are designed to please Africans by ensuring characters and content is recognisable. He further argues that even the comedy in the Nigerian movies is familiar to most African people (1994:157). Thus the respondents in this study are familiar with most of what they watch which draws them to these movies. They are able to laugh at the jokes in these movies, for example, because they are recognisable to them. This familiarity is reinforced by the topical themes the movies have adopted:

> **Mr Nsenje**: Even their themes and scenes, it is something we can picture in our minds but in the American ones...they just create something out of the ordinary. I think they are too computerised... (Laughter in the group). In the Nigerian ones, there are spiritual things that are well explained. The preacher will read a Bible verse then explain so you can create a picture in your mind. They focus on issues relevant to us. Their fiction is well timed. If the topical issue in churches is Satanism, the preachers in the movies will concentrate on that also.

Although not all Nigerian movies deal with Christianity, most of them are on Christianity and concentrate on what is good or bad in society. This is the aspect of Nigerian movies that Mr Nsenje is alluding to. He has also alluded to the movies showing current issues happening in Zambia as well especially in churches. Section 5.5 discusses some of the other topical issues in Nigerian movies such as building houses that Lusaka viewers enjoy and draw from.

With regard to relating to the content of movies, I asked the interviewees why they were turning to Nigerian productions and not Zambian productions which are available, although few in number.

> **Interviewer:** If you want something you can relate to, why don't you watch *Kabanana* or *Loose Ends* on ZNBC?
>
> **Mrs Nsenje**: The way Zambians act leaves too much to be desired. For example when eating nsima [pap or thick porridge], Zambians use forks that we don't even use in real life, we use our hands but those in Nigeria even the okra[2] which people are embarrassed with in Zambia, they will eat it the way they usually do in real life. They will just depict the way they live. Even in the villages they are not shy. They will show the village, the way it is, the way the houses are, and they will use those same houses instead of making up something like here in Zambia, which is not real. It simply means that they are down to earth.
>
> **Mr. Nsenje:** *Kabanana* actors also want to talk like Americans with that accent but it makes me uncomfortable because I can see that they are pretending.

The reference by Mr Nsenje to actors speaking with an American accent is a marker of class difference and upward mobility among Zambians. Most Zambians, who have lived overseas or have gone to private schools, develop accents regarded as non-African. Gaganakis (1992) in her study of language-use among African students in private schools in South Africa points out that people are seen as elite due to their ability to speak fluent English because they had a better education. She argues: "The use of English is perceived as a means of effecting social closure or signalling distance from township peers and those who attempt to project social identity as an elite often refuse to speak vernacular" (1992:53 in Strelitz, 2002:229). Thus, because of the association of the high status associated with people with proficiency and good accent in English, many people especially women in Zambia have a non-African accent, which is usually American. Most respondents in my study did not identify with the American accent from *Kabanana* actors. According to Mr Nsenje, the *Kabanana* actors seem to be pretenders.

[2] Okra is slippery and one needs to make a hole in the nsima to put the okra and then sort of scoop it so it does not slip off. Okra is regarded as a poor person's food because it is cheap and grows in a lot of places.

What has emerged from the discussion above is that for working class viewers such as Mr and Mrs Nsenje, the issue is not that there is a small film industry in Zambia but rather that the industry in Zambia is too influenced by Hollywood making it irrelevant to them. These audiences are therefore turning to regional markets in search of cultural commodities relevant to them and as such they have found Nigerian movies to be relevant with recognisable people and themes.

The interviewees also believe that the way characters speak in Zambian productions is an imitation of Americans, and that it does not depict the way Zambians speak. As a result, the Zambian movies and television products are unattractive to them. Due to the fact that Lusaka audiences are unable to find these Zambian productions culturally proximate or of relevance to them, they turn to Nigeria for cultural goods they can understand in terms of language, politics, economics and culture in an environment similar to their own.

It is interesting to note that local productions are regarded as irrelevant while the foreign cultural products from Nigeria are regarded as relevant by the interviewees. Morley (1994:145) reminds us that the term 'foreign' is a problematic category because one has to ask the question: what is 'foreign' and to whom? This is because some productions may have a 'local' relevance, which renders them real to their audiences, as is the case with Lusaka audiences and Nigerian movies.

The regional imperialism theory, however, argues that turning to regional markets for cultural commodities may lead to poor countries being dominated by the more powerful countries, resulting in regional imperialism (Straubhaar, 1991:39). This is true in Zambia. There is now a Nigerian domination over Zambia in terms of movies and other cultural commodities. The movie libraries and stalls especially on the black market have a lot of Nigerian movies. Zambian productions are only broadcast on the ZNBC. There are no Zambian DVDs or videocassettes on the market. I discuss Nigerian domination on Zambia with regard to how Zambians are dressing in a later section. Below is a brief discussion on some of the similarities between Zambian and Nigerian culture so as to elaborate why Zambians find Nigerian culture to be cultural proximate to their own.

The reason why Zambians find Nollywood products culturally proximate to them is because there are a number of visual affinities between the Nigerian and Zambian culture. For example, women in these movies dress in long chitenge (kanga)[3] outfits. This is similar to Zambia. Women wear chitenges or tailor them into outfits, which are considered to be feminine decorum in most African countries. The iconography of Nigerian tradition such as marriage celebrations, food and village life, while slightly different from Zambian culture, provides a similar cultural background that is frequently in opposition to the spread of Westernisation.

Because of the growth in globalisation and the arguably increasing homogenisation of societies associated with for example shopping mall culture, people seem to increasingly be looking for local cultural commodities they can identify with and call their own. This is in line with Mercer's (1990:43) argument that "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (in Hall et al, 1992:275). Thus, while there is arguably the homogenisation of cultures and the ubiquity of Hollywood, the audiences in my study want something different, something unique from the rest of the world, which they can identify with as African people. Kevin Robins argues:

> Alongside the tendency towards global homogenisation, there is also fascination with difference and the marketing of ethnicity and 'otherness'. There is a new interest in 'the local' together with the impact of 'the global' although this local is not rooted in well-bounded localities...This 'local' is not, of course to be confused with older identities, firmly rooted in well-bounded localities. Rather it operates within the logic of globalisation. (In Hall et al 1992: 304).

Nigerian movie fans identify with these seemingly local movies in the global context, as the actors are similar to them as well as the traditions in Nollywood. Thus the impact of globalisation remains contradictory because some identities gravitate towards 'traditions', attempting to restore their former purity and recover the unities and certainties that are felt as being lost and the trend towards global homogenisation is matched by a powerful revival of ethnicity (Hall et al 1992: 309-13)

[3] Printed fabric won by a woman around her body. Also used as fabric to make clothes for both men and women.

Since this research also sought answers on how Lusaka audiences viewed Nigerian movies in relation to American movies, I asked the interviewees what they felt about realism in connection with Hollywood movies. Most of them said American movies are fictitious or alien. While some said they watched American movies for entertainment purposes only, a few said they did not watch anything from America at all:

> **Interviewer:** Tell me about realism in relation to Hollywood movies.
>
> **Mr Nsenje**: Fiction is too much. Like *War of the Worlds.*
>
> **Lungowe**: And the way they shoot each other. I don't think people live like that. You just find someone comes into a bar and goes around shooting everyone in sight until the bullets finish in the gun. Even without this fiction, I can't just relate to American movies. The way they talk to each other, their set-up, their laws, it is just not part of my world.
>
> **Constance:** Yes and nothing happens to the main actor. Bullets will somehow always miss him but if he shoots someone they die instantly.
>
> **Mrs Nsenje:** I don't watch American movies anymore. I specifically send my children to borrow a Nigerian movie and not an American one [agreement by some group members]. I learn nothing from American movies.

These responses reflect that these audiences who view American movies regard them as 'other', something to just entertain or pass the time because the respondents feel that there is nothing in them that they can learn or appropriate in their lives. Instead, audiences have turned to Nigerian movies, which they regard as part of them, something to relate to and to use in their daily lives.

Significantly these excerpts reveal that audiences are active in selecting what to watch and are active in making meanings from the text they consume (Fiske, 1987:84; Ang, 1990:160). The active audience thesis discusses the complex interplay and negotiation between audience and production that is at the heart of contemporary culture. It emphasises that the receiver is not just a decoder to whom a movie, or indeed any media product, transmits a message, but is also a producer of messages (Marshall, 2004:10; Martin-Barbero, 1993 in Tufte, 2000:16).

The audiences in my study choose to watch Nollywood movies because they enjoy watching them. Some also choose not to watch Hollywood movies as they argue that

there is nothing they learn from there. This thus shows how audiences integrate media consumption within their lives. The comments by Mrs Nsenje, Constance and Lungowe (above) also illustrate that audiences are active and aware of what they want in their cultural products.

Whereas the media imperialism thesis is built on the assumption that the media exerts a direct effect on society, the active audience theory argues that audiences are active in making meanings from the text they consume (Fiske, 1987:84; Ang, 1990:160). They are not passive consumers as the media imperialism thesis argues. This study therefore rejects the media imperialism thesis and argues that while audiences may adopt the Western style of doing things, they also draw from other media that are not Western. Nigerian movies have become popular in Zambia because people are able to make their own meanings that are relevant to them. This is in line with Fiske's (1989:2) argument that the making of popular culture is only possible and pleasurable if people can make their own meanings out of the cultural commodities they consume. I therefore argue that the people I interviewed are attracted to Nollywood because they are able to make their own meanings from Nollywood related to their lives hence draw pleasure.

Nigerian movies are popular in Zambia because what is in the movies is close to people's cultural experience. Since people's cultural experience has a priority over any other experience, people manage what they watch in relation to their perception of life and the closer the media images are to their perceptions of life the more they are attracted to it. Tomlinson (1991:62) explains that the mundane but existentially close level experience such as; worrying about families, organising the routines of the day, having a headache, gossiping, daydreaming, sharing a joke, desire to marry or be married, desire to have children must itself 'manage' people's use and perception of media images and messages. Thus the closer the level of experience to those represented by the media, the more the audiences maybe be attracted to the particular media production.

Relevant to this discussion are primordiality, universality and cultural discount, which explain why people are able to, or unable to, identify with a movie.

5.1.4 Primordiality and universality

As mentioned in Chapter Two and in the introduction of this chapter, Liebes and Katz, as a result of their qualitative study of on the reception of *Dallas* in Israel, argued that primordiality and universality determine the success of television shows in different cultures (1990 in Trepte, 2003:8). Although their studies were based in Israel and on television programmes, I will show that these concepts are applicable to Zambian viewers and Nigerian movies.

5.1.4a Primordiality

Primordiality refers to the availability or existence of foreign programmes in local markets (Liebes and Katz, 1990 in Trepte, 2003:8). In relation to primordiality, my argument is that Nollywood is popular in Zambia not only because of the five themes listed above but also because there are a lot of Nigerian movies available to the Zambian people at relatively affordable prices even for the working class population. In addition, most of the movies on DSTV's *African Magic* channel are Nigerian (see Chapter Three).

In an interview, Multi-Choice Zambia Public Relations Officer Kamiza Chikula, pointed out the reasons for Multi Choice introducing the *African Magic* channel and the reasons why Nigerian movies dominate it.

> **Kamiza**: Multi-Choice introduced the *African Magic* channel to showcase African talent. It is a platform to showcase movies made by Africans but these African movies are mainly from Nigeria as their movie industry is massive. There are approximately four Nigerian movies to every one movie from any other African country.

In another interview with a stall owner, the reasons given for selling Nigerian movies were that they are on demand:

> **Robbie**: Many people like Nigerian movies so we make business if we have them. I would say they compete well with those movies and cartoons from America. Most women like the romantic ones while the men like comedies.

Nigerian movies thus meet one of the conditions that make foreign productions successful. I discuss the universality of Nigerian movies in the next subsection.

5.1.4b Universality

Universality, according to Liebes and Katz (1990 in Trepte, 2003:8), refers to the ability of other people to be able to identify with the themes and problems discussed in a movie or television production. As discussed above, the respondents in this study find Nigerians movies relevant and realistic because the problems and topics that the movies address are similar to theirs and relevant to them. The inability of viewers to identify with a movie may lead to its failure at the box-office, a reason most commonly cited by Indian film makers for the poor performance of Hollywood movies in India (Ganti, 2002:285).

Ajoke Jacobs, a movie producer in Nigeria sates that "we do films for our people...people find Nollywood interesting because they are about them" (in Daniels, 2005:1). Another producer of Nigerian movies, Tunde Kelani, says that the movies are African and that their popularity shows that Africans have a lot in common, socially, culturally and politically (in Daniel, 2005:1).

Next, I discuss cultural discount, which suggests that the lack of identification with the audience is what leads to the failure of a movie/movies in foreign markets.

5.1.5 Cultural discount

Cultural discount refers to the reduction in the value of foreign entertainment programmes in the home market (Hoskins and Mirus, 1988 in Trepte, 2003:7). A cultural discount for traded programmes or movies arises because viewers in importing markets generally find it difficult to identify with the way of life, values, history, institutions, myths, and physical environment depicted. Language differences are also an important reason for a cultural discount, as the appeal of viewing is reduced by the need to dub or subtitle and by the difficulty in understanding unfamiliar accents (Hoskins and Mirus, 1988:500 in Trepte, 2003:7).

The people I interviewed also alluded to the difficulties they had in understanding the American accent. Some even said there are words they did not understand because

their English vocabulary was not so developed. Others said they could not relate to the themes and situations in the American movies such as children shouting at their parents, nudity or homosexuality. Some respondents attributed their liking of Nigerian movies to their 'decency'.

> **Mrs Nsenje:** You know the way the Americans talk, you really have to concentrate. They also use abusive language, which is okay for them but not for us. With them, a child can say words I can't say to my mum here in Zambia or even in Africa generally. But for them it is fine. They have their own culture.
>
> **Jessie:** The other good thing about Nigerian movies is that you can watch them with your children. There is no swearing like 'shit' or scenes of sex or nudity unlike in the American movies. Those Nigerian movies are also easy to follow. They are not a puzzle like most American movies. Maybe it is because I know what will happen because of the similarities of their settings to ours.

Viewers prefer movies rooted in the culture they belong to. Cultural discount also refers to the inability of local audiences to identify with the characters because of their unfamiliarity leading to a reduced appeal for foreign products in local markets. Ganti (2002:285) quotes Taran Adarsh, editor of Trade Guide, a trade weekly in India, who says that audiences derive pleasure only from familiar stars and narratives. Gant further argues that in Adarsh's view, the alien bodies, histories and modes of address of Hollywood movies are not capable of evoking in Indian audiences the psychological or emotional responses necessary for viewing pleasure. Ganti notes that "identification can be understood as a type of cultural empathy" (2002:286). I would also argue that the interviewees in my study feel the same about Hollywood and hence they prefer other movies.

Ofeimum (2004) sums up well the need for audience to identify with characters in the movies:

> The vanity of wanting to see your face in a mirror is a powerful weapon that no known people in the world have managed to outgrow... hearing the music and seeing the dance of your own people. The truth is that no matter how much we enjoy the most liberal Hollywood pictures, we know it is about other people's dreams and realities; it does not necessarily reflect what we are, what we want to be and how much we want to be seen. It is better to tell your own story even if others have told it (Ofeimum, 2004).

The preference of familiar cultural commodities is further discussed in the next section.

5.1.6 Cultural proximity

Cultural proximity also explains the selection and enjoyment of movies and television programmes by audiences (Trepte, 2003:6). Cultural proximity theory states that audiences in the middle and lower social classes prefer media cultural products, which are culturally relevant or proximate to them (Straubhaar, 1991:39). In a study on the European Song Contest "The Eurovision Song", it was shown that cultural proximity determines the audience's voting behaviour. That is, a song has a higher chance of being voted for if the artist comes from a country nearby and if both countries have similar cultural roots (Trepte, 2003:6). In relation to Nigerian movies and Lusaka audiences, the discussions above have reflected that Nigerian movies are popular because they are culturally relevant to the Zambian people. Further, as Lungowe explained, compared to Hollywood, the Nigerian movies are more culturally similar to the environment she grew up in:

> **Lungowe**: I have grown up in the village so it is only Nigerian movies, which show what I have experienced in the village. The movies reflect what goes on from my part of the world, especially the ceremonies and the environment.

What has emerged from my findings is that realism influences viewers in choosing what to watch. The viewers in my study said they are more attracted to Nollywood because they feel they are more realistic and culturally proximate to them compared to Hollywood. The respondents indicated that they like watching Nigerian movies because they are made by fellow Africans and follow themes that are closer to home and more relevant or familiar to them than Hollywood films. The respondents tended to reject Hollywood and anything else with Hollywood influence and regarded it as unrealistic or irrelevant to them as these movies were judged not to reflect, at a denotative level, these viewers' known lived realities. This is as Fiske (1987:84) has argued that audiences are not a homogenous group but are different and actively read media messages to produce from it their own meanings that connect with their social experience.

In the next section, I explore the regional imperialism thesis by examining how Lusaka audiences are attracted to successful black role models in Nigerian movies.

5.2 Successful black role models

Nollywood also gives Zambians a sense of belonging by allowing them to associate with successful black people from Africa. In other words, the respondents like identifying with the successful black characters:

> **Lungowe:** I like seeing black people in movies. It makes me feel proud that we can also make our own videos and it is wonderful to finally see somebody like you on the screen.

By 'we', Lungowe seems to be referring to black African people and considers white people and or black people outside of Africa, as 'other'. Identity is most clearly defined by difference, by polarization, and "by the markings of inclusion or exclusion – insiders and outsiders, 'us' and 'them'" (Woodward, 1997:2). This is why Lungowe describes the black African people as 'we' and the rest of the world as 'them'. Mrs Jamera and Lufaro had the same view as Lungowe.

> **Mrs Jamera**: The characters are very successful. They drive posh cars, their homes are beautifully furnished and the way they speak... they have good command of English even if their accents are funny [agreement and laughter from the group]
>
> Their talk of business, building of houses and education is very impressive. These movies show that black people are doing well for themselves and give me the drive to work hard and attain a certain status. I like to identify with them.
>
> **Lufaro**: I like Nigerian movies because most of the actors are black. The movies depict black people trying to make it in the world. Most of us black people can relate to that.

For these viewers, part of the appeal of the Nigerian movies is that viewers can now see positive roles for black people. These images of successful black people make these audiences proud because it is evidence that black people are now coming out from the "Dark Continent" and showing the world that they can make their own productions and live comfortable lives. At the same time, the movies give people hope and examples to live by. Some of the interviewees said they have been

encouraged to build houses because of what they see in Nigerian movies. They are also drawing on dress codes and home décor:

> **Mrs Jamera:** I also like the way the characters dress. I copy some of the styles myself, even the way they tie the headdress. The attires in Nigerian movies are African but if Zambians did any acting, they will dress like Americans.
>
> **Mrs Nsenje**: They also encourage us to build because their houses are beautiful. They say they cannot call a place their father's land if they have no house there. They really value that. They will go back to the village, build a house there so that they are part of that community, a nice proper house. I see the movies in this way addressing current issues in Zambia.

House ownership and issues surrounding building of houses are topical issues in Lusaka. The talk of building a house by the Nigerian characters and the showing of different house structures is very appealing for most Zambian viewers who are building or planning to build a house. On the other hand, the interviewees in the study said they did not like the portrayal of black people in limited or bad roles in the American movies. Jessie elaborates on this:

> **Jessie**: I am finding it hard to watch black people being ill-treated or being referred to with derogatory terms like 'nigger'. Movies like *Mississippi Burning* really hurt me because black people are ill-treated. Most American movies give black people janitor or criminal roles.

While Nigerian movies also show black people as criminals and /or poor, they have other black characters that are successful. In most movies there is a combination of people doing very well, with posh cars, opulent houses and a good command of English, while others are not doing so well.

Next, I sought to find out from the respondents if there were any positive black representations they liked in the American movies. A number of them said black representations, for example in comedies, did not relate to them because black Americans had a different culture from Africans:

> **Constance**: There are some positive black roles especially in comedies. I also like most movies that feature Queen Latifah because she is so proud of being black and tells off anyone who thinks otherwise. However, there are scenes I can't understand in the American movies. Some of their jokes, I cannot

understand even if it is black people acting because they have a different way of life from me.

Because most of the interviewees said they liked the Nigerian attires in the movies, I was interested to know what they felt about those characters that wore other clothing such as jeans and other casual wear in the movies:

> **Mrs Nsenje:** They wear such clothing only when they have a point to put across such as when the movies is about students at college or university but mostly they wear the indigenous Nigerian attires. I think they have even affected us somehow. We have come back to the chitenge [Kangas] and are coming out more with our culture also. Like them we have also become outspoken which helps to prevent stress, as one is able to speak their mind as the characters do in the movies.

As stated in Chapter Two, this study also set out to find out the social classes of the people who watch Nigerian movies in Lusaka. This is because cultural proximity theory argues that people with the strongest tendency to seek greater cultural proximity in television programmes and other cultural products are from among the less educated or popular class – the lower, middle, working class and poor (Straubhaar, 1991:51). These people seem to prefer nationally- or locally-produced material that are both closer to, and more reinforcing of, traditional identities and other elements. All the respondents from the study were from the middle- to lower-class. They all said they liked Nollywood except Ignitu who said she used to like them but later lost interest. Below is a repeat of an earlier excerpt from Lungowe followed by and exchange between Ignitu and Collins:

> **Lungowe**: I mostly grew up in a village and only moved to Lusaka much later so these movies remind me of some of the things that used to happen in the village. They remind me of my old days back in the village so I like to watch them.
>
> **Interviewer:** Ignitu, tell me why you stopped watching Nigerian movies.
>
> **Ignitu:** It is because the movies are all the same. When you have watched a couple of them then you have watched all of them. The quality of the movies is also poor as well as the acting itself. They concentrate on the same scene for a long time.
>
> **Collins**: But that is because they are just starting. You cannot compare them to American movies. Nigerian movies will also get to the stage at which American movies are one day.

Lungowe did mention that she could not understand most of what happens in American movies because of her background. This explains why she prefers Nigerian movies. Added to this, Nigerian movies reinforce much of her growing up experience.

Ignitu, on the other hand, who has mostly lived in high-income low-density residential areas, said she found the quality of the Nigerian movies unattractive and unprofessional and so she stopped watching them. As shown above, there was an exchange between her and Collins. Ignitu comes from a middle class background while Collins is from a working class background. He grew up in a rural setting and at the time of the interview had just started work and lived in a high density residential area.

In concluding this section therefore I contend that audiences I interviewed who come from a working class and a few from middle class background and have been exposed to Western cultural commodities for a long time, find movies that show black Africans as powerful and in control highly attractive. But people like Ignitu would rather watch those movies from America, which she argues, are better in terms of quality.

I must reiterate here that my sample was selected purposively, that is, the people selected already liked Nollywood. This was because I wanted to know the reason for the popularity of Nollywood in Zambia. Ignitu was selected to encourage debate in the group hence this research does not offer any comparison between preferences of upper class and popular classes. Neither does it generalise its findings as it was based on purposive qualitative sample as opposed to quantitative random sampling. However, these findings give the reason for the popularity of Nollywood among the people I interviewed, which may apply to other people in Zambia.

I now discuss the African culture aspect of Nigerian movies that the Lusaka audiences enjoy.

5.3 Affirming Africa's rich heritage

Nollywood movies have a cultural appeal that attracts many Zambians because they depict Africans as people with a rich cultural heritage. This heritage gives audiences a sense of dignity and pride.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Pool (1977) observed as early as 1971 that audiences would prefer references to their own culture and that they would rather watch national or regional productions as soon as they are available rather than American productions and programmes. This was the case for my study. Some of the respondents said they liked Nigerian movies because they showcase African culture.

> **Mrs Nsenje:** There are certain aspects of Nollywood movies I like to watch that show the African way of doing things, such as giving respect to elders.
>
> Zambians are now coming out and identifying with their culture because they have seen how proud Nigerians are with their culture. Someone will say I am Luvale [a tribal group in Zambia] or whatever. We can now talk about different tribal ceremonies in Zambia. Before it was only tourists who went to watch them but now, we do it too.
>
> **Muchimba:** There are interesting traditions, which we see but don't understand because of modernisation in Zambia. Our parents don't teach us certain things because they are modern parents. Nigerian movies become our teachers on African traditional issues so am able to understand.
>
> **Interviewer:** Could you elaborate on how Nollywood teaches you?
>
> **Muchimba**: This is especially the case with the movies shot in the village. They usually will show a family set up. How boys would go in the bush to hunt and then the elderly telling the boys the importance of being strong as men and protecting their homes. The girls on the other hand would go to the field with their mothers or stay at home to cook or clean. I have read storybooks and heard stories in this regard but it is more interesting to watch them.

Culture is the constant process of producing meanings of, and from, our social experience, and such meanings necessarily produce a social identity for the people involved (Fiske, 1989:1). Nigerian movies are popular because they combine modern and traditional ways of living. In one movie, *To Love is Forever*, for example, there are university lovers who get married in the city but because of an earlier abortion by the woman, the couple remains without a child. This brings about discontent among the man's relatives. The man's mother organises a woman for him in the village

where he goes to have a traditional wedding. From then on, the man goes to the village occasionally to see this woman and has three children with her.

This kind of movie is modern, especially when the couple is at the university. It is romantic and depicts university life in a city but when the couple is married, a traditional aspect is introduced in which a child is expected from the couple by their relatives. The organising of a second wife in the village is also traditional, as elders from the man's and the woman's families enter into marriage negotiations. The wedding itself is also traditional and the birth of each child is celebrated with the giving of money and welcoming them into the family.

I found that the interviewees in the 24-35-years age bracket like modern scenes although they do appreciate some traditional ones. Those in the 36-40-years age bracket enjoy traditional scenes, such as wedding ceremonies and the celebration of the birth of a child. From my observation, this could be because most of the older viewers in my study are married and have children of their own. Mrs Kaluba, Mrs Mwale, Mrs Tembo, Mrs Jamera, Mrs Nsenje and Mr Nsenje and Jessie are all similar in this regard.

These movies are relevant to Zambians because they are located in an African setup. They combine both traditional African way of living and modernity. Characters negotiate tensions between traditional life and modernity in ways in which Zambians in a similar postcolonial situation can empathise with (see Larkin, 1997:410). Next, I discuss how the interviewees learn lessons from Nollywood.

5.4 Learning lessons from Nollywood

Teaching using stories is an important aspect of African culture. It dates back to the 15th century when missionaries came to Africa and taught Africans using stories (Nwachukwu, 1994:201). Identifying the moral of the story is still present in African culture today. In a research conducted by Prinsloo (2002) on "Possibilities for Critical Literacy: an exploration of the schooled literacies in KwaZulu-Natal" in South Africa, she found that the black students were taught to identify the moral of the story. The aspect of having a moral of the story is evident in Nigerian movies as well. Most of them have both villains and victims in their stories and the victim always triumphs

over the villain in the end. Thus, by identifying the moral of the story, viewers are able to draw lessons from these movies. The viewers judge for themselves what is good or bad by watching Nigerian movies.

> **Mrs Tembo:** What I liked in one of them was that God punishes wickedness. In this movie called *Blood Sister*, there were two sisters. One was married while the other was not. The unmarried sister grabbed the marriage from her sister and because of this wickedness she started going insane. When she got pregnant and went to deliver at the hospital, there was nothing in the womb. It was like God was punishing her because of her bad deeds. So it teaches me that doing bad things to people is wrong.
>
> **Mr Nsenje**: The movies also give hope because at the end they will show you that justice has taken place. They don't leave you in suspense to make your own conclusion. They show you that being unfaithful for example does not pay. If something is done in a crooked manner, it will not be rewarded. So there are life lessons in these Nigerian movies because they reflect real issues. They are based on real things so they are constant reminders that it doesn't pay to be a star. You may suffer the consequences.
>
> **Mrs Jamera**: I have learned a lot about God in these movies. That is that God is the one who sees what people are doing. He rewards good but punishes bad. I therefore try to control myself when someone provokes me, as these movies are a constant reminder of what is right and wrong. If someone does me bad, I just leave that person.
>
> **Interviewer:** So you are able to apply what you see in these movies in your lives?
>
> **Mrs Jamera**: Yes! That I must not favour my children as a parent, but love them the same whether one is dull or intelligent.... Even when one does me wrong, I try not to avenge such a one because I leave it up to God.
>
> **Mrs Nsenje**: You learn a lot because as a wife for example, they will show me a movie of a good wife and in another, what a bad wife does so it is up to me to pick out what I can apply in my life.

Nigerian movies enable their viewers to look critically at their lives and to see how others live or do things when faced with different situations. In this way viewers learn and also gain pleasure. Doreen and other respondents elaborate further:

> **Doreen:** Whatever happens in the movie, you learn, you get to know. The movies help me realise that I am not the only one who certain things happen to. Okay I have been seeing things happening around me but once I see it in the movies I am able to open up because I'm not the only one. These things don't only happen to me or only in our house but even out there...people are

experiencing it and I can never make such a mistake once I see what is happening. I know whom I can trust.

Mrs Tembo: So many things happen in our homes. Last week, we were almost attacked by thieves. The people who helped us were our neighbours and not family or relatives. Those you live in the neighbourhood are your relatives as they usually depict in their movies.

Mrs Mwale: The movies also have a lot of lessons on children and how to handle them, whether they are one's biological children or not. With this HIV/AIDS among us, you find that you have a lot of orphans but you are conscious whether what you are doing to them is good are bad. You tell yourself, these things I watched in the movies may happen to me. Sometimes I admonish my friends by drawing examples from these movies.

Nigerians also value education a lot. They will do anything for their children to be educated. The mother will sell vitenges [kangas] at the market or do any sort of business just to send her child to school.

The plots in most Nigerian movies stress traditional values of acceptance of one's place in life and the idea that change comes as one reacts to events. In most stories, an enormous crime is committed but, nevertheless, justice is done. The necessity of following rules is also enforced because the storyline of the movies suggest that it is when values of honesty, faithfulness and admission of fault are not followed that various crises occur. So by watching Nollywood individuals draw lessons and are enabled to critically think about themselves and their situations. This is as Thompson explains "individuals draw on the material and symbolic resources available to them as well as those with whom they interact in their day-to-day lives, in order to make sense of the messages they receive and to find some way of relating to them" (1995: 172).

A few respondents said that despite the funny accents, Nigerians have a good command of English, which has enriched their own vocabulary. Thus the respondents in this study draw from Nollywood in different ways. For some it is the vocabulary while for others it is moral guidance. Other viewers of Nigerian movies use them to help them think critically about themselves and their lives. Next I discuss the entertainment aspect that people who watch Nigerian movies enjoy.

5.5 Entertainment and relaxation

Entertainment has a positive association. People usually treat it as something earned at the end of the day – a reward for hard work (Ang, 1985:21). For the viewers in this study, Nigerian movies entertain and help them to relax. The interviewees said they gained personal pleasures through, for example, the release of tension through laughter and the collective viewing experience.

The viewers said the movies provide issues to talk about with family and friends in a relaxed environment. The movies and their viewing spaces, mostly the living room, offer the viewers relaxation, a chance to laugh, as well as to discuss and learn something new.

> **Doreen:** We watch as a group, usually the three of us, I, Lufaro and Agnes and we pass comments while we watch. We laugh and sometimes predict the end. There will usually be characters we love, condemn or sympathise with. Sometimes I find myself crying as I watch.

Most Zambians find the way Nigerians speak the English language amusing and often mimic the way Nigerians speak. Interviewees also commented that the way Nigerians spoke English enabled them to understand what they were saying and therefore enabled them to relax because they did not need as much concentration in order to understand them, unlike American movies.

> **Lufaro:** Most Nigerian movies are very funny. Their accent is also very funny. The way they say mornie to refer to money or the way they swear and make shapes with their lips when they are cross… (Laughing) ha! It makes me laugh.
>
> **Lungowe:** It is easier to understand what Nigerians say unlike what Americans say. Americans talk very fast probably because it is their mother tongue. Sometimes they refer to things I have no idea about so I miss out on what they are saying but this is not the case with Nigerian movies.
>
> **Mr Nsenje:** The language in Nigerian movies is easier to understand. You see communication is about being heard so them being African, I am able to understand what they are saying (agreement by other focus group members). It is easy to understand and to follow. Plus you know, the way West Africans speak sounds funny so it amuses me to listen to them like 'God forbidho' or 'my brudha' (Laughter).

Apart from accessibility in terms of the way the English language is spoken, messages are easily communicated because of the narrative structure of Nigerian movies. They

usually have a fixed range of plots with clear moral contrasts that make the outlines of the movies familiar to their viewers. The character types also fall within a limited range of behaviour such as hero, the mother, the comedic friend and the evil boss, with many of the lesser roles (such as boss or mother) played by the same people movie after movie. These aid the fixed parameters of plot structure within which the spectacle unfolds. This is evident from the comments made by Collins and Jessie:

> **Collins**: I find the Nigerian movies easy to follow and I have also found that uneducated people like these movies even if they can't understand English. I think it is because they can still follow the actions and know what is going on. Many women in Choma where I come from watch these movies a lot and yet they are not educated.
>
> **Jessie**: As for me, I have been to school and now a secretary but I find the Nigerian movies easy to follow despite watching bits and pieces of a two-hour movie. I don't usually sit to watch as I may be cooking or doing something in the kitchen but these few parts that I watch am able to easily connect and know the whole story. I can't do that with American movies. Once you miss the beginning of an American movie that is the end. Nothing will make sense.

The other interesting aspect is that Nigerian movie fans have favourite actors that they look out for when selecting which Nigerian movie to watch.

> **Interviewer**: So how do you choose which movie to watch?
>
> **Mrs Nsenje**: When we pick a certain movie, we know it is good because of the actors. Genevieve Nnaji is very beautiful and really knows how to act. She can be stubborn sometimes but also very humble.
>
> **Mr Nsenje:** It is just like other people who go for American movies. When they see a movie by Nicholas Cage, they know it is a good movie. Good Nigerian actors include Genevieve Nnaji, Liz Benson, Nkem Owoh, Osita Iheme, Chinedu Ikedieze, De Don and De Capo.
>
> **Jessie:** I am also able to tell that a movie is decent and I can watch with my kids when I see the main actor. Certain actors are not involved in witchcraft movies. I hate those with witchcraft.

Genevieve Nnaji has a website http://www.genevievennaju.com. This site is visited by a lot of Nollywood fans who generally write to find out how the actor is doing. Nudity has been left out from Nollywood, as producers believe it is not African culture. Tunde Kaleni, a Nigerian movie producer argues:

> Pornography may be popular in America, but in our culture, it is the height of moral decadence. The Yoruba culture and tradition does not lend itself to exploiting sex and nudity for money. It would be unthinkable, as a Nigerian filmmaker, to consider this sort of permissiveness, especially in a culture that is strong on moral values (in Daniels, 2005).

Another producer, Zeb Ejiro, in the same interview with Daniels said that it was not possible to have nudity and pornography as in American movies as the African society was traditional and that the Censors Board in Nigeria would not even allow to shoe the top of a naked woman (Daniels, 2005).

Important to note is that although some men watch Nigerian movies, they are mostly viewed by women. This is because most of the movies are romantic family stories and are therefore quite emotional. For example in the interviews, I had four men compared to 12 women. Although one could argue that my contact people knew more women than men, I argue that it is because women watch the movies more and hence they are easily accessible.

> **Ernest**: I watch Nigerian movies but I think it is mostly women who watch them because a number of them are like soap operas and very emotional. I like to watch those with action and comedy especially those that feature Ukwa. Usually when this guy is in a movie, you are assured of a lot of laughter.

Ukwa is a comedian and has featured in many Nigerian productions. He can be compared to *Mr Bean* (Rowland Atkinson) in British and Hollywood productions.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed and interpreted the findings of my study. I have shown why Nigerian movies are popular in Zambia. I discussed that the pleasures viewers gained from Nigerian movies are multifarious and vary in intensity. As I discussed in this chapter, these range from the enjoyment of light, escapist entertainment, to moral guidance, to the enjoyment of the comments and discussions that it engenders and to the pleasure of identifying with successful, powerful black characters. These pleasures intersect with the Lusaka viewers lived realities in various ways and tend to have powerful links, I would argue, with their social positioning in Zambia.

The Nigerian movies also offer Zambians a way of imaginatively engaging with traditions similar to their own especially in this era of globalisation where so many cultures come through the media. The popularity of Nigerian movies rests in the balance between African tradition and Western modernity offering a mediating space for postcolonial Zambian viewers to reflect on and consider the nature of contemporary social change.

My research showed that most people who like Nigerian movies are from the popular classes-middle-working class background and that among the people I interviewed, more women like Nigerian movies compared to men.

I explained the findings of my study using the theories of realism, regional imperialism, cultural proximity and active audience. This study has argued that Third World countries are not just consuming media from the West but that they are active in selecting what to watch and what not to watch and that this includes media from non Western countries. The conclusion of my arguments is that Nigerian movies are popular among some audiences in Zambia because they are relevant and culturally proximate to them.

I challenge the argument by media imperialists that global media content that originates from the First World countries and spreads to Third World countries brings with it ways of thinking that is adopted by the people in Third World countries. The study explored the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia, which highlights the circulation of media within and between non Western countries, an aspect of trans-national cultural flows that has been ignored by the media imperialism thesis. Further this study has shown that audiences interpret media message and that they are not passive media consumers as argued by the media imperialism thesis. Thus this study has found the media imperialism thesis wanting.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6 Thesis summary

This study presented an investigation into the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia with a focus on Lusaka audiences. It investigated how meanings produced by the cultural industries of West Africa are appropriated in the day-to-day lives of Zambian viewers. The goals of the research were to find out (1) what pleasure Lusaka audiences in Zambia derive from Nigerian movies (2) how Lusaka audiences interact with, and make meaning out of these movies (3) how these movies relate with the lived contexts of the viewers and (4) how Lusaka audiences view American movies compared with the Nigerian movies.

In writing up the findings that arose from the above goals, the thesis was divided into six chapters. Below I provide a summary of my findings.

6.1 Summary of findings

I found that Nigerian movies are indeed popular in Zambia and this is because of multifarious reasons ranging from the enjoyment of light entertainment, to learning lessons, to the enjoyment of the comments and discussion that they engender to the pleasure of identifying with successful, black role models.

The Lusaka viewers I interviewed are drawn to Nigerian movies mainly because they can relate and identify with them. I contend that the watching of Nigerian movies among the interviewees in this study is a way of cementing their identities as black people. What makes the movies more enjoyable is that the viewers are able to bring their own interpretations to them related to their own lived realities.

The Nigerian movies offer Zambians a way of imaginatively engaging with forms of tradition similar to theirs, which at the same time offer modern ways of living. The popularity of Nigerian movies thus rests in the balance between African tradition and

Western modernity offering a mediating space for Zambian viewers to reflect on and consider the nature of contemporary social change.

This study thus challenges the argument by media imperialists that global media content from the First World countries spreads to Third World countries bringing with it ways of thinking that is adopted by the people in Third World countries. The study explored the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia, which highlighted the circulation of media within and between non Western countries, an aspect of trans-national cultural flows that has been ignored by the media imperialism thesis. Further this study has shown that audiences interpret media message and that they are not passive media consumers as argued by the media imperialism thesis. This study therefore finds the media imperialism thesis wanting.

I also argued, in my findings, that there is some form of Nigerian imperialism in Zambia as many Nigerian movies are dominating the homes of local viewers who in turn are adopting the forms of culture from Nigeria such as the dressing and the talking.

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APPENDIX 1
Focus Group Interview Guide

An investigation into the popularity of Nigerian movies in Zambia: A reception study of Lusaka Viewers.

1. Welcoming participants and introduction

Welcome everyone and thank you for making time to attend this interview. I am Diana Phiri, the moderator of the interview. I am a student at Rhodes University in South Africa. This research am doing is part of the academic requirement for the award of a masters degree in media studies.

1. Demographics of respondents

Please tell us your name and a little about yourself such as:

- What you do
- Your qualifications
- Where you live
- Age group
- Marital status
- How many children
- Contact number

2. Ethics and ground rules

I would like to talk to you about your experiences of watching Nigerian movies.

This discussion is confidential. When the discussion is over, please respect the privacy of your fellow group members. I will be taping this discussion today so I can easily refer to it later so feel free to say whatever is on your mind.

Before we begin I want to emphasize that you are the experts here today. There are no right or wrong answers, everyone's ideas are important. I want to hear what you think and feel about these movies. I'm not planning on doing most of the talking. I do want

to make sure that we cover a number of topics in a limited amount of time, so I'll try to keep things moving. There is no need to raise hands. Speak right up when an idea comes to your mind, but respect others when they are talking. Negative comments on the movies are useful as well.

This discussion may last up to about 60 minutes. Before we begin, are there any questions about how we will be conducting this discussion?

3. About watching Nigerian movies

We will watch a Nigerian movie, which some of you may have watched before called *My best friend* then we will carry on from there.

4.1. What did you think about the movie we just watched?

- What did you enjoy the most in the movie?
- What didn't you enjoy?
- What about the Nigerian movies generally, what do you think about them?
- Are there any meanings you derive from them? What are these meanings?
- What factors influence your choice of a Nigerian film or which genre do you like the most/ what types of movies do you like?
- What made you start watching these movies?
- How often do you watch these movies in a week for example?
- Do you discuss these movies with your peers, family, siblings or any other acquaintances in your social circles? If so what is it you discuss?
- What sort of influence do the discussions have on your attitude to these movies?

4.2. Cultural proximity. Are there any similarities or differences between the Nigerian traditional culture portrayed in these movies and yours?

- How does watching these Nigerian movies make you think about your own life? For example the problems presented in the movies, how do you relate to them?
- Do you see yourself or people you know in actors/characters in these movies? Does seeing them help you to understand them better?

- Is there anything these movies teach you? What is that?
- What about American movies?
- Does the watching of the Nigerian movies help you to understand or appreciate your traditional customs and culture better?

4.3 Regional imperialism

What can you say about you and your family viewing of Nigerian movies? Do you like it that there are so many of these movies in Zambia?

4.3. African identity and tradition modernity

- Does the watching of the Nigerian movies help you to form a national identity
- How do you feel about the way women are portrayed e.g. culture, dressing?
- What about men?
- Is there a shared African identity
- What can you say about religion in these movies?
- What can you say about witchcraft?
- Do you think you like these movies because the people you see look like you
- What can you say about American movies? Do you see American movies as other?
- Are there some things you don't like in the American movies?
- Are there some things you like?

4.4 How do you view American movies?

4.5 Combination of Western modernity and African tradition

- What would you say about how the Nigerian movies combine both African tradition and Western life style?

4. Summing up

What can you say in conclusion? Maybe something I should have asked you that I did not?

Thank you very much for helping me today. Remember to respect each other's privacy. If I have any additional questions or need clarification on any point that was made today, may I contact you? Would you like to receive a copy of the final report? If you would like more information about the study, or if you would like to discuss any of these issues further, please don't hesitate to contact me on 097 145082.