Cinematic Fact and the Film Services Industry: Production Contexts and Contexts of Production in Zimbabwe (1980-2016)

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DECLARATION

I, Oswelled Ureke, declare that:

This doctoral thesis is my original research undertaken at CCMS under the supervision of Prof. Ruth Teer Tomaselli. The thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

All the information contained in this thesis, including pictures and tables are my original work, and where this is an exception, the sources are duly acknowledged.

Student: Oswelled Ureke (213573242)

27 March 2017

Signature   Date

Supervisor: Prof. Ruth Teer Tomaselli

_____   _____

Signature   Date

DEDICATION

Dedicated to those trying to produce and understand film in Zimbabwe

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As with all endeavours on this earth, I thank God for the gift of life and a destiny that has taken me thus far. It all started with my late parents, Boas and Claris who nurtured me and instilled in me the desire to pursue knowledge, in whatever form, from whatever source.

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Cinematic Fact and the Film Services industry: Production Contexts and Contexts of
Production in Zimbabwe (1980-2016).

ABSTRACT

The thesis is an exploration of the film services industry in Zimbabwe. It attempts to explore the
nature of skills, infrastructure and organisational networks exploited in the production of film
and video in Zimbabwe. The study is situated within film services (Goldsmith and O'Regan,
2005; Goldsmith et al, 2010) and political economy frameworks which acknowledge and critique
the roles of multiple players and services in the film production value chain. The study proposes
and applies a holistic cinematic-fact analysis of the film industry's components rather than the
content or the filmic fact (Stam et al, 1992). Four purposively selected films, *King Solomon's
Mines, Everyone's Child, Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* are analysed to establish the composition
of film services employed in their production. The different socio-economic contexts in which
the films were created supposedly had an influence on the film services and ultimately, on the
aesthetic norms and themes of the narratives. The study is also informed by political and shadow
economy theories, attempting to link socio-economic and political circumstances to the content
of the films. Data for the study was collected using mainly the interview method as well as
collection of archival materials. Filmmakers purposively sampled for their roles in the four
productions were interviewed about their experiences on the film sets. Policy-makers with a
bearing on the functioning of the film industry were also selected, either purposively or through
snowball sampling, and interviewed to provide qualitative data about the nature of the film
services industry in Zimbabwe. Thematic analysis and hermeneutics of interpretation were used
to analyse the data. The study found out that film production in Zimbabwe, has transformed from
an era of being modelled as a formal enterprise with clear, specialised roles to one that is
constituted as a shadow economy (Lobato, 2012) which has no clear structures and does not
depend on specialised film services. The 'industry' now uses a 'guesswork' approach to making
film. This has had a net effect of creating a new genre of film whose building blocks are not
traditionally associated with the classical film medium. This genre, dubbed the drasofi (dramma,
soapie, film) is a genre of convenience borne out of the difficult circumstances that filmmakers
and other enterprises operate under in Zimbabwe. Though the typical film produced in this set-up
may be of poor aesthetic quality, it is one borne out of a truly indigenous and artistic endeavour;
a trashy but auterist narrative.

Cinematic Fact and the Film Services industry: Production Contexts and Contexts of Production in Zimbabwe (1980-2016).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cinematic Fact and the Film Services industry: Production Contexts and Contexts of Production in Zimbabwe (1980-2016).

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Aids	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ART	Anti Retroviral Therapy
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BEKE	Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment
BAZ	Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
BSA	Broadcasting Services Act
CAFU	Central African Film Unit
CBD	Central Business District
CBZ	Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe
CCMS	Centre for Communication Media and Society
CCOSA	Christian College of Southern Africa
CDN	Canadian
CFL	Central Film Laboratories
CFU	Colonial Film Unit
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency

Cinematic Fact and the Film Services industry: Production Contexts and Contexts of Production in Zimbabwe (1980-2016).

DFID	Department for International Development
Drasofi	Drama Soap opera Film
DSR	Development through Self Reliance
DV	Digital Video
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FESPACO	Festival panafricain du cinéma de Ouagadougou
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFIC	Ghana Film Industry Corporation
GNU	Government of National Unity
HIFA	Harare International Festival of the Arts
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
Hivos	Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation
IIFF	International Images Film Festival
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMPI	Information and Media Panel of Inquiry
ITDG	International Technology Development Group
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change

MDC-N	Movement for Democratic Change – Ncube
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai
MDT	Media for Development Trust
MFD	Media for Development
MFDI	Media for Development International
MGM	Metro Goldwyn Mayer
MIC	Media and Information Commission
MOI	Ministry of Information
MPAA	Motion Pictures Association of America
MSU	Midlands State University
NACZ	National Arts Council of Zimbabwe
NAFIB	National Film Board
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NFVF	National Film and Video Foundation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PSI	Population Services International
RF	Rhodesian Front
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SFP	Short Film Project

SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
STV	Straight to Video
SKG	Spielberg, Katzenberg, Geffen
TV	Television
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
UKZN	University of KwaZulu Natal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VMCZ	Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe
ZANU (PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
ZBCTV	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Television
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZFVA	Zimbabwe Film and Video Association
ZIFF	Zimbabwe International Film Festival

ZIFTESSA	Zimbabwe Film and Television School of Southern Africa
Zimpapers	Zimbabwe Newspapers
ZMC	Zimbabwe Media Commission
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police
ZTA	Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

We have a sacred responsibility to make quality films; otherwise it's better not to represent Africa at all (Souleyman Cisse, 2015).

…the character and circumstance of location production has changed with the emergence of an identifiable "location interest" in which locally situated companies, agencies, and infrastructure providers promote a place as a filmmaking venue. Location production now means extensive or complete packages of facilities, services and natural and built environments rather than simply being the obverse of studio-based production (Ben Goldsmith and Tom O'Regan, 2005:6).

…there is little to be gained from the wholesale condemnation of informality, as the informal sector is a means of survival for many millions of people excluded from wage labour through no fault of their own (Ramon Lobato, 2012:42).

How it all began

My memory is as hazy as that misty morning in 2012 when I was traveling with my boss at Video Promotions, William Memper. We were headed for the Eastern city of Mutare about 300km from Harare, to film over the next few days, in order to produce a corporate documentary for one of the major Zimbabwean companies. This was going to be one of my last outings on this company's business, having tendered my resignation to take up a lecturing post at Midlands State University in Gweru. It was an uneasy ride; just the two of us, trying to avoid the subject of my pending departure after at least seven years working with Willy.

The government had just adopted a multi-currency system to stabilise an economy ravaged by years of unparalleled inflation driven by a lengthy political and economic crisis. With the enthusiasm of a dollarised economy, we had received a few inquiries from people who wanted to make feature films, employing us as the technical crew. Willy was always wary of these people, often asking "do you know how much you need to produce a film?" A few of us at the company felt we could make a movie if we were offered the opportunity, but Willy, with his decades of experience would insist: "show me the money!"

A recent experience had made him ultra-cautious. We were the production team behind the *A Academy*, a talent search show modeled around *American Idols*, in which enthusiastic youths

exhibited their singing talent, jostling for the few available prizes that included recording contracts for the best three performers. The show, created by the equally enthusiastic and optimistic Gary Thompson, took us around the country's major cities in search for talent. In the most recent addition of the show, the economy was at its worst. An upbeat Thompson, managed to secure a few barter deals for accomodation and transport in return for advertising time on the show. The main funds for the production, he secured from the Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe (CBZ). Thompson received quadrillions upon quadrillions of the worthless Zimbabwean currency in his bank account and immediately paid service providers, including us, upfront. I remember receiving an allowance that was in the billions or trillions but I never managed to withdraw a single cent of it due to the stringent banking restrictions and the incessant devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar by the hour. We did not realise any profit from the entire show and Willy once remarked that we were "tithing" for our continued existence in the production industry. Tawanda Takawira, the guy who did the sound production for *A Academy* was luckier. He managed to buy penlight batteries for his microphone with his entire earnings. These events intrigued me, prompting me to write an article about the state of the industry, which I submitted to *AV Specialist*, based in South Africa.

As Willy and I drove to Mutare that morning, we started discussing these events again. He gave me an earnest assessment of how difficult it was to run a TV/video production company in Zimbabwe during that time. This talk was worthy of our impending parting. Immediately, I decided that I would, whenever the chance arose, undertake a study of the film production 'industry' in Zimbabwe, to systematically trace what was "wrong with it". The rest is history.

About the study

This study is a film services analysis of the cinematic fact in Zimbabwe. Film services is fairly recent terminology used to describe the components of film industries, vis-à-vis, the skills, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs exploited in the production of film/video. The study is situated within a film services framework (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005; Goldsmith et al, 2010), which acknowledges the roles of multiple players and services in the film production value chain. Cinematic fact is a term used to describe the totality of the film industry, which includes the pre-filmic aspects (Stam et al, 1992). It entails all those activities that occur within the film sector, from pre-production up to cinematic consumption, but is in this case delimited to the production context. The study, therefore, is a hermeneutic

engagement with the production context (value chain) and the context of production (political economy) in which that value chain is situated. It is thus an analysis of the film industry's components as well as a complementary critique of the content or the filmic fact (Stam et al, 1992). Four purposivley selected films, *King Solomon's Mines* (Thompson, 1985), *Everyone's Child* (Dangarembga, 1996)*, Tanyaradzwa* (Gunda Mupengo, 2005) and *Sinners?* (Tawengwa, 2013) are analysed to explore the nature of film services employed in their creation. A key assumption informing this endeavour, is that the different socio-economic contexts in which the films are created has an influence on the film services and ultimately, on the aesthetic norms and themes of the narratives. The study is partly informed by political economy theory, to link socio-economic and political circumstances to the content of films. Pursuant to this political economy endeavour, the shadow economy theory is employed to examine the informal aspects of filmmaking in Zimbabwe, which have become a latter day phenomenon.

The study is located within the qualitative interpretive paradigm and designed as a multiple case study. Data collection is influenced by this outlook and chiefly relies on in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in Zimbabwe's film production industry, including producers, directors and policy-makers. Archival records are also consulted, where available. These include photographs, production notes and newspaper articles related to the study.

The study's objectives are:

1. to establish the nature of Zimbabwe's film services industry.

2. to explore the link between film services and the production stage of the film value chain.

3. to explain the relationship between film services and thematic issues in varying contexts.

The study can be regarded as an assessment of the economic and ideological aspects influencing the structure of the sector responsible for film production in Zimbabwe. For clarity, the film services constitute the film industry. A discussion of film services, therefore, is simultaneously a discussion of the film industry. The thesis may be an important departure from content-based studies to an examination of how the film industry in Zimbabwe works. It is hoped that the findings generated may be important for policy decisions as well as for filmmakers pursuing individual projects.

Film or video?

While *King Solomon's Mines* and *Everyone's Child* are 'real' films, originally developed and processed for the film medium, *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* are video films. Their content is filmic but it is recorded and processed (and probably distributed and exhibited) using video technology. The term film is often used in the classical sense to define the content and the medium that carries moving images packaged into creative and meaningful narratives. Video refers to the cheaper modern technology of recording moving images. Unlike film, video is not recorded on film reel but on cheap digital media. The basic principles in the construction of video and film narratives are the same, only the technology is different (Barbash and Taylor 1997). The distinction between video and film is of little significance in this study, thus it is common to use the term film in reference to either or both, although there are anecdotal attempts to distinguish between the two in some sections of the thesis. Even participants interviewed in the study used the word 'film' indiscriminately. In other words, the word 'film' is used synthetically or descriptively rather than analytically. As such, the thesis is not a pure film studies endeavour but media studies involving films, albeit with few disciplinary boarders. This choice is obviously influenced by the author's training and professional work in media studies and production. To disentangle the study from the limitations around film normenclature, sometimes the term 'cinematic fact' is employed, as it offers a "multi-dimensional socio-cultural complex which includes the pre-filmic" (Stam et al, 1992:35).

Focus and structure of the study

The study is delimited to the production context, which excludes distribution and exhbition. It interrogaties the political economy of the services that went into the production of the four films. This entails examining the socio-economic and political contexts in which these films were made, assessing how these have had an effect (if at all) on film content, hence *contexts of production*. The research follows the work of Ben Goldsmith and Tom O'Regan (2005) on Australian cinematic fact as well as Keyan Tomaselli and Nyasha Mboti's various writings on the South African film industry.

The research questions to be answered in this study are:
1. What are the key skills, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs exploited in the production of film/video in Zimbabwe?

2. How has the availability or non-availability of 'film services' affected the production of the films *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), *Everyone's Child* (1996), *Tanyaradzwa* (2005) and *Sinners?* (2013)?

3. What are the major thematic issues in the films and how do they relate to the socio-economic-political contexts during which the films were produced?

Chapter One contextualises film production in Zimbabwe against the background of historical epochs on the economic and political front. The chapter discusses the rational of the study based on the research objectives and questions. It also provides brief synopses of the films used as case studies and provides some justification for selecting them.

Chapter Two reviews literature related to the structures and functions of film industries in the world, Africa and Zimbabwe. To start, global and continental literature is reviewed to establish a comparative basis for the assessment of the local industry. This is necessary to trace the origins of filmmaking and to contextualise developments in film industries of developing nations like Zimbabwe. The chapter reviews literature on Zimbabwean film and also attempts to problematise the universally used phrase 'African cinema' by discussing contestations surrounding a film industry in Africa and Zimbabwe.

The major concern informing the review is that most scholars are interested in studying film content at the expense of the industries that manufacture and disseminate that content. As the emerging strand of scholarship proposes, discussions on film industries should not be limited to the products of the industries but must extend to the processes and activities leading to production. It is this gap that the research attempts to address.

The film services approach is a fairly recent concept, and is concerned with the skills, infrastructure and organisational networks supporting a film industry (Goldsmith and O'Regan 2005). The rationale behind a film services approach to studying film in this thesis is more than merely prescriptive. The endeavour is not to prescribe how films should be made in Zimbabwe, but also to consider why films have historically been produced in the manner they are – hence a political economy approach. A value chain analysis is the entry point of this discussion in **Chapter Three** as it helps distinguish the production stage from other

stages of the film value chain or system. The task of the chapter is to critique Western theory based on practical realities in Zimbabwe.

The definition of 'Zimbabweanness' is problematic in the quest to theorise Zimbabwean cinematic fact. There exists a dialectical relationship between the individuality of film projects and their bounding to a specific political economy. Although film texts are unique unto themselves, they also belong to a historiography of cultural practices, discourses, ideology and administrative regimes deployed within a geographical space and economic system identified as a nation. This is problematised in the chapter as well. The chapter, therefore, discusses the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter Four describes the research methods employed in sampling, collecting and analysing data. Specifically, it discusses the research paradigm, design, sampling procedures, data collection and analysis, as well as ethical and self-reflexivity issues. The methods of data gathering are chiefly qualitative and include interviews with key players in the Zimbabwe's film services industry. The chapter also provides justification for the selection of participants interviewed.

Chapter Five is one of two chapters that present and discuss the findings of the research. The chapter begins by outlining the cinematic fact in terms of key skills employed in producing the four films. The findings reported in this chapter are highly specific to the four films. It is shown in this chapter, how early film production employed formal structures and film services in production, compared to the more recent video films, *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* whose production context is distinctly informal and thus belongs to a shadow economy. This shadow economy comprises freelance camera operators/editors, first time directors/producers, backyard 'studio' owners, and a plethora of other 'jack-of-all-trades' middlemen and personnel who will offer required services or conveniently link demand and supply. A key finding in this chapter is that the informal nature of film services employed in production has given birth to a new genre dubbed *drasofi* (drama, soap opera and film), which is a genre of convenience responding to the context of production.

Chapter Six takes a broader outlook on the nature of film services in Zimbabwe, based on empirical evidence from the four films, as well as on findings from conversations with policy-makers in the industry. It reiterates the informal nature of the contemporary film services industry and attempts to determine whether, on that evidence, Zimbabwe can be said to have

a film industry. Issues such as inadequate training, lack of policy cohesion, poor technological nfrastructure, departure from the location interest and lack of government support emerge in this chapter as some of the "crew behind the sins" or the key cinematic facts affecting film production in Zimbabwe.

Chapter Seven is the conclusion of the study. It summarises the research and discusses key conclusions and recommendations. Potential areas of further study are also identified in the chapter. The chapter also suggests a new theory of shadow film services, which combines aspects of film services and shadow economy theories.

The **Conclusion** chapter concludes the study. It sumarises the entire study and highlights the key findings. A theory of shadow film services is also proposed in the chapter, amalgamating the key principles of film services and shadow economy theory.

Conclusion

This chapter discusses the origins of the study and how the thesis is structured. In this chapter, the motivation for the study is outlined. A more detailed context is given in Chapter One to lay the basis for finding out the nature of the film services industry in Zimbabwe. The other six chapters flow as explained above.

CHAPTER ONE:

Contextualising Film In Zimbabwe

This thesis explores the film services or the skills, infrastructure and intermediate services exploited in the production of films in Zimbabwe. The study is delimited to the production value chain/system[1], or activities that contribute towards production of film and video in Zimbabwe, hence the *production context*. These activities include, but are not limited to creative inputs, technical expertise, financing and policy frameworks which enable the film industry[2] to function at maximum efficiency. The study therefore examines the films' value system – "a connected series of activities that combine to create and deliver" (Bloore, n.d:1) in Zimbabwe (see Fig. 1.1 below for an illustration of the value chain). This is achieved by establishing and interrogating the political economy of the services that went into the production of four purposively sampled films/videos. This endeavour entails examining the socio-economic and political contexts in which these films/videos were produced, assessing how (if at all) these have had an effect generally on film content, hence *contexts of production*. The research is therefore a two pronged enterprise that encompasses both the economy and ideology of film and video production in Zimbabwe. It is situated in relation to the work of theorists and scholars studying film industries from a film services approach. These include Ben Goldsmith and Tom O'Regan (2005) as well as Keyan Tomaselli (2013) and Nyasha Mboti's (2011) writings on the South African film industry.

As discussed in the introduction to the study, this research arose out of my work in Zimbabwe, as a producer for a video production company. Part of my time there coincided with the peaking of Zimbabwe's economic crisis, which can be traced back to the late 1990s. I took a keen interest in the organisational arrangements that different film/television organisations put in place to survive this crisis. At the outset, I intended to investigate the

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[1] Bloore (n.d:1) distinguishes a value chain (activities within a single company) and a value system (activities by a series of different business), although the term value chain has often be used in reference to either (see my detailed discussion in Chapter 3).

[2] The term industry is used loosely in reference to the sector that produces films and other cinematic products in Zimbabwe, though various observers have argued that there is no film industry in Zimbabwe (Culture Fund 2009).
film industry in Zimbabwe.

factors *affecting* (in the negative sense) the film industry, but I later realised that from a neutral analysis, and given the increasing numbers of film productions in the country, one could argue that the industry was actually 'growing.' To begin from a somewhat neutral position, therefore, I decided to consider the status of the film industry, starting from when the country gained independence in 1980, up to 2016, when I concluded data collection for the study. The study is justified by the realisation that most studies on Zimbabwean film, (Hungwe, 1991, 2005; Mahoso, 2001, Vambe et al, 2007; Rwafa, 2008) concentrate on the filmic or representational aspects at the expense of the constitution of the film industries that produce such content. This argument is discussed in detail under literature review. The use of the term 'film industry' is the author's choice, conscious that what is often labelled a film industry in Zimbabwe is not an industry in the classical sense, and does not entirely produce classical film products.

The main research question to be answered in this study is: *What are the key skills, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs exploited in the production of film/video in Zimbabwe?* The production context in this thesis stretches from pre-production up to post-production as illustrated in the table below. The study therefore does not extend to the distribution and exhibition contexts. Fig. 1.1 below illustrates a rudimentary value chain, emphasising the production context. It shows the various activities that constitute production, categorised under pre-production, production and post-production. The activities in this entire context are channeled towards the creation of a filmic fact product. Such activities include budgeting, script development, casting, principal videography, editing, laboratory work (in the case of classical film), audio-visual effects and the recording and packaging of the finished film, be it on reel, video casette, digital disc or other contemporary means such as digital hard drives.

This chapter covers the background of filmmaking in Zimbabwe over four decades since the country attained political independence from colonial rule in 1980. The chapter also outlines the significance and scope of the study in addition to discussing the methodological justification for selecting four particular films employed as case studies. Synopses of the four films are also presented in the chapter.

Production			Distribution	Exhibition

Pre-Production	Production	Post- production
-Script development -budget preparation -Location casting -Hiring of creative personnel -Talent and location casting	-Production design (art, sets, make-up, costumes, props -Principal videography (camera, lighting) -Music and sound recording	-Editing -Laboratory work -Visual and sound effects -Sub-titles -Dubbing -Copying -Recording in various formats

Fig. 1.1 An illustration of the production value chain or production context. (Adapted from Piva et al, 2011:21).

Film in Zimbabwe: Political, Economic and historical contexts

Filmmaking in Zimbabwe has gone through cyclical developments since independence (Mboti, 2015). These cycles can be likened to Juglar cycles or Kuznets[3] swings, which are generalisations of irregular patterns in economic behaviour (Abramovitz, 1961). Developments in Zimbabwean film have followed somewhat systematic and periodic, but irregular patterns which mirror those in the country's political and economic history. Patrick Bond (1998) has meticulously traced the country's political economy since 1890 in his book *Uneven Zimbabwe: A study of Finance, Development and Underdevelopment.* Other scholars have alluded to similar or comparable periodisations in their respective assessments of the media in Zimbabwe (Zaffiro, 2002; Mukasa, 2003; Chuma, 2005). Political scientist-cum-politician Jonathan Moyo has likewise identified cycles in Zimbabwe's politics, which he

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[3] Clement Juglar defines business cycles of seven to 11 years while Simon Kuznets' cycles range between 15 and 25 years.

says run for about 15 years "give or take three years" (Dube, 2014). These epochs share peculiar economic and political characteristics. It is pertinent, however, to note that Zimbabwe has been ruled by one political party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF)[4], since independence and a hypothesis that does not acknowledge the influence of this reality, may not be adequate, or is, at best, merely speculative. It is possible that the political and economic cycles mentioned above could vary under the governance of different political parties.

This thesis attempts as much as possible to extend a historical and periodic analysis similar to the foregoing, though in the context of film history in Zimbabwe. Granted, it is not adequate to trace Zimbabwe's political economy since 1980 by lumping events into neat periods. Events in these decades are not distinctly stratified according to time. They are at times intertwined, if not cumulative. For instance, one cannot understand the crisis of the 2000s without acknowledging the effects of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), which had come earlier. This periodised approach, however, is a possible starting point in the quest to systematically understand the development of the film sector in Zimbabwe. The period stretching from 1980 up to around 1990 is regarded as a transitional era from colonial rule to self-governance (Mukasa, 2003; Chuma, 2005; Moyo, 2014). The period had profound implications particularly to the broadcasting sector (Zaffiro, 2002). Soon after independence, issues of nation-building, development, decolonisation and reconciliation preoccupied the new government in Zimbabwe (Chuma, 2005). Following a period of political disturbances and military intervention in the southern parts of the country, there emerged a desire within ZANU-PF to establish a one party state, a wish that was partly successful with the integration of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) into ZANU-PF (CCJPZ and LRF, 1999; Kriger, 2003; Bratton & Masunungure, 2008). Economically, the time was one of "socialist experimentation with economic development" (Chikuhwa, 2004:263). Mukasa (2003) further argues that political, social and economic

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[4] ZANU-PF shared power with MDC-T and MDC-N between 2009 and 2013 in a government of national unity (GNU), following disputed elections in 2008. ZANU-PF, however, continued to wield more power in this GNU as it held key ministerial posts while its leader, Robert Mugabe continued as president of the nation. Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and Arthur Mutambara (MDC-N) were installed as Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister respectively, although their roles were largely ceremonial. An almost similar union in 1987, saw ZANU 'swallowing' ZAPU, to emerge as ZANU-PF, with former members of ZAPU being assured of certain senior positions in the new dispensation, though they were largely junior partners.

conditions of the time affected the operations of the media. He observes that "the press exhibited editorial policies and practices that reflected the ideological and socio-political environment in the country" (Mukasa 2003:171). Similarly, the development of Zimbabwe's film sector in the post-colonial era can be understood in light of the historical epochs described above, or some pattern closely resembling the same. In line with that approach, one can trace a political and economic history in Zimbabwe's filmmaking, and define intertwined epochs of roughly 10 years each, that have had a bearing on filmmaking in the country. These periods may not be seamless or well-defined, but they appear to have followed a trend lasting about 10 years each.

Zimbabwe inherited a film industry formerly used by the colonial government for propaganda and didactic purposes (Riber, 2001; Burns, 2003; Lazar, 2003; Hungwe, 2005; Thompson, 2013). It can be noted that, production of film was largely informed by the uses towards which it was meant. Film was mainly used as a means of extending Western ideology and entrenching colonial rule in Southern Rhodesia (Hungwe, 1991; Fredrikse, 1982; Burns, 2003; Rwafa, 2012). This philosophy was epitomised by, first the formation of the Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment (BEKE) in 1935, followed by the Colonial Film Unit (CFU) then the Central African Film Unit (CAFU). The cinematic experiment was exactly as its name suggested – an experiment with usage of film "to educate adult Africans to understand and adapt to new conditions" (Diawara, 1987). The Colonial Film Unit, formed in 1939, was mandated with the creation of films that explained Britain's role in the First World War in order to enlist support of British colonial subjects. CAFU, created in 1948, among other things produced instructional films for African 'natives' in the Federation of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) (Hungwe, 1991, 2005). CAFU's films were 'development' oriented, covering issues such as agriculture, health and safety among others (Hungwe, 1991; Burns, 2003; Hungwe, 2005). In pursuit of their developmental orientation, the films were funded under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act (1940). There was evidence of success of these developmental narratives but it was short-lived as the films ignored the stark political injustices prevailing in the country at the time, resulting in "recalcitrant audiences" whose reception of the cinema "perplexed and frustrated colonial observers" (Burns, 2003:131). This was compounded by the colonial government's efforts to censor media critical to the colonial cause (Fredrikse, 1982; Windrich, 1981). An example was Michael Raeburn's documentary, *Rhodesia Countdown*

(1969) which was banned for its mockery of white attitudes against Africans (Hungwe, 2005). Similar accounts of the use of film during colonial times occur elsewhere on the continent, for instance in Nigeria (Okome, 1996) and South Africa (Masilela, 1991; Tomaselli 2001; Maingard, 2007; Bisschoff, 2009) and most of Anglophone Africa (Diawara, 1987; Haynes, 2011).

At independence, the new Zimbabwean government sought to use cinema primarily as a means to market the country, pursuant to the transitional process mentioned above. This endeavour encompassed the invitation of foreign filmmakers to use the country as a production location (Riber, 2001; Hungwe, 2005; Thompson, 2013). The ministry of information even published a concept paper, *Why you should film in Zimbabwe* which marketed the country's hospitable people, infrastructure and climate to international filmmakers (Thompson, 2013). International film concerns responded favourably to this call, among them American company Cannon Group which produced *King Solomon's Mines* (Lee Thompson, 1985) featuring Hollywood stars Richard Chamberlain and Sharon Stone. Following up on the movie's success, a sequel *Allan Quartermain and the Lost City of Gold* (Nelson, 1987) was made. Many more international films were produced during the same decade, including *Cry Freedom* (Richard Attenborough, 1987) featuring Hollywood star Denzel Washington as South Africa's anti-apartheid hero Steve Biko. Although the government did not realise significant benefits from this exercise, it laid an important base for the development of the film industry that led Frank Ukadike (1994) to describe Zimbabwe as 'Africa's Hollywood' on the basis of its well- developed film laboratories. The period offers an important case study in contextualising the film services framework, which acknowledge the importance of a location interest in attracting international film production to a particular area (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005).

The period after 1990 to 2000 is one characterised by the continent-wide adoption of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank-sponsored Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). Among other things, these programmes saw government reducing its expenditure on social services while generally liberalising the economy (Chikuhwa, 2004). Zimbabwe's Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), which began in 1991, left a trail of hardship in its wake. Among other issues, there were massive job cuts and reduction in social service provision, which combined to make life unbearable for the average citizen and in turn escalated political tensions between the state and the dominant labour movement, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) (see Raftopoulos, 2001; Ndlovu-Gatsheni,

2003; Raftopoulos and Phimister, 2004) which ultimately culminated in the formation of a vibrant opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Tensions also began simmering as civilians, led by veterans of the liberation struggle, began agitating for equitable land distribution, which at the time was heavily skewed in favour of the minority white population (see Chikuhwa, 2004). The political and economic challenges were compounded by the emergence and worsening of the HIV/Aids pandemic, which claimed millions of lives. Among other things, SAPs discouraged public expenditure and favoured privatisation and liberalisation of markets. Sectors that had hitherto enjoyed boundless government support, including film, were negatively affected by this move continent wide (Cham 1998). In Zimbabwe, government's withdrawal from funding film was also necessitated by its disillusionment following the flop of *Cry Freedom* into whose production it had invested US$5 million (Hungwe, 2005; Thompson, 2013).

The conditions described above necessitated the entry of international aid agencies, either to provide social services or to mitigate the worsening HIV/Aids pandemic. Filmmakers also began to see value in co-productions and this resulted in some filmmakers from West Africa, such as Idrissa Ouedraogo from Burkina Faso (*Kini and Adams*, 1997) and Jean Pierre-Bekolo from Cameroon (*Aristotle's Plot*, 1995) coming to make their films in Zimbabwe (Cham, 1998). The international aid agents that 'took over' the film industry ushered in a development support framework in which they funded the production of films that served particular didactic purposes. The agencies responded to a dire need through development-oriented messages packed with social themes, although largely employing local actors and production crews (Mahoso, 2000; Lazar 2003; Hungwe, 2005; Mhiripiri, 2010; Fisher, 2010; Thompson, 2013). Although these films were way ahead of their time in health communication, critics often point out that they perpetuated the patronising philosophy of colonial texts – that of 'educating' black Africans. This was considered, not only as condescending, but also bringing a foreign 'gaze' on African life (Mahoso, 2000; Lazar, 2003).

Between 2000 and 2008, Zimbabwe endured unparalleled economic and political hardships whose causes are universally contested (Freeman, 2005). The cliché 'Zimbabwean crisis' has been coined for this period (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003; Raftopoulos and Phimister, 2004; Chikuhwa, 2004; Chuma, 2005). It was a crisis of monumental proportions underlined by political, economic, social, humanitarian and ideological challenges (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003).

Chikuhwa (2004) considers it a 'crisis of governance' while Freeman (2005) conjures binary approaches in defining the crisis: one supportive of the Zimbabwean government's actions and another against it. It is from ESAP, however, that most scholars (see Raftopoulos and Phimister 2004; Chikuhwa, 2004) trace the heightening of civil strife and economic hardships. Due to the same hardships, the country's labour force and civic society grew increasingly restive and agitated, culminating in the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) in 1998 and, ultimately, the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999, to confront the state politically (Raftopoulos & Phimister 2004). These ESAP-induced hardships worsened and peaked by 2008 with the highest inflation rate in the world. Unemployment fell to its lowest levels while social services were virtually paralysed. As the decade ended, narratives of indigenisation and economic empowerment began to emerge, foregrounded by ZANU-PF's politicised and controversial land reform programme (Chikuhwa 2004:263). At the turn of the decade, the land-reform-styled appropriation was extended to White-owned corporate entities, including mines and manufacturing industries. On the media front, laws such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002 and the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) of 2001 made media ownership exclusive to 'Zimbabwean citizens' an identity conveniently reserved for black people (see Thompson, 2013).

The post-2000 period was a difficult time to venture into film as cinema-going took a dip due to the prevailing economic circumstances and the worsening of 'piracy' of cultural products. As a result, the era was marked by an increasing adoption of digital means of production with most films being recorded on digital video (DV) and packaged for either television, home use via digital versatile disc (DVD) or for exhibition at film festivals. Most companies that owned production facilities were concentrating more on advertising and commercial productions at the expense of film (Riber, 2001). By then, the informal distribution of video film was already thriving in Nigeria and Ghana (Okome, 1996; Ebewo, 2007; Lobato, 2012; Geiger, 2012).

Politically, the post-2010 era is one associated with the dissolution of a government of national unity (GNU) that had combined ZANU (PF), the Movement for Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and another formation of the MDC led by Welshman Ncube (MDC-N). The GNU had ushered in some stability in Zimbabwe's social and economic spheres since its inception in 2009. Among other things, the GNU introduced multiple currencies and therefore arrested the hyperinflation that had become synonymous with the time just before 2008. The coalition was dissolved in 2013 when ZANU-PF won

controversial elections to regain the mandate to singly govern the country. At the time of writing, some observers noted a slowdown in economic activity as a reason to suggest that the country could head back to another 'crisis' (see for example Biti, 2014; Muronzi, 2014).

There were indicators that the film sector could be on the rise again as evidenced by the popularity of the short film genre (Mhiripiri, 2010; Thompson 2013) and other hitherto unexplored factors, including the proliferation of individuals and small enterprises specialising in video production, schools offering formal training in film and video production and the mushrooming of informal distributors selling Zimbabwean video films on the streets. A baseline survey by the Culture Fund (2009) showed that despite facing serious challenges, Zimbabwe remained a favourable location for filmmaking because of its benign climatic conditions, high literacy rate, low crime rate and low cost of labour, among other factors. The government had also resumed its interest in the sector as indicated by recent comments in the public media[5]. In spite of these rudimentary observations, very little is known academically about the nature and scope of Zimbabwe's film industry post-2010. A personal observation worth examining is that films made in this era seem to be crafted along the informal production systems characterising other video film industries such as Ghana and Nigeria, whose activities Lobato (2012) describes as a 'shadow economy'. Furthermore Mbye Cham's (1998:49) assertion that "The muffled allusions to romance, sexuality, and desire characteristic of quite a sizable segment of earlier African cinema have become more pronounced and developed in a few of the recent productions, to the point of even constituting the narrative vehicle of some" needs to be examined in the Zimbabwean context. According to Cham, some of these themes include interpersonal relations and romance and an African-American hip-hop culture (ibid). The film *Sinners?* (2013) can fit into this category, along with others such as *The Gentleman* (Njagu, 2011) and *Think* (Tsuro 2011).

Against the background discussed above, this thesis attempts to explore the nature of film services employed in the making of movies during these periods. This knowledge might help understand in general how the Zimbabwean film industry is organised in terms of the various skills, networks and infrastructure available for filmmaking. It may contribute knowledge on how films are made in Zimbabwe and the various organisational arrangements that are/are not in place to enable the production of film in the country. The thesis connects pre-existing

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[5] For instance 'Prof. Moyo urges filmmakers to tell the African story' in *The Sunday Mail,* 27 October 2013

historical knowledge on the production and content of film in Zimbabwe with emergent film services theory to holistically trace the development of the sector over time. The thesis, in a way intersects the economy and ideology of the cinematic fact in Zimbabwe.

Research Objectives

Broadly, this research assesses the viability of Zimbabwe's film production sector over time. This viability is qualitatively assessed using a Film Services approach by determining the inputs or services that went into the production of selected films made in the country and the resultant capabilities of the film services industry as a whole. The film services, in other words, constitute *the* film industry. From a film services approach, stakeholders need to shift their focus from funding individual film projects to enabling the intermediary services that make the whole industry function well (Goldsmith & O'Regan 2005).

The objectives of the study are:

- To establish the nature of Zimbabwe's film services industry
- To explore the link between film services and the production stage of the film value chain
- To explain the relationship between film services and thematic issues in varying contexts

The objective *to establish the nature of Zimbabwe's film services industry* tackles the contested subject of whether there is a 'film (services) industry' in Zimbabwe. This assessment locates and maps the services that went into the production of selected films produced in Zimbabwe. The assumption is that these services are not uniform in different contexts of production, but tracing them within cinematic fact contexts might help understand their nature.

The second objective *to explore the link between film services and the production stage of the film value chain* stems from the assumption that Zimbabwe has a film services industry, although its functionality is not known. By examining the production value chain of the four motion pictures proposed, the thesis might ascertain what services go into the production of Zimbabwean films. Further, and linked to the first objective, the study investigates how enabling these services have generally been to filmmaking in Zimbabwe.

The third objective of this thesis is: *to explain the relationship between film services and thematic issues in varying contexts*. This is enabled by a thematic analysis, from an interpretive-constructivist paradigm, of four purposively sampled films (*King Solomon's Mines, Everyone's Child, Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?*) from different eras in Zimbabwean cinematic history. The assumption is that there is a relationship between the context in which a film is produced and the same film's content (see Powdermaker, 1950). Studies that focus on texts only, often sideline the contexts in which the texts are produced (Tomaselli, 1996).

Research Questions

In affluent economies, there are well established film services industries, supplying specific, traceable resources towards film production, and earning measurable returns. Examples can be cited from the United States of America (USA) and South Africa (see Tomaselli, 2013). Yet, in other cases, for example Nigeria, an informal industry is thriving just as much as formal film sectors (Lobato, 2012; Rorvick, 2012). Pertaining to Zimbabwe, some observers have said that "there is no industry to talk about" (Culture Fund, 2009:48). The major questions guiding this study, therefore, are:

1. What are the key skills, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs exploited in the production of film/video in Zimbabwe?
2. How has the availability or non-availability of 'film services' affected the production of the films *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), *Everyone's Child* (1996), *Tanyaradzwa* (2005) and *Sinners?* (2013)?
3. What are the major thematic issues in the films and how do they relate to the socio-economic-political contexts during which the films were produced?

Constituting the film sample. A Constructivist approach

Further to Objective 1 which seeks to assess the nature of Zimbabwe's film services industry, this research is a preliminary study based on *constructivist principles*. The two core principles of constructivism are that: knowledge is actively, rather than passively built: and that people adapt to knowledge based on their experience, not some ontological reality (von Glasersfeld, 1989). Concepts and categories of information are not materially inherent in texts, but are constructed by their readers based on their experiences. An analysis of the cinematic *creates*, *establishes*, *discovers* and *constructs* codes consisting "only of what the analyst puts into it" (Metz, 1974:49). Metz uses this argument in distingushing between the cinematic and filmic

facts in film analysis (originating from Gilbert Cohen Séat's earlier work and later revisited in 1992 by Robert Stam et al), which are explored in greater detail in Chapter Two of this thesis. The construction of knowledge concerning the nature of film services as perceived from the four selected films is one laden with personal judgement. The same applies to the choice of four films employed as case studies. It is assumed, for the purposes of the study, that the four films are adequate and representative of the four decades since Zimbabwe's independence. While the aim is not to generalise the findings of the study, there is something to be learnt about the film services industry in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2013 deriving from those films. Persons who were employed in the production of the films and were interviewed in this study are assumed to be the richest available sources of data concerning the production of the films and the nature of the film services industry in Zimbabwe. In qualitative research, sample size must not be too small to affect data saturation but at the same time, must not be too large to cripple the undertaking of deep case-oriented analyses (Leech, 2005). A more detailed sample description is given in Chapter Four.

A constructivist approach to research postulates that knowledge is not handed down ready-formed and researchers have to be adaptive to information, rather than be passive (Phillips, 1995; Murphy 1997; Redfern 2005). As Phillips (1997:5) argues "human knowledge and the criteria of methods we use in our inquiries are all *constructed*" [original emphasis]. There is nothing intrinsic, therefore, about the four purposively sampled films that demarcates or exposes the film services employed in their production. This information has to be derived from the researcher's own interaction with the films, constructing knowledge in the process. It is therefore knowledge 'made' rather than pre-existing (Phillips, 1997). This process is also affected by the fact that besides being a researcher, I am a spectator/viewer of the films from which I construct my own interpretive narrative (fabula).

Although constructivism is often criticised for investigator bias, it is noteworthy that this 'bias' is an inescapable reality of critical inquiry because research data has to be decoded and described in line with what researchers know. If researchers were to shun this, their findings would largely constitute 'abstracted empiricism' or inconsequential fact gathering and description (de Vaus, 2001). As Leech (2005) points out, sampling decisions are made after adequate reflection about the phenomenon under study. Constructive knowledge about Zimbabwean cinema was used to constitute a sample of *known* films whose themes were *known* by the researcher from a spectrum of the political and economic history of filmmaking

described at the beginning of this chapter. A more detailed discussion of the ontological foundations of the study follows in Chapter Four.

The four films were purposively sampled for their relevance in Zimbabwe's film industry. According to Robert Yin (2011:88), the goal of purposive sampling is to select units that will offer relevant and plentiful data (see also Marshall, 1996). A purposive sample is 'criterion based', dependent on what issues the researcher is studying (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003). Units of a sample are chosen with a purpose to represent a particular type of criterion. In this case a heterogeneous sample was derived from a 'parent population' (Ritchie et al. 2003) of films made in Zimbabwe, but ensuring that the cases differed from each other over the period of study 1980-2013. The four films selected therefore had to have different characteristics from each other across this period but also have characteristics peculiar to films belonging to their (periodic) contexts of production described earlier. The latter decision can be described as intensity sampling, a branch of purposive sampling that "focuses on cases which strongly represent the phenomena of interest rather than the unusual cases" (Ritchie et al, 2003). Films that were therefore identified as strongly typical of the characteristics of films made in the respective decades of Zimbabwe's independence, described above, were chosen. This is because, as Ritchie et al (2003) argue, sampling decisions are also guided by existing knowledge, in this case my assumptions based on what I know about the films and supported by existing literature. What I know about the four films can be summarised as follows:

King Solomon's Mines

King Solomon's Mines (1985) is one of the first films to be made by an international organisation in Zimbabwe after independence. Because it was made by the US-based Cannon Group, some cinema scholars do not regard it as a Zimbabwean film (Thomspon, 2013). *King Solomon's Mines* (1985) is one of several adaptations of Henry Rider Haggard's 1885 novel of the same title. Different versions of the film exist with one produced in 1950, directed by Andrew Marton and Compton Bennett, and a more recent version – a television series – directed by Steve Boyum, released in 2004. The 1985 version was shot in Zimbabwe by American company Cannon Group Inc. and was directed by British born John Lee Thompson. The film is set in an imaginary African kingdom Tongola, which might well be a play with the name Angola. Whatever the represented country, Tangola as it is shown in the movie, is a typical Western representation of Africa with jungles, beasts and communities of rowdy and cannibalistic black people. This image of Africa predominates in similar Western

narratives such as *The African Queen* (1951) and the *Tarzan* series (Murphy, 2000:239). This representation coincides with Ngugi wa Thiong'o's (1981:18) regard of Rider Haggard as one of the "geniuses of racism." The story follows the escapades of treasure hunter Allain Quartermein (Richard Chamberlain) who leads Jessie (Sharon Stone), a lady searching for her lost father while being pursued by a rival German explorer and hostile tribes. The film has some non-talking roles for Zimbabwean actors, including the late Isaac Mabhikwa who went on to produce and direct his own films, among them *More Time* (1993), and former body-building champion, Innocent Choga. Some Zimbabweans were also involved as technical crew members, among them Stephen Chigorimbo (3rd Unit director) who went on to act in and produce/direct several Zimbabwean and international films.

Everyone's Child

Everyone's Child was filmed and processed in Zimbabwe. It is a story "about children in stress" (Nichols, 1997) – Itai, Tamari and their siblings Norah and Nhamo who suddenly find themselves with the onerous responsibility of catering for themselves following the death of their parents due to HIV/Aids related illnesses. The film is also about children living on the streets due to different circumstances. Generally, the story relates the woes of children as a result of social dysfunction and particularly mirrors the troubles of children at the height of the HIV pandemic in the 1990s. Tamari and Itai have to live with the stigma of losing parents to HIV/Aids, but also have to contend with a community bent on dispossessing them of their parents' estate and abusing them in various ways. The movie urges community members to treat orphans as 'everyone's child' who need care and aid.

The film was written by Shimmer Chinodya, directed by Tsitsi Dangarembga and produced by John Riber, who made a name producing and directing many development-oriented films through his Media for Development Trust (MDT), among them the critically acclaimed *Neria* (Mawuru, 1992). The film credits indicate that it was made with the support of the British Overseas and Development Administration and Plan International. Unlike *King Solomon's Mines*, *Everyone's Child* features a predominantly black cast with a few white actors. More black Zimbabweans are also involved in technical roles compared to *King Solomon's Mines.* Importantly, *Everyone's Child* is a film that Dangarembga, says "wasn't even the film that I decided was the story I had to tell" (Nichols, 1997). In another interview with Christopher Joon-Hai Lee (2006:135) Dangarembga describes it as "one of those NGO, "teach the people how to behave"- type things" which she only did because she needed a job. It is a typical donor-funded, didactic movie of the 1990s. Lazar (2003) regards *Everyone's Child* as the

most scopic of the development-oriented films produced by MDT and belonging in the
bracket of narratives that cast African people as a 'problem' and that are constructed for the
Western developmental gaze (Mahoso, 2001). As Lazar (2003:15) argues "the developmental
gaze is more interested in images of suffering than understanding what caused the suffering".
The films produced during this era can be classified under the development support paradigm.
Such films make use of native experts to advance foreign agendas. Donors define
development projects but employ local voices and images to communicate. It is of interest in
this study to find out the services employed in the production of the film and how these might
have affected the commonly known didactic theme of the film.

Tanyaradzwa

Tanyaradzwa is about a girl Tanyaradzwa (Kudakwashe Maradzika) who ends up as a
prostitute after being impregnated and dumped by her boyfriend while still in school. The
name Tanyaradzwa in Shona, translates loosely to "we have been consoled" or "we have been
silenced" themes that both flow in the narrative (Rwafa, 2008). The film was produced in
2005, when Zimbabwe's economic woes were peaking. It was produced by Dorothy Meck
and directed by Tawanda Gunda Mupengo, who also wrote it. It is one of the films described
by Mhiripiri (2010) as bearing themes that the generality of the Zimbabwean population
identified with. Meck confirmed as much in a newspaper interview, saying "We want the
school children to watch it because it is about them." (*The Herald* online, 9 May 2006). The
theme of the film, however, seems to follow the same plot as the donor-funded, didactic films
of the 1990s. The message in *Tanyaradzwa* is that 'premarital sex is bad' as it may lead to
unwanted pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases. In that sense, the film does not differ
much from *Consequences* (Olley Maruma, 1988), *More Time* (Mabhikwa, 1993) and *Yellow
Card* (Riber, 2000), the highlights of an era of successful entertainment education films
produced from donor funds. *Tanyaradzwa* features Tongai Chirisa, who as a result of his
popularity on the local film scene has since exported his talents to South Africa and
ultimately Hollywood. Subsequent to *Tanyaradzwa,* Chirisa featured in a local television soap
Studio 263 then South African production *Bones 2: Back from the past* (Schuster, 2008) and
the Hollywood picture *Crusoe* (2008).

***Sinners*?**

Sinners? has been quite topical in discussions of films made during the post-crisis multicurrency era[6]. It recounts the story of female 'rapists' that made international headlines for 'raping' dozens of men in Zimbabwe in 2011 - drugging them into sex and collecting their semen for ritual purposes. The women, according to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) were arrested and charged on 17 counts of aggravated indecent assault after they were found with 31 used condoms in their car. The film is a typical 'based on a true story' narrative, featuring Samantha (Getrude Munhamo), Chipo (Eunice Tava), Kere (Sarah Mpofu) and Patience (Nothando Nobengula) who are enticed by Vero (Chipo Bizure) into the weird business of harvesting men's sperms. It is a film driven by near-graphic representation of sex and has "broke(n) most boundaries in terms of subject matter, graphic content and all round performance" (*The Herald*, 14 September 2013). The unusual 'rape' incidents reportedly inspired a 2014 Hollywood series, *Being Mary Jane* (*Financial Gazette*, 17 April 2014).

Sinners? is a 2013 Creative Native production, written by Patrick Chasaya, directed by Gamu Tawengwa and produced by Daves Guzha. Not much academic literature has been published about the themes of films produced in this period.

Significance of the Study

In Africa, film has taken over the traditional oral means of story-telling. As a result, African filmmakers, especially those operating from the now out-dated paradigm of 'Third Cinema', aspired to harness the technologies of film and localise them towards the expression of local cultures (Tomaselli and Eke, 1995). This has made film very important- as important as the oral culture before it in cultural studies. As a result, there is a corresponding rise in film scholarship continent-wide. In Zimbabwe, however, film scholarship can be regarded as still developing. It is not uncharted territory, though. Far from it, there is a growing body of scholarship on the themes and histories of films produced in Zimbabwe. This interest can be traced in various recent works (Hungwe, 1991 and 2005; Mahoso, 2000; Burns, 2003; Fisher, 2010; Vambe, Chikonzo and Khan, 2007; Mhiripiri, 2010; Thompson, 2013; Mboti, 2015). Hungwe, especially has been a prolific writer about Zimbabwean cinema and has availed

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[6] Zimbabwe introduced a multiple currency system in 2009 to curb rampant inflation, which had risen to a record high of 500 billion percent in 2008. The Zimbabwe dollar was withdrawn from circulation and the United States dollar and South African rand became the major currencies for transaction alongside the Botswana Pula, British pound sterling and the Euro.

important literature tracing the local cinema since colonial times (see Hungwe, 1991; Hungwe, 2005; Thompson, 2013).

Most academic studies of Zimbabwean film largely dwell on thematic and aesthetic issues in film products, with little attention paid to the production value chain or the services that go into film production or how the industry itself is organised. Mhiripiri (2010) has, however attempted to assess production issues though his study is limited to short films that emerged as a reaction to Zimbabwe's economic crisis in the 2000s, while Fisher (2010) and Mahoso (2000) have also explored the influence of funding and ideology on Zimbabwean films. Most recently, a government-commissioned research also highlighted important issues affecting the film sector (IMPI, 2014). Inspite of this rise in academic attention, most scholars are only interested in analysing the meanings embedded in film texts, such as the portrayal of particular subjects, but few go further to relate such meanings to the contexts in which films are produced (see Rwafa, 2008; Vambe et al., 2007; Thompson 2011). As a result, very little is known about the structure of Zimbabwe's film industry or about the cinematic fact– who offers what services, how and to what end? The economic aspects of filmmaking in Zimbabwe are largely unknown while the ideological aspects have been overemphasised. This points to a need to analyse Zimbabwean cinema as an economic industry, not just as a visual cultural sector. This thesis thus adapts the Film Services Approach (Goldsmith and O'Regan 2005) to the study of films produced in Zimbabwe. The thesis contributes new knowledge about Zimbabwean cinematic fact of production, especially how film services are critical to the functioning of the 'industry'.

A baseline survey conducted by the Culture Fund in 2009 highlights some of the major challenges facing the country's film sector. The survey report acknowledges the challenge that the country still has one television broadcaster, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). Furthermore, most of Zimbabwe's creative talent has migrated to other countries, largely due to economic reasons. Investors still see film as risky business because the market cannot generate sufficient profits, an issue that is exacerbated by, and in turn influences, the poor quality of productions. A 90 minute production was estimated to cost about US$100 000 in 2009 (Culture Fund, 2009). While the above points to an industry that is actually atrophying instead of expanding, positives can be drawn from the favourable conditions prevailing in the country, including "favourable weather, high literacy levels, low labour cost, variety and scenic location, low crime rate, shorter distances between locations and fairly

good infrastructure" (Culture Fund 2009:48). These conditions have been for long existent in Zimbabwe and were the basis of government's attempts to attract foreign filmmakers into the country shortly after independence (Thompson 2013). It is for this reason that Hollywood films such as *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), *Allain Quatermain and the Lost City of Gold* (1987), *Cry Freedom* (1987) among others were filmed in Zimbabwe. What is not known is how these conditions have been or can be harnessed to create an 'industry' that functions in similar fashion again. Even the quantitative successes of the film sector currently (there is a proliferation of productions) can latch onto these conditions and services for better quality productions. This study is therefore necessary to find out what film services have been/are available in Zimbabwe and how these can enable the capacity of the industry to produce good 'quality' films. The study therefore could be of benefit to individual filmmakers, policy makers in the sector and to the academic community, particularly in the areas of screen media studies.

Scope and Location of study
Spatially, the study is located in Zimbabwe. Most of the research activity was located in Harare, which is the epicentre of film and television-related production in Zimbabwe. Temporally, the study covers the period from 1980 to 2016. The period is characterized by different socio-political-economic contexts. These contexts are mirrored in the nature of film products produced at different times. The study utilises four films made at different times during this period. The research explores the film services that facilitated the production of these movies with the aim to generate knowledge on the nature of Zimbabwe's film services industry.

Conclusion
This chapter discussed the background of filmmaking in Zimbabwe, applying a periodised analysis that has been employed in studying the country's political and economic performance. The main epochs discussed in the chapter are: the post-independence era ending around 1990 in which the government took a proactive stance in funding films and inviting foreign organisations to use the country as a filmmaking location. The next period stretches from around 1990 to 2000 and is marked by donor-funded development support films. These films, though didactic, marked the high point of film production and education entertainment in Zimbabwe. Many indigenous filmmakers and actors gained their first experience on the sets of these films. Between 2000 and 2010, the country experienced unparalleled economic challenges which also drastically affected film production. Filmmakers resorted to the short

film genre, and more indigenous themes. The period after 2010 is one that has not been subjected to close academic scrutiny but is interesting for the informal arrangements characterising most business sectors, including film. This study is justified by the fact that most literature on Zimbabwean film tends to focus on content rather than context. A film services approach to studying the cinematic fact, therefore calls for the examination of those various services leading to the production of films and may best explain the content seen in those films. The next chapter reviews literature related to the study.

CHAPTER TWO:

Global, African and Zimbabwean Film 'Industries':

Filmic and Cinematic Fact

This chapter reviews literature related to the structures and functions of film industries in the world, Africa and Zimbabwe. This cross cutting approach is necessary because "the understanding of the film industry needs to happen in local, regional and global contexts to enable cross-national comparisons and replication" (Mboti, 2011). Although, ultimately the research is about the film services industry in Zimbabwe, it is important to analyse how other film industries are structured, and to determine the services thereof. Literature on the Zimbabwean film industry is reviewed later in the chapter. The chapter begins by reviewing literature on global structures of film industries. This body of literature is largely centred on Western cinematic fact and dwells on the subject of the North American (Hollywood) industry's domination of global cinema. This background is necessary to trace the origins of filmmaking and to contextualise developments in film industries of developing nations like Zimbabwe. As the literature reflects, the film industries of Africa and other developing nations emulate in organisation, but sometimes oppose in content the hegemonic 'First Cinema' (Gaynor, 2009) predominantly found in developed nations. The write-up also attempts to problematise the universally used phrase 'African cinema' and discuss contestations surrounding a film 'industry' in Africa and in Zimbabwe.

The terms 'film' and 'cinema' are used interchangeably in most literature. Although Samuel Cameron (2011) distinguishes 'cinema' as the space where films are exhibited and watched, Robert Stam et al's (1992:35) 'cinematic fact' and 'filmic fact' distinctions are more comprehensive. They offer a broader and multi-dimensional sense of cinema/film, which includes pre-filmic events such as the economic infrastructure, studio system and technology, as well as the post-filmic such as distribution and exhibition. Film, in that regard, is the filmic text, while cinema entails an ensemble or "the totality of films and their traits" (Stam et al, 1992:35). This study is as much about films as products as it is about the production of films, therefore there is an interchangeable use of 'film' and 'cinema' to sometimes refer to the same phenomena.

Few filmic fact studies examine context. Most scholars are interested in the filmic fact, or the signifying textual products of film industries, not how the industries function towards making those products. This has made Martin Mhando (2014:5) observe that "the informational nature of the film is seen to be its defining quality. Rarely do we see critical reflection on the formal techniques which are deployed in delivering the rhetorical account." The term 'film services' is a fairly recent one, traceable to the scholarship, post-2000, of Ben Goldsmith, Tom O'Regan and Susan Ward in Australia's Gold Coast, as well as Keyan Tomaselli and Nyasha Mboti in South Africa. Nevertheless, older literature discussing the organisational arrangements of film industries loosely makes reference to 'services' in varying nomenclature. As this emerging strand of scholarship proposes, discussions on film industries should no be limited to the products of the industries but could also extend to the processes and activities leading to production. Conscious of this gap, this research does not position itself as exhaustive but as complementing existing scholarship on screen media.

Global Hollywood and the 'Hollywoodisation' of film industries

Film is an important component of the cultural industries. As a result, it features prominently in discussions of cultural imperialism and cultural globalisation. For those worried about the effects of the media on their consumers, the dominance of the American film industry (Hollywood) represents cultural imperialism in peripheral places that are both filming locations and cinema markets for Hollywood. From that view, Hollywood is seen as representing "imperialism without colonies" (Okome, 1996, see also Ukadike, 2013:2-4). This concern stems from the apparent imbalance in the global distribution of cultural products which the USA dominates largely. Due to this, observers arguing from a cultural imperialism thesis, worry that this *status quo* might lead to a systematic decline of national cultural industries in developing nations (Banerjee, 2002; Hesmondhalgh, 2013). Two positions, therefore emerge: First, a neo-Marxian perspective, which proposes film industries and products that either "subvert or exist independently of a capitalist superstructure" (Zacks, 1995:7) and second; a liberal persuasion, which sees mutual benefit in this relationship between Hollywood and 'other' film industries (Goldsmith et al, 2010). From the latter perspective, the increasing dispersal of film services from Hollywood offers economic benefits to those places that interact with the US film industry on various platforms. There is, in this regard, an increasing cross-pollination of finance, personnel and creative talent between Hollywood and the rest of the world, as Goldsmith et al (2010) posit in their Global Hollywood thesis:

> While much production still goes on in Los Angeles, and Los Angeles is still the principal 'design centre' coordinating, facilitating and sometimes financing the production, marketing and distribution of filmmaking globally, Hollywood itself is now thoroughly enmeshed in an emerging system of globally dispersed film and television production (Goldsmith et al, 2010:2).

The 'global Hollywood' described by Goldsmith et al (2010) is characterised by geographic dispersal of film services, with films being made and set in different places around the world employing finances, actors and crews drawn from many countries. The scholars describe a situation in which, not only Hollywood influences global cinematic fact, but where "people from around the world are actively shaping Hollywood productions" (Goldsmith et al, 2010:2). This can be regarded as internationalisation of cultural businesses or development of geocultural markets (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). In this scenario, Hollywood is envisaged as the 'design centre' of global cinema with its major and independent studios being the 'incubators' and 'sponsors' of film projects. There is geographic dispersal at the level of the production shoot and concentration in production design and post-production centres in Los Angeles (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005).

There is a co-production imperative in this 'global Hollywood,' necessitated by the reality that, lately the global film market is shrinking and production is becoming more expensive. This is evidenced by a 14-54 percent cut in the number of films made by Hollywood's 'Big Six'[7] studios between 2006 and 2012 (*The Economist*, 23 February 2013). As a result, co-productions between Hollywood and Western European producers have been on the rise since the 1990s. This has many advantages. For their 'local' components, co-productions qualify for most modes of public funding, including grants and tax incentives. For instance, in Canada, they benefit from the Canadian Television Fund and provincial tax credits (Baltruschat, 2002 and 2012). On the other hand, 'local' film industries benefit in terms of financing of projects as well as creative and technical resources from Hollywood, in addition to expanded horizons of film distribution (Baltruschat, 2002). In the above example, Canadian provinces compete against each other in terms of "service productions" as they market locations that have proved popular with Hollywood film companies. In 2011, Ontario earned CDN$1.25 billion while British Columbia generated CDN$1.18 billion in revenues from production services (Baltruschat, 2012). Similarly, the European Union (EU) provides funding under the EURIMAGES, which specifically funds co-productions; while in England,

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[7] Also known as the 'majors,' Hollywood's biggest film production studios. These are Warner Brothers Pictures, Walt Disney Pictures, Universal Pictures, Columbia Pictures, 20th Century Fox and Paramount Pictures.

there is 100 percent tax relief on acquisition costs relating to co-productions (Baltruschat, 2002). EURIMAGES, set up in 1988, supports EU films that promote Europe's cultural diversity, regardless of whether the films make a profit or not (Royer, 2010). On the downside, co-productions involve a tedious amount of paperwork and often result in the loss of creative control due to compromises made in scriptwriting. As a result, they create "a bias for particular genres such as science fiction, adventure films, and television programs which are neither spatially nor temporally bound, but occur in a fictitious place" (Baltruschat, 2002:4). Co-produced narratives, therefore, are largely considered as targeting international audiences and consumers, rather than citizens.

Literature on co-productions, and the Global Hollywood thesis, has geographical limitations. The global and local initiatives described by various scholars (Jacka, 1988; Baltruschat, 2002, 2012; Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005; Goldsmith et al, 2010) are largely Eurocentric and do very little to enlighten one on the possibilities and efficacy of Hollywood-Africa partnerships, at least. As a result, a Global Hollywood - one with the benefits described above – may appear Utopian to a reader situated in Africa. Goldsmith et al (2010) celebrate the global dispersal of finance, human resources and locations, with Hollywood being the design centre (see also Baltruschat, 2012) and non-Hollywood participants being "junior partners" or "Local Hollywoods" (Goldsmith et al, 2010:11). However, the power dynamics in these conceptualisations are reminiscent of the global imbalance described in Immanuel Wallerstein's (2004) World Systems analysis. While capital from developed centres is necessary for the growth of the film industry, it often means the developed centre has the bigger say in what films will be produced. One can presume that some African filmmakers would not be comfortable with this arrangement, given the contesting (largely Third World) ideology of Third Cinema[8], which in effect seeks to counter the hegemony of First cinema as represented by Hollywood (Ukadike, 1993; Gaynor, 2009). Filmmakers from the developing world are therefore caught up in a dialectical relationship with Hollywood where on one hand; they desire to emulate the organisational arrangements and efficiency of the American industry, but on the other hand, seek to ward off the overbearing domination of a ubiquitous Hollywood.

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[8] First Cinema refers to industrial scale or commercial film making while Third Cinema is a revolutionary cinema driven by ideals of political and social change

The influence of Hollywood is, among other things, reflected in the nomenclature of national film industries around the globe. Some are referred to by monikers such as 'Bollywood' (India), 'Nollywood' (Nigeria), Hollyveld (South Africa) and, lately 'Zollywood' (Zimbabwe). The term 'Aussiewood' has also been used in reference to an imagined community of Australian actors and directors featuring in the American industry (Boland and Bodey, 2004). Wole Soyinka (2013) even jests about the possibilities of a 'Dollywood' or 'Sellywood' in reference to films from Dakar, Senegal.

The above etymology indicates much more than mimicry, but 'canons of conformity' (Soyinka-Airewele, 2010). Some developing film industries, in this regard, obsess with appropriating Hollywood techniques and narratives. This 'Hollywoodisation' of non-American film industries has implicitly become a condition for films to get international recognition and critical acclaim (Ezra, 2007). The Hollywood filmic fact is thus framed as the prototype (Mhando, 2000; Gaynor 2009). Pursuant to this argument, Schaefer and Karan (2011) criticise a Hollywood-influenced 'globalised *mise-en-scène*' which has displaced Indian themes in some Bollywood films. Similar concerns have been raised elsewhere with, for instance, African filmmakers' mimicry of Hollywood being labelled as "retarded infantilism" which negatively influences cultural consciousness (Soyinka, 2013).

Yet, a brief but highly contestible analysis of Hollywood's financial successes and history may vindicate those that pursue its model. The international audio-visual services market is dominated by developed nations, which account for 90 percent of exports in the sector, with the USA alone exporting US$13 billion worth in 2008 (Piva et al, 2011). As of 2013, some US$10 billion was spent on movie tickets in the USA and Canada alone (Motion Picture Association of America, 2013). This occurs in spite of the fact that the American film industry is only the third largest producer of films by volume, after Bollywood and Nollywood (Eliashberg et al 2005; Rorvik, 2012).

The term 'Hollywood' refers to both a concept and a location. As a concept, Hollywood is defined less by its physical location than by its global products and its American brand (Yaquinto, 2008; Boland and Bodey, 2004). As the latter, it is a location in Los Angeles, California, where companies offering film services migrated and settled around 1909 (Bakker 2008; Yaquinto, 2008; Baltruschat, 2012). A decade ago, the remnants of the original physical Hollywood were "Paramount Studios, Mann's Chinese Theatre and the Roosevelt Hotel, former home of the Oscars" (Boland and Bodey (2004:1). Hollywood rose to

prominence by integrating industrial practices into its value chain. One of the most important
epochs in this process, was the Hollywood studio era (1930 to 1949) [9], which was
characterised by the emergence of monopolistic practices, the major highlight being the rise
of Warner Brothers. Lately, Hollywood is characterised by "multi-media empires, new media
technologies and (mainstream) independent production" (Kochberg, 2007:25). To date, the
industry is made up of numerous studios, the major ones being: 20th Century-Fox, Walt
Disney Pictures, Warner Brothers Pictures, Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures Entertainment,
Columbia Pictures, Universal Pictures, Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM) and Dreamworks
SKG (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005; Young et al, 2008). These organisations' business
interests are collectively represented internationally by the Motion Pictures Association of
America (MPAA). The 'Majors' are owned by media conglomerates which also have
distribution interests and are constantly competing against or complementing numerous
'independent' production studios. Many other film producers outside the USA feed into
Hollywood.

Hollywood is the embodiment of decades of industrialisation and standardisation of
entertainment (Bakker, 2008). Its production processes are hinged on geographical clustering
of organisations providing related services - or 'agglomeration economies' (Nachum and
Keeble, 1999). Considering all this, there may be some rationale for film industries in
developing nations to emulate and associate with Hollywood to some extent, although
numerous arguments could be posited to counter this thinking. This is also the thinking of
Tomaselli (2013) in his recent scholarship on media cities and competitive advantage of the
South African film industry. His central argument is that developing nations' film industries
can leverage on global, interfirm and inter-industry networks and services for competitive
advantage (see Tomaselli, 2013; Mboti, 2011). This is discussed further in a later section.

The organisation of global film industries discussed above differs drastically with that of
'African' industries. Film industries on the continent and most developing countries operate
under unique circumstances. Because of this, analysts group their film products into one
continental collective 'African cinema' which can be directly contrasted to Hollywood. In
that regard, filmmaking is more than a commercial enterprise, but a political cause.

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[9] This period is also regarded as Hollywood's 'Golden Age' because of its creativity and
exploration

Rethinking 'African film/cinema': Contexts of production

The phrase 'African film industry' is often used loosely to define, from a cinematic fact perspective, films made in post-colonial Africa by black Africans. The term is, however problematic, reductive and laden with contestations. It is cumbersome to define a film industry, let alone one that can be termed African. Journalist Georges Sadoul once bluntly put it:

> Sixty-five years after the invention of the cinema, not one truly African feature length film has been produced to my knowledge. By that I mean a film *acted*, *photographed*, *written*, conceived and *edited* by Africans and *filmed in* an African language (in Ukadike 1994:59; see also Diawara, 1987) [author's emphasis].

Actors, photographers, writers, editors and locations referred to by Sadoul are in fact film services (providers) in the film production/development value chain. Sadoul's argument, therefore, implies that once a film's production employs foreign services, creative talent or language, its 'African' purity is lost. Many scholars often write about African cinema as if it were a homogeneous entity, insiders vs. outsiders, with (negative) exploitation argued to be the *raison d'etre* of business collaboration. Frank Ukadike (2013:2), for example, argues that much "African film production is scarcely African at all" as it results from cheap labour and access to service facilities. African film makers, if not black, are considered 'foreign'. This kind of racial classification conveniently excludes on the basis of geographical, periodised, racial criteria (see Ureke and Tomaselli forthcoming). Most scholars writing about 'African film' ignore the cultural and historical contexts within which the cinema emerges. Some profer definitions of 'African' film, based on content more than the techniques employed in the film (Mhando, 2000a; Paleker, 2008; Mhando, 2014): "The informational nature of the film is seen to be its defining quality. Rarely do we see critical reflection on the formal techniques which are deployed in delivering the rhetorical account" (Mhando, 2014:5).

Sadoul's observation above highlights how contentious it is to define 'African film' or 'African cinema' on racial/locational/residential/political grounds only. A number of scholars have acknowledged this difficulty in varying contributions to the on-going debate on African film (see Diawara, 1987; Tomaselli, 1993; Ukadike, 1994). At the risk of rehashing worn out arguments, this is a necessary entry point in discussing how film 'industries' are structured or understood on the continent.

Most historical discussions on 'African film' concentrate on motion pictures originating in French speaking parts of West and North Africa. To appreciate this, one needs to consider the

approaches of some of the prominent scholars on the subject. For instance, Ukadike's (2002) book, *Questioning African Cinema*, features only South Africa from the Southern African region, while the other countries whose cinemas are extensively discussed are north of the Equator, namely: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal. As the book is about 'questioning' *African cinema*, one gets the notion that African cinema is entirely made up of West African cinematic products. Ukadike does not acknowledge this disproportion but is instead concerned about the turning down of his interview request by yet another West African filmmaker, Senegalese Ousmane Sembéne, who is widely regarded as *the* (not one of) 'father of African cinema' (Ukadike, 1993; Cham, 2002; Armes, 2006; Harrow, 2007). Ukadike's book has been criticized by Samuel Lelievre (2004) for, among other things, its methodological weaknesses, factual contradictions and essentialist definitions of African cinema. For instance, Ukadike's view of 'African' excludes people who are not black, ignoring Ali Mazrui's (1986) discussion of definitions of Africa: continental, identity, and political. Similarly, Roy Armes' (2006) book, *African Filmmaking North and South of the Sahara*, extensively discusses the cinemas of Chad, Burkina Faso, Tunisia, Morocco and Mauritania again at the expense of the Southern African region. This mirrors the colonial-linguistic heritage divide that characterises much 'African' historigraphical scholarship, with the same phenomenon also seen in radio and newspaper studies, for instance.

Disparities similar to those discussed above are mirrored in Africa's oldest film festival, the Festival panafricain du cinéma de Ouagadougou (FESPACO), where traditionally, films from English-speaking parts of Africa are largely peripheral. Historically, films shot and packaged in digital video format (which is the common practice in Anglophone Africa) featured less prominently at this festival (McCain, 2011). The net effect was that Anglophone and Lusophone Southern African film remained marginalised as it had earlier migrated to digital means of production compared to most of West Africa, which until recently, continued to employ the 35mm celluloid format. As a result, Southern African film remained on the margins of continental activity, including in academia.

One of the chief reasons for the above bias lies in the historical claim that Francophone Africa had made more films than Anglophone Africa (Diawara, 1987). Zimbabwean-raised filmmaker Michael Raeburn once bluntly declared that filmmaking as a profession only existed in Francophone Africa (Hungwe, 2001). This notion, however, was critiqued by

Tomaselli (1993) on the contention that South Africa alone (at the time) had made more films than the whole of Africa combined. However, as Diawara (1987) cautions, a mere listing of films made in Africa is not adequate, as there are other underlying political and economic factors that need to be considered when discussing 'African film' or African cinematic fact.

Because of the foregoing contentions, scholars on African film usually differ on some elementary facts. For instance, most scholars date the emergence of African cinema in the 1960s (Murphy, 2000; Cham, 2002; Ukadike, 2002; Armes, 2006). Ukadike (1993) regards a 1955 student production *Afrique sur Seine* as the first film made by Africans in Africa while Ousmane Sembene's *Borom Sarret* (1963) was the first African film to be viewed by a paying audience. Ironically, Armes (2006) begins his discussion of African cinema with earlier productions such as the work of Tunisian Albert Samama Chikly in the early 20th century (see also Gugler, 2003). In South Africa, film production began as early as 1910 with the making of *The Great Kimberly Diamond Robbery* by the Springbok Production Company (Gutsche 1972; see also Bisschoff, 2009). Defining African cinematic fact on geographical or racial parameters often excludes those films made by colonial organisations or non-black Africans. Most discussions on 'Zimbabwean cinema' only consider films made after the country gained independence from colonial rule in 1980 (Hungwe, 2005; Thompson, 2013).

Diawara (1987), in concurrence with Sadoul, observes that Europeans and Americans were making "films about Africa in Africa", as early as 1900, soon after the invention of cinema. Conspicuously, he does not say they were making 'African films'. Furthermore, Armes (2006:26) dismisses South African films made between 1910 and 1996 as being of no relevance since they were "white cinema constructed for a white audience." Lizelle Bisschoff (2009b:448), concludes of apartheid-era South African films:

> Because of South Africa's disjointed history – out of sync with the historical patterns of colonisation, freedom struggles and eventual independence that shaped the modern era for most other African countries – South African cinema during apartheid is generally excluded from historical and theoretical discussions of African film as a whole. The vast majority of films made during apartheid reinforced apartheid ideologies and Afrikaner nationalism, or were vessels for mindless entertainment which completely ignored the country's socio-political realities.

However, some of these 'white films' were actually critical of apartheid, applying a variety of Second and Third Cinema styles and techniques (Tomaselli, 2007). The foregoing discussion shows that the concept of continental or national cinema is problematic because it

presupposes a continental or national philosophy in the manner in which film industries are organised. Related to the contentions surrounding discussions of African filmic and cinematic fact, some scholars (Prammagiore and Wallis, 2011; Rosen, 2006; Mhando, 2000a) have also questioned attempts to identify cinema by its national origin. The complexity of discussing a 'national' or continental cinema is in the principle of what constitutes 'national' or 'continental'. Is it the nation of origin of the director, the location where the film was shot, the style, or is it about the genre? (Prammagiore and Wallis, 2011). Indeed, one of the unresolved questions about African cinema is about what constitutes Africa (Tomaselli, 1993): "Can there be a single African aesthetic?" (Tomaselli, 1993:5). Along a similar line of argument, Mhando (2014:8) points out that national and continental identities ascribed to cinema ignore other 'effective identities' which are not bound by territorial boundaries. One can imagine such a grouping of cinema as a cohort of films that share historical specificity and employ specific film services in their production, as (Rosen 2006:18) argues:

> The discussion of a national cinema assumes not only that there is a principle or principles of coherence among a large number of films; it also involves an assumption that those principles have something to do with the production and/or reception within the legal borders of (or benefitting capital controlled from within) a given nation state.

The above arguments show that it is problematic to ascribe an overarching identity to films made in Africa and it is untenable for filmmakers on the continent to organise themselves into a collective industry bound by similar political and ideological principles. It suggests a false cultural homogeneity (Mhando, 2000a). In his foreword to Ukadike's (2002) book *Questioning African Cinema*, Teshome Gabriel acknowledges this problem of monolithic definitions of African cinema. He argues, to that end, that it is difficult to separate different periods in Africa's filmmaking history and future, because the two influence each other:

> ….there are many strands, many threads within it (African cinema). And these strands are themselves interwoven into intricate parts, creating an immense tapestry in which one can discern images of the past mingling with those of the present and foreshadowing the future (Ukadike, 2002:x).

From the foregoing, one can deduce that there needs to be a departure from defining 'African films' to *films produced in Africa*. The reason for this argument is that the latter is more context- specific – that is; it defines these films in the context of where and, to some extent, how they are produced while the former is monolithic and cumbersome.

Filmmaking in the African context

Film in Africa remains a colonial legacy and a product of Western capitalism (Okome, 1996; Haynes, 2011). In line with this argument, Haynes (2011:68) postulates that "Cinema arrived with colonialism and as a tool of colonialism". It was used to 'dazzle' African viewers as well as to indoctrinate them (Burns, 2003; Haynes, 2011). As part of their colonialism endeavours, British, French and Belgian authorities set up film units to produce instructional films meant to 'civilise' Africans (Diawara, 1987; Hungwe, 2005; Bisschoff, 2009). Despite this background, film was also a novel medium of entertainment. As cinema developed on the continent, movie houses were set up in cities and became a popular phenomenon with Africans, leading Ousmane Sembéne to remark that "cinema is our night school" (Haynes, 2011:68). These film units were later turned into institutions responsible for production of propaganda films, especially against African revolutions (Diawara, 1987; Thompson, 2013). The same institutions set up by colonial governments, have been adopted by independent African states, almost under the same principles (Ukadike, 1994).

It is important to note that film production developed differently in former colonies, and that this distinction was largely informed by the colonial histories of the respective countries (Ukadike, 1991). Generally, film in Africa began as an 'informational outlet' for an illiterate audience and was created by Europeans who were largely ignorant of African aesthetics (Ukadike, 2014). Nevertheless, the net effect and common legacy of colonialism was to make Africans consumers, not producers of films. This uneasiness with film has largely been adopted by post-colonial governments, which remain wary of the subversive potential of the medium. To worsen matters, filmmaking and exhibition equipment remains beyond the reach of many in Africa, the result being that film remains a largely elitist medium. In line with this observation, Okome (1996:56) argues that "the highly technological and capital-intensive character of production makes it more difficult to reclaim national cultural autonomy." In this context, former colonisers have still found relevance in African cultural industries due to the dire need for funding. For instance, until 1980, when the Bureau de Cinema was shut down, France continued to support filmmaking in its former colonies, as it tried to upset the global hegemonic influence of Hollywood. However, this support was considered paternalistic as French producers insisted on seconding technical crews in production, and also developing these films in France, away from their locations of creation (Haynes, 2011). Currently this cultural cooperation occurs under the auspices of the Organisation international de la Francophonie (OIF), which fosters equal ties among French-speaking nations.

In the 1990s, owing to the introduction of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), international aid agencies became highly significant to film industries on the continent. These donors provided funds for film production to fill the gap left by governments as they attempted to lessen public expenditure. The donors have, however been criticized for imposing plots on the films they funded (Mahoso, 2000; Lazar, 2003). Most of the films did not realize profit, forcing the filmmakers to approach donors again when they needed to make other movies, as Haynes (2011:70) observes:

> Once made, the films make the rounds of international film festivals, art house cinemas, and educational institutions. They seldom get shown in Africa and they do not turn a profit that would support future filmmaking. Instead, the filmmaker must again run the gauntlet of foreign funders.

Advances in technology, however, mean films no longer have to depend on formal exhibition to generate revenue. Formal economies of film production and distribution have been supplanted by informal means or 'shadow economies of cinema' (Lobato, 2012). The straight to video model (STV) has become a lucrative avenue for films to generate revenue outside formal cinema economies. Distributors have increasingly been cut out of the equation, while digital means of production and packaging of films, have greatly lessened expenses traditionally associated with production and distribution. The STV phenomenon has also inspired new genres, a separate star system and new audience expectations. This necessitates a move away from the traditional arguments of cinematic hegemony and resistance, to those that acknowledge the interplay between the emerging distribution platform, third generation internet distribution and existing production cultures (Lobato, 2012:24).

While filmmaking practices in post-colonial Africa have been accused of mimicking Western techniques, in some cases they have appropriated and domesticated "what is other … rendering it familiar or same" (Harrow 2007:xii). Harrow likens the use of film technology in Africa to the appropriation of the foreign alphabet and its translation into local languages. He proffers that early African cinema, led by Sembéne's efforts, was one of revolt against colonialism and Eurocentricism. This is the idea that gave birth to notions of a 'Third Cinema' (Teshome and Gabriel, 1989; Tomaselli and Eke, 1995; Ezra, 2007; Bisschoff 2009; Gaynor, 2010). Third cinema is seen as a radical and political cinema opposed to imperialism and representing the aspirations of the (former) colonised (Tomaselli and Eke, 1995; Harrow, 2007; Gaynor, 2010). Harrow (2007) argues the relevance of theory to question essentialism. He critiques assumptions embedded in outworn conceptual frameworks and repositions the

study of African cinema as a branch of general cinema studies, and not as an object located on the periphery of disciplinary activity. Harrow tries to liberate film discussion from concerns with decolonization, revolt, authenticity and the construction of film debates around national models.

As indicated earlier, most cinema industries in post-colonial Africa are organised 'nationally.' In line with this argument, Ukadike (2001) observes that early post-colonial African cinema was heavily didactic as it tried to root African viewers to the national cause. Emergent industries, therefore, were loosely organised around imagined cultural and national identities that they tried to conform with. In Kenya, for example, the Kenyan Film Corporation, was established in 1968 as a government agency charged with seeing the development of the film industry and to distribute Kenyan films. Such organisation of cinema is steeped in hegemonic discourses centred on the post-colonial state. This is why, for instance, films developed under the Ghana Film Industry Corporation (GFIC) in the late 1960s were accused of building 'a personality cult' around the then president Kwame Nkrumah (Ukadike, 2001[10]).

The term 'national cinema' also lends credence to state support and intervention, which justifies legislative controls on film, including censorship, whether overt or covert. As a result, films that oppose the state and its ideology are excluded from the convenient label of 'national cinema' or are banned outright. While national cinema encourages communality at the expense of individuality (Gaynor, 2009), Okome (1996) argues that it must tell national stories based on cultural facts but able to problematise social issues, so that they become relevant to local viewers. Whether to pursue developmental or commercial film is the dilemma that lies at the heart of African cinema. On the one hand, African filmmakers feel obliged to tell 'African' stories and counter the distorted history recorded by colonial cinema, which was based on false representations (Masilela, 1991). On the other hand, states and entrepreneurs neglect film production industries, leaving these sectors in perennial crises (Cham, 1998). As a result, some film industries that have been set up as national have opened up to become commercial enterprises at the core. Nollywood film, for instance is in the hands of a few private entrepreneurs with no prior training (Ebewo, 2007) while foreign businesspeople are extensively involved in its distribution (Ukadike, 1994; Diawara, 1987). Furthermore, far from being 'national' the industry is showing signs of regionalism as

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[10] From www .ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC36folder/AnglophAfrica.html

indicated by the themes of some movies. As a result, some Kano-based filmmakers have coined the term 'Kanywood' for their regional industry (Ebewo, 2007).

Writing in *The Mail & Guardian*, Roger Young argues that in South Africa, efforts to develop film emphasise commercial success rather than cultural development. As such, economic contributions of the film industry have been measured in terms of financial returns over time. The statics are there. The South African film industry then contributed about R3.5 billion to GDP (Young, 2013) and up to R5.5 billion in related economic activities (NFVF, 2010). The industry had created more than 15 000 jobs in 2012 and had grown by 14 percent in the five years before 2013 (Young, 2013). The country also has technically advanced production facilities (with over 150 registered production companies), casting and crew agencies, set designers and prop suppliers, which are attracted by the country's well developed transport and communication infrastructure (NFVF, 2010). Compared to the rest of Africa, this is a commercial success story. Young, however, notes that most of the films produced in this context, are service films, in which South Africa is mostly used as a backdrop. In other words, South Africa is commoditised as a location and sold to the global filmmaking industry, which is not concerned with the making of South African narratives. How does this compare with the rest of the continent? Is this to be loathed or aspired for? These are be pertinent questions.

Tracing the margins of 'industry' on the continent

Given the background discussed above, one can ask whether we have film industries in Africa in the same sense as constituted in Hollywood. Infact, this is a pertinent question throughout this thesis, and would extend to whether we have a 'film industry' in Zimbabwe. As highlighted above, most African countries lack the industrial capacity to independently produce films and, as a result, a political economy analysis of these film industries may show that they continue to rely on 'foreign' film services. Sometimes this dependency stems from administrative incompetence of film producers more than genuine financial challenges. Some critics argue that it is difficult to talk of a 'film industry' in Africa under such circumstances (Diawara, 1987; Mboti, 2015). Cinema is not accorded development status given to other sectors of African economies hence an industry, on these terms, remains a mirage (Ukadike, 1994). On similar bases Dockney (2010:169) points out that "the African film industry is a cinema of artists - a structural anomaly - rather than being an industry as practiced in other countries", while Okome (1996) likewise argues that the Nigerian cinema is not yet an

industry because "industrial organisation implies specialisation of labour" (1996:58). Okome's argument is that in Nigeria, there is no specialisation and the basic technology is not in place. Jonathan Haynes shares the same sentiments:

> This cinema has never approached commercial viability, the form of a real industry that produces on the basis of profits from previous production; instead, it depends on the drip of grants from foreign sources, administered intravenously. It has established a small but respected niche for itself in the contexts of international cinema, but has reached audiences in Africa only sporadically and fleetingly (Haynes, 2011:67).

Contestations around the term 'industry;' in describing African filmmaking processes arise from the fact that these activities, in the majority of cases, are not formally constituted. They have been described as a 'shadow economy' which "is a space of unmeasured, untaxed and unregulated economic activity" (Lobato, 2012:40). Govil (2013) asks important questions that need to be considered when assessing cultural or creative industries:

> What are the social, textual, political, and cultural infrastructures and interactions assembled under the sign of "industry"? What are these formal and informal processes of assembly, and how do exchange practices move in and out of industry status? In other words, how are industries "made up"? (Govil, 2013:173).

The film sector is part and parcel of a broad-based creative or cultural industry. Some of the essential elements of such an industry are industrial scale production and creative content (Towse, 2011:125). Work in the creative industry is undertaken by trained artists of various talents and competencies. Technological developments have enabled mass production within the industry and sometimes led to standardisation of outputs which has been criticised in the seminal works of Theodor Adorno, Marx Horkheimer and Walter Benjamin within the Frankfurt School.

The British Council's definition of the cultural industries in the United Kingdom is comprehensive, and includes "service businesses" that feed into cultural production (British Council, 2010:15). However, even the informal sector can be recognised as an industry. The International Labour Organisation (1972) defines informal industry along six criteria, namely: " a) ease of entry; b) reliance on indigenous resources; c) family ownership of enterprises; d) small scale of operation; e) labour intensive and adopted technology; f) skills acquired outside the formal school system; and g) unregulated and competitive prices" (Lobato, 2012:40). Most film sectors in Africa are structured informally or as megotage, to use Sembene's

phrase. Social and economic conditions dictate this state of affairs. This informal setup is captured by filmmaker Michael Raeburn, citing the examples of a film he made:

> One thing that has impressed people about *Home Sweet Home* is the fact that it was made with this tiny little company, and a camera the size of your tape recorder. It cost very little to make it and that is what Africa and the Third World needs. You don't want to wait for three million dollars. You will never do it. I wish there was somebody who had the energy and is inspired to make these kinds of films. Entertainment films with a little video projector in the urban area and in the rural areas. You could earn a good living. You would be able to make one film after the other and the whole thing will expand. You would not rely on the government or donors (interviewed by Kedmon Hungwe 2001)[11].

Filmmaking is an especially demanding enterprise in Africa because, from a Services Approach, most African countries do not have adequate services required for film production, particularly production facilities. This deficiency is well documented across the continent (Paleker, 2008; Mhando & Kipeja, 2010; Haynes, 2011) where, as observed by Frantz Fanon, control of technology by the West, is part of continuous organised domination of former colonies (Diawara, 1987). To worsen matters, available resources have either been abused or professional principles are not adhered to in utilising them by current administrations. For example, according to Ukadike (1991), Nigerian administrators in the television and film industry saw "the opportunity to practice tribalism, favouritism, and nepotism by giving creative jobs to their brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces, girlfriends and others without qualifications for the jobs they [were] employed to do" (www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC36folder/AnglophAfrica.html)

Sembéne has in the past described African filmmaking as 'mégotage' – similar to scrounging around for cigarette butts (Diawara, 1987; Harrow, 2007; Haynes, 2011) - as African filmmakers similarly struggle to finance their films. Another filmmaker, Med Hondo from Mauritania has described African filmmaking as 'tottering' (Diawara, 1987). Zimbabwean filmmaker Tsitsi Dangarembga describes comparable pains as she had to use her personal funds towards the production of the 2004 short film *Kare Kare Zvako (Mother's Day)* (Lee, 2006). Such difficulties have made Malian filmmaker Souleyman Cissé equate filmmaking in Africa to a 'miracle' (Ukadike, 2002). Haynes sums up this difficulty in more pessimistic terms:

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[11] From http://www.ed.mtu.edu/~khungwe/afrika/kedmon-hungwe/michael-raeburn.html.

> African celluloid filmmaking is an auteurist cinema: it usually takes a nearly lunatic commitment on the part of an individual to get a film made, the filmmaker playing many roles from scriptwriter to distributor; there are no supporting, let alone competing structures, no standing machinery of production (Haynes 2011:74).

As testimony to the difficulties discussed above, Nigerian film pioneer Ola Balogun grew so disillusioned by developments in Nigerian cinema that he abandoned his work and moved to Paris to work in the film industry of that country (Okome, 1996). Many other African filmmakers, black or white have realised better success working abroad, away from their countries of origin. Observers who problematise the existence of a film 'industry' in Africa pin the problem down to social and economic problems, as Ukadike (1993:55) says: "If African cinema is a rare and specialised, and not an industrialised art form, it is because of the social, political and economic circumstances regulating production". This thinking resonates with an observation made in the Algiers Charter on African cinema, 1975 that: "The problems of cinema production in the countries of the Third World are closely linked to the economic, political and social realities of each of them" (Black Camera, 2010:162) and the Niamey Manifesto (1982) which also observed that the viability of film production was closely linked to the exploitation of cinema theatres, importation and distribution of films as well as technical infrastructure and training.

These difficulties can be located in the lack of both interest and power, by post-colonial African elites, to invest in culture (Haynes 2011; Okome 1996). For the cinema of developing countries to improve, there is need for supportive government policy and the involvement of private investors in the industry. What should African filmmakers do under the circumstances discussed above? There are several possibilities. One that has been tried is for African filmmakers to coalesce around political consciousness in all their filmmaking endeavours. This is an approach that starkly contrasts the call for a global Hollywood by Goldsmith et al (2010). African nations, for instance remain wary of engaging developed nations in co-productions, as highlighted in the Algiers Resolutions[12] (1973):

> We do not believe in co-productions in which an imperialist country participates, given the following risks:

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[12] The resolutions came out of a meeting for Third World Filmmakers in Algiers December 5 to 14, 1973, which was convened to discuss common problems and goals for third world filmmakers.

- the imperialist country can shed influence through production methods which are foreign to the realities of our countries, and
- The examples of co-productions have given rise to cases of profit and the cultural and economic exploitation of our countries (*Black Camera*, 2010:163).

Among other things, the Algiers meeting resolved that African filmmakers would seek "new forms" of production which would be different from the means and conceptions of capitalist countries. As a result of the above, African nations have deliberately set out to constitute an 'alternative' cinema that "deconstructs dominant cinemas by expressing views of people who are considered 'other'" (Ukadike, 1993:43). Early African cinematic fact (other than 1920s South African film productions), which established the foundations of current production endeavours, did not set out to compete on industrial terms with the established cinemas of the world, but rather to re-present and debunk mythical presentations of Africa. The Third Cinema movement, whose goal has been "to be an African socialism and an African cinematic aesthetic for a conscientised African audience" (Harrow, 2007:23) arose out of this spirit. This approach appears to be separatist and reactionary than inclusive and proactive, and is quite at variance with the Global Hollywood proposed by Goldsmith et al (2010). Both in terms of periodisation and in terms of ideological/ political/ economic ethos, Third Cinema thinking is part of the 'dissociation/another development' paradigm discussed in studies of media and development. This was a direct consequence of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) worried about the unbalance in media coverage of the developing world, but also coincided with the 'liberation' and 'uhuru' discourses emmanating from both South American thinkers as well as African thinkers/first wave liberation politicians. This thinking had a bearing on the whole political-economic and cultural dependency critique/independence movement, not just on cinema. Indeed, it was part of "the broad socio-political and cultural movement" of the time, which was part of the national independence movements of the developing world. The major objectives of the movement were: equity and autonomy within global communications, establishing national communication policies, promoting participatory national communication institutions, stimulating indigenous cultural expression and local culture industries and accomodating non-governmental and autonomous institutions (White,1994 :22-24).

Grounded in political commitment, the Third Cinema movement was, ironically, not an African initiative. It began in Latin America then spread to Asia and Africa (Ezra, 2007). It

encapsulated a departure from the commercial traditions of Hollywood movies and championed liberation and cultural decolonisation (Prammagiore and Wallis, 2011). Its aspirations were not commercial but revolutionary, as captured in the 1975 Algiers Charter on African Cinema[13]:

> The question of commercial profit can be no yardstick for African filmmakers. The only relevant criterion of profitability is the knowledge of whether the needs and aspirations of the people are expressed and not those of specific interest groups (*Black Camera*, 2010:166).

This spirit of resistance in early African cinema resonated with the fight for political independence that most African states were either engaged in or had recently achieved. It is no surprise therefore, that African filmmakers were influenced by Latin American ideology, as this was also the case on the political front, where the philosophies of, among others, Che Guevara and Paulo Freire were quite popular. However, Kenneth Harrow (2013), citing the example of Nollywood, calls for a rethink of the tenets of Third Cinema and advocates for the rise of popular (trashy) and auteurist cinema in Africa. Largely, the Nigerian industry, Nollywood, has managed to strike a balance between social consciousness and commercial enterprise. Nollywood is rated as the second largest film industry worldwide in terms of volumes of productions (second to Bollywood), and third (after Hollywood and Bollywood) in terms of revenue (Haynes, 2011). This success is underpinned by the adoption of video technology coupled with high energy trade but without the huge capital and formalisation of other industries (Haynes, 2011). The Nigerian industry is made up of "a shifting field of countless independent contractors" and is "openly commercial, culturally and ideologically dispersed, with tendencies towards sensationalism and stereotype" (McCall in Geiger, 2012:5). This shiftiness and 'disorder' has been the main criticism levelled against Nollywood (Okome, 1996). However, the same attributes have also been valorised as reflective of the radicalism of the industry, which goes against the canonised 'orderliness' that is seen in Western cinema (Geiger 2012). In so-being, Nollywood's mercantile video industry has resisted capitalist structuralism while simultaneously telling African stories that Africans in Nigeria and beyond identify with, showcasing Africa's successes: its landmark features, its successful persons and its traditional culture, contrary to stories of war, disease and poverty shown in foreign films (Haynes, 2011).

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[13] This Charter was adopted at the Second Congress of the Fédération Panafricaine des Cinéastes (FEPACI) held in Algiers on January, 1975.

The call for a revolutionary African Cinema as espoused in Third Cinema is largely idealistic. But simply because African film industries are not making commercial returns does not mean they do not need to be doing so. African cinema needs to move away from the "educational imperative" to "something more than dogmatic" (Harrow, 2013:ix). African filmmakers, like any others, need money to be able to make more films. They need competitive advantage in exhibition markets, especially within their geographical borders. African filmmakers have the choice to adopt these, or preside over a "megotage" industry instead of one that is robust and commercial. A services approach to film production has been proposed (Tomaselli, 2013; Mboti, 2011). Tomaselli and Mboti's studies within the University of KwaZulu Natal's (UKZN) Centre for Communication, Media and Society (CCMS) attempt to map the film services in Durban's film industry and to determine, therefore, Durban's 'film friendliness' and to what extent it is a film city (Mboti, 2011; Naidoo, 2012). This different approach is justified by the fact that "the economics of film and media are no longer subject to conventional economic theory as this industry draws also on cultural, social and creative/symbolic capital" (Tomaselli, 2013:238). This work marks a feasible and necessary localisation of Western theory to align it with African needs and available resources but for the benefit of Africans. The argument is that emphasis needs no longer be on individual products or content (for instance particular films) but on processes or services provided to production, including tax incentives, capacity building and loan financing. Filmmakers need to look at the film industry in a more holistic manner, appreciating that production initiatives alone are not adequate if the audience is not considered. Capacitating the exhibition end of the film value chain should, therefore be seen as also creating demand for production (Tomaselli, 2013). To exemplify, Tomaselli argues that small budget film productions can be stimulated by creating exhibition mini-complexes in the poorer high-density black suburbs that currently lack leisure time infrastructure. Although Tomaselli and Mboti's studies are based on the Durban film industry, as far as this current study is concerned, they carry important contributions to be extracted and applied to Zimbabwe's film industry. This study is embedded within this strand of scholarship with the aim of broadening knowledge in the area, particularly its applicability to Zimbabwe and in line with the main research question: *What are the key skills, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs exploited in the production of film/video in Zimbabwe?* An analysis of literature on Zimbabwean film will partly help respond to this question. The aim is not to eulogise Hollywood and South African film services industries while trashing all Zimbabwean efforts. It is acknowledged that the

circumstances underpinning all production endavours differ for various reasons. It remains a valid argument, however, that there are some best practices in the more advanced film industries that may be helpful in both the production and analysis of Zimbabwean cinematic fact.

Appropriating Nollywood

A discussion of 'African cinema' would not be complete without acknowledging the influences of the Nigerian industry, Nollywood. Nollywood has arguably become the most prominent 'cultural machine' in Africa (Krings and Okome, 2013). Nollywood is both a cultural and technological hybrid. It refers to films from diverse Nigerian cultures while at the same time combining film and video production techniques (Onuzulike, 2009). It has been there for some time, with scholars concurring that Kenneth Nnebue's (1992) *Living in Bondage* marked the birth of the Nollywood era (Onuzulike, 2009; Geiger, 2012; Haynes, 2011). The influences of Nollywood are so strong that for a good part of the 2000s, Zimbabweans referred to Nigerian films as 'African movies'. Whether this arose as a compliment or derogation, it has since become clear that the Nollywood imprint on the continent is significant. Mistry and Ellapen (2013) acknowledge the inspiration of Nollywood on other film industries, chiefly because of its unique mode of production, which is the epitome of the democratization of film technology in the post-colony. Resultantly, the Nollywood aesthetic and economy has been appropriated beyond the Nigerian borders, and served as a production/distribution and narrative model in countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and South Africa (Krings and Okome, 2013; Böhme, 2013) and, to some extent, even Europe and America (Hoffman, 2013; Samyn, 2013). In Tanzania, Nollywood films were dubbed with Swahili commentary to make them accessible to local audiences. The appeal of the films inspired the appropriation of Nollywood techniques and narrative in a uniquely Tanzanian context, now dubbed Bongo or Bongowood (see Bisschoff and Overbergh, 2012; Krings, 2013).

What Nollywood has offered the continent is the ability to harness few resources and tell stories that celebrate or illuminate local cultures, which in part has also been its underbelly (see Mistry and Ellapen, 2013). Nevertheless Nollywood, just like Hollywood before it, has transcended its own national boundaries to become more than a geographically located industry, but a transnational practice, such that some video-films can now be described as 'Nollywood-styled' (Krings and Okome, 2013:2). The Nigerian industry has thrived on the back of an informal economy and widespread adoption of digital technology, both of which

are immanent in Zimbabwe and most of the developing world. Nollywood is a perfect example of informality in film production as its activities occur around an unregulated "constellation of small enterprises, which disappear and reappear according to the economic conditions" (Jedlowski, 2013:27). Largely, Nollywood thrives on an entrepreneurial spirit driven by grassroots filmmakers in contrast to formal models that depend on state funding, broadcast commissioning and co-production (Mistry and Ellapen, 2013).

Nollywood offers an alternative self-determinism that contradicts the technological partenalism of the neo-colony in which the filmmaking agenda and technology was handed down from former colonial powers (Mistry and Ellapen, 2013). This evokes a critique of the NGO-funded films of the 1990s such as developed by several scholars on Zimbabwean cinematic fact (Mahoso, 2000; Fisher, 2010; Lazar, 2003). In this critique, the present emergence of alternative, cheaper film technology might be seen as a challenge to the old, elitist filmmaking agenda built around a nostalgia for the celluloid era, complete with its stringent entry conditions for would be upcoming film producers. There are many more aspects of Nollywood that are comparable to the Zimbabwean context. It is interesting in this study, to find out the extend to which the Zimbabwean cinematic fact has utilised the shadow economy model (Lobato 2012) as has been the case with Nollywood. Filmmakers in such a context can be described as "opportunistic" because they are not subordinate to institutional commandments (Mistry and Ellapen, 2013:51).

In terms of content, several scholars have identified the departure of Nollywood from Third Cinema-styled revisionist narratives to those inspired by immediate social and cultural conditions affecting people (Mistry and Ellapen, 2013; Geiger, 2012). It would be worthwhile in the context of the present study, to assess the extent to which the socio-cultural context also affects emergent narratives. Inspite of the vastness of scholarship on Nollywood, most of the academc focus seems to be on its distribution and exhibition value chains at the expense of production, with few exceptions (see for example Jedlowski, 2013). These exceptions include Jedlowski, who discusses the transnationalisation of the Nigerian film industry, giving examples of Nollywood films that employed transnational crews in their production as well as the increasing adoption of the diaspora as a production site and a market. Mistry and Ellapen (2013) also interrogate the relationship between production and content. An exploration of literature on Nollywood offers important insights as it reflects similarities in the production economies as well as narrative content. Lately, however, Nollywood is predicated on profit-

making, which may not be the case in the Zimbabwean context. The apparent dearth of literature on production contexts makes a study on the subject a much more necessary endeavour in broadening screen media studies. While there is a vast body of literature on the Nigerian film industry, the same cannot be said of Zimbabwe. This may be partly due to the fact that unlike Nigerian films, Zimbabwean productions have not found an easy route to a wider audience to sustain academic interest. Nevertheless, the knowledge emerging around the industry needs to be pushed further.

From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: A history of film production and use

As is the case elsewhere on the continent, it is difficult to separate discussions of a film industry in Zimbabwe from issues of race, power and colonial history. At the centre of such discussions would be questions such as: who owns the infrastructure? What role has history played in the distribution of technological and financial resources fundamental to the functioning of the industry? Analyses of Zimbabwe's film sector (for example Lazar, 2003; Fisher, 2010) are often entrapped in these issues and the bigger picture is likely to be missed. Political economy issues, though important, cannot be the sole parameters upon which the nature of the film industry in Zimbabwe is assessed. A cross sectional analysis of film services available throughout the history of filmmaking in Zimbabwe needs to be adopted. Such an analysis means a migration from content-based or genre-based, often narrow and simplistic assessments of the film industry, to a more robust appreciation of film services employed along the film value chain in different contexts. In this analysis, a film is not greater than the sum of its parts. This entails a holistic approach to the study of film akin to the hermeneutical circle in which to understand the whole, one has to understand its parts and vice-versa (Motahari, 2007). This section of the literature review confronts the epistemological tensions between filmic fact and cinematic fact arguments, as already highlighted above, but within the Zimbabwean geo-political space. Applying a film services approach to studying Zimbabwe's film industry is a process that includes acknowledging existing literature but sometimes deconstructing old viewpoints and reconstructing new ones. As outlined in Chapter One, the narrative of film production in Zimbabwe transitions through cyclical, sometimes overlapping periods beginning in the colonial era, through to the post-independence 'golden age' (Mboti, 2015), to the donor-funded initiatives of the 1990s (Fisher, 2010; Lazar, 2003) the post-2000 short film project (Mhiripiri, 2010) up to the current era characterised by both informality and indigeniety.

Apart from a few scholars (for instance Mhiripiri, 2010; Fisher, 2010; Mboti, 2015), most academic literature on Zimbabwean cinema dwells on thematic and aesthetic issues in filmic fact – the 'what', with little attention paid to the services or the broader contexts in which films are produced – the 'how' (Mhando, 2000b; Mhando, 2014). The literature concentrates on the filmic fact at the expense of the cinematic fact. As argued in this thesis, film scholarship needs to also consider contexts of production, not only film content. Mhando (2000b) puts this argument across thus:

> To understand the African film it is imperative to relate dynamics of culture to the period of its production. This means relating film to contemporary social relations, historical pressures, and technological innovations as well as to beliefs, attitudes and conceptualisations of people on whom the cinema is modelled[14].

The various accounts on film production in colonial Southern Rhodesia show that it was decidedly racist, both in industry structure and film content, and predominantly employed white capital and personnel in its production (Thompson, 2013; Hungwe, 2005). This is consistent with the ideology of the time but has had far-reaching implications in the development of the film and video production industry in the post-colonial nation. Conscious of this, some scholars draw comparisons between the propaganda films of the colonial era (and their production practices) and non-governmental organisation (NGO)-sponsored development support films in independent Zimbabwe (Lazar, 2003; Mahoso, 2000; Thompson, 2013). To establish the alleged similarities, it is necessary to trace the history of film production in Zimbabwe from its beginnings, exploring the nature of film services employed in the 'industry' over time. As stated earlier in this chapter, it can still be emphasised within the Zimbabwean context, that the uses to which film was put were directly related to the ideological rationale behind production. The politics of film production cannot be separated, therefore, from its end use. An effort is made in this part of the thesis, within the limits of available literature, to analyse how film was produced, linked to how film was employed pre- and post-independence.

The history of filmmaking in Zimbabwe can be traced back to 1935 under the auspices of the Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment (BEKE). There are various accounts on the constitution and funding of the BEKE. One version is that the experiment was funded by mining corporations in the Southern African region (Mboti, 2015). Other accounts suggest

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[14] From http://www.ed.mtu.edu/~khungwe/afrika/martin-mhando/southern-african-cinema.html

that the BEKE was the brainchild of an "ambitious but underfunded white farmer" (Lazar, 2003:4) or that it was "a project of the Department of Social and Industrial Research of the Geneva-based International Missionary Council […] with financial backing […] from the Carnegie Corporation of New York" (Smyth, 1988:286). It is not clear from these various accounts how BEKE was constituted or the means it employed in producing films, although it soon collapsed due to funding issues. Nevertheless, the BEKE formed the basis upon which the Colonial Film Unit (CFU) was established in 1939 (Hungwe, 1991, 2005). The CFU was an important institution in the history of film in what is Zimbabwe today, as various scholars consider it influential to the post-colonial didactic style of filmmaking (Lazar, 2003; Mahoso, 2000; Fisher, 2010).

The CFU was a brainchild of the British Ministry of Information and was mandated with the production of instructional and propaganda films that told stories of Britain's successes in the Second World War (Smyth, 1988; Hungwe, 1991 & 2005; Lazar, 2003; Vambe et al, 2007). The unit drafted a policy that separated the production means of film along racial lines. Under this policy, 16mm films were designed to 'develop' and 'civilise' natives (as the indigenous black people were derogatively called) while 35mm films were for overseas audiences, who were potential tourists (Mboti, 2015). Its films were documentary-type (for instance *Mr English at Home* and *A British Family in Peace and War*) and deliberately employed slow techniques, based on the producers' (William Sellers and George Pearson) assumptions about targeted African viewers:

> Sellers and Pearson worked out an elaborate theory of filmmaking for what they termed 'primitive audiences'. Their basic assumption was that the perception of moving images in film is something that is learned rather than inherent. The unit's films were required to be simple in content, slow in tempo and have considerable pictorial continuity. It was recommended that film techniques should not go beyond the viewer's experience and that the use of montage, flashbacks and magnification be avoided (Smyth, 1988:287).

By 1944, the unit had a collection of 115 films although it was not responsible for the production of all of them. The CFU, until its closure in 1955, had produced over 200 short films exhibited to black Africans through mobile cinema units. The unit's films fell into categories of "information, exhortation, goodwill and the Projection of England" (Smyth, 1988:287). Its administration largely mirrored shifts in British colonial policy. Originally, the unit was under the Ministry of Information but after the war, it came under the Films Division of the Central Office of Information funded through the Colonial Development and Welfare

Act and this time producing instructional films for Africans, with the stated objective being to "raise the primitive African to a higher standard of culture" (Smyth, 1988:292). In 1943, Treasury budgeted £24 000 towards that endeavour, which led to the setting up of two camera units and recruitment of additional staff, which by the end of 1943, numbered 23. The CFU employed production techniques assumed to be relevant to an illiterate African audience. The most common cinematographic techniques employed included "the use of close-ups, cross-cutting, short scenes and excessive movement within the frame" which were predominant in its first production, *Mr English at Home* (Rice, 2010[15]). A major weakness of the CFU films was the poor technical quality and lack of 'African footage'. The latter problem led to a compromise decision to appoint a Nigerian musician, Fela Sowande to join the unit in 1944 and "advise on African life and customs" (Smyth, 1988:293). Also, the Raw Stock Scheme was mooted, in which colonial information officers filmed footage on 16mm and sent it back to London for editing. The footage captured demonstrated the 'achievements' of colonial rule in the African colonies.

By 1950, the CFU came under the Colonial Office and had ceased production, concentrating instead on the establishment of local film units and training schools. The Gold Coast Film Unit, Nigerian Film Unit and the Jamaica Film Unit were set up under this programme. The plan was that by 1950, the respective local governments would take over the funding of these units with the CFU retreating to an advisory capacity (Rice, 2010). After the Second World War, the colonial government set up the Central African Film Unit (CAFU) in 1948, to produce 'educational' films in the British colonies of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland, now known as Malawi[16] (Burns 2003; Lazar 2003; Hungwe, 1991 & 2005; Vambe et al, 2007; Thompson, 2013; Mboti, 2015).

The CAFU, which was under the stewardship of Alan Izod, produced films about agricultural production, health and hygiene, among others. These films deliberately harped on the subject of agriculture as it was regarded as the mainstay of the Rhodesian economy (Vambe et al, 2007). The films were dominated by a "Mr Wise and Mr Foolish" motif underlined by "a persistent subtext of white authority" (Lazar, 2003:5). The narratives often contrasted the careful vs the careless, lazy African, with the careful "Mr Wise" scoring successes in whatever enterprise. Some of the titles made during this period included *The Two Farmers*

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[15] From http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/production-company/colonial-film-unit).

[16] These colonies were later amalgamated into a short-lived federation from 1953-63.

(1948/9) – a contrast between good and bad farming habits; *Mangwende and the Trees* (1949/50) and *Mujeji Builds a Bridge* (1948) – all about community development. Although the general thrust of the CAFU films was to persuade Africans towards colonial modernity, these narratives often met resistant audiences that perplexed the colonial administration. African viewers of colonial films developed defiant tastes and habits which hugely contradicted the expectations of the colonial administration (Burns, 2003).

Throughout the colonial era, films that were critical of white minority rule were banned, an example being Michael Raeburn's *Rhodesia Countdown* (1969), a satire on Ian Smith's racist regime (Hungwe, 2005; Thompson, 2013). The warped focus of colonial films was driven by "rigid misconceptions" on what film meant for Africans, who in turn "defied these expectations by developing autonomous tastes and habits" (Burns, 2003:131). There was a stark "contradiction between the lived reality and aspirations of the audience and those of institutional film-makers" (Hungwe, 2005:86). The historical narratives on the relationship between film production and consumption often disempower colonial African audiences, making them appear like zombies who had no capacity to autonomously decode film messages, a weakness acknowledged by some scholars (see Burns, 2003; Hungwe, 2005):

> scholars have paid relatively little attention to the ways in which non-Western peoples consumed these symbols and messages. The limited research that has been done has demonstrated that Africans embraced cinema on terms that often perplexed and frustrated colonial observers. The expectations of the Europeans who introduced cinema into Africa often foundered on the shoals of recalcitrant audiences. In the contest between the Europeans who showed movies in Africa and the Africans who watched them, cinema came to mean different things among diverse ethnic, social, and 'racial' communities (Burns, 2003:131).

The British government provided support to CAFU by channelling grants through the Colonial Development Welfare Fund (Hungwe, 1991). This also meant that the aim of CAFU films was that of 'community development,' although some observers argue that this focus was meant to make Africans less critical of their oppression by a white minority (Hungwe, 2005). In this view, colonial films were part of systematic efforts to annihilate African identity and culture, what Rwafa (2014) terms "cultural genocide". In pursuit of this strategy, the Department of Native Affairs "promoted written publications and films that painted a positive picture of the colonial government while presenting Africans as a people without culture and history" (Rwafa, 2014:108). Although this is not the main concern of this thesis, scholars writing about Zimbabwean cinema concur that, the main function of film before independence was propaganda (Mahoso, 2000; Hungwe, 1991 & 2005; Thompson, 2013) at

best meant to 'educate' and modernise 'illiterate Africans'. In line with this, colonial administrator S.A Hammond once said film was a way of "preparing Africans for "citizenship of the Empire"" (Thompson, 2013:33). As it was elsewhere on the continent, film was, therefore produced and used to justify the imperial project of colonial expansion and civilisation (Cham, 2002).

By 1953, the CAFU had produced 77 films. The composition of production crews usually included a white director/cameraman, an African interpreter and one or two African assistants (Hungwe, 1991:231). Mboti (2015) argues that it is during this period that the concept of film as an elite medium began. This argument is premised on the notion that films about 'natives' were made by touring production crews, and therefore film 'visited' its rural subjects who were not regarded as having their own stories to tell (Mboti, 2015:6). After 1956, the British government had withdrawn its funding from the CAFU, which subsequently moved to the Rhodesian Ministry of Information where it was used chiefly for propaganda purposes "to win the hearts and minds of the rural peasants" (Hungwe, 2005:85). Under the Ministry of Information, the unit made films (for instance *War on Terror*) designed to make Africans believe that the black guerrilla fighters were losing the fight against Rhodesian Front (RF) forces. The CAFU lasted until 1963 when the Federation fell apart. The period 1973-80 saw an influx in the production of war movies, focusing on the fight between colonial forces and the black nationalist guerrillas in Southern Rhodesia. The films depicted gory details of the bloody conflict with the aim to undermine the support for guerrilla fighters through terror tactics (Fredrikse, 1990; Hungwe, 2005). Hungwe describes this as the low point of film-making in Zimbabwe.

The dissolution of CAFU led to the establishment in 1963 of commercialised Central Film Laboratories (CFL) which remained one of the best film facilities on the continent until they shut down in 1996. The laboratories were opened "by a group of entrepreneurs" and were initially part of the CAFU but later commercialised in 1963 (Thompson 2013:37). The CFL were equipped with studios, animation facilities, audio production and projection facilities as well as offices, although they were designed to cater for the interests of a white if not international filmmaking minority (Mboti, 2015; Thompson 2013). John Riber, an American-born filmmaker confesses that he was attracted by the impression of the CFL to migrate to Zimbabwe (Riber, 2001). During his time in Zimbabwe, Riber and his wife Louis, through their Media for Development Trust (MFD), were involved in the production and distribution

of some of Zimbabwe's renowned movies such as *Jit*, *Everyone's Child*, *Neria*, *More Time* and *Yellow Card*, among others. Beyond the colonial era, the CFL were used in the production of independent Zimbabwe's first locally produced film, *Jit* (Michael Raeburn; 1990). For a facility dubbed "one of the most sophisticated on the continent" (Thompson, 2013:37) and hyped by Ukadike (1994) as "the African Hollywood", the CFL features too fleetingly in literature on Zimbabwean film production. The CFL is one of the most important post production film services. It is important in this study to find out more about its role in the history of film production in Zimbabwe, as well as the circumstances surrounding its closure and subsequently the effect on the film production sector in latter years. It is also onerous from the on-going historical accounts to glean information about the production processes of colonial cinema. The above-reviewed literature pays too much attention to filmic fact rather than cinematic fact, to use Stam et al's (1992) distinction. However, from a political economy approach, it is possible to establish the connection between film content and the context of production. From that analysis, there is nothing unusual about colonial films advancing colonial interests because there is a symbiotic relationship between film production and content. It is therefore the aim of this study to explain the relationship between film services and thematic issues in varying contexts.

Historical literature on Rhodesian/Zimbabwean film does not adequately clarify how films were produced. It is not evident, from this literature, what technology was harnessed towards production. Neither are other film services, besides funding, adequately discussed. Instead, the literature focuses on ideological contestations surrounding colonial film. A film services orientation is, therefore made necessary by this obvious shortcoming. As a result of the above, most analyses of Zimbabwean film, just like elsewhere on the continent, exhaust their efforts on apportioning all blame for current failures of film industries in Africa to imagined or real ideological conspiracies by Western powers (see Hungwe, 1991 & 2005; Vambe et al, 2007). Film has been linked with perceived efforts by the West to effect 'regime change' in the country (see Rwafa, 2014; Mahoso, 2000). This school of thought, now dubbed 'Mugabeism' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009) appears to have slowly crept into academia, the effect being to reduce most analyses of cultural products into binaries pitting blacks against whites or indigenous versus foreign ideas (Thompson, 2013). There could be some credence in historian Terrence Ranger's (1998:261) argument that "there could be a history of whites in Africa that is also not a history of colonialism". Mugabeism may miss some positive developments ushered into the film industry through local-global partnerships, such as the

famous donor funded films of the 1990s, which are the subject of numerous academic discussions on Zimbabwean cinema (see Mhiripiri, 2010; Fisher, 2010; Mahoso, 2000; Lazar, 2003; Thompson, 2013; Hungwe, 2005). It can be argued that this period, characterised by donor-funded cinematic fact, resulted in the production of some of Zimbabwe's most popular films such as *Neria*, *Flame* and *Everyone's Child* among others. Although Mahoso (2000) considers the films to be an extension of colonial propaganda, his observation is oblivious of the fact that, among other things, this epoch offered an opportunity for first time indigenous actors and directors, for instance Olley Maruma, who directed *After the Hunger and Drought* (1985), Isaac Mabhikwa (*More Time*) and Godwin Mawuru (*Neria*).

Film production in post-colonial Zimbabwe: The early years

The available body of literature distinguishes between various models of funding adopted by the film production industry since the attainment of independence in 1980. This literature follows the cycles that Zimbabwean filmmaking has witnessed over the years, as highlighted in Chapter One. Three models of funding are apparent, namely: government funding, NGO funding and self-funding. Government funding is associated with the films made soon after independence, particularly the Hollywood film *Cry Freedom* (Attenborough, 1987), whose production the state directly co-financed (Hungwe, 2005; Thompson, 2013). The movie turned out to be what Jehoshua Eliashberg et al (2005) term a 'ten-ton turkey'[17] as, out of the its US$22 million budget, the film grossed less than US$6 million, with the Zimbabwean government having injected US$5.5 million (Hungwe, 2005). The massive loss suffered by the Zimbabwean government was one normally described by filmmakers as a Type II error, that of investing too much into a movie that earns too little (Eliashberg et al., 2005).

It appears the government's involvement in film was motivated by a dual desire to earn profit as well as goodwill for the country. As part of this initiative, the government in 1987 drafted a document titled *Why you should film in Zimbabwe*, which marketed the country as an ideal film-making venue (Hungwe, 2005; Thompson, 2013). This initiative targeted Hollywood companies, such as the Cannon Group, which produced *King Solomon's Mines* (Lee Thompson, 1985) and *Allan Quartermain and the Lost City of Gold* (Nelson, 1987) and Universal Pictures, which produced *Cry Freedom* (Attenborough, 1987). These productions became the first Hollywood films to be shot in Zimbabwe (Hungwe, 2005). It has to be stated that while this was happening the ZANU-PF government continued to produce and use film

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[17] A film that flops miserably at the box office.

for propaganda purposes as had been done by the colonial regime before it. For instance, a document authored by the party about the first five years of independence recorded that:

> Since independence the [mobile cinema] units have taken round over 100 new films. The films are in various categories intended to:-
>
> - improve the lives of the masses;
>
> - broaden the knowledge of the country and its leaders;
>
> - reinforce and supplement work of government and non-government field workers; and
>
> - educate them on government's national policies (ZANU-PF, n.d:114).

Most of the films described above were made by Production Services, a unit in the Department of Information, akin to the film units of colonial times. The Central Film Laboratories (CFL) owned by the government (49 percent) and the Industrial Development Corporation (51 percent) were also instrumental.

The early years of filmmaking in Zimbabwe had some benefits for the industry. Regional and international filmmakers thronged the CFL to process their films, with the Zimbabwean government making it mandatory that filmmakers who shot their films in the country should process them at the CFL (ZANU-PF, n.d:121). Despite financial losses suffered by the government, there was some investment in film infrastructure and capacity development of local filmmakers (Thompson, 2013). For instance, many actors who featured in *King Solomon's Mines* proceeded to have successful careers in film and television. Godwin Mawuru did some camera training in *World Apart* (Menges, 1988) and subsequently became a successful director (Mboti, 2015). He later directed the popular *Neria* (1992) and Zimbabwe's first soap opera, *Studio 263*. Olley Maruma, who later directed *The Assegai* (1982) and *Consequences* (1988), was assistant director in *Allan Quartermain and the Lost City of Gold*. David Guwaza, who had a part in *Cry Freedom* was art director in *More Time* (1993) and production designer in *Yellow Card* (2000). Dominic Kanaventi, who also took part in *Cry Freedom*, was the lead actor in *Neria*, while Walter Muparutsa who acted in *Cry Freedom* later had major roles in *Everyone's Child*, *The Last Picture* (1997) and *Yellow Card* (Thompson, 2013). Despite these successes, critics have pointed out that Zimbabweans had minor roles in the Hollywood productions and this did not offer immense benefit to the film industry. For instance, Mabhikwa, Choga and Kagure had 'silent' roles in *King Solomon's Mines*, while Chigorimbo was merely third assistant director in the same film, in *Cry Freedom* and in the 1986 film *Jake Speed* directed by Andrew Lane (Mboti, 2015).

A major discussion among scholars on Zimbabwean film is whether or not the state ought to have prolonged its involvement in the film industry. For instance, Thompson (2013:38) worries that the government did not formulate a film or cultural policy pursuant to *Why you should film in Zimbabwe*. Hungwe (2005:88) argues that the government's withdrawal was a result of being "stung" by commercial losses associated with *Cry Freedom*. While these accounts provide important information towards understanding government's role in film, they do not offer a holistic analysis of the role of 'film services' in the industry. The major aspect discussed in these accounts is funding, but another critical issue such as regulation, for instance, is not tackled. Such obsessions with only financial aspects of film administration have led to complaints that "stories were told through the eyes of white producers simply because they had the finances" (Thompson, 2013:45). What happened to the production facilities such as the CFL that were employed back then? What happened to the locations? These, among other issues, need serious interrogation.

The era of donor funded film production in Zimbabwe

The late 1980s to 1990s saw an influx in Zimbabwean film production, largely through sponsorship by Western development aid organisations such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), Ford Foundation and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), among others (Lazar, 2003; Thompson, 2013). These non-governmental organisations (NGOs) naturally filled the gap created by the government's withdrawal of support to the film industry and numerous films were produced as a result. Despite the evident quantitative successes, some scholars argue that Zimbabwean cinema (cinematic fact) in this period, was on the decline (Burns, 2003; Mboti, 2015). Mboti suggests that the reason for this decline was that the NGO films were mere 'delivery vans' of message more than anything. As evidenced by the closure of the CFL in 1996, the period did not grow any infrastructure that could support film production. Well-equipped studios (for instance Mighty Movies) engaged in the production of commercials and corporate videos instead (Riber, 2001; Mboti, 2015). Only recently, has Mighty Movies diversified into film production with titles such as *Lobola* and *The Gentleman* being the major highlights.

There is considerable literature on the role of NGOs in funding the Zimbabwean film sector in the late 1980s to 1990s (Fisher, 2010; Mhiripiri, 2010; Lazar, 2003; Mahoso, 2000; Hungwe, 2005; Thompson, 2013; Mboti 2015). Most of these analyses treat this as an

important era in the narrative of Zimbabwean filmmaking, for different reasons. For some, this period marked a continuation of colonial style educational filmmaking and its institutional arrangements (Lazar, 2003; Mhando, 2000; Mahoso, 2000) while for some it ushered in a fresh impetus of indigenous film production (Thompson, 2013; Fisher, 2010). The donor initiatives utilised a rights-based approach in which film production was used as a vehicle to disseminate information about human rights such as property rights (*Neria*), gender equality (*Flame, Neria*) as well as social messages on HIV/Aids and teenage pregnancy (*Yellow Card, More Time*). Other films in the same bracket include *Consequences* (Maruma, 1988), *More Time* (Mabhikwa, 1993), *Everyone's Child* (Dangarembga, 1996) and *Keeping a Live Voice: 15 Years of Democracy in Zimbabwe* (Spicer, 1995), among others (Hungwe, 2005). Their primary concern was "message rather than profit" (Hungwe, 2005:88).

Donor-funded film production needs to be understood in the wider scope of Western-aid initiatives given impetus by the Cold War (Hungwe, 2005). They were part of a broader development agenda whose latent and manifest functions had varying implications. As such, donor-sponsored film production was not unique to Zimbabwe alone but was part of:

> a wider trend emerging in the early 1990s across the eastern and southern regions of Africa, in which European and American funded NGOs produced pedagogically oriented documentaries and fiction films dealing with human rights, in relation to issues such as inheritance law, teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, linked by the social and economic growth of the continent (Fisher, 2010:112).

The "message rather than profit" scheme fitted well into the development ideology that reproduced political hegemony (of post-colonial nationalist movements and former colonisers) without bringing economic transformation (Ake, 1996). As a result, filmmakers who were active during this otherwise 'successful' era, had very little to show for it, as "the majority were treated merely as cheap labor" (Thompson, 2013:47). From this perspective, development-oriented films could be considered as part of development discourse, which "has produced and constructed the third world as underdeveloped, placing it in a hierarchical and unequal relationship to the first world, and […] continues to justify and legitimise the right of the North to intervene in, control and develop the South" (Abrahamsen, 2000:1). The NGO-sponsored films were at the centre of a development communication strategy which placed film at the centre of development initiatives. At the root of the strategy lay development guru Erskine Childers' view that "no innovation, however brilliantly designed […] becomes development until it has been communicated" (Colle, 2002:9). Films were, therefore viewed as accelerative means to diffuse innovations on development related issues

as well as solutions to social problems such as the HIV/Aids pandemic. The fact that the films did not go beyond a certain time span was consistent with development communication thinking of diffusion-cycles foreseen in the planning stages of such strategy. Observers often criticise this lack of continuity in the strategy as having led to the development of a film industry sustained by the ability to draft fundable project proposals (see Chapters Five and Six of this thesis).

Filmic fact comparisons have been drawn between these didactic-socially-oriented donor films and those produced by the CAFU in the colonial era (Hungwe 2005; Lazar 2003; Fisher 2010). Fisher (2010:112) observes that: "the films emerge as the heir to the colonial cinema represented by CAFU, in which the social message supersedes every other aspect of the films' production." A fierce critic of the NGO-funded films, Mahoso (2000:211) complains that the 'development' films employed 'centralised distance in their determination to convey singular messages.

> What my complaint means is that 'development' is an ideology, a metanarrative of the North about the South. It is presented as an objective techno-scientific process when in fact it is a moral, ethical and political stance which the North assumed when it discovered the 'Third World' as a problem after World War II. All films, books and stories whose narrative is about 'development' in Zimbabwe tend to narrow rather than open up the discourse about our condition (Mahoso, 2000:217).

Mahoso argues that 'development' films cast African knowledge systems as backward compared to 'modern' and 'progressive' Western values. The symbolic and narrative techniques used in these films therefore employ binaries that play up this dichotomy of traditional versus modern and internal problems in Africa vs external intervention. Numerous contesting arguments, however, could be raised from filmic fact perspectives similar but parallel to Mahoso's. For instance, Terrence Ranger (1998:267), commenting on Dangarembga's film *Everyone's Child,* observes:

> Whites figure only marginally in her film. When the country boy goes off to Harare in search of work and becomes a member of a street gang, whites figure only as people to rob, and even then the old white woman whom the gang intimidates is an impoverished pensioner rather than a multinational fat cat. All the holders of power in the film are black—prison wardens and governors, dangerously well-qualified black women counsellors or personal assistants to employers. It made me think that more or less despite themselves, whites in Zimbabwe are being given the gift of powerlessness.

This obsession with textual, race-based analyses of the film industry, as highlighted in Chapter Two of this thesis, often misses the point. It does not help explain the status of the film industry in economic terms at any given time.

The Harare-based Media for Development Trust (MFD/MDT), headed by John and Louise Riber, features prominently in discussions on donor-funded film production in Zimbabwe. MFD was part of the Media for Development International (MFDI) founded by Americans Steve and Sally Smith who were "normally responsible for the logistical and administrative aspects of the productions" (Entertainment Education 2000:18). MFDI was also an umbrella organisation set up by the Development through Self Reliance (DSR), an organisation promoting development in the developing world (Fisher, 2010). To underline the organisation's importance, Mboti (2015:13) describes the period 1990-2000 as an "MDT decade." The organisation is hailed for its provision of opportunities to local acting and technical talent. However it is equally criticised for monopolising available funds and not sharing them with African filmmakers. For instance, Olley Maruma, the director of *Consequences,* whose copyright is held by MFD, complained that he earned only Z$50 000, when the film had grossed between Z$15-16 million (Thompson, 2013:77).

From an economic perspective, the donor-initiative did not succeed in growing a film industry (Mboti, 2015), although so far, the reasons have not been clearly spelt out. In this study an analysis of film services employed in *Everyone's Child*, one of the donor-funded films, may help find answers. Critics, such as Ben Zulu, interviewed by Hungwe (2000) allege that the donor-funded films were not industry films, they were not commercially driven and, therefore, not sustainable:

> We feel that those kinds of films are not industry films. You can't sustain them. It's a question of, there is a problem, give me some money. All these films like *Yellow Card*, they are all development films. Some of the films were funded for anthropological reasons showing an aspect of African life that was unique and so on. Normally the people who funded those films had an academic or romantic notion of Africa. But they were not industry films. They were not making films that were a work of art and culture and would be picked up for commercial distribution so that they would build a sizeable audience[18].

Zulu's complaint tallies with Mhando's (2000) assessment that post-independence didactic filmmaking, like the colonial films "often emphasises content over artistic and cultural

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[18] From http://www.ed.mtu.edu/~khungwe/afrika/kedmon-hungwe/african-movies-and-global-mainstream.html

influences and styles[19]". The main complaint arising from the above observations is, again a race/regional issue - that the film services industry was not 'localised' enough as indigenous (black) people had very little significance in the productions they worked in (Lazar, 2003; Thompson, 2013). Tsitsi Dangarembga, who directed *Everyone's Child* has made a similar complaint, saying that the film was not one she would have wanted to make (Lee, 2006; Nichols, 1997; Thompson, 2013). She said: "It was really one of those NGO, "teach the people how to behave"-type things, and I needed work, and I needed to graduate, so I did it. But it's not the kind of thing I like to do" (Lee 2006:135).

That the donor funded films are considered "the post-colonial equivalents of the CAFU films" (Fisher, 2010:113) becomes a non-sequitur from a film services orientation. The important factor is that the era ushered in a critical mass of resources and expertise from which the industry could develop further. The period saw the emergence of many black actors and filmmakers, some of whom had honed their talent and skill on the sets of Hollywood movies filmed in Zimbabwe soon after independence. Most of these aspiring filmmakers were spurred on by the flux of production aided by donor funds. Fisher (2010) acknowledges a radical shift in the deployment of local personnel and content which made the 'NGO films' resonate with their cultural context. Unlike the CAFU films, the NGO-funded productions were imbued with a "post-colonial hybridity" (Fisher, 2010:112) drawn from and appealing to a larger collective. For instance, for *Yellow Card*, the director of photography and the sound engineer were the only foreigners, as the aim of the film was "to build a local film industry" (Entertainment Education: 2000). International donor agency Pathfinder International raised US$1.2 million for the film project. The alleged 'failure' of the NGO-initiative is not adequately examined because scholarship around the issue tends to dwell on filmic rather than cinematic fact. A film services approach, such as suggested in this thesis, moves beyond the racial composition of the industry to consider how friendly the conditions were for filmmaking in the country.

The post-2000 short films and other initiatives

Zimbabwe's film industry after 2000 is characterised by the short film and other low budget initiatives. As Peter Rorvick (2012) observes generally about low budget filmmaking, more African stories are being told and watched, while there is huge potential for cultural and

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[19] From http://www.ed.mtu.edu/~khungwe/afrika/martin-mhando/southern-african-cinema.html

economic empowerment. Structured along roughly similar grounds, Zimbabwe's film industry is constituted informally, making it a difficult sector to study, as Mboti (2015:3) observes:

> The task of researching the Zimbabwean film industry is made more difficult by the paucity of data on the local film industry. Industry stakeholders are dispersed and difficult to track down systematically. Instruments for methodically and rigorously surveying the state of the industry have not yet been devised. There is also no central film organisation, such as a Film Commission, tasked with collecting systematic data and intelligence on the industry.

The current study attempts to address this void by documenting historical and current data on Zimbabwe's film industry and mapping its complementary services. Post-2000, the story of Zimbabwe's film and television production industry has been about survival. There have been fundamental transformations, mainly precipitated by the country's political and socio-economic strife discussed in Chapter One, as Hungwe (2005:88) puts it:

> Over the last five years, the positive image of the country that was carefully nurtured in the 1980s has degenerated. The country has plunged into economic and political turmoil. Production by corporate agencies has fizzled out. What remains is limited production funded by Western donor agencies, and even these productions have mostly moved to neighbouring countries, mainly South Africa.

The impression one gets from a cursory perusal of available literature is that there is something drastically 'wrong' about the film industry. Most prominent filmmakers (predominantly Whites) have left the country, while many more have passed away. For instance, John and Louise Riber moved to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Ingrid Sinclair and Simon Bright moved to England, while Olley Maruma, Walter Mparutsa, Garikayi Chawasarira and Ben Zulu have passed away (Thomspon, 2013). This means Zimbabwe is now deprived of some of its major film service providers and this supposedly contributes towards the retardation of the film industry. From a film services approach, however, this should not matter as the emphasis is on systems rather than individuals (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005). Given that scenario, does Zimbabwe, therefore have a film (services) industry? This is also the point of departure for Nyasha Mboti in his paper titled: *The Zimbabwean film industry*. In responding to that question, Mboti (2015:1) states that the Zimbabwean film industry is "a work in progress" and is in "a search for itself"'. He also points out that if one were to use the contexts of privileged economies to define industry, then Zimbabwe would be said to have no film industry. The shadow economy concept as applied

to cinema (Lobato, 2012) may help in the study of informally constituted 'industries' such as Zimbabwe's cinematic fact.

Zimbabwe has not pursued the benefits of earlier periods and has not integrated film into any of its cultural polices (Thompson 2013). Film is treated as a 'sub-sector' of a gamut of creative arts which include music, literary arts, performing arts, media and cultural heritage (Culture Fund, 2009). A baseline survey by the Culture Fund (2009) does acknowledge film services as key constituents of the film sub-sector. Script writers, actors, directors, producers, costume designers, lighting engineers, camera operators, floor managers, editors, film festivals, cinemas houses, financiers, government departments and donors, are all listed as part of the 'sub-sector' (Culture Fund, 2009). The Culture Fund survey is one of the most important and most recent administrative researches covering the film sector. However, a bias towards quantitative methodology renders the survey largely descriptive and less explanatory. This leads to the assumption that "there is no industry to talk about" (Culture Fund, 2009:48; see also IMPI, 2014). This sweeping statement ignores the informal arrangements currently constituting the film services industry in Zimbabwe. Filmmaking needs not be formal as "the majority of the work that goes into making movies is done by hundreds of small businesses and independent contractors hired by studios" (Clouse, 2012:17). Employing a qualitative approach in the study of the film sector in Zimbabwe, as is the case in this study, is bound to yield more in-depth data.

The Culture Fund's study also lacks a conceptual framework which makes it de-contextual. In comparison, a British Council toolkit by BOP Consulting (2010:41) on mapping creative industries, recommends a Creative Business Models Framework which acknowledges the existence of creative content, creative services, creative originals and creative experiences. Infact, the major weakness of the Culture Fund survey is that of trying to do too much at the same time. The scope of its research, that of 'creative arts' is too wide to adequately scrutinise the film industry, which by itself is quite wide ranging. A study that maps the arrangements (both formal and informal) constituting Zimbabwe's film sector, particularly production, is therefore necessary. Such a study should not be limited to formal establishments specific to the film production only, as the sector touches and is touched by many other industries (Clouse, 2012).

In spite of the current informal nature of the Zimbabwean film industry, there have been attempts, albeit short-lived, by filmmakers to consolidate their appeals for support from government. This was the case in the 1980s to 1990s, when the Zimbabwe Film and Video Association (ZFVA), led by producer Simon Bright and the African Script Development Fund, headed by Ben Zulu, were formed (Hungwe, 2000). Zulu argued that African films did not need to restrict themselves to donor funding. He pointed out that African screenwriters needed to be encouraged to be creative rather than to write towards a particular message as dictated by donors. Recently, there have been renewed calls for a national film commission/board underlined by the need to treat film as a business (IMPI, 2014). There are many more refreshing aspects of current filmmaking initiatives. Unlike the CFU films earlier, the use of cinematographic techniques in the post-2000 short films is more sophisticated (Mhiripiri, 2010), perhaps as an acknowledgement of the visual literacy of latter day audiences. The films sometimes employ local languages, allowing the actors to be more natural (Thompson, 2013).

In 2012, the Zimbabwe Film Makers Guild approached the government urging it to provide more support to the film sector (Mboti, 2015), while in 2013, a Zimbabwe Film Industry Development Committee submitted to government, a proposal for the establishment of a National Film Board (IMPI, 2014). The board's objectives would include lobbying for state support, promoting training, creating a national film fund and promoting Zimbabwean films locally and abroad (IMPI 2014). According to the Zimbabwe government's website, the government expressed its commitment to the film industry with Permanent secretary in the then ministry of Information, Media and Publicity, George Charamba, saying "I refuse to accept the view that Government has no funds for the film sector because I believe that the image of Zimbabwe is a public good for which the Government should find resources" (www.zim.gov.zw).

The role of government in film production, however, should not be limited to the provision of funds but should also extend to the creation of an environment that enables growth of the industry. It should be "aimed at enabling clustering and inter-firm collaboration to generate demand for services" (Tomaselli and Mboti, 2013:13). In the Zimbabwean context, this might include a revamp of the national broadcaster ZBC, as well as review of current legislation such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Broadcast Services Act and the Censorship Act. AIPPA, for instance created the Zimbabwe Media Commission, which licences media houses (including those engaged in film and video production). Media

houses are expected to pay levies in order to be licensed and in some cases, these levies are prohibitive. The BSA, through the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) on the other hand, has been accused of creating a monopoly of state funded broadcasting by preventing alternative perspectives (Thompson, 2013). This naturally limits the exhibition opportunities for filmmakers. Both legislations make citizenship a condition for participating in media production (Thompson, 2013). The Censorship Act is also restrictive on creative aspects. For instance, it prohibits on- screen kissing in cinematic productions (Culture Fund, 2009:50). A film services approach to studying film production would be far reaching and would encompass analyses of policy issues highlighted above, because policy has a role in the success or failure of any industry. Besides policy framework, the industrial value chain and networks that link the industry within cities, would also be considered. Focus is not on individual film projects but on intermediate inputs, organisational arrangement and expertise harnessed in developing the projects (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005). Mhiripiri (2010) makes close reference to this viewpoint when he discusses the impact of Zimbabwe's post-2000 economic crisis on the nation's cinema. He argues that:

> International film-makers are reluctant to invest in the Zimbabwean film industry at the moment because of the perceived absence of protection of private property. Insurance companies are not prepared to insure world-renowned actors and film personnel or capital-intensive equipment due to the real or imagined high-risk status of the country (Mhiripiri 2010:96).

Zimbabwe is no longer regarded as a film friendly location, having been overtaken by South Africa in that regard (Thompson, 2013:168). This new state-of-affairs has, however ushered in a new breed of (mostly black) indigenous straight to video (STV) film producers. The straight to video films, as Ramon Lobato (2012:34) generally observes "are a curious combination of mass and flexible production tendencies, pumped out in large numbers by small studios to a reliable formula". It is worth pursuing how this new breed of filmmakers has fared. Tsitsi Dangarembga argues that because of indigenisation drive in production, the film industry has become more rooted in the people (Thompson, 2013). The short films have been celebrated for not being entrapped by donor funding, although they sometimes access it. They have maintained some 'artistic and creative licence' (Mhiripiri, 2010:95). This indigenisation turn, however has had its own challenges. Issues of quality remain a talking point while the informal nature of the industry presents problems for collection of data on the sector (Mboti, 2015).

Adverse economic conditions and the resultant migration of expertise have meant that emerging Zimbabwean filmmakers are less and less capacitated to make feature-length films and instead, have tended to specialise in short films (Mhiripiri 2010; Thompson 2013). The short film genre has become a "genre of convenience" (Mhiripiri, 2010:91-2) but has opened up the industry to many more players (Mboti, 2015). The Zimbabwe International Film Festival's (ZIFF) Short Film Project (SFP) was the traditional financier of these 'shorties' just after 2000. As Mhiripiri (2010:92) observes, beyond the economic crisis, what now needs to be investigated is "whether such film-makers only chose the short film as a convenient response to the Zimbabwean crisis or whether they were indeed exploring the aesthetic and narrative possibilities of the genre". A film services approach would be useful in this endeavour, but from a more futuristic perspective: first, to determine the trajectory that the film industry has taken after the short film era. Are short films still popular? What are the implications of conditions that necessitated the short film genre, to current production efforts? Second, to assess the viability of alternative feature genres in spite of economic difficulties, which are still prevailing in Zimbabwe. The ability by Zimbabwean filmmakers to sustain the industry during the economic crisis, with whatever shortcomings, suggests that economic or financial issues alone cannot explain the success or failure of an industry. While some current literature somewhat discusses contemporary filmmaking efforts, it is largely anecdotal and still sparse, providing greater justification for this thesis.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed literature on global, continental film and Zimbabwean. From a global perspective, the film industries are structured and aspire to function like Hollywood. For this reason, some observers see Hollywood as extending the cultural imperialism of the United States of America. However the interconnectedness of film industries worldwide, can also be considered as part of a global Hollywood, which is geographically dispersed for the benefit of 'local' industries. Most developing industries benefit from this relationship by engaging in co-productions with Hollywood. The principals of the 'global Hollywood' thesis by Goldsmith et al (2010) stands in stark contrast with the aspirations of developing world filmmakers, particularly Africans. Due to the colonial history of Africa, filmmakers on the continent constantly suspect ill motives in global arrangements involving developed nations. Some African filmmakers are generally opposed to these partnerships as they perceive them to be unfairly constituted. This spirit of suspicion on one hand and radical thinking on the other, has led to African and other developing world filmmakers gravitating towards a

political style of cinema – Third Cinema. Although the principals of Third Cinema may be justified by history, there is also need for third world filmmakers to be forward-looking and not remain fixated on the past, as Harrow (2007; 2013) encourages. A politically conscious cinema is achievable but should also strive for commercial success as is increasingly becoming evident in Nollywood. A film services approach to analysing film industry may also help filmmakers to move forward. This approach, while borrowing from tenets of the global Hollywood thesis can be localised and help stakeholders in the film industries to appreciate the components of the industry besides its products.

On the film industry in Zimbabwe, it has been observed that the Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment, Colonial Film Unit and the Central African Film Unit employed production techniques that suited the end target of their films – the 'natives'. There are continuities between colonial film production style and post-colonial practices, particularly in the 1990s, when film production was supported by international development agencies. This chapter also highlights that most literature on the Zimbabwean film industry explores filmic fact issues of textual representation as well as ideological concerns of the industry at the expense of the cinematic fact. The issue of race is evidently contentious in most narratives on film production in Zimbabwe. In an attempt to break away from this patter, the chapter builds a rationale for the use of a film services approach in studying Zimbabwe's film production industry. This approach needs to be supported by the shadow economy concept and political economy concept for it to be more in-depth. These approaches are discussed at length in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER THREE:

Theorising Zimbabwean Film Production:

Intersections of Economy and Ideology

This study explores the film services employed in the production of four selected films made in Zimbabwe, and examines the link between these services and the themes of the respective films. The study is informed broadly by film services and political economy approaches. The shadow economy theory complements these theories to analyse some informal aspects of Zimbabwe's film production industry[20]. The film services approach is a fairly recent concept, and is concerned with the skills, infrastructure and networks supporting a film industry (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005). The rationale behind a film services approach to studying film in this thesis is more than merely prescriptive. The endeavour is not to prescribe how films should be made in Zimbabwe, but also to consider why films have historically been produced in the manner they are – hence a political economy approach. This theoretical approach is thus an eclectic mix between economic and ideological analyses.

A value chain analysis is the entry point of this discussion as it helps distinguish the production stage from other stages of the film value system. These are only some of the concepts that can be used to analyse film industries and products. They are, however, not exhaustive. Many other approaches can be used to study film: for instance, Martin Mhando (2000) has proposed a cultural studies perspective. The challenge of theory lies in attempting to contextualise, Africanise or nationalise/localise concepts that are originally Western. Film scholars (Willemen 2006; Crofts 2006; Rosen 2006) have shown as much in the important text: *Theorising National Cinema.*

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[20] Since the contentions of 'industry' in the study of film production in Zimbabwe have been foregrounded in Chapter Two, the insistence on the use of the term industry henceforth, is only a theoretical premise. In this case, the film production industry is taken to mean that sector which produces filmic fact texts. This sector is made up of various service providers; hence a film production industry is, in actual fact, a film production services industry. The terms may therefore be used interchangeably to mean more or less the same thing.

Most of the celebrated theories and paradigms employed in media studies originate from privileged Western contexts. The conditions assumed in these concepts, however, may be far removed from the African reality largely because "African communication scholars have not yet developed authentic theories of African communication" (Okigbo, 1987:19). For instance, analyses borrowed from the Frankfurt and Birmingham Schools inform most media and cultural studies on the continent (Tomaselli, Mboti and Rønning, 2013). One may also appreciate this predicament because the very media that communication theory seeks to study are largely Western phenomena. This is especially the case for film/video[21]. The task in this chapter, therefore, is not just to apply theory, but also to critique it based on practical realities. The approach adopted in this chapter allows for the compensation of the weaknesses of certain theories by the strengths of others. Such an approach is one described as theoretical triangulation in research (Denzin, 1970; Bryman, 1988).

The contestations surrounding 'African' and 'national' cinema have to some degree been discussed in Chapter Two. However, the scope of 'Zimbabweanness' remains problematic in the quest to theorise Zimbabwean cinematic fact. Claiming film services, film texts and film audiences as Zimbabwean is in itself, a 'nationalistic' discourse. There exists a dialectical relationship between the individuality of film projects and their bounding to a specific political economy. Although film texts are unique unto themselves, they also belong to a historiography of cultural practices, discourses, ideology and administrative regimes deployed within a geographical space and economic system identified as Zimbabwe. A film is an economic commodity with an exchange value, but it is also an ideological product. Films are therefore part of an economic and ideological system from which they cannot escape:

> No film-maker can, by his own individual efforts, change the economic relations governing the manufacture and distribution of his films […] because every film is part of the economic system, it is also part of the ideological system, for 'cinema' and 'art' are branches of ideology. None can escape: somewhere, like pieces in a jigsaw, all have their own allotted place (Comolli and Narboni, 1993:45).

Film is a product of imagination as well as political and intellectual practice (Cham, 2002). As such, the endeavour to explore Zimbabwe's film services is one that considers "the apparatuses of discourse, technologies and institutions" which produce Zimbabwean "national culture" (Morley and Robins, 2006:294). Such services are assumed to be different

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[21] The terms film and video are used indiscriminately in this thesis. Although technically they are different genres, they are fundamentally similar audio-visual means of capturing and disseminating content.

from those in other nations, and this difference in itself constitutes a distinct Zimbabwean identity.

A discussion of the value chain, especially in the context of production is given by Bakker (2008):

> The value chain can be separated into the providers of finance; the makers of the technological equipment such as cameras, projectors and film stock; the suppliers of materials for film production; the creative and technical inputs used in film production; film production itself; the printing of film positives; the distribution of positives and the exhibition of films and the film consumers (Bakker, 2008:179).

Of the above services or activities, finance, technological equipment provision, the supply of materials for film production as well creative and technical inputs, fall within the 'production context' of film production and are, therefore key to this study. Production can be defined as "the activities needed to produce one copy (or, in industry terms, one 'print') of the movies" (Eliashberg et al, 2005:2). The process of production itself involves pre-production, production and post-production, and it begins with the acquisition of a story concept and rights thereof (Rea and Irving, 2001; Eliashberg et al, 2005; Finney, 2010). Because film production is intensive business in Hollywood, production costs are usually higher than in the developing world. The average cost of making a major Hollywood studio movie in 2006 was $100.3 million, with $65.8 million going towards production alone (Young et al, 2008). In comparison, a South African film costs between R9-20 million to produce (Young, 2013). These figures have ballooned to date as films utilise more studio time on special effects.

The different stages of the value chain can further be broken down into more specific chains, for instance the production value chain. A production value chain relates to all activities that occur to add value to a film within a production context (Refer to Fig. 1.1 in Chapter One).

The "typical film" and Zimbabwe's film value system
Film production is collaborative work, which ideally involves hierarchies of mixed, "industrialized, theatrical and artisanal practices" (Naremore, 2004:9). To appreciate Zimbabwe's film production industry, it is necessary to disaggregate its components or services – hence a value chain analysis (Porter, 1985). The value chain concept is widely credited to Michael Porter (1985) and has largely been employed in commerce to study the firm and its competitive advantage. The same concept can be adapted to the analysis of a whole industry (Bloore, 2009; Finney, 2010), although this has been criticised for being too broad (Porter, 1985). A value chain is a collection of activities "performed to design, produce,

market, and deliver a product" (Porter, 1985:36). It can also be defined as a "series of activities that combine to create and deliver a product (or value) to customers" (Bloore, 2009:1). A value chain represents those activities that occur within the same organisation, while a value system refers to activities by a series of different enterprises (Porter, 1985; Gibbons and Ponte 2005). The value system could also be equated with a commodity chain, which is a network of labour and production processes resulting in a finished commodity (Gibbon and Ponte 2005).

An indiscriminate value chain/system approach has previously been employed in studying media industries (Aris and Bughin, 2009) and, specifically film industries (Eliashberg et al, 2004; Bloore, 2009; Finney, 2010). Media studies commonly use the term 'value chain' to refer to both the value chain and the value system (Finney, 2010). Due to recent developments in media production, the value chain approach has transformed constantly and shifted as evidenced by the use of concepts such as 'unbundling' and 'fragmentation' in response to media convergence, which has become a common phenomenon. Following Porter (2005), while the film value chain is common in the United States of America's studio system, a value system made up of various freelancers and companies is common in most independent productions outside Hollywood. The scope of "chain" in value chain analysis has traditionally been delimited to the processes characterising the relationship between the producer and the consumer. The concept may be taken, in this analysis, to consider the cinematic fact activities connecting the transition from concept to finished film. A value chain analysis of film production would include the value activities that are strategically relevant to film production, such as acquisition of film rights, financing, script development, casting, design and organisation, shooting, picture and sound editing as well as post-production, among others (Bloore 2009; Kung et al, 2008. See Figure 1.1). A value chain in the context of film production can be separated into:

> providers of finance; the makers of the technological equipment such as cameras, projectors and film stock; the suppliers of materials for film production; the creative and technical inputs used in film production; film production itself; the printing of film positives; the distribution of positives; and the exhibition of films and the film consumers (Bakker, 2008:179).

Production, in this scenario, is "the activities needed to produce one copy of the movie" (Eliashberg et al, 2004:2). Film production is a "project enterprise" (Wasko, 2003:16) in that each film project varies from the other. Janet Wasko, however argues that the production

process is standardised enough to allow discussion of a "typical film". One may assume that the "typical film" here-referred, is a Hollywood film - for canonical reasons already discussed in Chapter Two. This calls for a vigilant exercise when attempting to describe the film value chain because a Zimbabwean film's production value chain may be vastly different to Wasko's (2003) or any other "typical film". Value chain activities can be considered as the building blocks of competitive advantage. A firm's value chain activities reflect its history and organisational culture (Porter, 1985). Similarly, it is assumed in this thesis that the value chain activities in Zimbabwe's film services industry reflect its identity within varying historical contexts. The body of cinematic fact output produced in Zimbabwe, in this regard, is a result of industrialised cultural practices that have often been the bases of discussions on 'national cinema' (Willemen, 2006; Rosen, 2006; Crofts, 2006; Mhando, 2000).

Although, as argued earlier, the concept of national cinema is problematic, it is not contemptible because film services are necessarily bound by geo-temporal constructions:

> in film studies, the issue of specificity is primarily a national one: the boundaries of cultural specificity in cinema are established by governmental actions implemented through institutions such as the legal framework of censorship, industrial and financial measures on the economic level, the gearing of training institutions towards employment in national media structures, systems of licencing governed by aspects of corporate law, and so on (Willemen 2006:33).

The illustration below, adapted from the South Africa Television Industry Report (1998:48), depicts an approximation of the film value system of that country, from preproduction up to consumption of finished films.

The Film Industry Structure

Beginnings
- Scriptwriters
- Broadcasting Commissioners
- Producers

Production
- Make up
- Casting agencies
- Financiers
- Crewing agencies
- Set designers
- Equipment & facility suppliers
- Cast & crew
- Post production facilities

Circulation
- Film & video distributors

Delivery
- Broadcasters

Audience Consumption
- Retail video
- Cinemas
- Rental Video
- Television

Fig. 3.1: The film industry structure illustrating the value chain (Adapted from the South Africa Film and Television Industry Report (1998:48).

The South African value chain model (Fig.3.1) can be adapted for purposes of studying Zimbabwe's industry. Although this is by no means 'typical' it is more relevant because it is from a geographical and cultural context closest to Zimbabwe's. At the beginning of the chain are producers, scriptwriters and broadcasting commissioners. Ideally, these are responsible for mooting film ideas. They operate within specific legal, policy and creative boundaries. In South Africa, for instance, films structured within the Sediba creative framework are highly likely to secure funding from the National Film and Video Foundation. The Sediba

framework employs a formula with clear aggressor/victim roles and a "three act structure" (Young, 2013). In terms of production, the South African industry is fragmented, with hundreds of production companies.

The production stage of the South African industry value chain includes numerous service providers such as casting agencies, financiers, crewing agencies, set designers, post production facilities, cast and crew, equipment and facility suppliers and make-up artists (South Africa Film and Television Industry Report, 1998). The report gives a sector by sector analysis, indicating the availability of data. The fact that value is measured by total revenue (Porter, 1985) makes it necessary but difficult to map Zimbabwe's film value chain, given the paucity of data (Mboti, 2015). In South Africa, the task is made easier by the existence of the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), which besides providing funding, also commissions important administrative research for the country's film industry (NFVF, 2013). In comparison, a Culture Fund Survey (2009) of Zimbabwe's cultural industry, identifies *creation*-related services, namely scriptwriters and actors; *production* (directors, producers, costume designers, lighting engineers, camera operators, floor managers and editors), but it does not identify the quantity and nature of these services in the industry. In the context of this study, it is interesting to find out whether Zimbabwe has clear distinctions of service providers occupying different roles on the value chain. Given the informality of the Zimbabwean economy, it would also be worthwhile to establish how the industry has organised itself in later years.

The South African model is a relatively similar to the Hollywood set-up. In Hollywood, film production ideally begins with a concept (Wasko, 2003; Eliashberg et al, 2004). A concept can come from an existing literary work or from a new idea. Scriptwriters normally pitch their ideas to producers who may be affiliated to studios. Such producers would then purchase the complete screenplay from the writer (Eliashberg et al, 2004). For producers affiliated to studios, financing film projects is easier as they can secure bank loans against the studio's capital. The producer would also recruit related talent including the director, crew, some actors, as well as do the preliminary location scouting. These planning activities are considered part of pre-production. Production entails the actual shooting while post production involves editing, adding special effects and soundtracks (Eliashberg et al, 2004). In this thesis, pre-production, production and post-production are regarded as part of the *production context*.

Due to the fact that films requires a good deal of money to produce – on average over $100 million for one movie in the US – there are many risks associated with film projects. They may face completion risk due to high levels of required investment and the ever-changing motivations and relationships during production. They may also face financial risk associated with increases in production and marketing costs as well as performance risks associated with acting casts (Eliashberg, 2004). Because of these risks, production studios often take the safest route of investing in established genres and formats such as adaptation of video-games and sequels to successful films. For instance, four out of the ten highest grossing films in 2003 were sequels, namely: *The Matrix Reloaded, X2-X-Men United, Terminator 3* and *Bad Boys 2* (Eliashberg, et al 2004).

The advent of digital technology has resulted in faster and cheaper production although it has ushered in a demand for new capabilities as well as the challenge of piracy. More importantly the barriers of entry into digital video production are lessened, meaning that anyone with a camcorder and a computer can embark on a film project, thereby loosening the stranglehold of Hollywood and other elitist production models (Eliashberg et al, 2004). It is important for this thesis to find out whether the production value chain of a film in Zimbabwe is the same as that of the 'typical film' in Hollywood or South Africa. It would be worthwhile to compare Zimbabwe's industrial practices to those of film production elsewhere.

Film services, film friendliness and the production context in Zimbabwe

A film production industry is sustained by an infrastructure that provides production and post-production facilities. This is called a 'services' industry (Wasko, 2003; Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005). A comprehensive list of service providers can be so diverse to include what may be considered the most banal:

> The majority of the work that goes into making movies is done by hundreds of small businesses and independent contractors hired by studios. In addition, the film industry uses many contractors to fill supporting roles like caterers, electricians, makeup artists, and the like (Clouse, 2012:17).

For Hollywood, most of these services are centralised in Los Angeles, although they are sometimes dispersed around the world (Wasko, 2003). In this thesis, the film services approach is employed to analyse pro-filmic factors: "the multitude of processes and activities that actually happened in the shooting of the film" (Barbash and Taylor, 1997:8). Film services approaches remove the focus of attention of film production from content to context. In this thesis, analysis is concentrated on the production context or those activities that occur

towards the production of a film. This is entirely for feasibility reasons, but a services approach could also be employed throughout the value chain, from production to exhibition. In any case, focus is placed on components rather than complete productions (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005). The importance of the film industry in this regard is not appreciated for its own sake but for the extent to which it also services other creative industries and geographical locations:

> This shifts the focus to some extent away from facilitating creative processes and film milieu through the funding of individual projects to facilitating the organisational arrangements, capabilities, and technological infrastructure of the film services sector (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:57).

From this viewpoint, international filmmakers are not attracted to a particular location or a particular film alone, but by the state and character of that particular industry. Implicit in the film services approach is the concept of 'film friendliness' (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005; Goldsmith et al, 2010; Piva et al 2011; Tomaselli, 2013; Clouse, 2012; Tomaselli and Mboti, 2013) in which established media cities have a disposition towards production which is evident in their people, companies and governments. 'Film cities' or 'film friendly' locations, become favourable locations for filmmaking, on the basis of the production and post-production services they supply, as well as their friendly conditions. Film friendliness is a deliberate strategy, utilised by 'Local Hollywoods' to attract production to their precincts but most importantly it also prepares the local community for production. In South Africa, for instance, Cape Town fits the bill of a 'Local Hollywood' popularised by its world-class studios, diverse locations and good services infrastructure (Tomaselli, 2013).

A film services approach is "fundamentally concerned with mapping the capacity and capabilities of a film industry" (Mboti, 2011:4). It considers the various inputs and expertise that go into the making of a film. Under this approach, intervention is not focused on the film product but the "intermediate inputs, organisational arrangements, and expertise associated with the processes involved in developing film projects" (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:55). There is a location interest more than a design interest. What matters most, is the availability of service providers, facilities and technological competitiveness within a film location. Pursuant to this argument, Goldsmith and O'Regan describe how different places are now competing on their ability to provide generic skills and services to film production. Places that stand better chances are those with modern studio equipment, creative individuals and

compelling filming locations. A film services approach is, therefore more holistic, than text specific:

> It requires the coordination of stakeholders, locations and resources in a place in pursuit of what we call the location interest, to build or develop local capability and capacity to host and service inbound production, to educate local communities about the benefits of filmmaking, and to market a place to filmmakers as a 'pro-film', low-risk production destination. The process involves bringing together local, regional, and sometimes national government agencies, business associations, film-related businesses and organisations, infrastructure owners and operators, representatives of the local community, 'environment managers' (those responsible or with an interest in the use of places that filmmakers might want to shoot in), police and emergency services, transportation services and agencies, health and safety officials – indeed any person or body that may be affected by filmmaking in a place – to ensure that the needs of filmmakers are prioritised in order to make the experience of filmmaking in a place as straightforward as possible (Goldsmith et al, 2005:154).

According to the above thinking, film agents break down production into constituent parts, such as locations, infrastructure and services. The onus to accommodate film productions, in this view, moves from film producers to the places that will host production. Quasi-governmental institutions such as film commissions play an active role in this approach, by developing film friendly policies (Goldsmith et al, 2010). The absence of such a commission in Zimbabwe is glaring, making it difficult, among other things, for one to source any information about the film industry (Mboti, 2015). The Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services, through the BAZ, as well as the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) may have roles in developing the industry but these duties do not appear specific. While the Broadcasting Services Act, which legislated for the BAZ, promotes national culture, local ownership and local production (Thompson, 2013:22), it is not clear how this initiative is supported.

Goldsmith and O'Regan (2005:58) argue that "the state of international interest is partly dependent on the existing local industry and that there is as a consequence a dynamic relationship between the two industries." This could directly be applied to the involvement of international production companies in Zimbabwe soon after independence. One may be persuaded to ask: where are these organisations now? What has gone wrong/right with Zimbabwe's film services industry against the background of political and economic changes?

Locations are one of the key inputs in the film services approach. Locations offer a level of verisimilitude and realism that is not offered by studios. Decisions about locations often go beyond creative aspects to include economic incentives available in those locations. Sometimes studios create infrastructure in a particular location to cater for their productions. These structural designs may be maintained for future productions or may be dismantled at the end of the film for which they were specifically constructed. Today, locations have become as important as the studio was in the 'Hollywood studio era', around 1917 (Fawell 2008). There are also benefits to be accrued by locations for "standing for somewhere else" (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:10). They earn "signifying and representational power" (ibid). As a result, such locations acquire a greater significance stretching beyond particular film productions that they hosted. For instance the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy has created a 'Frodo economy' boosting tourist numbers as people visit the production site (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005).

Film commissions play a crucial role in making their locations/cities 'film friendly' (Tomaselli, 2013), for the purposes of attracting production companies into their area. In the United States, commissions have developed "in response to the need for local government liaisons who could coordinate services such as police, state troopers and highway patrols, road and highway departments, fire departments, park rangers and all the other essential municipal and government services for location shooting" (Wasko, 2003:38). The demand for realistic and varied locations, therefore creates impulse in cities to begin production co-ordination (Wasko, 2003; Tomaselli, 2013;). Film commissions offer a variety of services including scouting locations within their areas, helping with paperwork and bureaucratic protocol, as well as tax rebates and hotel discounts. Attracting film production to a location means local crews can be hired, local equipment is used and other downstream industries may supply goods and services to production as well (Wasko, 2003). In this analysis, geographically dispersed locations become key players in a 'global Hollywood' (Goldsmith et al, 2010). The film industry is therefore, no longer a centralised affair but one characterised by "flexible specialization, with activities at different locations" (Wasko, 2003:39). The above, 'film friendliness' thinking may well have driven the Zimbabwean government's initiative '*Why you should film in Zimbabwe*' in the 1980s (Thompson 2013). That impetus, however, seems to have fizzled out over the years, making it necessary to inquire the possible reasons and to determine alternatives that may have taken over.

In Goldsmith and O'Regan's (2005) analysis, the geographical dispersal of production is necessitated by a global Hollywood which paradoxically necessitates "the dispersal of production and production capacity internationally requiring an intense concentration of activity and controlling and coordinating functions in Los Angeles" (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:18). However, there are great benefits that may accrue to the dispersed locations hosting film productions:

> The *one-off, fly-in production* requires a range of ancillary services from the *region* in which the shoot is located including hotels and transport, and it will often require casual short-term manual labour and sometimes local extras. With more permanent infrastructure, the local investment may be much greater, as the producers seek a variety of incentives and local contributions to share and minimise their risks and costs in return for choosing a particular location (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:3).

There are economic advantages in clustering production facilities. The push by Hollywood to find new production locations and the pull by film agencies to attract film producers to particular locations coincides. The studio, or the place in which the production design takes place, is an important film service. Studios that can cater for multiple stages of production need to be big and therefore require space. This is why the first studios of Hollywood were constructed on the underdeveloped outskirts of Los Angeles (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005). Control of studios may vary from ownership by major production companies to ownership by private individuals. Establishment of a studio can be a complicated process dependant on a number of things, including the availability of financial resources and credible personnel. Some studios offer full services or are one-stop-shops, meaning they will provide a wide range of services in production and post-production, while others only rent out space to production companies that must bring their production equipment when commencing production (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005). Such studios may augment their income by offering other film services such as hiring out equipment, props and wardrobes. A studio may attract work based on its name alone which may be desired for its "familiarity, credibility and prestige" (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:30):

> In general terms, though, the ability of a studio to attract international work may have less to do with their ownership by major corporations and more to do with a range of other factors, including currency exchange rates, levels of incentives available in a territory, the "film friendliness" of local authorities, the pool of local talent, the degree to which the studio and related onsite businesses are plugged into international networks, and so on" (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:30).

The popularity of studios also depends on the facilities that they offer, including, nowadays, the ability to service digital production and post-production as well as other external factors. Goldsmith and O'Regan list a number of factors that affect the popularity of a film studio. These include:

- Quality of a studio's infrastructure and its attractiveness to producers
- Facilities and skilled services available to the studio over the course of a production
- Reputation of a place as a production site, for example, New Zealand locations have become favourable due to the success of *Lord of the Rings*
- Natural and built environment surrounding a studio, and its proximity to particular locations
- Closeness of the studio to an urban centre capable of providing accommodation, entertainment, transport and other facilities
- The film friendliness of local and national authorities who provide ancillaries and enact local regulation governing production (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:31-32).

The concentration of work undertaken by a studio follows three typical patterns and therefore defines three types of studios. These are: the production precinct which services production but does not have extensive post-production facilities; the cinema city which contains a range of production and post-production services; and the media city which above the attributes of a cinema city, has other new media services, training facilities and other creative industries who may be tenants on the site (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:37).

Film services providers provide a necessary quality assurance and reduce associated risks (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005). The film services approaches, therefore, allow stakeholders in the film industry to see the deficits and opportunities in the industry. The Culture Fund of Zimbabwe (2009:48) acknowledges "support services" including donors, private sector financiers and government departments among the stakeholders in the industry. As far as this thesis is concerned, it would be worthwhile considering how such a formal arrangement described by Goldsmith and O'Regan (2005) fits into an informal context such as Zimbabwe, where most of the country's economy falls in the informal sector. Some of the services assumed to pre-exist in a location, such as highway departments and park rangers may be luxuries in a poor economy such as Zimbabwe's. As Ousmane Sembene has previously pointed out, filmmaking in Africa is 'mégotage' where film producers scrounge around for meagre resources most of the time (Harrow, 2007; Haynes 2011). A film services approach may be ideal but singularly, has little relevance in Zimbabwe's current socio-economic and political environment.

The shadow economy of film production

For an economy as informal as Zimbabwe's, a film services approach to industry analysis might appear too formal and cosmopolitan. The shadow economy concept may be employed both as an alternative or complement. The shadow economy is "a space of unmeasured, untaxed and unregulated economic activity" (Lobato, 2012:40). It is, among other things, characterised by handshake deals and different forms of barter trade. It includes "unreported income from the production of legal goods and services" (Schneider and Enste, 2000:4) or "all market-based production of legal goods and services that are deliberately concealed from public authorities (Schneider and Williams, 2013:24), for various reasons. Reasons for evading authorities range from avoiding payment of taxes, social security contributions, legal labour market standards and administrative obligations. In that regard, Zimbabwe's film industry can be classified largely as a shadow economy because it is informally constituted (Mboti, 2015).

Although the shadow economy concept has largely been employed to analyse economic activity (Schneider and Enste, 2000; Schneider and Williams, 2013), Ramon Lobato (2012) has usefully engaged the shadow economy concept to the study of cinema. The scope of Lobato's definition and discussion of shadow economies of cinema, however, is limited to distribution. In this thesis, the same concept is proposed and extended to film production. It is the first step towards the building of new theory for the analysis of Zimbabwan cinematic fact (see the Conclusion chapter for further discussion on this). In this context, the shadow economy can, therefore, be defined as *a space of unregulated and unmeasured services employed in film production* (author's definition). The shadow economy concept seems more relevant in analysing the range of services or the film production value chain post-2000. The major reason for this is that the Zimbabwean economy became more inclined towards the informal sector around 2000, the time during which the country's socio-economic challenges had become more pronounced than before (Saungweme, Matsvai and Sakuhuni, 2014). Since the shadow economy is largely an unobserved phenomenon, it is difficult to measure (Schneider and Williams, 2013). While Reno (2000) generally views clandestine economies as strengthening political authority and perpetuating chaos in film production, this state of affairs may have democratised filmmaking on the African continent, with abundant examples hailing from Nigeria. In line with this point of view, films produced in Zimbabwe can be seen as part of the popular arts of Africa which "flourish without encouragement or recognition

from official cultural bodies, and sometimes in defiance of them" (Barber, 1987:1), but not because Africa has a "reputation for disorder" as William Reno (2000) claims.

Informal trade has become common practice in Zimbabwe, with 85 percent of the country's employed population occupying the sector as of 2011 (Saungweme et al, 2014). The informal sector contributes upward of 20 percent of Zimbabwe's Gross Domestic Product (Rudzuna, 2014). The informal sector in Zimbabwe is not merely a last resort, but a trade in which some individuals are committed and would continue, even if other avenues of employment were available to them. According to Brand (1986:54) "It is the very low level of input costs, as well as the mobility of the operation, that makes it an attainable option, often the only one, as a source of livelihood for large numbers of the urban poor".

Informal sector operators are part of the proto-proletariat and are therefore a significant section of most developing countries. They operate on 'one dollar technology' as opposed to the 'thousand dollar technology' of formal industry in developed nations (Brand 2012). In the film production context, shadow economies of filmmaking mean cutting out some stages of the value chain (highlighted in Fig. 1.1). It calls for a rethink of traditional production cultures, a paradigm shift to what Lobato (2012:21) refers to as the "straight-to-video slaughterhouse". Zimbabwe's short film projects of the post-2000 era embody this paradigm shift (Mhiripiri, 2010; Thompson, 2013). The emergence of video and its subsequent preferability over the celluloid technology has ushered in numerous possibilities as evidenced by the boom of Nigerian video industries, collectively known as Nollywood. Insistence on formal modes of production and formal research data, however, is the reason why Nigeria has largely been 'othered' in discourses of global cinema (Lobato, 2012).

While the rise of the shadow economy can largely be attributed to increases in tax levels, there are other important factors to be considered. In Zimbabwe, the shadow economy of film production may have grown out of both economic hardships and shifts in regulation. This includes the regulatory provisions of the Broadcasting Services Act (2001) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (2000). The two legislations resulted in the creation of regulatory bodies, the BAZ and the Media and Information Commission (MIC), now known as the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) respectively. These bodies are responsible for the licensing and regulation of media organisations, including film and video production enterprises, and have often been accused of granting media operating licences on

partisan bases. At times the registration fees are prohibitive, making it difficult for new players to enter the market formally. For instance, as of 2013, ZMC data showed that there were only six video production companies with only three being accredited to operate (IMPI, 2014).

The Political Economy of Film production

In this thesis, the political economy approach attempts to explain the various political, economic and social forces behind the provision of film services in Zimbabwean cinema. The underlying assumption is that film and all cultural industries are embedded in social and historical contexts that shape them (Garnham, 1994; Golding and Murdock, 1973; Mansell, 2004). Condtions of production are assumed to have a bearing on the nature of cultural continent (Davis, 2008). A political economy analysis of film production is one that examines the structural conditions that affect production of film content. It arises from the realisation that culture determines production of media texts and that media texts influence culture in turn (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). This theoretical dimension is useful in analysing the *context of production* in this thesis.

Vincent Mosco (2009:24) has defined political economy as "the social relations, particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources". Film is a communication resource in Mosco's definition. This definition "emphasises how a company produces a film or a magazine, how it deals with those who distribute the product and market it, and how consumers decide about what to watch, read, or listen to" Mosco (2009:24). As far as this thesis is concerned, the aspect of "how a company produces a film" is very critical. Following Mosco, the political economy of film production is therefore: *the socio-economic political relations that constitute the cinematic fact* [author's emphasis]. The relations that constitute film production are infact film services as they include the organisational arrangements, intermediate inputs and expertise employed in film production (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005). In essence, film services constitute the economy of film production and distribution. A film services approach to studying film production is therefore a political economy analysis and vice-versa.

Applications of political economy theory to studying African media is considerably rarer, compared to Western studies, hence the assumption that political economy of communication is "primarily concerned with capitalist society and commercial media systems" (McChesney,

2000:110), and that "the political economy of film analyses motion pictures as commodities produced and distributed within a capitalist industrial structure" (Wasko, 2005:10). Political economy theory connects the economic, the political and social (Browning and Kilmister, 2006). It has been used extensively to study the media in Western contexts (Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Wasko, 2003, 2005; Mosco, 2009) but has been usefully employed in film studies, particularly Hollywood, by Janet Wasko (Wasko, 2003, 2005; Wasko et al, 2011; Wasko and Meehan, 2013; Ryoo, 2008). It is possible and necessary, to employ the theory differently in varying contexts, including those that are non-capitalist (Lee, 2001). While Western political economy theory is interested in critiquing or celebrating the hegemonic influence of media conglomerates in film production and distribution (Wasko, 2003 & 2005), an African perspective appears to worry about lack of government and corporate support against the "formidable technical, infrastructural, and capital requirements of making and distributing films (Haynes, 2011:67). As such, a state-sponsored, revolutionary (Third) cinema may be desirable in Africa (Crofts, 2006; Gaynor, 2009), but not in Western contexts. A political economy approach to film production in Africa has been summarised by Mhando (2000) thus:

> Needless to say, in order to understand the African film, it is imperative to relate dynamics of culture to the period of its production. This means relating film to environmental social relations, historical pressures, and technological innovations as well as to beliefs, attitudes and conceptualisations of the African people[22].

Of importance, from a political economy approach, is the power relations involved in the control and distribution of film resources or film services. This power includes, but is not limited to regulatory, economic as well as ideological control. As Willemen (2006:41) acknowledges, "The fact of cinema is bounded by the network of industrial institutions which govern and define specific ways of producing and circulating specific objects: films". Willemen lists these industrial institutions as studios, production companies, distributors and exhibitors, whose histories he regards as sub-sets of a national industry. Though not fully embracing the concept of a "national cinema", Willemen (2006:41) insists that ignoring the relationship between the film industry and a state's institutional framework "amounts to depriving oneself of the means to understand the dynamics which, although rarely governing the film industry directly, at least decisively shape its options, procedures and, thus, its products". The relationship between the film industry and its production processes has

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[22] From http://www.researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/11431/

inevitable consequences for the social power relations governing a nation's cinematic fact, therefore. As such, the history of film production in Zimbabwe, cannot entirely be separated from the history of the nation as a whole. As already outlined in Chapter Two, the various epochs of filmmaking in Zimbabwe, since the colonial era have always borne these power implications, vested in colonial authorities (pre-independence), the post-independence government (1980-90s), NGOs (1990-2000s and a critical mass of emerging filmmakers (post-2000).

Of interest to this study is the appreciation that a political economy analysis of film industries must move beyond structural issues to include analysis of the relationship between industry and the state and how this maintains and reproduces structures of power (Wasko, 2005). It provides context for the study of film. The scope of political economy theory in this study includes Robert McChesney's (2000:110) observation that: "the political economy of communication looks specifically at how ownership, support mechanisms and government policies influence media behaviour and content". Such an approach to studying film production arises from the realisation that filmmaking, like any media enterprise, is not an autonomous organisational system but an inter-institutional network subscribing to a dominant power structure through ownership, regulation as well as professional values and standards (Curran et al, 2005).

A value chain analysis of Zimbabwe's film industry would only list the activities occurring in the production of films, but a political economy analysis would go beyond, to consider the coordination of those activities that lead to the production of films. The textual organisation of films traces the industrial histories of these movies (Lobato, 2012). Therefore, examination of a film's lineage enables the appreciation of its representations. As Roland Barthes once observed, when the author has been found, the text is explained (Branigan, 2006). It might also be true that when the text is explained, the author (or production means) has been found. Under the political economy approach, film production is analysed as an industry with the major assumption being that the conditions of production determine the content (Hesmondhalgh, 2013). Individual filmic fact, in this study the films used as case studies, are linked to political, technological, economic and industrial factors that shape film services organisations:

cultural outputs are in part shaped as a consequence of political and economic conditions. The negotiations and decisions of individual politicians, regulators and business owners and advertisers filter through to influence the choices and methods of those who make, edit, produce and distribute cultural products (Davis, 2008:54).

Filmmaking is a risky business and funders often have to consider the artistic and business opportunities before investing in any production (Eliashberg et al, 2005). Often, such financiers influence the content of film. The above narrative is the political economy of film production in Africa. It is a political economic narrative because it traces the links between economic, political and social developments (Browning and Kilmister, 2006). The relationship between the ownership and control of film production services and thematic content of films is alluded to in various writings on cinema in Zimbabwe (Mahoso, 2000; Riber, 2001: ZANU PF, n.d; Lazar, 2003; Hungwe, 2005; Fisher, 2010; Mhiripiri, 2010; Thompson, 2013; Mboti, 2015).

Conclusion

In this chapter, the theoretical framework of the study has been explained. The difficulties of applying Western concepts to studying African phenomenon have been appreciated as well. The study is hinged upon the film services and political economy theories. Other concepts that complement these theories, have also been discussed, namely: value chain analysis, the shadow economy concept as well as film friendliness have been discussed. A film services approach is necessary to analyse the aggregate services supporting the production of film in Zimbabwe. The concept, popularised by Goldsmith and O'Regan (2005, 2010), though fairly recent, is useful in studying components of the film industry. An appreciation of the *production context* emphasised in this study can be achieved through value chain analysis, which separates the production stage from other stages of the film value chain. The concept also helps identify the activities that make up the production value chain, as this stage is also made up of numerous aggregate services.

As explained in this chapter, the political economy theory helps understand the historical, socio-economic and political factors within the geographical space defined as Zimbabwe, that have affected the production of films over time. Such factors make up the *contexts of production* in this thesis. It is acknowledged in this thesis, that the later years of film production in Zimbabwe, are somewhat different from the earlier years (Mboti 2014; Mhiripiri 2010; Thompson 2013). This production, which has taken place in a largely informal space, can be studied from a shadow economy perspective, which is part of the

grand scheme of political economy theory. The shadow economy of cinema concept, popularised by Ramon Lobato (2012) is useful for studying the informal arrangements making up Zimbabwe's film production industry post-2000.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Research Methods and Methodology

This research explores Zimbabwe's film services industry. Broadly, the study is an assessment of the constitution and performance of Zimbabwe's film sector. The viability of the sector is gauged by considering the services that go into the production of films within a Zimbabwean context. The objectives of this study are: to establish the nature of Zimbabwe's film services industry; to explore the link between film services and the production stage of the film value chain; and to explain the relationship between film services and thematic issues in film. The study is qualitative and employs the case study design, analysing four films made in Zimbabwe, to determine the services exploited towards their production and the resultant content of those films. The study is broadly informed by political economy and film services approaches.

This chapter describes the research methods employed in sampling, collecting and analysing data. Specifically, it discusses the research paradigm, design, sampling procedures, data collection and analysis, ethical as well as self-reflexivity issues. This chapter can be considered somewhat as the beginning of research findings, because it is a report of strategies employed and experiences encountered in the process of doing the research. The prefered term is *applied methodology* because the chapter is a report of what happened, not just theoretical and abstract constructs of conducting research. For instance, the fact that a respondent said "*xyz*" cannot be separated from the fact that they said this in response to question "*abc*", which is a direct reference to the interview method. The connection between methodology and findings, therefore, is one fluid continuum rather than a linear transition. It can be argued, in that view, that *methodology is findings* because of the importance of researchers' experiences to what is eventually interpreted and narrated as research results. It is therefore not prudent, although common, to separate research results from the methods that led to their finding. Methodology is thus merely a write-up of the schemata employed in recognising and reiterating experiences that best answer the research questions. This slightly unorthodox thinking is typical of cultural studies, which is not only methodologically eclectic, but also non-prescriptive (Pink, 2008).

Due care is taken not to dilute participants' views with my own, although acknowledging that a description of participants' responses is, inevitably, an interpretive exercise characterised by selection and exclusion of some data over others. A 'thick description' of data is considered one of the ways to ensure inclusion of more data (Geertz, 1973; Yin, 2011). This is the reason for some descriptive passages presented in the reporting of fndings. Another way to avoid prejudice may be the selection of a case that upsets a researcher's prior thinking (Yin, 2011). In deciding on this thesis and the sample of films to include, my original thinking was that the film industry in Zimbabwe was atrophying rather than growing in the post-2000 years. The film *Sinners* (2013) was selected as one made in this period to link and compare its production services to those of earlier years.

Self-Reflexivity, experience and encounters with 'data'.
Self-reflexivity calls into question "the complex relationship between processes of knowledge production and the various contexts of such processes as well as the involvement of the knowledge producer" (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000:5). Far from being an apology for any researcher's identity, biases and assumptions, reflexivity is only a rigorous account of all those dispositions and a way for researchers to monitor and interrogate their subjectivity (Butler-Kisber, 2010). I spent at least seven years working directly in the film industry. The research benefits and is influenced by my experiences working in the video production industry between 2007 and 2012. I was involved in the production of television programmes, notably *African Food Adventure* (Memper, 2007) as scriptwriter, *Believer's Broadcast Network* (Mangunda, 2007) as camera operator/editor and *A- Academy* (Thompson, 2006-2008) as camera operator. *African Food Adventure* aired on Dstv's Africa Magic, while *A-Academy* and *BBN* showed on Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Television (ZBCTV) for several successive seasons. Although these productions were not fictional feature films, they opened up for me, experiences that are often lived by fictional filmmakers. Subsequently the entire duration of researching and writing this thesis was also spent teaching university students 'how to' produce fictional and documentary genre videos.

Over these years, I have cultivated relationships and gained first hand experiences that influenced my selection of the thesis topic as well as the methodology therein. This, to some extent, enriches the study through experiential understanding, also termed *verstehen* in German (Stake, 2010:48). In conducting research and writing this thesis, I have had to negotiate numerous identities, chiefly my identity as a former practitioner in the industry,

second as a film/video production trainer and third, as a researcher. The fact that I was no longer an eight to five o'clock filmmaker means that I could no longer make claims to such an identity in my current occupation. It means I could not conduct a pure "participant observation" research. However, I had already participated in this industry and was now going back to initiate a rapport with current practitioners. The obvious accusation for such a methodology is that it is subjective (Patton, 2002). Arguing from that perspective, one would say that I was only researching the film industry in order to validate whatever conclusions I had already made about it during my years of employment as a video producer, what has often been dubbed the 'fallacy of affirming the consequent' (Finocchiaro, 1981).

Film and theatre producer Daves Guzha, one of the participants in this study, questioned my methodology before granting me an interview. *His argument*: He had a "problem" with local film researchers because they only approached him to conduct piecemeal interviews to complement their "expert" knowledge about the industry. This, he said was an arrogant attitude, compared to foreign (Western) film scholars who took time to live among filmmakers, share their experiences and "find out" about the industry through participation. *My argument*: I felt that taking part in or observing a film production was time-consuming, and I had accumulated a substantial amount of experience prior, coupled with the fact that I was in a way participating in the production of films by my university students. Whatever the merits or demerits of either argument, the issue is that human experience is fundamental to the exercise of interpretation that lies at the core of academic research. Experience is an important facet of cultural studies (Pickering, 2006) and a "unifying source of authority" (Clifford, 1983:136). An understanding of human life is thus possible via "empathetic re-enactment of a past experience" (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000:56). This means one's interpretation of issues fetches largely from one's own experiences. A similar argument is Lynn Buler-Kisber's (2010:19) observation that "we are all constantly researching as naturally interpretive beings." In essence, this entire thesis is a report to the reader that describes my understanding of my own experiences, what Boyatzis (1998:5) terms 'encounters with data'. The practice of writing the thesis itself is exclusively interpretive and personal. I have had to carefully select the 'right' words, grammar and standard language for the thesis. It is therefore a series of dialectical activities of selection and inclusion, abstraction and application, commission and omission – a very conscious process.

Guzha's and my arguments above show a distinction between pure ethnography and auto-ethnography. Full participation in the phenomenon that one is researching about may have

some advantages, but the downside is that the researcher becomes essentialist and blasé in writing about things that are part of their everyday life (Jewkes, 2011). This thesis is partly auto-ethnographic, although not written in the novelistic style employed by auto-ethnographic adherents Carolyn Ellis or Stacy Holman Jones (see Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2002). It is auto-ethnographic in that it sometimes employs the first person "I" and largely reports my own interpretations of my encounters with data. I consider myself part of the phenomenon that I am studying, but I have to separate *myself* the filmmaker from *myself* the film scholar to achieve careful interpretation and reflection. Some semblance of neutrality and rationality is achievable. My entire working life in the film/video production industry, as such, was one long encounter with 'data'. My experiences, my conversations with fellow filmmakers and my observations all constitute a body of 'data' which cannot be ignored in the quest to cultivate knowledge on the film services industry in Zimbabwe. Where the interpretations of my experiences coincide with my respondents' recollections becomes, to borrow from Pickering (2008:18), the "intersection between public culture and private subjectivity". Although I was not involved in the making of any of the films employed here as case studies, the reflections and self-knowledge emanating from my video production experiences give me a platform to evaluate and categorize the quality of information obtained from filmmakers who are participants in this study.

I make no pretentious claim of impartiality or innocence as far as the data encountered and collected in this research is concerned. Research is never an innocent process, but one steeped in our beliefs, values, prejudices, experiences and lifestyles as academics. My awareness of what is going on during data collection and interpretation shapes the research and, to some extent, determines its 'findings'. In that sense, experience goes beyond the circumstances undergone by individuals, to include the articulation, understanding and sharing of those circumstances (Pickering, 2008). The selection of what to study, what methods to employ, which units to sample and which data to analyse, is a constructionist and interpretivist process, rather than a positivist one. As such, the investigator is a research instrument with overarching responsibilities superseding other instruments such as interviews or questionnaires (Yin, 2011; Geertz, 1973; Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007). Anyone arguing from a positivist science approach would beg to differ. This is the bone of contention dubbed the 'major splits' in media and cultural studies (Livingstone, 1998), wherein the qualitative/critical camp and the quantitative/administrative camp have stacked claims

eulogising their respective approaches over the other. These contestations call for the deployment of a rigorous mix of methods of data collection, hence triangulation (Denzin, 1970; Bryman, 1988; Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 2008), which is employed to some extent in this study.

Research paradigm, ontology and epistemology

This research employs qualitative methodology rooted in constructivist-interpretive epistemology. Qualitative methodology is preferred in this study for its fluidity, constant evolution and the fact that it allows the study to draw on personal experiences when analysing information. More importantly, qualitative methodology allows research to maintain some relevance for non-academic audiences (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:13-14). In that regard, this thesis could be of great benefit to policymakers and those directly engaged in film production in Zimbabwe. The study, like many others in the qualitative paradigm, is methodologically flexible. This means it is not constrained by the methodological Puritanism of objective science, but does depend on some inter-subjective reality. When we search for knowledge we cannot separate the search from what we find out. As we search and prove or disprove our inclinations, this is a process of *finding out*. Qualitative methodology, therefore, may not have that "eureka" moment that is possible in positivist research. From a more common perspective, methodology is theory because it is a set of assumptions about sampling, data collection and analysis that guides the process of finding out. Results are thus shaped in that transition from general theoretical observations to concrete findings, vis-à-vis a deductive or *a priori* approach. In this thesis, however, I employ a hermeneutic approach, treating methodology and "findings" as one continuum, which is difficult to delineate. For this reason, this chapter was written simultaneously with the collection of data. It is therefore more than a systematic plan of *what would be* used in data collection. Rather, it is a report of *what happened* in the collection of data.

Human experience and interpretation is at the centre of this research. Film productions are manned by human beings, and the research process in this context entails drawing on those people's experiences through oral, written and filmic evidence. Filmmakers' perceptions are infact their own interpretations of activities in the film services industry, yet their spoken words are also subject to the interpretation of the researcher. This is why Robert Stake (2010) sounds persuasive enough in his argument that all research is qualitative. Premising this argument on the fact that qualitative research "relies primarily on human perception and understanding," Stake (2010:11) posits that even the most quantitative of studies, are driven

by "visionary and sceptical scientists". On similar bases, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) argue that interpretation is at the forefront of all research work. At the same time, one has to acknowledge the socially-constructed nature of reality and accept that "multiple interpretations of human experience or realities are possible" (Gunter, 2000:6). Due to the interpretive nature of qualitative research, it can be considered "a struggle with meanings" (Stake, 2010:38).

The qualitative paradigm employed in this research allows for the capturing of multiple meanings of the world from participants' perspectives, which in turn constitute a second set of meanings – that of the researcher. The two respective standpoints constitute the "emic" and the "etic". The emic captures research participants' own meanings of the world, while the etic captures external (researchers') perspectives of the same events (Yin, 2011:11). Stake makes a useful distinction between "microinterpretation" and "macrointerpretation" (2010:39), wherein the micro relates to individual experiences while the macro relates to the collective. In this analysis, the endeavour to gain individual insights from service providers works within a micro interpretation framework, therefore, while the overarching evaluation of Zimbabwe's film services would constitute macro interpretation. Interpretation in qualitative research is not treated haphazardly, but is connected to theory and scientific knowledge, to constitute what have been termed 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1993; Stake, 2010). The questions asked in the research as well as the methods employed to collect data and the sources from which that data is collected play out within this interpretive framework.

The research question: "What are the key skills, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs exploited in the production of film/video in Zimbabwe?" is one that attempts to ascertain the nature of the film services industry and, therefore, demarcates the ontological axis of the study, while the questions: How has the availability or non-availability of 'film services' affected the production of the films *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), *Everyone's Child* (1996), *Tanyaradzwa* (2005) and *Sinners?* (2013)? and what are the major thematic issues in the films and how do they relate to the socio-economic-political contexts during which the films were produced? Indicate the study's constructivist-interpretive epistemology. Evidently, the latter questions indicate the researcher's assumption/interpretation that the film services industry *affects* film and video production in Zimbabwe. Understanding the *nature* of Zimbabwe's films services industry is also dependent on a number of factors, namely: the researcher's interpretation based on constructivist knowledge and the information provided

by service providers based on their experiences and recollections. It can thus be termed relativist ontology (Denzin and Lincoln 2005:22; see also Yin 2011).

According to Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2005:3) "qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world". Qualitative research is, therefore, an interpretive endeavour in which researchers study things in their natural settings and attempt to interpret them in relation to the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Stake 2010). This is the basis for locating this qualitative research in the interpretive hermeneutic paradigm, which acknowledges multiple views of the world, what Gunter (2000:2) terms "World View II". The usefulness of the qualitative approach lies in the argument that:

> Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; *cultural texts and productions*; observational, historical, interactional and visual texts- that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:3).

Qualitative research is surrounded by an often complex, interrelated family of expressions, concepts and assumptions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). It can be summed up as "interpretive, experience-based, situational and personalistic" (Stake, 2010:31). This is why the field of qualitative research is difficult to define. As a result, objectivity can never be achieved, only various representations of the world. However, in-depth understanding of these representations can be achieved by rigorous application of multiple methods, or triangulation (Denzin, 1970; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Bryman, 1988; Stake, 2010). Triangulation entails employing more than one source of data, observers, theoretical perspectives and investigators (Bryman 1988). The use of more than a single theory discussed in Chapter Three is a demonstration of this triangulation, as too is the use of more than one method in gathering and explaining data.

Multiple case study design and the logic of replication
The study employs an instrumental multiple case study design (Yin, 1994, 2012; de Vaus, 2001; Gray, 2009), subjecting to thematic analysis, four purposively sampled films produced in different spatial-temporal contexts and under different socio-political-economic conditions in Zimbabwe. An instrumental case "facilitates our understanding of something" (Stake, 2005:445). In this study, the four films employed as cases aid an understanding of the nature of film services in Zimbabwe. The study, therefore sets out as an endeavour to understand the making of particular films but funnels out to provide information with wider applicability

beyond those films. The research is cross-sectional as most data was collected in a limited timeframe spread over a few months between 2015 and 2016. It is also descriptive and exploratory in as far as it attempts to find out "what is happening" and how (Gray, 2009:35-36).

It is pertinent to point out at this stage that a research design should not be confused with research methods or research approaches. De Vaus (2011) also argues that it is erroneous to equate research designs with quantitative or qualitative methods:

> designs are often equated with qualitative and quantitative research methods. Social surveys and experiments are frequently viewed as prime examples of quantitative research and are evaluated against the strengths and weaknesses of statistical, quantitative research methods and analysis. Case studies, on the other hand, are often seen as prime examples of qualitative research- which adopts and interpretive approach to data, studies 'things' within their context and considers the subjective meanings that people bring to their situation (de Vaus 2001:10).

A case study can be defined as "a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (Miles and Huberman, 1994:25; see also Yin, 2009, 2012; de Vaus, 2001). It is designed to gain in-depth understanding of a case in its real world context. Although case studies are not designed to generalise findings, they should have some semblance of external validity, that is: the results ought to apply more widely (Gray, 2009). In other words, while not expected to achieve statistical generalisation, a good case study should have theoretical generalizability; that is: "we ask, What does this case tell us about a specific theory (or theoretical proposition)?" (de Vaus, 2001:237). In the present study, this question extends to "*what do the respective film cases tell us about the film services industry in Zimbabwe within the production context?*" At the same time, the design should also have internal validity; that is: it ought to deliver on the conclusions it claims to deliver (de Vaus, 2001:28-9). The four films selected as case studies in this study provide information that is intrinsic only to them, but they offer a window from which to explore the broader context, vis-à-vis, the cinematic fact in Zimbabwe. At the same, respondents sampled from the production crews of the films become key informants in recruiting a larger sample that includes policy makers and key stakeholders that have a mandate over the broader film production context in Zimbabwe.

Case studies draw from the following:

1. The nature of the case, particularly its activity and functioning;
2. Its historical background;
3. Its physical setting;

4. Other contexts, such as economic, political, legal and aesthetic;
5. Other cases through which this case is recognised; and
6. Those informants through whom the case can be known (Stake, 2005:447).

Following on Baxter's (2008:550) components of a rigorous case study, it is possible to summarise a case study protocol for this study thus:

1. **Propositions**: these are assumptions or generalisations based on literature, theory or personal experience. For example, some major propositions in this study are that:

   i.   Zimbabwean film locations can gain competitive advantage by leveraging the availability of film services in their precincts (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005, 2010; Tomaselli, 2013).

   ii.   Zimbabwean cinematic fact is organised as a shadow economy like many other industries in the country (Lobato, 2012; personal experience).

2. **A conceptual framework**: explains "the main things to be studied- the key factors, constructs or variables- and the presumed relationships among them" (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This framework encapsulates film services and contexts. Following on these scholars, this thesis is as much "a visual catalogue of roles to be studied [*policymakers, technical crew and film talent*] and, within each role, where these people work and what they do… [*production context, behaviour, day-to-day activities*]…the innovations [*technology*]…the outcomes" [*the films and their content*] (Miles and Huberman, 1994:18).

3. **Development of "how/why" research questions**. In this case:

   • What are the key skills, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs exploited in the production of film,video in Zimbabwe?

   • How has the availability or non-availability of 'film services' affected the production of the films *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), *Everyone's Child* (1996), *Tanyaradzwa* (2005) and *Sinners?* (2013)?

   • What are the major thematic issues in the films and *how* do they relate to the socio-economic-political contexts during which the films were produced?

4. **The logic linking data to propositions:** this includes the methods of collecting data. Multiple data sources enrich case studies. In this thesis data sources and collection

methods are triangulated to include interviews, archival collection and the researcher's experiential observations.

5. **Criteria for interpreting findings:** this refers to the methods employed to analyse and make sense of collected data. In this study, thematic analysis and hermeneutics of interpretation are employed.

Researchers may employ one or several cases in one study. The latter is favoured in this thesis as it offers a deeper understanding of processes and outcomes (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Gray, 2009). These are what scholars have termed multiple case studies (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009, 2012; de Vaus, 2001) or collective case studies (Stakes, 2005; Baxter, 2008). For this particular research design, the context related to the study is critical to understanding the cases. This study is both descriptive (tries to find out what is happening) and exploratory (finds out how something is happening). The justification for analysing four different films follows a 'theoretical replication logic' wherein the film services going into production are expected to be different, but for anticipatable reasons (Shakir, 2002; Yin, 2012). In this case, the anticipatable reasons relate to the different political and socio-economic settings during which the respective films were made. The multiple case study design is also favoured in this study because the more the cases involved in a study, the greater the certainty in its findings (de Vaus, 2001; Yin, 2010). These case studies help understand how and why the film services industries, in those respective films, are structured in the manner they are. These 'how' and 'why' aspects are considered key to case study research designs (Yin, 2009).

The case study design is preferred in this thesis because it allows for multiple sources of evidence, including direct observations, interviews, archival records, documents, participant observation and physical artefacts (Yin, 2012:10). These converging lines of evidence make the findings more robust and compelling. In all the cases, data is collected retrospectively, which means it involves collecting information pertaining to an extended period (de Vaus, 2001). A major weakness of this design is that it may lead to loss of evidence as it depends on participants' ability to recall the past (de Vaus, 2001). For instance, Stephen Chigorimbo had to rely on his archives to recall how certain events occurred in the production of *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), which at the time of interview, was over 30 years back. In a few instances, he would momentarily confuse events from the film with those from the sequel *Allan Quartermein and the Lost of Gold*, in which he was also an assistant director. At the same time, some data sources were not available. For instance, Tsitsi Dangarembga, the

director of *Everyone's Child* declined to be interviewed about the film, arguing that it was in her past and did not help her future endeavours in any way. Her assistant, Garikai Chawasarira was late while the other assistants Norman Madawo and Jema Spring could not be located and were believed to have migrated out of the country. In cases where substitute sources were identified, they may not have been as information rich as the initial targets.

The study focuses on the nature of film services employed in producing particular films in Zimbabwe. The film services make up "the thing" (Stake, 2010) that this research is about. The case is the context within which that "thing" plays out. The 'case' in case studies is the object of study or the unit of analysis (de Vaus, 2001; Yin, 2012). In this research, the case is made up of the films *King Solomon's Mines, Everyone's Child, Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners* in the political, socio-economic context. The unit of analysis is both the film texts and the processes and people behind their production. In each case (film) there are embedded units, that is: a plethora of issues and stakeholders that are constituents of the film. Robert Yin's (2012) distinction between holistic and embedded cases can be deployed to further enlighten this point. A holistic case is one that treats the unit as a whole, while an embedded design considers the multiple levels or sub-units that exist within each case. For instance, a holistic design in this case would look into the aesthetics and textual value only (filmic fact) of each film, while an embedded design, as is the case here, would consider the components of each film, vis-à-vis film services (cinematic fact). The insights gathered from the multiplicity of service providers avails divergent views which when converged, give a deeper and fuller understanding of the phenomenon under study. Because each case is made up of different elements, this justifies the use of different methods of collecting data. The research design in this regard is treated as conceptual, that is: it includes sampling, case definition as well as the nature and depth of data that was collected.

Sample description and justification

The rationale for sampling stems from the fact that: "you cannot study everyone, everywhere doing everything" (Miles and Huberman, 1994:16; see also Mack et al, 2005). Sampling gives the rationale of how much of something to analyse. Samples are theoretically informed as they are selected strategically in line with the phenomenon under study (Gunter, 2000). The exercise of sampling is in the end, a compromise between selecting a representative sample and the practical constraints surrounding the conducting of the study (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007). This study employed purposive sampling to select film texts and key informants (see Chapter One for constitution of the film sample). Purposive sampling targets

those sources or units of study that are information rich and provide the greatest insights to research questions (Devers and Frankel, 2000; Tongco, 2007; Yin, 2011; Mack et al, 2005). In the case of interviews, the target aim was to find respondents that were most knowledgeable about the subject of study. The sample units had to be as close as possible to the "theoretical norm" or as close as possible to the typical unit (Tongco, 2007:151). For instance, a typical filmmaker is one that would be able to communicate with other people in the craft and to give as much information as possible about the sector. Respondents were purposively sampled (some from the film credits) and included, government/sector representatives, funders, directors/producers, actors as well as trainers.

The snowball sampling technique, sometimes referred to as chain referral sampling (Mack et al, 2005) was also used to identify other key people in the production of the four films or service providers who may not have been specifically involved in these films but were considered key players in Zimbabwe's film services industry over the period under study. In that sense, the snowballing was purposeful rather than convenient. It would begin from a purposively selected respondent, who would then refer to the next possible respondent. It would then have to be considered whether that prospective respondent fitted the scope of the study. In most cases, respondents would mention a potential interviewee during their own interview. For example, an interview with Elvas Mari, National Arts Council of Zimbabwe director, identified Farai Mpfunya, Culture Fund director, as a potential respondent, while another with *Tanyaradzwa* director/writer Tawanda Gunda Mupengo, led to short film producer/director and script supervisor Angeline Dimingo.

Semi-structured expert interviews
In-depth interviews were conducted (see interview schedule) with stakeholders who supplied services towards the production of the four films and some who occupied critical roles in Zimbabwe's film industry but were not necessarily involved in the production of the mentioned films. The respondents in this study were treated as experts in the area of film production, hence the term 'expert interview' (Flick, 2006). The interview questions were non-standardised, although there was a predetermined schedule to guide the interview process (see interview schedules in Appendices). Some interview questions required respondents to provide episodic recounts based on their recall of events that occurred during the production of particular films. Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in a conversational manner, except for Dorothy Meck who was interviewed over the phone, as well as John

Riber, now resident in Tanzania, who responded via electronic mail. All the face-to-face interviews were recorded aurally using a smartphone, while field notes were also taken down at the same time. Although the telephone and e-mail interviews were convenient, they did not provide the rich data and convenience normally associated with face-to-face interviews.

Interviews provided the contextual evidence of what happened in the production of the films employed as case studies in the research. They provided the window into the participants' experiences. For this reason, interviews are often hailed for their ability for "giving a human face to research problems" (Mack et al, 2005:26). Interviewing film industry stakeholders counterbalanced the otherwise insulated analysis of films (hence triangulation), as Tomaselli (1996) argues that studies that look into texts only, often sideline the contexts in which the texts are produced.   The method employed could also be regarded as phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 1998) which focused on past experiences, present experiences and the essential experiences. The data yielded through these interviews is essentially a recollection by the participants of what occurred in the past, their assessment of present circumstances and their speculations about the future, as far as the film sector is concerned. The knowledge obtained from the interviews, however, is framed according to my own constructions as a researcher. As Geertz (2003:150) observes, "What we call data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to."

Although an interview schedule was drafted to collect data, it only worked as a guideline or *aide-mémoire* (Gray, 2009). Often, some respondents would answer several questions in one response, or would require further probing on one issue to give a 'satisfactory' response. This is what scholars term "semi-structured interviews" (Gray, 2009; Wellington & Szczerbinski, 2007). The strategy employed was to allow the interviewees as much latitude as possible to express themselves. In this manner, respondents would recount their experiences without much interruption. The main advantage of this strategy was that it resulted in a robust conversation rich with qualitative date. In some instances, however, this led to rambling - "a tiresome distraction from the main focus at hand" (Bryman, 1988:48). In such cases, respondents would wander off and provide information that did not help answer the research questions. This 'rambling' was permissible as an indicator of diversity in the manner people interact with issues. Interviewees in this research were drawn from a cross-section of film service providers such as financiers, policy-makers and technical crew members. The interviews were designed to answer the key research questions that informed the study as indicated in the table (5.1) below.

Archival research and New Film History

The work of qualitative researchers and indeed the methodology guiding this thesis can be summed up thus:

> They try to observe the ordinary, and they try to observe it long enough to comprehend what, for this thing, "ordinary" means. For them, naturalistic observation has been their primary medium of acquaintance. When they cannot see for themselves, they ask others who have seen. When there are formal records kept, they search for the documents. But they favour a personal capture of the experience, so they can interpret it, recognise its contexts, puzzle the many meanings even while still there, and pass along an experiential, naturalistic account so that readers can participate in some of the same reflection" (Stake, 2010:32).

Research linking the context of production to film content is not a new methodological endeavour. James Chapman (2011:360) in his chronicle on *Researching Film and History* observes that there has been an approach documenting "the historical conditions under which films were made" analysing both their production and reception. It is part of a holistic approach regarded as 'New Film History,' which combines textual and contextual analysis[23]. A distinction needs to be made between researches that use visuals to study social life (visual sociology) and a cultural studies approach that studies the meanings of visuals (Harper, 2005). This thesis is eclectic because it combines both approaches, although it leans more on the sociological paradigm. Such an approach has been employed to study the synchronicity of style and industry or the "institutionalisation of an industrial method of filmmaking (the studio system)" connected to a particular style, vis-à-vis the classical Hollywood feature film (Chapman, 2011:351). New film history acknowledges that films are:

> ...complex cultural artifacts whose content and style is determined by a range of historical processes (including but not limited to, industrial practices, economic constraints, relations with external bodies, the interventions of producers and censors and the role of individual creative agency within the filmmaking process (Chapman, 2011:361; see also Powdermaker, 1950).

The table below attempts to give a summary of the methodology in the chapter, linking the study's research questions to potential interview sources as well as identifying the suitable data sources for study.

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[23] Hortense Powdermaker's (1950) pioneering study *Hollywood, the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie Makers* also argues that social relations in filmmaking affect their content and meaning.

Research Question(s)	Respondent category/Data source	Issue(s)
1. **What are the key skills, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs exploited in the production of film in Zimbabwe?**	a. Film and theatre trainers with a bearing in the supply of actors and production crew b. Zimbabwe Filmmakers Guild c. National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and Culture Fund d. Ministry of Media, Information and Broadcasting services. e. Film production and post-production studio representatives	i. The nature of training and training facilities offered for film production ii. Data on film production facilities in Zimbabwe iii. Policy framework for film production iv. The status of the film sector within the national cultural framework v. The role of government in the film services industry vi. History of government support to the film industry vii. Policy framework on film viii. Past and current film productions ix. Prospects and challenges facing film producers
2. **How has the availability or non-availability of 'film services' affected the production of the films *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), *Everyone's Child* (1996), *Tanyaradzwa* (2005) and *Sinners?***	a. Service providers involved in the making of any of the four films constituting the study	i. Key experiences in the making of the films. ii. The significance of their day to day activities (roles) to the making of the respective films. iii. Data on key expenditure.

(2013)?	b. Companies and individuals involved in the funding of films c. Government/ NACZ representative.	iv. Current scenario and prospects of funding future film projects. v. Short term/long term plans for the film industry. vi. Prospects for capacity-building
3. What are the major thematic issues in the films and how do they relate to the socio-economic-political contexts during which the films were produced?	a. The four films employed as case studies. b. Film producers/directors	i. The film services that went into them (as per interviews and observations) ii. Thematic concerns of the films. iii. What they wanted to achieve with films (commercial or artistic successes) iv. Their thick descriptions of work on the films.

Table 5.1: Correlation between research questions, data sources and interview issues

(source: Author)

The foregoing provides a rationale for combining a film services approach with political economy theory to study film production in Zimbabwe. It is a holistic approach that acknowledges the significance of circumstances of film production, for instance that "technologies used in the making of an image determine its form, meaning and effect" (Rose, 2012:20). Due to its holistic nature, new film history encompasses multiple primary data sources including the films themselves and non-filmic resources such as company records, personal papers and scripts, among others. In this research, several people involved (currently or previously) in Zimbabwe's film industry were interviewed to get their insights on the constitution of the sector, while reference was also made to archival materials, whenever available (see Fig. 4.1 below). For example, the image below shows a call sheet from *King Solomon's Mines* and Stephen Chigorimbo (second assistant director) giving out instructions to actors on the set of the film. Reference is also made to a report on a *Consultative meeting on Film and Development needs in Southern Africa* (Chigorimbo, 1996). Where convenient, news reports are also used to gain important insights on film production in Zimbabwe. Such archival materials were collected in a bid to understand the circumstances surrounding the production of films in Zimbabwe. Not all productions would have such rich historical records, however. Acquiring a copy of the film *Tanyaradzwa* alone took painstaking efforts as it was not readily available on the market. The director did not have a copy, while the producer only had one on the antiquated analogue U-matic technology.

The films were collected and archived electronically on digital versatile disc (DVD). The film *King Solomon's Mines* was only available on Betacam at the Production Services and had to be transferred to DVD. *Everyone's Child* was easily available as the Media for Development Trust still had a functional office in Zimbabwe, where most of their yesteryear productions were archived on DVD. *Tanyaradzwa* was the most difficult film to get, and was eventually acquired from short-film producer Angeline Dimingo at the request of Tawanda Gunda Mupengo, the writer/director of the film. *Sinners?* was given to me by a student who was aware of my interest in the video film.
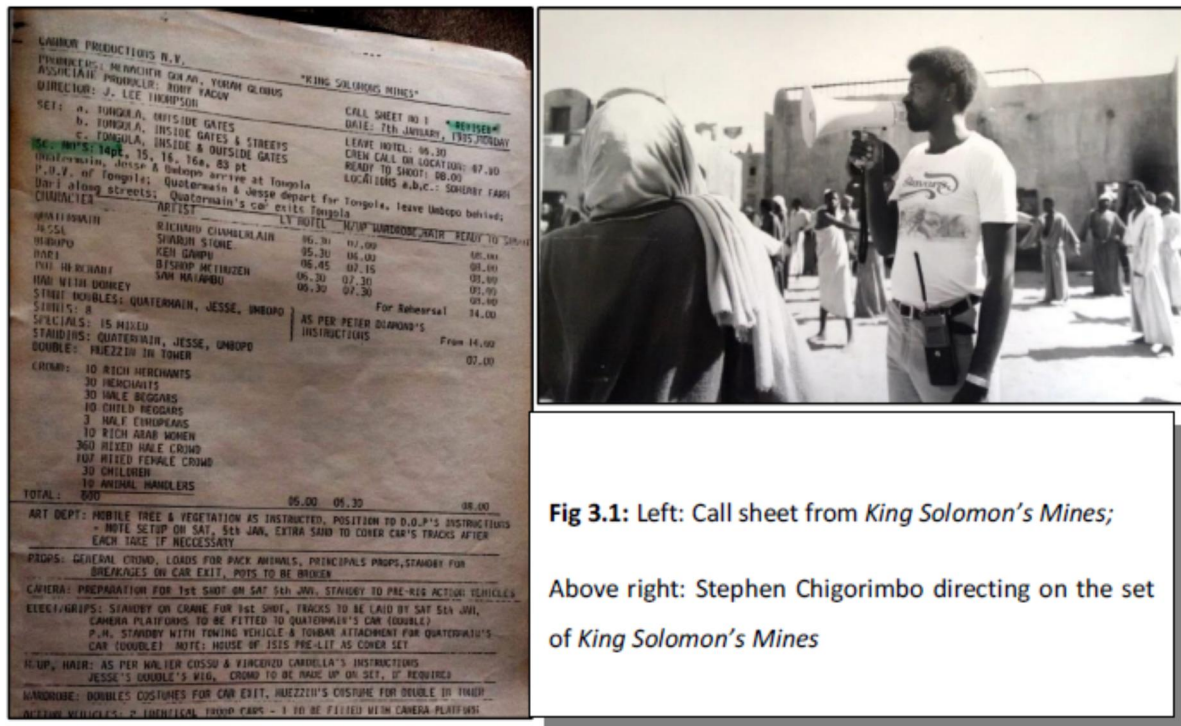
Fig 3.1: Left: Call sheet from *King Solomon's Mines*;

Above right: Stephen Chigorimbo directing on the set of *King Solomon's Mines*

All the films employed as case studies in this research are treated as "found materials" (Pauwels, 2011:6) – those visual products produced without the researcher's effort. Found materials should be distinguished from researcher initiated visual data, although both are strands of visual research. Found materials offer a way for researchers to find out about the culture of the producers of such material. Visual research on found materials can focus on the depicted or the representational practice (the cultural and technological systems) responsible for the depiction (Pauwels, 2011) thus the production context and the context of production.

Thematic analysis and hermeneutics of interpretation

Data collected using interviews and the films are analysed using thematic analysis and hermeneutics of interpretation. Generally, analysis is "sorting out the structure of signification" (Geertz, 2003: 158). From the outset of any research project, analysis is on-going because the researcher has to pay attention to and select research participants and what data to record (Butler-Kisber, 2010). In that sense, researchers are constantly identifying themes way before the stage of analysing data. From that perspective, research is an iterative rather than a linear process of inquiry. There are three approaches to qualitative data analysis, namely interpretative, social anthropological and collaborative social research approaches (Miles and Huberman 1994). The interpretative approach is applicable to this thesis. Under this paradigm, interview and observational/experiential data is regarded and interpreted as

text. Human action and words are considered as a collection of symbols that can be critically analysed. Films can be classified among 'hybrid texts', which combine linguistic and semiological elements (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). Stam et al (1992:50) use the term "pluricodic" to denote the numerous codes making up films, which include language and images.

Thematic analysis is a search for and identification of themes emerging in the description of a phenomenon (Fereday and Muir-Cochraine, 2006). It allows one to decipher both latent and manifest meanings in data. Because it is "a way of seeing", it means that what one sees through thematic analysis, may not be seen by others. This means that the person doing the analysis must possess tacit knowledge or theoretical sensitivity to be able to discern what is going on (Boyatzis, 1998). In this case, my consciousness about film services was a useful premise in recognising how the production of films was constituted in Zimbabwe. This recognition could be derived from both the film texts and interview transcripts. A theme can be defined as "a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998:4). Thematic analysis, as is the case here, is used to identify both visual and verbal patterns in data. The thematic analysis employed in the study, therefore entails part semiotics-part content analysis of both filmic texts and interview transcripts. Due to the triangulated nature of this methodology, it can be termed a 'hybrid approach' (Fereday and Muir-Cochraine, 2006). Meaning in film is embedded in the production contexts of filmic texts. But importantly, as Tomaselli (1996) argues, prevailing meanings are outcomes of socio-cultural encounters. In other words, discursive practices and texts can be connected to wider social and cultural determinants; there is a link between the text and underlying societal power structures. The processed visual image in cinema stands for something that is no longer there or as Metz (in Easthope, 1993) says, 'made present in the mode of absence.' The image thus stands for what it represents - what the film is about (Benjamin, 1935) and the efforts that produced it (production context/film services). Images on screen are nothing more than a representation of reality. Such representation is a cultural, not a natural process and is therefore rooted in "ideological conventions and specific cultural practices" (Easthope, 1993:7). This thesis argues that such ideological conventions and cultural practices can be deciphered by analysing the constitution of film industries that produce these filmic representations.

Thematic analysis is used in this study to gauge the content of the four films mentioned above, in order to understand the production services that went into their making, and the socio-economic context within which such production occurred. The films are part of what van Leeuwen (2005) terms 'semiotic resources' which have potential for making meanings. An analysis of "specific cinematic codes[24]" (Stam, et al 1992: 50) such as camera movement, lighting, editing allows a connection between film services and the context in which the particular films were produced. To further clarify this, is another term employed by Stam et al (1992); that of *aesthetic norms* "the historically evolving sets of alternatives available to the filmmaker, the set of more or less probable substitutions within a functional context" (1992:51). This means that there are certain stylistic conventions and outcomes associated with productions from different epochs (contexts of production) as has already been discussed in Chapter Two:

> Thus a given mode of film practice at any historical moment ranks certain paradigmatic alternatives as more or less likely. The wipe, for example, is an unlikely alternative in a 1920s film but a highly likely one in the mid-1930s. These norms should be studied, furthermore *in terms of their relation to the forces and relations of film production* (Stam et al, 1992:51, emphasis added).

Thematic analysis entails "recognising" (Boyatzis, 1998; Fereday and Muir-Cochraine, 2006) important information that answers the research questions and then interpreting it. In this case, an open coding system was adopted in which data was interpreted according to their relevance to the research questions. The codes employed were taken from existing film concepts (constructed codes) and from interviewee expressions (in vivo codes) (see Flick, 2006:299). As such, it was possible to infer from interviews the film services that respondents made reference to even when they did not use the phrase "film services" in their responses. The film services conceptualisation provided in Chapter Four (see Fig. 4.1) also allowed the dimensionalisation/contextualisation of film services within particular productions, either from the film credits or by considering the aesthetic norms of particular productions. Related approaches have enabled scholars on Zimbabwean cinema to conclude that donor-funded films of the 1990s bear the preferred social messages crafted by their funders (Mahoso, 2000; Hungwe, 2005; Fisher, 2010; Thompson, 2013).

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[24] Specific cinematic codes are those that appear only in cinema (e.g. lighting, montage, camera movement) and can be distinguished from non-specific codes, which are shared with other languages besides cinematic language (Stam et al, 1992:50)

At the heart of hermeneutics lies the assertion that "the meaning of a part can only be understood if it is related to the whole" (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000:53). In this thesis, a film can only be understood in relation to its context of production. The endeavour to understand the part (a particular shot or scene for instance), therefore spirals until it involves the whole (the entire film and the context in which it was produced):

> if it is necessary to place a text in its context, in order to understand it, then the context should naturally also include the author of the work. Yet authors cannot be seen in isolation, either; they need to be placed in their social context- which can be further broadened to their whole historical background. In the final analysis, the entire world history becomes the whole to which it is necessary to refer in order to understand a single part (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000:54).

The conceptualisation of social science hermeneutics advocated by Flick (2006:339) is enlightening here. The procedure begins with open coding of the text (be it interviews or films). The next procedure is to look for meaning units as well as concepts that "bind together the parts and units." From this discussion, it means units or parts of films are connected to the broader context (political economy) of those films to come up with an aggregated meaning. Research findings of this study are presented thematically, or in a way that best answers the research questions. This entails, what Flick (2006) calls "selective plausibilisation" or the selection of passages of data that offer the greatest congruence in answering the research questions. The obvious criticism of this approach is that it excludes data that is not illustrative or is deviant and contradictory to the research objectives (Flick, 2006).

Ethical considerations

Embedded at the core of all research activities are some "do's" and "don'ts", or a "systematic reflection on morality" (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007:59), otherwise referred to as ethics. The issue of ethics is one that has gathered a lot of significance ever since the Nuremberg trials (Lincoln, 2005; Christians, 2005; Israel and Hay, 2006). Worldwide, ethics review boards have to give some formal approval before a research project can commence. These institutional review boards have at times been perceived as "monsters" standing in the way of progress for some researchers. This is the case, especially, when such committees insist on rigid, sometimes out-dated methodological checklists – what Yvonna Lincoln (2005:165) has termed "methodological conservatism" - which may have been made redundant by developments in methods of inquiry and cultural dynamics. Such templates often disregard indigenous ways of knowing (Vannini and Gladue, 2008). The common

allegation is that regulators of ethical practice themselves do not understand social research because the methods and theories of social sciences developed from the natural sciences (Christians, 2005). It is for this reason that Mark Israel and Iain Hay (2006) open the first chapter of their book *Research Ethics for Social Scientists*, by declaring that "Social scientists are angry and frustrated" (Israel and Hay 2006:1). Indeed "The social scientific disciplines' story line includes telling writers to suppress their own voices, adopt the all-knowing, all powerful voice of the academy and keep their own mouths shuts about academic in-house politics" (Richardson, 2006:2). Due to the fact that research ethics hail from the discipline of biomedical research, most qualitative researchers feel that they are not likely to benefit from some of the ethical guidelines currently in place (Mack et al, 2005).

The difficulty of imposing hard and fast rules of conducting research lies in the reality that every social science research will encounter and create different circumstances from any other (Rose, 2012). Emergent research methods lately challenge traditional modes of thinking. As argued by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy (2006:ix) "Much of traditional research has been entrenched in a positivist paradigm, one that assumes a unified truth with the goal of testing knowledge and providing little room for exploration and interpretation of multiple perspectives". These scholars call for "new questions" which in turn create "new spaces for dialogues" while at the same time crossing disciplinary boundaries. Arguing for what they term "respectful" research, Vannini and Gladue (2008:141) also trash objective research as "careless and heartless": "This means that it is not unscientific to think with the heart, but rather it is immoral to follow a science that refuses to respect inquiry's moral path and necessary relational reality" (Vannini and Gladue, 2008:141). They encourage a decolonised epistemology that moves beyond research ethics checklists to those ethics that researchers actually "feel" important because ethics are morally lived. Often, this calls for new questions that tread on soft methodological grounds fertile for ethical introspections now common in social research.

This research is informed by de-ontological/non-consequentialist Kantian ethical philosophy (Gray, 2009; Israel and Hay, 2006). Immanuel Kant believed in a science of ethics in which human beings had obligations and duties to themselves and to other human beings. The de-ontological dimension of ethics thus flows from a core expectation whose primary consideration is human dignity. This philosophy is both comparable and compatible with the

African philosophy of Ubuntuism which demands respect for human life and space. Kant (1991) argues that the science of ethics has to be taught methodically if it is to be exercised:

> a doctrine of virtue is therefore, *something that can be taught…*But since one does not acquire the power to put the rules of virtue into practice merely by being taught how one ought to behave in order to conform with the concept of virtue […] virtue cannot be *taught* merely by concepts of duty or by exhortations (by paraenesis), but must instead be *exercised* and cultivated by efforts to combat the inner enemy within man (Kant, 1991:266).

Such insistence as the one by Kant above might have had an influence on the drafting of ethical guidelines by research institutions worldwide, such as the Nuremberg Code (1947), the Helsinki Declaration (1964) and the Belmont report. Some of the common ethical principles which apply to this research include: informed voluntary consent; confidentiality and anonymity and accuracy (Rose, 2012; Yin, 2011; Israel and Hay, 2006; Christians, 2005). The ethical principles emphasised in this research are not only based on the researcher's virtues but are also demanded by the UKZN's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. An ethical clearance certificate (Protocol reference number: HSS/0551/014D) has been issued as part of this ethical protocol (see Appendices).

In collecting data for this research, voluntary informed consent had to be sought from all participants (see informed consent form attached in Appendices). Voluntary consent is one of the most important of ethical principles (Mack et al, 2005; Israel and Hay, 2006; Liamputtong, 2008). It stems from the dictate that: participants "have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of experiments in which they are involved" (Christians, 2005:144). Getting this consent began with obtaining gatekeepers letters from authoritative bodies in Zimbabwe's film services industry. These included the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services and the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (See gatekeepers' letters in Appendices). The gatekeepers' letters were issued on condition that the research adhered to basic ethical requirements. The process of obtaining gatekeepers' letters was arduous yet was one of the key requirements for getting ethical clearance. Following the issuance of the gatekeepers' letters and, subsequently the ethical clearance, obtaining informed consent was relatively easier with all participants. Interview schedules were shown to participants so that they could decide, based on the line of questioning, whether they still wanted to participate in the study.

The principle of privacy and confidentiality was also critical in this research. This right was offered to participants in case they felt that the issues they would discuss were of a sensitive nature. All the participants in this research did not mind revealing their identity as the nature of the research did not endanger them in any way. In most cases, some of the information sought was too informant-specific that it would have been extremely difficult to withhold the identity of the respondent once their data was reported in the study. For instance, the identity of the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting services would have been difficult to withhold given that any information that he offered in his capacity as the permanent secretary, was easily traceable to him. This difficulty was quite significant in all data collection that included public enterprises. Related to this, Christians (2005:145), asks an important question: "When government agencies or educational institutions or health organisations are studied, what private parts ought not be exposed?"

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the various methods employed in conducting the study. The sampling procedures, methods of data collection and analysis, as well as ethical considerations of the study, are discussed in this chapter. The chapter advances the argument that research methodology needs not be separated from research findings as the two are on the same continuum. At the centre of this argument is the fact that what we find out in doing research is part of the very process of finding out that we often term methodology. Furthermore, the chapter underlines the importance of experience in research. The argument is advanced that the authoring of research results is steeped in the writer's experiences and is an exercise of interpretation. It interprets the author's perceptions and also reports respondents' own interpretation of events. The next chapter reports and analyses the issues that were encountered (findings) in the process of conducting the research.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Cinematic Fact, Aesthetic Norms

and Key Skills in Film Production

This section is one of two chapters that discuss and analyse the findings of the study. The approach employed is one in which findings are presented and analysed simultaneously to avoid the hazard of redundancy that sometimes characterises separate data presentation and analysis. The main endeavour of the current chapter is to trace the themes and aesthetic norms of the four films employed as case studies in this thesis. These themes are then related to the periods during which the films were produced, paying particular attention to the nature of services and key skills employed in their production. The political economy of such services is assumed to have had some influence on the themes of the films. This chapter therefore attempts to explore *the key skills, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs exploited in the production of film in Zimbabwe* deriving from the four films used as case studies, and at the same time *explain the relationship between film services and thematic issues in varying contexts*. A detailed discussion of the assumptions underlying this exercise has been conducted in chapters One and Four. In the table below, is an adaption of Clouse's (2012) classification of film industry occupations to distinguish between people/entities whose occupations are primarily in the film industry and those "that work in the film industry, but are primarily in other industries" (2012:17). This classification is delimited to the four films, namely: *King Solomon's Mines*, *Everyone's Child*, *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* which as discussed in Chapter One and Two, were produced during different but systematically connected epochs of filmmaking in Zimbabwe. As Geiger (2012) has done with the Nollywood cinema, it is necessary to review the stylistic and professional endeavours of films produced in Zimbabwe by tackling the aesthetic norms and production strategies employed in making the films, hence a cinematic fact analysis.

Key skills, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs in the specific films: Production contexts

Some observers judge the quality of films based on comparisons of both their substance and aesthetics (Mhiripiri, 2010; Fisher, 2010; Powdermaker, 1950). In the Zimbabwean context, among these observers are critics writing in the mainstream media, some of whom have

expressed concern over what they perceive to be deterioration in the quality of films made in Zimbabwe. One critic argues thus:

> Whenever Zimbabweans talk about the greatest films ever made in the country, on many occasions they refer to films produced in the 90s. This decade produced "Jit" (1990), "Neria" (1992), "More Time" (1993), "Everyone's Child" (1996), "Flame" (1996) and "Yellow Card" (2000), which are probably some of Zimbabwe's highest-grossing movies of all time. But seldom is there mention of movies from 2000 onwards and if they do, it is usually with a lot of criticism. The major reason being that *movies are no longer made in the same manner* (emphasis added) as they used to (Yikoniko, 2014[25]).

Yikoniko's observation relates to the production of films in Zimbabwe. The argument can, in one analysis, mean that some services that were available in the production of films back then, are no longer there. She further argues that the themes of latter day movies are 'less weighty' compared to the strong social messages of the donor-funded films. From this, one may argue that the themes of recent films appear to be 'shallow' because they lack the necessary support to engage better aesthetic norms. Furthermore, it appears taboo for filmmakers to tackle the most topical issue of their time – the political crisis, while during the donor- era they could easily tackle the social problems of the time, with government support too. Mhiripiri (2010) has made this observation with reference to the themes of post-2000 short films. He observes that while documentary films attempt to portray the political realities in the country, this theme inexplicably does not appear in contemporary feature films. A contemplation of the reasons for this inability or unwillingness by filmmakers to depict Zimbabwe's political crisis, is possibly an area of future inquiry.

It is necessary to follow up on Yikoniko's (2014) assertion that post-2000 films are no longer made in the same manner as their predecessors of the 1980s and 1990s. A comparison can be made with Hollywood, which by 1917 had reached a climax in terms of its classical narrative and technology of production, including its "laws of editing, lighting and story-telling" (Fawell, 2008:1; c.f Powdermaker, 1950). Can the same be said in the Zimbabwean context? What are the laws of editing, lighting and story-telling peculiar to the Zimbabwean setting? These are possible entry points. A follow-up on film production in Zimbabwe traces the production roles and norms constituting different films. These production roles depict the service providers on the value chain of film production in the local context. They are part of the cinematic fact; "a multidimensional socio-cultural complex" (Stam et al, 1992:35). Below

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[25] From www.sundaymail.co.zw/whats-gone-wrong-with-our-film-industry/

is an outline of the services employed and key skills as well as organisational arrangements in the production of the four films under study. It must be noted that the character of the production value chain for each film relates very much to the period of its production, as explained in Chapter One. The data below was yielded by analysing the credits at the beginning and end of the films as well as from conversing with filmmakers who worked in the respective productions. The data gives a cross-section of the production value chain for all the four films in terms of their pre-production, production and post-production activities.

The table below gives a condensed reflection of the key skills/occupations and services, as well as supplemental occupations employed in the four films used as case studies in this research. It gives an idea of 'who' did 'what' and 'to what effect' in the production of the films and ultimately in the seen filmic product reflecting the notion that "within the filmic, then one encounters the cinematic" (Stam et al, 1992:35). The illustration captures the value chain of the four films, at the same time showing their differences, which as postulated in this thesis, are results of their different contexts of production. To some extent, the value chain in the respective cases is also comparable to the film industry structure modelled in Chapter Three. The idea to classify occupations as demonstrated below is adapted from Clouse's (2012:23) standard occupational classification (SOC), "a system used to categorize occupational groups and classify employees into...detailed occupational categories." This system helps map out the production value chain in different settings/contexts. While in Clouse's study, Ohio's Bureau of Labour Statistics provided this data; in Zimbabwe this endeavour is cumbersome due to the informal nature of the industry. Film credits were therefore a primary source of data in this research. Furthermore, some of the people involved in the film productions gave their insights into their roles and some key moments in production, which may help understand and explain some of the aesthetic norms used in the narratives.

Primary film occupations/services	*King Solomon's Mines* (1985)	*Everyone's Child* (1996)	*Tanyaradzwa* (2005)	*Sinners?* (2013)
Producers	Yoram Globus; Menahem Golan	John Riber [1]; John Persey (project coordinator); Ben Zulu; Louise Riber [1] (Line producer)	Dorothy Meck [1]	Daves Guzha [1] (executive); O'Brian Mudyiwenyama [1] (co-producer)
Directors	J. Lee Thompson; Stephen Chigorimbo (3rd assistant)	Tsitsi Dangarembga [1]	Tawanda Gunda Mupengo [1]	Gamu Tawengwa
Production Management	Cannon Group Inc.	Media for Development Trust	AfroVision Entertainment	Rooftop Promotions
Post-production Studios	Twickenham Film Studios.	Media for Development Trust	Media for Development (facilities); 14 10th Street Productions (online facilities)	Creative Native
Script Developers	Gene Quintano and James Silke; Vivalda Vigorelli (supervisor)	John Riber [2]; Andrew Whaley; Tsitsi Dangarembga [2]	Tawanda Gunda Mupengo [2]; script consultants: Rumbi Katedza, Jacui Jojo; Leonard Murasa	Blessing Hungwe
Key Cast	Richard Chamberlain; Sharon Stone; Herbert Lom; John Rhys-Davies; Ken Gampu; 3000 Zimbabwean extras	Nomsa Mlambo; Thulani Sandhla; Walter Mparutsa; Elijah Madzikatire; Chunky Phiri; Killness Nyati	Kudakwashe Maradzika; Emmanuel Mbirimi; Agnes Mupikala; Arnold Chirisa; Tendai Musoni	Getrude Munhamo; Tapiwa Mavindidze; Albert Charichafa; Sarah Mpofu; Eunice Taba; Chipo Bizure

Camera department	Alex Phillips (D.O.P); Avi Karpik (focus puller); Clive Lawrie (Camera assistant); Tony Baggott (camera assistant); Dave Dunn Yarker (aerial photography); Hans Khule Jnr. (2nd unit)	Patrick Lindsell (director of photography); Karl Schodt (focus puller)	Herbert Mhlanga; James Jemwa (assistant)	O'Brian Mudyiwenyama [2](director of photography)
Equipment suppliers	Lighting: Southern Lighting; Cameras & anamorphic lenses: Joe Dunton studios	Camera: Production Services (MOI)[26]; Grip equipment: MOI Zambia; Lighting: unspecified 'local' company (Riber, 2015)	Anonymous	Camera: Rooftop Promotions
Editors	Larry Richardson (assistant editor); Robert Green (2nd assistant editor); Dubbing editors: Peter Best, Bryan Tilling; Graham Harris; Dubbing assistants: Bob Mullen, Richard Fettes & Michelle Atkins; Kenneth Hall (music editor)	Louise Riber [2]; Andrew Melhuish (sound editor); Lawrence Mutasa (first assistant editor); Garikayi Chawasarira [2] (second assistant editor)	Offline: Mussa Ally & Dorothy Meck [2]; Online: Tongai Furusa	Joe Mawuru
Sound engineers	Eli Yarkoni (sound mixer); Yossi Yarkoni (boom operator)	Bob Hay; Themba Nyamweda (boom operator);	Temba Nyamweda; Enock Chinyenze; Mike Hundu (boom)	Musa Ally

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[26] MOI refers to Ministry of Information, Zimbabwe under which the Production Services is housed.

Set designers	Nello Giorgetti; David Varod (dresser); Property masters: Batia Grafka; Cesar Alava	David Guwaza (art director); Rachel Bednar (assistant); Steady Chidyausiku (props manager)	Wilfred Chidyausiku (prop master)	Josh Changa (art director)
Make-up artists	Walter Cossu; Gino Zampriolo; Betty Church; Vincenzo Cardella (hair stylist)	Mara Gedergren	Evelyn Gambe	Lusca Muchenje; Jean Shora (assistant)
Wardrobe/Costume designers	Tony Pueo; Robyn Smith; Sue Lightman	Beaula Guwaza; Elector Garara (assistant)	Paxcedes Gambe	Sabina Musvati
Special effects technicians	Germano Natali; Fred Unger; Franco Scarano; Fabio Traversari	Juliet Lewis (foley artist)	None	None
Stunts	Peter Diamond; Reo Ruitters; Andy Bradford; Karmen Barbnik; Allan Olberholzer; Angel Castignani; Isaac Mavimbela; Abe Thembe; Graham Press; Keith Anderson (Aerial coordinator); Scully Levine	None	None	None
Supplemental film occupations	*King Solomon's Mines*	*Everyone's Child*	*Tanyaradzwa*	*Sinners*
Music	Jerry Goldsmith; Arthur Morton (orchestrations)	Keith Farquharson; Chiwoniso Maraire	Thamsanga Bimha (scoring); Chiwoniso Maraire; Double	Roki; Pauline Gundiza

			Trouble; Afrika Revenge; Kudakwashe Maradzike; Kelly Rusike; Sahara Band; Camelita Gumbo; James Mujuru	
Locations	Harare; Victoria Falls; Domboshava Location manager: Avner Pelled; unit locations: Rory Kilalea	Harare CBD; Domboshava	Ruwa; Harare	Harare CBD; University of Zimbabwe
Writers	Henry Rider Haggard	Shimmer Chinodya	Tawanda Gunda Mupengo	Partick Chasaya (stage play)
Transport	Paul Fisher	Ashley Joseph (transport and location manager); Charity Maruta (assistant)	Rockshade Car rentals & Tours; Matambanadzo Rentals	Anonymous
Financiers	Cannon Group Inc.	British Overseas Development Administration; Plan International	Dorothy Meck [3]	Daves Guzha [2]
Accommodation	Holiday Inn (main cast and crew)	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified
Caterers	Not specified	Carlette Godley	Big Mug	Shellzy catering
Electricians	Benny Offer	Farai Chimombe (first spark); Trynos Ruzani (second spark)	Jeffrey Japanje (spark)	Not specified
Security	Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP)	Time Security; Knightwatch; ZRP	Not specified	Not specified

| Construction | Benito Leonardi; Arieh Ben-Ishai; Ian Mulder | Albert Tapera (construction manager); Tapiwa Kapesi & Dudzai Mawonera (assistants) | Not specified | Not specified |

Table 5.1: Film services and film industry occupations in *King Solomon's Mines*, *Everyone's Child*, *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* (Source: Film credits and field notes).

It is apparent that the composition of crews and talent that were involved in the particular productions differed respectively. For example, while *King Solomon's Mines* features a heavy load of visual effects, they are very minimal in the other productions (see a detailed discussion below). The films were, obviously not made in the same way (because they are products of their contexts) which is why, as already discussed in Chapter Two, it is difficult to blanket-classify films as national or continental. Each production differs from the other in many ways. There is a connection that can be made between the film crew, period of production, aesthetic norms and the filmic content. What follows below is a critical reflection on the (in)formal techniques employed in creating the films, as well as the resultant themes/content/aesthetic norms.

King Solomon's Mines and the special effects boon

King Solomon's Mines (1985) is a 100 minute-long action adventure feature film directed by British born John Lee Thompson. Israeli cousins Yoram Globus and Menahem Golan

Figure 5.1: King Solomon's Mines poster (Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/c/c5/King_Solomon's_Mines_1985.jpg

produced it. Globus and Golan realised significant success in Hollywood between the 1980s and 1990s because of their unique ability to produce films with small budgets and efficiently distributing them for profitable returns. Among the popular films they produced were *Bloodsport* (Arnold, 1988) and *Cyborg* (Pyun, 1989) featuring action super hero Jean-Claude van Damme. They also produced the *American Ninja* sequels, *Behind Enemy Lines* (Amir, 1986), *Braddock: Missing in Action* (Norris, 1988) and *The Delta Force* (Golan, 1986) featuring Chuck Norris as well as *Cobra* (Cosmatos, 1986) starring Sylvester Stallone; meaning that they worked with some of the most popular actors of the time. The Cannon Group produced several films featuring Michael Dudikoff, Charles Bronson, Van Damme, Norris and Stallone, the super action heroes of the 1980s and 1990s.

Golan and Globus had also developed a distinctive system of having several low-budget films in production at the same time, a factor that might have contributed to the demise of the Cannon Group in 1994. Their unique model was to presell films before they were made, and for this, they are credited for inventing the way most independent film companies work today. A comprehensive documentary titled *Electric Boogaloo: The Wild Untold Story of Cannon Films* (Hartley, 2014) has been made about the company. Robert Foster, an actor featured in the documentary describes the Cannon Group model as follows: "*They create a poster about a movie they intend to make, they sell it to foreign buyers; they take their money; they make the picture and deliver it the following season*". Cannon Group had a reputation of making at least 20 and up to 80 films a year, when most studios could only manage eight. The production of *King Solomon's Mines* therefore, was immediately succeeded, and in some cases, simultaneous with that of its sequel *Allan Quartermein and the Lost City of Gold* (1987). Both films were shot in Zimbabwe, specifically in Harare, Domboshava and Victoria Falls. Golan and Globus' exceptional low budget production model is epitomised by *King Solomon's Mines*, which was produced with a relatively small budget of about US$11 million, although it largely flopped on the market. The budget for the film was so low that Richard Chamberlain, the main actor, has jokingly remarked that out of the original budget of US$50 million "*I think they ended up spending three dollars seventy five cents on it*" (Hartley, 2014). This was possible due to the shrewdness, fierceness, robustness and passion of the two Israeli cousins at the helm of the company. As a result, they are said to have run the company "like a factory, a no frills operation where long hours and no pay are the norm, where every penny ends up on the screen" (Hartley, 2014). *King Solomon's Mines* would have worked perfectly for the Cannon model because it featured hundreds of inexperienced locals exploited as cheap labour. This aspect has been criticised for contributing to stereotypical representations of Africa and indigenous black people. The opening montage of *King Solomon's Mines* rolls long cuts of the majestic Zimbabwean landmark Victoria Falls edited to an opera score. As the opening credits of the main characters appear, the outstanding omission is that the list of actors features no Zimbabwean name. Some of the local cast is credited at the end of the movie though, under the magnanimous title 'silent ones'. That title alone is symbolic of the 'silence' of the film on the significance of black people featuring in a Hollywood narrative. It is a silence also evident in the symbolic misrepresentation of Africa consistent throughout the film. According to George Charamba, the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services, this stereotypical

representation was one of the dents on government's early initiative to put Zimbabwe on the map as a filming location:

> Now the trouble is, you then had a case of films which infact objectified the native getting filmed in Zimbabwe simply because we wanted Zimbabwe put on the map. Or you had films that had absolutely no bearing on the politics or culture of this country finding place in our country using our people as simply a mass horde that provides the hooting that is needed in a film and not really as actors in which case there was no development (Charamba, 2016).

In pronouncing the above, Charamba argues that Zimbabwe should move away from being a setting for films to being a producer of films so that it contributes to global discourses on film by generating its own tradition.

The filmic fact issues aside, *King Solomon's Mines* can be seen as a 'runaway production' (Goldsmith et al, 2010) conceived, designed and financed in the USA but drawing on the talent and skill of a Zimbabwean human resource base. An analysis of the film services employed in *King Solomon's Mines* shows that it was a 'one-off, fly-in production' which "requires a range of ancillary services from the region in which the shoot is located, including hotels and transport, and it will often require casual short term manual labour and sometimes local extras" (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:3). Archival material on the production of the film (kept by 3rd assistant director Stephen Chigorimbo) shows that international actors and crews flown into the country resided at Holiday Inn in Harare, while thousands of extras were recruited from the high density suburb of Dzivarasekwa and Domboshava to act as the savage blacks. Harare-based individuals (including numerous drivers from the high density suburbs of Kambuzuma, Highfield, Glen View and Glen Norah) supplied transport and medical services, while catering services were also provided by Holiday Inn.

The film became a viable project due to the 'push' by the Cannon Group for international, film friendly locations and Zimbabwe's 'pull', characterised by governmental and corporate attention as well as liaison networks. In Goldsmith and O'Regan's (2005) theorisation of location and design interests, local agents are a critical component of this 'pull' factor to a location. They previsualise film work and identify available infrastructure, including built and natural environments. Film services are identified prior to filming, making the pre-production preparation an important aspect of the production context. For *King Solomon's Mines*, four to six weeks were dedicated to preparation before the commencement of production. During this period, Chigorimbo says he played an active role in the identification of locations and the execution of several critical logistical functions, including coordinating the setting up of

infrastructure used in the film in conjunction with a hired Jewish crew. The meticulousness of the planning is evident from the available evidence, although Golan and Globus have been criticised for not working according to rules and plans (Hartley, 2014). Yet, by Zimbabwean standards the planning for *King Solomon's Mines* appears to have been flawless. Minutes of a meeting held by the production crew (4 January, 1985) show as much:

> Two buses at 5a.m to 4th St/Manica Road car park going straight out to set; Andrew Whaley and Steve Chigorimbo in supervision. One bus from Labour Exchange going straight out to set; Tanya Muzorewa in supervision. One bus at Dzivaresekwa, Mawadze shopping and Bus Centre, going straight out to set; Steve Phillis and Jephat Mapadwe in supervision. Buses will turn round from location back to Dzivaresekwa to collect the remaining extras (Chigorimbo, 1985).

Daily shoots started at 7a.m. By then actors had to be transported, dressed, made up and ready for the director's call. Judging from the above and much more evidence from the film's production notes, planning was a very important aspect of filmmaking:

> When you have got 3000 actors, you've got to feed them, you've got to transport them from their residences and you have got to take them back home, besides costuming them, and when you are actually filming, you need to control, to have those actors doing what you need them to do. We had to come up with various strategies. For every 100 people, there was someone whom we called a shelter controller. A leader; and those leaders are the ones whom you sit down with and you tell them what's happening in the story that day. And you tell them what was wanted the next day. It's the preparation that is critical. That's one of the biggest problems that we are having with our industry here because most of the people who are now into the industry have no idea about the preparation that goes into making a movie (Chigorimbo, 2015).

King Solomon's Mines features American stars Richard Chamberlain (Allan Quartermein) and Sharon Stone (Jessie) as well as hundreds of Zimbabwean extras acting as slaves, traders or savage tribesmen. Among them are Fidelis Cheza, Simon Shumba, Isaac Mabhikwa, Oliver Tengende, Brian Kagure and Innocent Choga. These people subsequently launched successful careers in Zimbabwe's film and TV sector as a result of the experience gained in this and other early Hollywood productions. For this reason, *King Solomon's Mines* is important in the historiography of filmmaking in Zimbabwe. It belongs to a period for which Zimbabwe is celebrated for managing to lure a host of international productions including *Cry Freedom* (Attenborough, 1987), *Lumumba* (Peck, 2000) and *Thinking About Africa* (Deodato, 1998) to mention just a few. As Cannon Group was a major corporation at the time, with active business interests in Europe, Asia and Africa, one can argue that Zimbabwe became a "local Hollywood" as enunciated in the film services framework (Goldsmith et al,

2010). The creative aspects of the films suited the production ecology of Zimbabwe as the host country. The framework suggests that in recent times, film production has become dispersed, with different aspects of pre-production, production and post-production occurring in different locations. These locations form an intricate 'international studio complex' (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2003, 2005). The Cannon Group thus became enmeshed into and shaped by the Zimbabwean production ecology. *King Solomon's Mines* is one of the best examples of the relevance and applicability of a film services framework, as it describes how Zimbabwe responded to international production industry needs by locally promoting international film services. The film is also a good case to demonstrate the globalisation of Hollywood, vis-à-vis how Hollywood affected film production internationally and in turn, how it was shaped by 'local' realities. Zimbabwe propped up its location interest by underwriting a supportive policy and regulatory framework as encapsulated in the *Why you should film in Zimbabwe* initiative (see Thompson, 2013). As a result, the country was able to attract production on a regular basis for the next decade. The film services framework also suggests that while production is dispersed, it is at the same time concentrated in particular locations. This model, though only a recent conceptualisation, was a key design in the Zimbabwean film economy in those early days. Back then, international companies dispersed production to foreign locations with only post-production being done in the USA, however, Zimbabwe became a unique zone, attracting concentrated post-production activities due to the impressive infrastructure invested in the Central Film Laboratories. This is probably why Ukadike (1994) opines that Zimbabwe had become "Africa's Hollywood." It also lends credit to the argument that filmmakers are not attracted to a particular location or a particular film alone, but by the state and character of that particular industry. From that perspective, the Cannon Group was attracted to Zimbabwe by the "film friendliness" of the country as evidenced by its film infrastructure, temperate locations, organisational networks and the capabilities of its people.

With reference to the above, Goldsmith et al (2010) point out that infrastructure invested for film production can make a place become a regular landscape for film production and in this way, lead to the emergence and growth of an industry. The Zimbabwean government somewhat realised this strength, hence its '*Why you should film in Zimbabwe*' initiative (Hungwe, 2005; Thompson, 2013). From the above evidence, an argument can be made that there is a relationship between the film industry and a state's institutional framework:

> If you look at the development of film historically, it has always been connected to structures of the state fundamentally because of the cost structure of the film industry. If you take into account that film is a capital-intensive industry, it means it can't avoid state patronage, and if you look at the Russian experience, it will tell you how film rose alongside the rise of the Bolshevik revolution. If you look at the American experience, again Hollywood is nothing but the state incognito. The same has also passed for quite a number of film areas including India, so really the production of film and the structures of the state are infact symbiotic (Charamba, 2016).

The period immediately after independence during which *King Solomon's Mines* was produced, shows that filmmaking is likely to develop in a location where the state plays a key role in supporting the sector. At the same time, filmmaking methodology (the cinematic fact) is influenced by political, regulatory and economic decisions made by the state. This extends to location and casting decisions, technology utilisation, and choice of service providers. From a liberal political economy perspective, however, the worry is that the relationship between the film industry and the state reproduces (in the negative sense) structures of power (Wasko, 2005). Evidence of this can be found in the composition and content of the sole national broadcaster, ZBC, which is unashamedly pro-state and ruling party, even when masquerading as a public service broadcaster (Thompson, 2013). So, while government's involvement in the film sector in the 1980s may be applauded, similar future arrangements may require critical checks and balances or cautious implementation (see a more detailed critique in Chapter Six).

The move by the Cannon Group to invest in film production in Zimbabwe can also be understood in light of the post-Fordist vertical disintegration of film economies characterising post-1960s Hollywood (Storper, 1989). Among other things, this resulted in a departure from the studio system of classical Hollywood (Storper, 1989; Fawell, 2008) with a growing interest in location shooting. This model, which is normally cheaper than studio filming suited the means and ends of the Cannon Group, whose specialty was the low budget film.

The production of *King Solomon's Mines* provided employment opportunities for local filmmakers and talent alike. Besides Chigorimbo, the now renowned film and theatre producer/trainer Continueloving (Conti) Mhlanga was a (uncredited) crowd choreographer. Other actors cast as extras would go on to have successful careers in Zimbabwe's film and TV sectors. According to Sebastian Mungate (2016), a resident of Domboshava, where part of the film was shot, numerous youngsters from the community landed roles on the set of *King Solomon's Mines* and were remunerated handsomely. Inspite of the criticism that the

film cast local people in inferior roles, there were numerous learning experiences as well. Chigorimbo, who was engaged three to four weeks before commencement of production says his job was so involving that he regarded himself as having been a "co-first assistant" and partly production manager. His role involved preparing for the filming, which meant the scheduling of production with first assistant director Miguel Gil, the director Lee Thompson as well as the production manager Joe Pollini. It is apparent that Chigorimbo values the experiences he gained on the set of *King Solomon's Mines*. He has affectionate memories from the production of the film he fondly calls 'King Solly,' and still maintains a rich archive of materials from the film's production, including production call sheets, minutes, schedules, scripts, some hand-written notes and photographs captured on the set. The evolvement of Chigorimbo and other filmmakers from the set of *King Solomon's Mines* marked an important epoch in local filmmaking. One can argue that in terms of political economy of film production, the period lay the foundations for the current indigenisation of the film economy in Zimbabwe. It apprenticed many would-be industry greats, so that when the Hollywood productions of the 1980/90s departed, a stable human resource base remained in the country and became key to the successes of the donor-funded films of the 1990s and productions of subsequent years.

The production of *King Solomon's Mines* lasted 16 weeks, nine of which were spent at 'Tongola' – constructed as a massive but ancient fort located in the heart of a jungle, whose magnitude is evidenced in the film by Allan Quartermein's warning to Jessie that "there is a jungle out there." Production ran at a daily cost of about US$50 000 (Chigorimbo, 2015). The Tongola structure, as well as actors' wardrobes had to be made up to suit the depicted period (the 1800s), as *King Solomon's Mines* was a "period production[27]." For instance, the spear-wielding Mapaki and Kukuana tribes were dressed in loin clothes, beads and animal skins. Likewise, the hospitable Apakua, who lived their lives hanging from trees, also dressed in loin-clothes. Many aspects, for instance the language and properties (props) on the location also had to be designed for the period that the movie represented. Furthermore, there are many old cars and locomotives in the film. Luckily, according to Chigorimbo, there were a lot of vintage cars around:

> We had to dress the people according to the period. The action vehicles had to be from the period as well. It's set in sub-Saharan Africa, so the clothing was close to that. [My role] was organising the costumes, the props, the action vehicles, the

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[27] A film that depicts a particular historical period.

extras, and the support actors. We had to prepare them. To make matters worse, the language used was some strange language. I remember Fidelis Cheza saying '*dumafoto duma foto*' which was like saying 'let's run'. The scriptwriter had to come up with some kind of language and part of my job was to help the scriptwriter to translate into the real (Chigorimbo, 2015).

The availability of vintage locomotives as well as a scenic environment made the Norton area an ideal production location. For once, the open veldts and hills of Norton were turned into an imaginary land teeming with mineral wealth, occupied by warring treasure hunters and savage African tribes and wildlife. Many local people express wonder that this humble location could have hosted such a film, regarded as massive by African standards. The scenic Domboshava landscape also offered a complementary venue to make Harare and its immediate environs a film friendly city.

Fig. 5.2: Above and below: Vintage steam locomotive on the set of *King Solomon's Mines* (Source: Chigorimbo's personal archives)

The granite outcrop used in the scene in which Quartermein and Jessie are about to be stewed alive by the savage Mapaki tribe, is located within the Domboshava National Monument and national heritage site, which has been protected land since 1936. The place is steeped in mythology surrounding the San (bushman) rock paintings on rock surfaces and caves situated in the park. According to National Museums Tour Guide Terrence Mapondera (2016), the scenery of the place makes it suitable for filmic productions. Beyond *King Solomon's Mines*, the place has also been used for *Everyone's Child*, a short film by Patricia Mabviko and several musical videos:

> It has beautiful scenery. If you go to the cave, there is a geological tunnel that is used by the local community. It probably was the part that was used in *King Solomon's Mines* to show the mine. There are some gullies on the mountain. It makes a nice set. Even up to this present day, most of the visitorship that we have here, we are talking of people that come to take pictures of the sunset, some for the full moon, even those that are making musical videos (Mapondera, 2016).

Both Domboshava and Norton are located close to the modern Harare city centre, where the main production crew and actors stayed at the Holiday Inn hotel. Their natural and built environs were part of the infrastructure that attracted the Cannon Group to Zimbabwe and Harare specifically. Consistent with Goldsmith and O'Regan's (2005) observation, any such location would enjoy good competitive advantage of being able to represent real or imagined places in many productions as attested by Mapondera above. This is akin to location placement or the selling of a location as product with the film text, with positive implications for future tourism. It becomes part of a wider public relations promotion programme to attract a "travelling circus of international producers" (Goldsmith et al, 2010:3).

King Solomon's Mines has been the subject of heavy criticism, if not ridicule, particularly for its substantial load of special effects (see Goodman, 1985). Richard Chamberlain has described it as " a bit of a spoof," largely because of the slapstick antics of the cast. The disapproval is understandable against criticism levelled against Golan and Globus about their "lack of taste" (Hartley, 2014). The film has its fair share of action stunts, comparable to *Indiana Jones* that it reportedly imitated and tried to outdo. Some of the stunts, especially the fighting scenes were dangerous, so actors had to be specially trained for those scenes:

> Some of the fighting was dangerous, because you have a car driving through a street. It's actually driving, so the people who are walking, every one of them, has to be rehearsed. You have to tell them 'when you see that vehicle arriving at that spot, you move that way'. Among them, you have specially trained stunts [people] because ordinary people do not react the way you want in a movie. So you have to specially train another group of fit people. You give them make-up to look like old people, but they are actually young, fit people, whom you have spent weeks training weightlifting, running and so forth so that they are agile, so that when the vehicle comes, they are not hit (Chigorimbo, 2015).

In one of the scenes described by Chigorimbo, Quartermein, Jessie and their tachophobic chaperone Umbopo (played by South African Ken Gampu - Quartermein later tells Jessie: '*He doesn't trust anything that moves without eating grass'*) are aboard a truck, pursued by Dogati (John Rhys-Davies) and his crew. The chase occurs through a crowded market place, with the mob having to move this and that way to avoid the speeding trucks. There are many more dangerous feats in the film. In one scene, Jessie is captured by a group of bandits and bundled into a roll of carpet. Her captors unwind the carpet to present her to Dogati but the propulsion of the unrolling carpet makes her tumble out of the room through an opening. She falls a few feet down into a stationary horse-drawn vegetable cart. As if on cue, the horse immediately takes off through a crowded street with the bemused Jessie on board. Her captors pursue her as she fights back aboard the speeding cart. The superhero, Quartermein comes to the rescue, but a mishap sees Jessie again tumble out of the cart together with an assortment of fruits and vegetables. These stunts, if not well choreographed, could have led to serious injuries. Chigorimbo recalls two incidents when two people almost died on set, comparing it to a 1975 production, *Slavers* (Goslar, 1978) in which five people drowned on Lake Mutirikwi (then Lake Kyle) during filming.

Mhlanga, though not credited in the film, was responsible for crowd choreography on *King Solomon's Mines* and says controlling the crowds during those scenes was quite a challenge as there were numerous extras and the scenes had to be done in as few takes as possible. The

interlocking roles and responsibilities of crew in the film, the mixture of amateur and trained talent, the novelty of an uncharted location and the experience of Golan and Globus all combine to form an intricate mix of factors legitimising Fawell's (2008:25) observation that Hollywood films "tend to be an amalgam of contributions that vary in their effectiveness". He argues that even the greatest productions have some "genuinely good" and "genuinely bad" moments. Related to this, Cannon Group film productions have generally been labelled pejoratively as 'schluck' with Mark Helfrich, a former editor under the group remarking that "*there were so many bad movies being made at Cannon that if something of quality came out, it was like a happy accident*" (Hartley, 2014). *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), compared to two earlier adaptations of the same title, has been criticised for having its story "lost in the effects" (Goodman, 1985[28]). It features wild animals and computer generated effects of so great proportions that Goodman complains:

> The plot is trampled by elephants, gobbled by crocodiles, mowed down by machine guns, consumed in flames, drowned in roiling waters, crushed by slabs of stone, buried in quicksand, enmeshed in a gigantic spider's web, swallowed whole by a sea monster and cooked in the biggest cauldron of vegetable soup you ever saw.

To advance Goodman's observations, a few more scenes from the film can be cited. For instance, in the opening scene, Professor Huston's assistant Rupert is impaled to death by a trap door. Throughout the film, there are at least 12 scenes with explosions involving cars, locomotives, aeroplanes, missiles, dynamite and King Solomon's mines themselves (excluding numerous other scenes with gunfire). In one action sequence, Quartermein fights an assailant atop a moving train. He is overpowered and falls onto the rail track, but between the wheels. He pulls off the extraordinary feat of holding on to a chain dangling from the train, getting dragged by the speeding locomotive on the rail track and climbing back on board without injury. In many other scenes, Quartermein always arrives on the scene dramatically to rescue Jessie from a series of captors. For her part, the lady always gasps "Quartermein!"

In yet another action scene, a horse drawn cart speeds through a busy courtyard. Quartermein pulls off a number of breath-taking stunts to save Jesse from the locals whose fascination with her on more than one occasion leads them to ask "*momutengesa marii?*" (For how much are you selling her?) Quartermein is represented as a superhero, a daring and sometimes gruff

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[28]http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9D04E7D91138F930A15752C1A96394826 0&gwh=4E1913F6A287D88C54D53DCF8E075E58

macho man of unparalleled bravado who is always endangered and ever winning. The character was reportedly created in direct competition to *Indiana Jones*, which was already in production prior to the mooting of the *King Solomon's Mines* script.

The scenes on the small aeroplanes are clearly shot in a green studio as evidenced by the thick, fuzzy and greenish edges as well as the unnatural, floating movements of the planes. These effects are traceable to the work of stunt coordinator Peter Diamond, aerial coordinator Keith Anderson and the editing of John Shirley. According to Chigorimbo, many more special effects experts (film service providers) were flown in from South Africa, Israel, the UK and USA, but the armourer (Brian Rayner) was local.

Some of the effects seen in *King Solomon's Mines* were not computer generated but were done manually.

> When you talk about shooting you are talking about guns that have to be prepared because you don't use live rounds, you use blanks. Inside, you've got the explosive, but where you should have the bullet, you have wax, so when it hits, it explodes and you see the fire, but nothing has come out of it; and that is done by armourers. You have the 'blood' in satchels. It can be put on the skin and you use some adhesive, but inside it you also put something that explodes, an explosive - a minor one, because underneath, you've got leather and then on top of it, you put the explosives, and you cover it up with wax. One camera is filming the gun exploding and another camera is shooting the reverse on the person getting shot. There are wires to the person. There is somebody sitting there. When the bullet goes there, he presses there so that the bullet also explodes. So that is the special effects (Chigorimbo, 2015).

One of the famous scenes in the film involves a huge clay pot, into which Quartermein and Jessie are thrown, to be stewed alive. They upset the pot and it tumbles downhill landing just in front of a pride of lions. The big pot was made from a special plastic-like material- Perspex (acrylic glass). The same material was also used to partition lions from the actors in the scene. In one scene, Colonel Bockner (Herbert Lom) and his troops walk into a quicksand and several men get 'swallowed' by the sand. There is yet another scene where a man is trapped and eaten by a giant spider at the entrance into King Solomon's mines. It is evident that a lot of effort went into designing and decorating the set. The quicksand, the spider web and the mine tunnels as well as the Tongola fort are all intricate designs. The design team was in the country two weeks prior to shooting to put these sets in place.

> On *King Solomon's Mines* we had some very special devices, […] the people get to a place where the soil is quicksand, so you have to specially arrange that, you have

to prepare, put a platform on top, where you put a thin layer then underneath there is nothing so that when the people are falling in, they are actually falling in there and yet up there because there is the sand that's coming, it's as if the ground is actually sinking. Those things you have to prepare. And the big pot where Fidelis would say *endai munomubika* (go and stew them) that's made from Perspex and plaster of Paris, and it was transported from Lake Chivero to Domboshava, because one of the scenes was done in Domboshava on the mountain. Then you also use a glass partition because there is a scene where the lion is attacking and between the lion and the actors there is actually glass, mainly Perspex. It doesn't break like normal glass (Chigorimbo, 2015).

In that scene, Quartermein and Jessie pitch up at the Breasts of Sheba (twin mountains under which it was assumed lay great treasures) only to find themselves surrounded by an army of black, cannibalistic warriors armed with spears. The Mapaki chief (Cheza) orders the warriors to take the duo and stew them in a big 'pot' on a rocky outcrop. The language used in that scene is mostly Shona: Simon Shumba saying "*Tatenda matiponesa*" (we are grateful for feeding us) and the Mapaki repeatedly shouting "*Ngavabikwe*" (They should be cooked), and the actors sound realistic and natural conversing in their mother tongue. Inside the gradually heating piece of earthenware, Quartermein and Jessie improvise a way of rocking the giant pot so that it spills water on the fire and eventually they upset it and it rolls down the dwala. Just as they think they are safe, the pot lands in front of a pack of lions, but they boldly start romancing in front of the wild beasts. The lions were acquired from Lion and Cheetah Park particularly from Vivian Bristow. Animals from this facility have appeared in international productions, including *Mountains of the Moon* (Rafelson, 1990) and *A Far Off Place* (Salomon, 1993) but Bristow was displaced from the property at the height of the land reform programme (see Chadwick, 2003). The film also employed crocodiles in a scene where Quartermein is dangled down a rope and slowly brought down into a crocodile infested pool. Umbopo, who throws an explosive onto the scene, saves him. While the lions were trained, the crocodiles used in the film could not be trained. Some of them would die due to shock from the sound of gunshots and detonating explosives.

To sum up the special effects in *King Solomon's Mines*, there are guns, explosives, a German army unit, speeding cars, trains and carts, fights, precarious aircraft, untamed animals and a lot of savage blacks. Another Cannon Group production, *Hercules* (1983) has been criticised for employing similar, cheap special effects. The boon of special effects in the films was an aesthetic norm for the time and can be understood from Michael Storper's view of the transitioning Hollywood production format that was growing increasingly inclined towards the 'spectacular' in which "technical innovations were aimed at the 'look' of the film" in

order to set it apart from television (1989:280). At the same time, *King Solomon's Mines* was attempting to counterpoise the studio and the found location, perhaps on the realisation that the natural location offered "integrity as an authentic background" while the studio offered a faithful rendering artifice expected as an aesthetic norm of films of the time. As a result, the film producers invested in suitable film services, namely set designers, props manufacturers, stunt coordinators and suitable acting talent.

At the height of production of *King Solomon's Mines* there were up to 3 000 extras. The production schedules of the film show that these extras were divided into sub-categories of: definite characters cast (6), slavers (3), crocodile salesman (1), definite silent once (6), Dogarty riff-raff – Arab (15), main beggar boys (3), Germans (11), train rebels (2), foreground Kukuanas (3), slaves-male (14), Askari (7), foreground Mapaki (3), foreground stall holders (5), possibles (5), Amazons-doubtful (7), girls on trek (7) and hookers (13). Most of these extras were drawn from Highfield, Glen Norah, Glen View, St Mary's, Mufakose, Warren Park, Lochinvar, and Dzivarasekwa, which supplied most of the extras because of its proximity to the main set known as Tongola in the film. The main set was situated 25km outside Harare, corner Kirkman and Bulawayo road, opposite what is known today as Snake World. One may argue that the amount of above-the-line talent that was imported into the country for the set of *King Solomon's Mines*, deprived local filmmakers of opportunities to work at the highest level. For example, the film crew was made up of American, Jewish and Italian nationals with only a few locals being involved in direct supervisory and design roles. Yet, from a film services perspective, such international organisations and individuals of repute were necessary to provide " "quality assurance" and reduce the risks" associated with the production (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:41). The description of expertise, locations and technological infrastructure invested in the film indicate that it was a 'service production', depending heavily on the provision of film services that were formally and systematically coordinated and therefore easy to trace. The account above also gives a thick description of what exactly was going on in the production context of a film created in the context of the 1980s political and economic environment when the country embraced the Hollywood dream factory.

Everyone's Child and the influence of donor funding

Everyone's Child is an 83 minute-long film produced by the Media for Development Trust and directed by author-cum-filmmaker Tsitsi Dangarembga. It was produced mainly to raise

awareness about HIV/Aids and its associated problems. The story revolves around the lives of four siblings Tamari (Nomsa Mlambo), Itai (Thulani Sandhla), Norah (Victoria Vuyeqaba) and Nhamo (Casey Mugabe) who, after the death of their parents, Gideon (uncredited) and Ketiwe Mapisa (Peligia Viaji) from AIDS-related sickness, are left to face the trials and tribulations of orphanhood in a community full of greed, stereotype and little to no understanding of the disease. Itai moves to Harare in the hope of securing a job but ends up living on the streets, roaming around and robbing people with a gang of other street 'kids'. Isolated and burdened with the care of Nhamo and Norah, a vulnerable Tamari becomes the girlfriend of a promiscuous and abusive businessman Mdhara Shaghi (Elijah Madzikatire). In return for sexual favours, he gives her food, clothes and money that she desperately needs to look after herself and her siblings.

Much later in the narrative, Nhamo dies in an inferno when his sister Tamari is out with Shaghi. The death of Nhamo makes the family's uncle, Ozias, realise that the boy "was everyone's child", which becomes the clarion call; that society has a duty to look after orphaned children in the era of HIV/Aids. The sad event of Nhamo's death marks a new turn of events as everyone becomes conciliatory and starts supporting the family for a "feel-good" ending to the film. *Everyone's Child* concludes with a bold caption warning that "*by the turn of the century there will be over ten million children orphaned as a result of AIDS in Africa alone,*" which is the major reason that inspired the film. Unlike the commercial Hollywood productions in the previous decade, *Everyone's Child* set out to earn moral capital. Whatever amount was spent on its production would be justifiable as long as it reached its intended audiences. The film, just like many others of its time successfully mobilised public awareness and can thus be judged on its reach rather than commercial value as argued by the producer:

> I suppose it depends on how you define "success" and "failure." One measure that I like to use is simply "reach." A film is only as good as the number of people who see it (Riber, 2015).

Besides its "reach", *Everyone's Child* also enjoyed critical acclaim. The film afforded many filmmakers and actors apprenticed in the Hollywood era a chance to take up leading roles. Once regarded as cheap labour, black actors and technical crews now had the chance to not only showcase their expertise, but also earn good income. Most of these people became major service providers whose skill was employed in many other productions of the time. Some of the familiar names in the film include Fidelis Cheza (Mr Zonde), Walter Muparutsa (Uncle Ozias), Madzikatire, Peter Kampira (Zato) and Simon Shumba (pastor Phiri). Of these, only

Madzikatire is still alive. Most of these actors have in their careers featured in internationally acclaimed films. For example, Cheza and Shumba featured in *King Solomon's Mines* and *Kini and Adams* (Ouedraogo, 1997). Kampira featured in *United Trash* (Schlingensief, 1996), *Kini and Adams* and *Lumumba* (Peck, 2000) while Muparutsa also featured in *Kini and Adams.*

As already discussed in Chapter One, *Everyone's Child* was one of the so-called didactic films of the 1990s aimed at addressing the HIV/Aids scourge that was seriously affecting the country and the African continent at large. It has been called "an eloquent call for action on behalf of Africa's millions of parentless children" (California Newsreel, n.d[29]). This purpose is evident from the beginning as the credits declare that the film is made with support from some of the world's major aid agencies, such as the British Overseas Development Administration and Plan International. The former had been in operation since the 1970s and became the Department for International Development (DFID) in 1997. To date, the DFID has as one of its mandates the duty "to save lives when humanitarian emergencies hit.[30]" Plan International is a children's development organisation "committed to children and young people living a life of equality, justice and dignity.[31]" Anglo-American Corporation, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Oxfam-America, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), terres des hommes and 'Jonny's friends from England' also funded *Everyone's Child.* It is clearly a donor initiative and it should thus be no surprise that its agenda is driven by the funders (Lazar, 2003; Fisher, 2010).

Everyone's Child is a film about the time that it purports to represent. An evaluation survey conducted by the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) around 1998/9 about viewers' general impressions of the film suggested that they related closely with the 'realities' represented in the story (ITDG, n.d)[32]. Inspite of the criticism levelled against the donor-funded films; chiefly their didactism and donor influence on creative aspects, a contextual evaluation of the films would acknowledge that they were only responding to a need. Just like the Hollywood films in the decade before, the donor-funded films' aesthetic norms and thematic concerns were products of their circumstances. *Everyone's Child* was produced at a time when a large section of the population was succumbing to the HIV/Aids pandemic. People living with the syndrome were condemned to death, as medical interventions had not

[29] www.newsreel.org/video/EVERYONES-CHILD
[30] www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development
[31] www.plan-international.org/our-approach-1
[32] www.commsconsult.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/EveryoneZimbabwe-1.doc.pdf

developed as much as they have in the 21st century. This reality is reflected in the film when, on arrival at the clinic in an ox-drawn cart, a nurse examines Tamari's mother and declares: "*I think she is better off at home.*" By this, the nurse meant that the sick lady should go home and die, which was a common verdict back then. Nowadays, with the introduction of antiretroviral therapy (ART), HIV/Aids patients can live relatively longer and healthier lives compared to the 1990s. The film, therefore, simply reflected the dire reality without suggesting a solution. This could be one of the reasons for the observation that "while it succeeded in raising awareness of the problems, little awareness was raised of what to do about it and how it is possible to live positively with HIV/AIDS" (ITDG, n.d:10).

Even the money exchanged in buying goods, looks realistic for the time – a few notes of Zimbabwean currency- as the economy had not yet been ravaged by inflation. *Everyone's Child* is also a film that glorifies city life, probably because of the pull of urban life for rural youths at the time. Itai goes off to Harare at the slightest promise of imagined employment opportunities. Thabiso (Nkululeko 'Chunky' Phiri) pronounces that he is going to Harare now, where there is work for him, and promises Tamari that together they can make it there. All these scenes combine to give the film a realistic and therefore believable feel suitable for its straightforward intentions. This evidence threads into the argument made in this thesis, that films are as good or as bad as the contexts in which they are made. Their content reflects real events, while their circumstances of production affect this reflection; the sets, the props, the talent are all easier to deploy when they represent reality.

To continue with the argument above, there are some shortcomings in *Everyone's Child* that can be traced down to context: It appears the film was made for an English-speaking audience as there is very little of indigenous language used throughout. Apparently, the international aid organisations that funded the film, would be some of the major audiences, hence the language used in the narrative had to be accessible to them. As a result, some of the actors' dialogue is laboured, not authentic and sounds too rehearsed, as if they were reading from a script. Itai, Ozias' wife (Catherine Madzinga), Ambuya Matongo (Killness Nyati), Norah and Nhamo are the major culprits. A review of the film in *Variety* slates this aspect at length:

> The attractive cast is handled with sympathy, but the players are severely hampered by helmer Tsitsi Dangarembga's decision to shoot her story almost entirely in (sometimes phonetic sounding) English. This brings a formal, sluggish quality to the otherwise gracefully mounted proceedings, and the result is a needlessly long

90 minutes, with about a half-hour's worth of truly interesting material (Eisner, 1996)[33].

One can easily notice that in the film, Tamari's mother looks more sleepy than ill. Tamari seems to move and talk in perpetual slow motion. She is ponderous and always poker-faced, which leads critics to conclude that "she genuinely failed to express herself in different situations" (ITDG, n.d:9). This could be a result of the fact that most of the lead actors were first timers, with the younger, child actors being taken from the streets and trained for their roles. This explains why there was a workshop facilitator Chris Hurst. This aspect of the film tallies with Mhando's (2000) assertion that post-independence didactic filmmaking emphasises content more than artistic and cultural style. *Everyone's Child* also marked Dangarembga's directorial debut and as she has previously complained, there were several things that were beyond her control (Lee, 2006). She had to be 'covered' by Riber on some occasions (Riber, 2015). Dangarembga's reasons for declining to participate in this study reflected her earlier criticism of the film's circumstances of production about which she declared that "it's not the kind of thing I like to do" (Lee, 2006:135). Possibly because there was a dearth of technical skill at the time, some people had dual roles or featured simultaneously in the cast as well as the production crew. For example, Shumba, who features as a pastor, is also the Casting and Extras Co-ordinator as well as the actors' workshop assistant together with Garikayi Chawasarira, who was also the first assistant director and second assistant editor. From then on, this became common practice in the production of film in Zimbabwe, as will be shown in the discussion of *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* to follow.

Everyone's Child was one of the last films to enjoy the film services infrastructure installed by the state. The production technology and processes were genuinely filmic, as video had not become popular at the time. The film was shot on 16mm celluloid film and the negatives were processed at the Central Film Laboratories in Harare. The camera was hired from Production Services, Ministry of Information Zimbabwe and grip equipment was also hired from the Ministry of Information in Lusaka Zambia. Lights were acquired from a "local private film/events lighting company in Harare" (Riber 2015). The film was edited at the Media for Development Trust (MFD) post-production facilities on Steenbeck editing machines, which were some of the best in the industry at the time. The audio tracks were mixed at MFD and Chris Fellows Sound Studios in South Africa. The final sound mix,

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[33] www.variety.com/1996/film/reviews/everyone-s-child-1200447659/

negative cut and film mastering (including a 35mm blow up) was completed at The Film Lab in Johannesburg, South Africa. Mastering of the film at The Film Lab only shows that film business will follow installations of technological infrastructure. Unlike the CFL, The Film Lab still exists and recently processed the film *Mandela: Long Walk To Freedom* (Chadwick, 2013), although its operations are also being affected by the boon of digital technology (Stead, 2013).

The entire cast of *Everyone's Child* was Zimbabwean and so was the crew, apart from John and his wife Louise who were US citizens but permanent Zimbabwean residents for 10 years, producer Jonny Persey, who was a volunteer from the UK and a location sound recordist (Keith Farquharson) from South Africa. Some of the acting talent was derived from the peri-urban community of Domboshava, where parts of the film were shot. As was also the case with *King Solomon's Mine,* this episode underlines the importance of Domboshava as a filming location, which benefits people in its vicinity.

> One film that was made here was *Everyone's* Child. After they had a set on the mountains, there were also sets that were done in the village, and there were some parts where they needed a large number of people, they had to take them from the community. Everybody benefitted because they had some cash. Everyone was happy that one; they will be seen on TV, two; they also get an income. It's actually good that even some people who do musical videos use people from the community as part of their cast (Mapondera, 2016).

The choice of Domboshava as a filming location shows the importance of natural environments to attracting film. As already stated, Zimbabwe is endowed with numerous such locations as well as temperate conditions coupled with friendly people. For a location to be of meaningful value to film production, however, it needs to be underwritten by a supportive policy and regulatory framework. While at he time of production of *Everyone's Child*, there might not have been a film policy in place, the general political and economic climate was friendly enough. For example, NGOs were at the time important players in national affairs, a situation that would change around 2000 as the Zimbabwean state became more and more reactionary and suspicious of any institutions or individuals with external links.

 A long list of service providers at the end of *Everyone's Child* indicates the variety of film services available for the film production – hence a reflection of the skills, infrastructure and organisational arrangements that supported film production. These include the Central Film Laboratories (CFL), Europcar a transport services company, the supply of generators by Baron Services, the Zimbabwe Republic Police, film printing company Kodak, Radio

Communications, Zambia Information Services and municipal authorities such as Goromonzi

Rural district council and Harare city council. This shows that at the time, there still existed

formal organisational networks to underwrite the film industry, although by the end of the

decade, these were on the wane. *Everyone's Child* was one of the last films to be processed at

the CFL. Ronald Nongwana, who was employed at the CFL as a Film Colour Grader reckons

that the facility was highly important in the development of film in Zimbabwe and the region:

> Back then they would film on negative, on 16mm or 35mm. The film laboratories
> would process roles and roles of movie films. After processing it goes through
> other processes like negative cutting, printing, colour grading and so forth. We
> would process newsreel from as far as Kenya, South Africa, Botswana, and the
> SADC region, our own local productions. Our major customer was the Production
> Services [under] Ministry of Information, local industry and even other
> international film producers who would come to film in Zimbabwe (Nongwana,
> 2016).

Film processing was a highly involving endeavour. After filming, the negative was colour

graded and sent for a first print to turn it into a positive film or the 'rushes,' which were then

taken to editors for cutting. Afterwards, the edited version was matched with the negative,

which was subsequently cut, colour graded and sent for printing. During the days of analogue

systems, film processing was an entirely necessary process to be able to 'see' the image.

Without processing, film remained a latent image, which could not be seen. Advances in

digital technology have made this process largely redundant, but if film is to maintain the

traditional quality, as is the case in Hollywood, then the process may still be necessary. The

fact that digital video has superseded the analogue film does not necessarily make it of better

quality always:

> If we want to continue producing the best quality, we have to go back to film. Like
> in Hollywood, when they produce big screen movies, they still shoot on film, they
> process, then they cut the negative, they convert that negative to digital to make
> their editing easier, but the final cut again goes back to the negative because so far,
> research hasn't come up with anything better than film when producing big screen
> movies (Nongwana, 2016).

The CFL collapsed in the late 1990s and left a void that has led Conti Mhlanga (2016) to

postulate that, "film died in 1994 with the death of the CFL." While some observers are

nostalgic about the CFL, others feel its collapse was inevitable given the technological

advances in the industry:

> The Central Film Laboratory not only is non-existent but it dealt with an old
> technology in filmmaking. There has been lots of technological evolution, which

would have made it a complete dinosaur but as it turns out it got caught up in some debt, which involved the bank of one Roger Boka and therefore got lost that way. By the time we got to 2000, we had long lost Central Film Laboratory and in any case it only worked at a time when the film industry was still depending on what we now consider very ancient, archaic technology. That institution is long gone and presently there is no other institution that is attending to the film industry except the will, except the intention, except the need (Charamba, 2016).

Although Charamba dismisses the importance of the CFL in the era of digital technology, the fact that he acknowledges a will, intention and need to support the film industry in the same breath indicates the relevance of a national facility such as the CFL. The importance of such a facility must be understood, not only in light of its built infrastructure but also the skilled labour that it pools together in one place. Such a studio has the tendency of attracting to its precinct important talent that can be used by once-off fly-in productions (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005). In this way, Zimbabwe would maintain a place in global film discourse while at the same time developing its own industry.

Tanyaradzwa: indigenising video film production in Zimbabwe

Tanyaradzwa is a 63-minute long video film about a girl, Tanyaradzwa (Kudakwashe Maradzika) who is impregnated by her carefree lover Marlon (Tongai Chirisa). For some time, Tanyaradzwa manages to keep her pregnancy a secret from her parents (Emmanuel Mbirimi and Agnes Mupikata), but when they find out, her secret threatens the very survival of the otherwise stable family. Rejected by both her now estranged parents and the father of her child, Tanyaradzwa reluctantly goes into the risky practice of prostitution, thanks to her manipulative 'sister-in-law', Ajira (Tendai Musoni). Tanyaradzwa's misdemeanours bring to the fore her parents' own marital problems, worsened by her father's newfound but baseless suspicion that he did not sire her. As tensions simmer in the family and Tanyaradzwa's own life, the demands of African tradition, Christianity and societal expectations play out within the busy urban setting of Harare. The film ends with Tanyaradzwa reconciling and reuniting with her family, bringing with her the fatherless child and a hitherto unknown sister, secretly sired by Mr Chinoda out of wedlock. The reunification of the family offers some consolation at the end, hence the title 'Tanyaradzwa', which loosely translates to "we are consoled". The film covers many other issues relevant to the Zimbabwean context, including the plight of the girl child, sex, sexual rights, cultural expectations, friendship, family and betrayal.

The film was directed by Tawanda Gunda Mupengo and produced by Dorothy Meck. *Tanyaradzwa* marks the breaking away from donor-funded film production to a style driven by cultural rather than commercial profit. This departure from donor funding can be

understood against the background of the departure of many international aid agencies in the wake of the state's land reform programme, as discussed in Chapter One. *Tanyaradzwa* is a film in which the needs and aspirations of the filmmakers themselves were met, making it an artistic rather than commercial or didactic endeavour. The writer/director, Mupengo says he "always had a story to tell" about the free-spirited life of the Avenues area in Harare, characterised by pretty, fast young girls, petty criminals and corrupt police officers (Mupengo, 2015). For Meck, it was a film she invested in because of a passion for filmmaking. She funded it mainly from her personal earnings, while friends and relatives helped her with locations and supplementary funds. The fulfilment of the needs and aspirations of the people, which fosters liberated and popular creativity, is an important yardstick of the Algiers Charter on African Cinema (1975). Though a very dated document, some of its aspirations are reflected in current endeavours. Based on testimonies of the filmmakers, *Tanyaradzwa* is a typical film described in the charter because it is part of cinematic fact "inspired by its own realities and responding to its own needs" (Black Camera, 2010:166).

Most of the scenes were filmed in Ruwa, about 30km East of Harare and in Borrowdale as well as the Avenues area on the Northern periphery of the Harare central business district (CBD). For Tanyaradzwa and Ajira's house, they used Meck's Borrowdale offices. The Chinodas' house was Meck's friend's house in Ruwa. The choice of locations was largely a matter of convenience:

> It's about the setting. Set can allow you to use your house. You can use one corner of your house. The four walls can be four different houses. The best way to make a film is to have your locations close to each other, because the time you spend trying to shift from one location to another, you spend a lot of time and the setting up takes more time than the actual filming, so being under one roof or being around the same place will save a lot of time and money (Meck, 2016).

The houses described by Meck are the typical "villa on the outskirts" described by Lobato (2012:24), which are a staple of most straight to video productions. According to Lobato, these houses are preferred because they are cheaper than a studio soundstage, and are therefore a cost-saving device. This further shows how "STV aesthetics and STV economics are inextricably linked" (Lobato, 2012:24). As Meck suggests, this is a norm, not something that happens by chance.

Meck's comments reiterate Michael Raeburn's on the making of *Home Sweet Home,* which he says, is "what Africa needs" (Hungwe, 2001) because it cost very little. Whether this is really what Africa needs or what it can afford is debatable. As a matter of convenience, filmmakers may design their film projects to cost very little, but they also aspire to make big budget films in which they can afford any services they may need.

Afrovision Entertainment, a production company based in Harare, produced *Tanyaradzwa* although Media for Development and 14 10th Street Productions facilities were also used. Both online and offline editing was employed in making the film. There are several dual roles in the production team. Meck, the Producer, is also the Offline Editor alongside Musa Ally, who also doubles up as the Production Co-ordinator, while Tawanda Gunda Mupengo, who wrote the script, also directed and cast the film. Meck says from time to time, she also made interventions in the writing of the script, at least to make sure that "women were represented positively." As discussed in the case of *Everyone's Child* and indicated in Table 6.1 above, this was not a new phenomenon, but one that began to take root during the donor era. Perhaps this is typical of a film produced in Zimbabwe, if this evidence is anything to go by. It needs to be noted, however, that the issue of dual roles in film production is not entirely a Zimbabwean phenomenon, but one that has been practiced even in some of the best international productions. For example, the universally acclaimed film *Citizen Kane* (Welles, 1941) was co-written, directed and produced by Orson Welles, who also starred in it. Mel Gibson also stars in *Braveheart* (1995), which he directed. More recently, Brad Pitt featured in *12 Years a Slave* (McQueen, 2013), which he also co-produced. While this practice is unusual, in Zimbabwe it has become the norm rather than the exception.

Considering the evidence above, *Tanyaradzwa* is, therefore, a typical "Zimbabwean" film. It also features a largely indigenous cast and crew and its story is almost a documentary type reality of socio-cultural issues in Zimbabwe. The actors mostly use Shona although there is some code switching to English within and between scenes. This issue of language use may be an indicator of the influence of culture in the creation of film:

> The creation of any story is influenced by culture. The writer has a clear position; even *tsuro na gudo* (old tales animating baboon and rabbit) folk tales have a spin to them. Donors, politics and ideology all have an influence. For instance the influence of 'Englishness' affects people, because of our colonial background. During the colonial era, it used to be very important for one to be able to speak English like an Englishman, to dress like an Englishman. But today, graduates of our education system are more independent. This means in the future people are

going to be critical enough when they create stories, whether they want to maintain their identity or they are just trying to conform to the global village (Moyo, 2015).

Within the production context, the issue of language use in film reflects the role of the scriptwriter. O'Regan (1996:75) has observed that "natural languages are the basis for cultural systems". The language employed in film creation, therefore depends on national factors, which in turn are reflected in national markets. As O'Regan points out, national cinemas are infact "language cinemas." Language use in films is thus oriented towards the language of intended audiences. This relationship is easy enough for film markets that are linguistically endogenous, such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia that O'Regan lists among his examples. For a place like Zimbabwe, which has up to 16 officially recognised natural languages, filmmakers have an onus to create their narratives in English, the official language in pursuit of a market unified by that language.

The narrative unfolds in the now too common drama-soapie style that writer/actor Aaron Chiundura Moyo (who also acts as a bartender in the film) calls "drasofi," a combination of the drama, soap opera and film genres (Moyo, 2015). Moyo says this style is characteristic of most latter-day Zimbabwean productions, including the television series *Tiriparwendo* that he wrote. The emergence of the *drasofi*, can be attributed to several issues, both creative and economic (see detailed discussion of the drasofi genre below). Like *Sinners?* below, *Tanyaradzwa* is typical of the indigenous, cheap model of filmmaking that is comparable to many other production sectors in Zimbabwe. It is a product of a socio-economic context in which poorly resourced enthusiasts with access to a video camera and editing suite welcomed an opportunity to tell a visual story. The composition of the cast and crew did not have to be professional but convenient, sometimes working for no pay. *Tanyaradzwa* was made on a budget of less than US$8000 raised from producer Dorothy Meck's retrenchment package and donations from her friends and relatives (Meck, 2016). The film did not break even due to piracy, but money was not the motivating factor, as Meck says "it was like a pregnant woman waiting for the baby to come." It was about leveraging working relationships just to have the film produced. In many instances the filmmakers employed barter trade to put the film services together:

> I didn't have money. That's when I had been retrenched from ZBC. So I had my retrenchment package and I also got a bit from relatives to support the film. The cameraman bought the camera from Singapore through my company so it was duty-free. So that's how we traded. For bringing the camera into the country duty-free, we could also use his camera. The main house that we used was my friend's

house. We were together at ZBC and together we were also retrenched and she gave me her house and said Dorothy, you can come and film. She had a restaurant, so in return, we would buy food for the crew from this restaurant (Meck, 2016).

The barter trading described by Meck is a common characteristic in the shadow economy. It is necessitated by the poor state of finances in film project and can be a way of bypassing authorities that monitor and tax all financial transactions. In the above context, it was not necessarily illicit but meant to provide a solution to a genuine need. It is clear that funding was a big problem in the production of *Tanyaradzwa* and the poor funding adversely affected the aesthetic norms of the film.

> [With more resources] Tanyaradzwa would have been a blow-over. We did what we could with very little money. If you look closely, it looks like an incomplete film. It's like it's gonna go on. I remember there is a scene that we cut when Ben Mahaka comes in asking Tanyaradzwa out, we could have gone further. It needed an ending but it didn't end. We could have put more visual effects. Look at when Tanyaradzwa was in the bush and she was beaten up. It looks OK but we could have done much more than that. Sometimes you have to make it real, so so real. I could have made it more believable that people look like they are in a 3-D movie; that's what I wanted (Meck, 2016).

In the scene described by Meck, Tanyaradzwa is assaulted by some ladies, accusing her of 'snatching' their men. In one shot, she is shown being molested by her assailants, who push and shove her without much physical violence. The scene cuts to a close up of one of the assailants, apparently worried by the 'torture'. Tanyaradzwa is heard screaming and the next shot shows her bruised and bloody face, apparently created with tomato sauce. The next scene is a montage in which Tanyaradzwa appears in her father's dream together with his illegitimate daughter. The two scenes are poor attempts at visual effects. Both the make-up and the effects are not convincing, making Meck's worries understandable.

The making of *Tanyaradzwa* is a reinvention of production practices of filmmaking in Zimbabwe. Production had to necessarily adopt a different approach after the demise of the donor initiative of the 1990s and the Hollywood location interest of the 1980s. Film production had to be reinvented to adapt to smaller budgets, poorer equipment and a weaker skills base all at the mercy of an enthusiastic but informal market. As if to justify the poor budget for *Tanyaradzwa*, Meck argues that people do not need "wow money" to make a film. She argues that most of the film budget goes towards filmmakers' personal earnings and is not necessarily invested into the making of the film. This is a 'third way' departure from commercial and donor funding. It marks the emergence of self-funding, which would be

employed in several subsequent productions, including *Sinners?* thus consolidating new aesthetic norms and production practices.

Sinners? The consolidation of the *'drasofi'* hybrid genre

Sinners? (Tawengwa, 2013) is a 71 minute-long straight to video (STV) feature film produced by Creative Native, the video production arm of theatre company, Rooftop Promotions. The story started off as a theatre play, written by Patrick Chasaya and directed by Daves Guzha. It ran for 16 performances in Zimbabwe and Malawi. Blessing Hungwe then adapted the story into a screenplay for the video film, directed by Patience Gamu Tawengwa, with Guzha becoming the producer. Sarah Mpofu, one of the lead actresses, replaced Charity Dhlodhlo who played the role of Kere in the theatre version. Partly due to this theatre background in its creation, the story structure of *Sinners?* vacillates between a play-cum-soap opera to an intensely emotional film as shall be described below.

The *Sinners?* narrative is primarily driven by dialogue. One has to watch while attentively listening to the film for one to discern the plot. Perhaps as a precursor of what to expect throughout the film, the story opens with dialogue between two lovers Romeo (Tapiwa Mavindidze) and Samantha (Gertrude Munhamo) in a University of Zimbabwe campus exterior setting. In the next scene, Kere (Sarah Mpofu) and Patie (Nothando Nobengula) are also occupied in a conversation that cues the viewer's attention to "prostitutes" appearing briefly in the shot. Immediately after this follows an interior scene in which Kere confronts her school-going sister Mercy (Yvonne Mangunda) about getting home late from school. Throughout the film, there is limited cinematographic sophistication. The camerawork is distinctly objective and not subjective as expected of most expressionist narratives. There is restricted animation in the camerawork, underpinned by a substantial deployment of medium to long shots. The pro-filmic aspects are *performed* rather than *made.* Actors move and dialogue for the camera with minimal artistic adornment in the *mise en scène.* The active scenes are made up of cutaways, for instance an arbitrary shot of traffic on Enterprise Road or Samora Machel Avenue, or skimpily dressed ladies walking into the frame. Consistent with typical STV films, *Sinners?* covers the barest basics in terms of its cinematography, making it evidently a cheap and convenient production.

Although it is about women in difficult circumstances, *Sinners?* is also about "real, convincing and poignant stories" (Guzha, 2015). Just like *Everyone's Child* and *Tanyaradzwa* before it, *Sinners?* depicts modern day Zimbabwe in an almost realist manner. The cars

driving on the streets, the sets and the properties (props) are close to what one might expect to find them in a typical Zimbabwean setting. The story is based on real events, particularly the controversial issue of female rapists that became a popular story in the mainstream media around 2011-2012. The pseudo-realism, now a common trend in recent productions in Zimbabwe (see my discussions on *Everyone's Child* and *Tanyaradzwa* above), demonstrates the significance of context in the creation of films, particularly when stylistic and creative innovation is curtailed by financial constraints.

The video film is an entertainment vehicle that tackles issues of sex, love, survival and corruption. It confronts many societal taboos such as prostitution and sex generally because, as the producer says, "art must provoke," and "sex sells". One of the props is pink underwear hanging casually onto a wall in a room in which the 'girls' are discussing how to fund the funeral of one of their own. There is so much sperm and talk of semen in the film that Vero has some for breakfast, much to the chagrin of the witnessing ladies who have collected the sexual fluid. The sex scenes, though not very explicit, are more suggestive than any other Zimbabwean film has attempted to be. Kere's performance raping a victim (Denzel Burutsa) is the most unambiguous of all. To research for the scenes, the leading actresses, together with their spouses, were driven around the Avenues streets in a tinted vehicle to 'witness' commercial sex workers in 'action'. The spouses were included to let them know the sort of acting that their partners would be involved in, so that they would not be shocked when they saw the finished production. The film producers intended to provoke the otherwise conservative Zimbabwean society into confronting uncomfortable truths about itself:

> Zimbabwe, as you know, pretends to be a very conservative society and because of our pretence of wanting to be a conservative society, we end up doing a lot of sexually explicit things in the dark. Right now if your child asks 'how did I come into this world?' chances are that you will tell them 'don't ask that question' or you are likely to beat them up, yet in the evening or even in the afternoon, we are likely to see you disappearing into some dingy little place where you end up paying your coins so that you can satisfy your cravings (Guzha, 2015).

A cinematic fact analysis shows that the film is partly influenced by realism and its aesthetic norms are influenced and limited by this desire to be a pseudo-realist depiction of actual events. The main theme of the film, therefore, is influenced by the social and cultural context of production. In as much as the narrative is fictionalised, it centres on everyday circumstances of the time, further suggesting that films made in Zimbabwe are influenced by their contexts of production. The same can be said of films like *Everyone's Child*, *Yellow*

Card, *Neria* and many other donor-funded films, which responded to real-life needs in their contexts – for instance, a response to the HIV/Aids pandemic, the need for gender equality, domestic conflicts as well as educating youths about the dangers of premarital sex. Later also, *Think* (Tsuro, 2011), *No Matter What* (Tsiga, 2007) *Marrying the Devil* (Dimingo, 2014) continued with the trend, showing that it is more than a coincidence. One can postulate that this pattern is a colonial heritage influenced by the documentary style of filmmaking during the colonial era in which films were supposed to create real life lessons, not just entertain. In the current scenario, it is possible that filmmakers and their elite finders consider film as a vehicle of educating their subaltern viewers. Like once observed by Sembene, cinema was Africa's night school (Haynes, 2011:68) As discussed in Chapter Two, this was a distinct characteristic of film initiatives under the Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment, the Central African Film Unit and the Colonial Film Unit regimes of the colonial era.

According to Guzha, the major aim of the video-film *Sinners?* was always to emasculate men and demonstrate the power of women. In the narrative, Chipo (Eunice Tava) is a woman entrapped in a 15 year-long abusive relationship, compelled into prostitution because she "needs satisfaction" from her husband Simba (Albert Charichafa), who has not managed to make her orgasm in their entire relationship. While in pursuit of this gratification, she senses an opportunity for business – one of her lines is: "*just show me a penis and we are in business!*" Kere is a regular prostitute with no background story. Samantha's family has betrothed her to become a sixth wife to Uncle Shaya (Mr Madiro), but she has an idealistic university lover, Romeo. This troubled life leads her into prostitution as well. Vero (Chipo Bizure) and her sidekick (Caroline Mashingaidze) are coordinators of a black-magic sperm-harvesting syndicate of women who "rape" men. The emasculation of men intended by the filmmakers stands out prominently throughout the film. In many ways, the film is simultaneously about women liberating themselves. For example, they chide each other as *hure* (prostitute), a term often used derogatively to 'other' females engaging in commercial sex work or those perceived to be of loose sexual morals. Kere considers herself as a woman who does "*business with consenting adults who pay me for my services*". Convincing Kere to enrol into the sperm harvesting business, Chipo says: "*For how many years have men been raping us? It's our turn now. Let's make money while we are at it*". The film deliberately positions female figures in leading roles in the cast as well as the technical crew because, as Guzha (2015) argues: "We don't talk about feminism. We do it. It's not just about the

women's stories. It's also about the power of women, which seems to be increasing" (Guzha, 2015).

For all its good intentions, the film put its female director in the spotlight. It was Tawengwa's first feature film[34] and the magnitude of the crew and the talent, coupled with the theme of the narrative overwhelmed her, in her own admission. She concedes that *Sinners?* was her most challenging production; she was not able to stamp her authority on the film, partly because of 'unprofessionalism' on the part of the cast, which in turn was influenced by the deep-rooted gender stereotyping in Zimbabwe:

> People don't wanna admit it but I think it is just from a cultural perspective that people think I don't want this woman telling me what to do, so I think it's really not easy. A lot of us also fall by the wayside because just being women as we are, we sometimes all have family obligations; kids - so it's not very easy to juggle the roles (Tawengwa, 2016).

Tawengwa's admission, though from a gendered perspective, is a critical introspection that acknowledges the role of the directorial film service to the quality of a film production. Directing is one of the key services on the production value chain, and if not well executed, whatever the reasons, it has significant consequences on the filmic fact of any production. There are several glaring technical and creative hitches in *Sinners?* which can be traceable to its production context (cinematic fact) and the nature of its film services as well. At times, the camerawork is unnecessarily shaky and the editing transitions also jumpy. This is apparent in a scene in which Chipo answers a call from her bedroom. The camera zooms in and out and does not hold a steady close-up of the actress in the scene. At one point, the camera tilts up on Chipo as she picks up some clothes strewn on the floor, and cuts off mid-way through the movement. The church scene in which the lady pastor (Pauline Gundidza) counsels Kere also has a few continuity issues. The pastor is singing a hymn from the pulpit a few metres away, with a weeping Kere, positioned in the foreground, jadedly trying to join in. From a wide, over-the-shoulder shot of the singing ladies, the scene cuts to a close-up of the pastor, now suddenly by Kere's side within the same line of the song – the time lapse unaccounted for. It is almost a jump-cut. Several times in the same scene, the dialogue is clipped, apparently in editing, making the conversation sound unnatural. The subtitles in some cases have typographical errors; for example *reletives* for relatives and *dept collectors* for debt collectors. Oddly, in a newsroom scene, an over-the-shoulder close-up unwittingly reveals

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[34] Tawengwa directed a short film titled *The Return* and has also directed theatrical plays, including *Loupe, Allegations, Ebony & Ivory* and *Comrades*

that the news editor (Lovejoy Mwawoneka) is holding a Creative Native transaction receipt. Creative Native is the company that produced the film.

From the above filmic fact, one gets the feeling that the cinematic fact was hastily put together or was, at worst, amateurish. These glitches are traceable to the changes in editing personnel during post-production, problems with continuity, and rushed decisions to release the film as well as the inexplicable loss of footage. In other words, they are a direct result of the expertise or lack of it, which is given as one of the principal issues within a film services framework (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005), as admitted by the director:

> My editor of choice was Marian Kunonga. When we did a test screening after we had roughly assembled some of the production, and the audience feedback came back, we sat down with the editor and the producer and we decided [that] we needed some more shots or to reshoot some of the scenes. Also, there is the fact that, I don't know how this happened that when we were shooting the film, we lost an entire evening's or day's work of the shots and that really compromised the film. I don't know what happened between the people who were doing continuity. So the film that you see today actually is a film that's missing some shots that were done to tell the story. I think also on the producer's end he felt time is money; there is no budget for a reshoot and then I don't know what happened along the way. They changed Marian from editing and they put Joe [Mawuru] to re-edit what Marian had started, so I think that was the falling apart of the film because now we have two editors. I know this editor then a new editor came in. The lost footage and the editing side had a lot of problems, which I think affected the overall narrative of the film (Tawengwa, 2016).

The shambolic co-ordination of the production context described by Tawengwa suggests a serious lack of professionalism on and off the set of *Sinners?* It indicates that the pre-production planning was not as meticulous as it should have been and certainly cannot be compared with that in *King Solomon's Mines*. This can be illustrated with a comparative value chain of the two films, wherein the *King Solomon's Mines* value chain represents the formal set-up of the Hollywood films made in Zimbabwe in the 1980s, while the *Sinners?* value chain is a representation of most films made in Zimbabwe post-2000, when the now chronic dearth of funding and corporate support began to emerge.
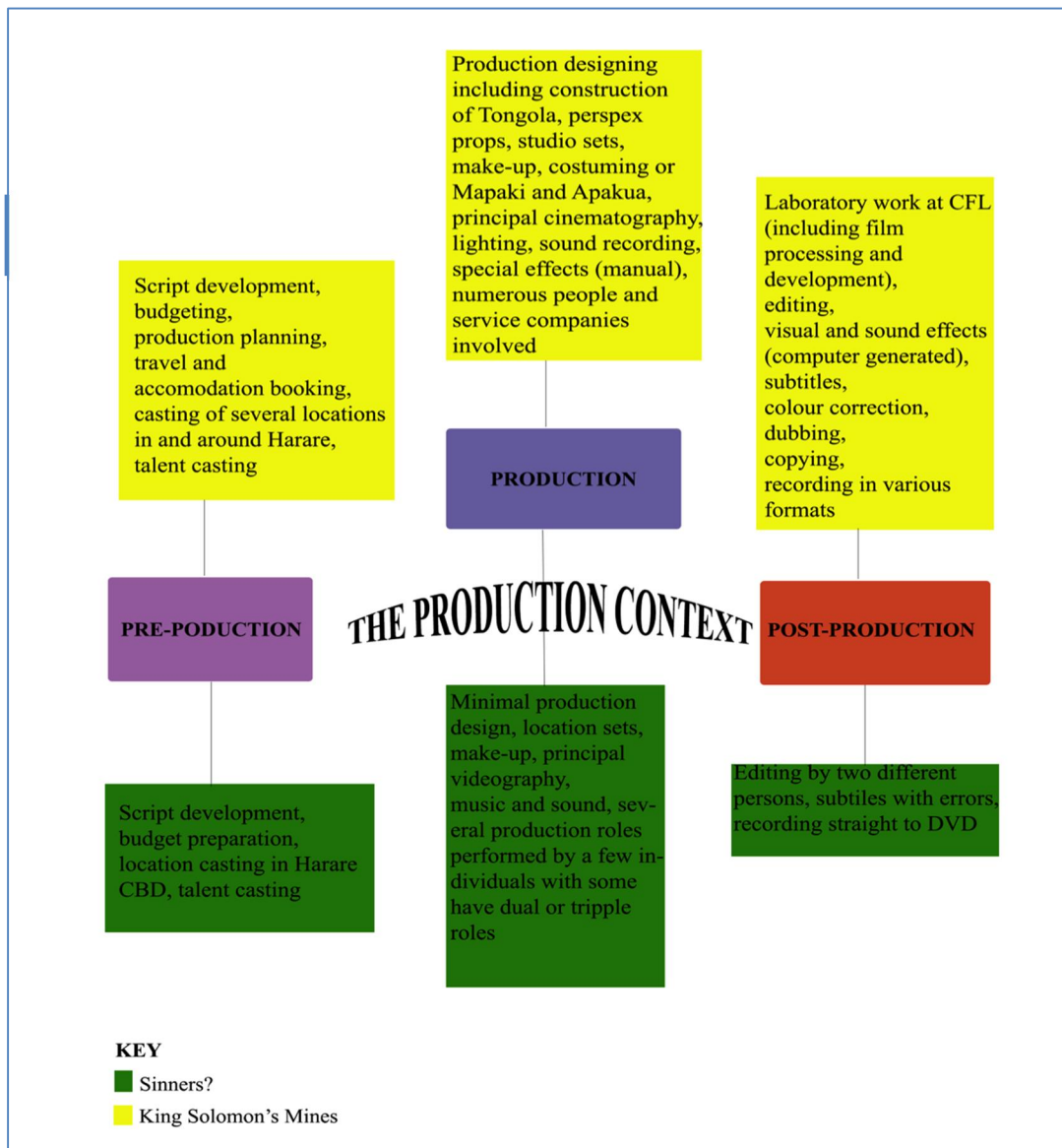
Fig. 5.3 Comparative value chain for King Solomon's Mines and Sinners?

When the re-editing happened, Tawengwa says she was out of the country and never sat in the editing studio with the editor. Despite having edited the first draft of the film, Kunonga's name is even missing from the credits. It is clear that the outcome of the production efforts really disappointed Tawengwa because by 2016, three years after the film's official release, she said she had never watched the film. She only met some people who passed negative comments about the film, including one of the technical crew who told her that they had to work extra hard to "salvage our names and reputations" (Tawengwa, 2016). She strongly feels the film needed to be redone with a team that she "believed in" in order to do justice to the riveting story "not just from a one dimensional view which I think we ended up taking which was to make it like some sort of black magic ritualistic thing, but to really delve deeper into the psychology of these women who rape men" (Tawengwa, 2016).

Considering the above evidence by Tawengwa, a "team that she believed in" represents a set of film services providers, particularly the "skill and expertise" of proven and preferred professional competencies, and in Tawengwa's assessment, such film services have an effect on the themes/content of the seen film. This is important evidence to buttress the argument throughout this thesis; that films are as good or as bad as their film services or their contexts of production. The chaotic nature of the production of *Sinners* is typical of film production theorised within a shadow economy. If in the shadow economy of distribution "individuals and small organisations suddenly found themselves in the position of being *de facto* distributors" (Lobato, 2012:13), the same can be said of individuals and organisations involved in production, who generate new production practices (not necessarily good practices) as evidenced in the making of *Sinners?*

As also observed in the cases of *Everyone's Child* and *Tanyaradzwa*, language use in *Sinners?* appears to limit the actors' abilities. One gets the feeling that some of the actors would ordinarily not talk the way they do in the film. Perhaps if they performed their lines in their mother tongue, they would have done better. For instance, in one scene, Patience swears: "Fuck *tradition. You know I am going to* fuck *that ancient dude. It better be worth my while, and I mean,* personally" (author's emphasis). Later she says to Samantha: "*Your life is screwed up baby girl. I thought mine was screwed up but yours (laughs) ah inotora mukombe* (can win a trophy)". Her pronouncement of the words is too phonetic to be natural. It reminds one, though parochially, of the gangster language employed in American films, for example *Set It Off* (Gray, 1996) in which swearing is commonplace but convincingly enacted. According to the film's director, this is a major weakness of typical Zimbabwean films:

> One of the problems that we really have is that of scripts in English. How many of us really speak English twenty-four-seven? We speak *Shonglish* (Shona-English). You have got a person struggling with words, trying to regurgitate the lines on the page as they are written and maybe they are not really connecting with the meaning of the words but then just say to a person 'just do your part in Shona and Shonglish' and then watch them go. So I think we should really start investing time in writing our scripts in Shona if it's gonna be expressive. Don't give [the role to] an actor who is not comfortable with the language; and then we have an actor who - yeah you can speak English but then you try to put on an American accent. What for? (Tawengwa, 2016).

Tawengwa singles out a particular actress whom she also says was playful on set, who changed accents from one shot to the next, making her character inconsistent. Similar observations can be made of films like *Everyone's Child* (Dangarembga, 1996) as well as *I*

want a wedding dress (Dangarembga, 2009). Although not making specific reference to these particular films, Aaron Chiundura Moyo argues that language use in local films contributes to a state of 'confusion' in the narratives:

> A typical Zimbabwean film is characterised by confusion. It starts from the scripting. It is confused, because it writes about confused actors who are culturally confused. For instance you find the word Masvingo being pronounced as *Masviingo*. The language, the mannerisms are all not original. There is too much distortion compared to Nigerian films that have a distinct Nigerian accent. Ours has too much distortion. Some people attend Group A schools, and speak in American or British accents. Then you take actors from there and make up one cast. There is distortion (Moyo, 2015).

The English accents make the films sound highly unnatural, if not laughable. English is not a mother tongue in Zimbabwe and its awkwardness becomes more pronounced when a Zimbabwean 'tongue' attempts to adopt a nasal English accent, what others have jokingly referred to as *Zimlish* (Zimbabwean English). In Moyo's opinion, this sets local films apart from Nigerian English films whose actors have distinct accents suggestive of their indigenous Yoruba or Hausa dialects. The dilemma that filmmakers face is that often their productions are targeted at universal audiences beyond the geographical borders of Zimbabwe. This places an onus on the filmmakers to produce their narratives in English, which is more accessible. *Sinners?* is obviously produced for an English-speaking audience as it switches language codes between English, Ndebele and Shona but with English subtitles all the time, even though the subtitles too are not always of good grammatical construction.

The data from *Sinners?* points to a general lack of professionalism that pervades the film sector partly because people do not take the trade seriously. For many, film production or acting are part time occupations, which they get involved in their spare time, and sometimes just to be "seen on TV," whether they earn something or not. Chigorimbo witnessed similar problems on the set of *King Solomon's Mines* and feels that local people are particularly not serious when being supervised by fellow blacks. According to Chigorimbo, some actors argued with him when he tried to pass on directions given by Lee Thompson on the set of the film:

> Our people work very well when they are being supervised by a white person. And they are terrible when the person in charge is black. It's one of the biggest challenges that we have got in Zimbabwe today, to convert a Zimbabwean to understand that the person who is managing production does not have to be white. You don't have to be white to be a manager (Chigorimbo, 2015).

This shows that personal attributes such as teamwork, ability to meet deadlines, commitment and self-motivation, which are often seen in other professions, are not common in local film production contexts. When actors and production crews do not readily take instructions from those that are supposed to supervise them, the effects can be debilitating on the filmic production. Tawengwa feels this problem, though very prominent on the set of *Sinners?* is a common issue in Zimbabwe:

> Team cohesion was not really where it should have been. When we were in the process of making the film people would jokingly say film *raGamu naGuzha* (Gamu and Guzha's film). [There is] lack of seriousness within our artists, a lack of taking a script seriously, a lack of honouring the character that they choose to play. A lot of people think acting is a joke and I think that's the difference between the old school and the new breed that's coming up that anyone just thinks if they can stand in front of a camera and recite lines back, they are acting. Yet when you get down to studying the craft of acting, you find that the best actors don't act; they live the role, they take it seriously. They embody it (Tawengwa, 2016).

The insubordination alluded to above may arise from the fact that, historically, film supervisory roles were the preserve of white males, as evidenced in colonial productions and the early Hollywood films made in Zimbabwe and a few donor-funded initiatives, including *Everyone's Child.* From a political economy perspective, the above evidence suggests that film production in Zimbabwe is both ideological and political. Its facets constitute a distinctly Zimbabwean production culture with far reaching socio-historical influences. What is seen on the production sets becomes a continuation of everyday encounters constructed by the broader socio-historical context. Just as Lobato (2012:15) postulates about film distribution, production similarly is about "the transmission of values, competencies and ideologies." The above issues can be related to *Sinners?* context of production – the socio-economic political conditions under which the film was produced, *vis a vis* the political economy of the film's production that Wasko and Meehan (2013) have termed the contextual approach.

All evidence shows that *Sinners?* as a straight to video production, is in many ways a film of convenience. It is production "from below" which generates new kinds of production practices and aesthetics. It is a "counternarrative to the institutional point of view" (Lobato, 2012:13) – the very opposite of a typical Hollywood film, which makes it a perfect example of a shadow economy production. It cost US$12 000 to make the film, which Guzha feels was "realistic." Of this total, $8-9 000 was from Guzha's personal investment, which he enthuses were "private, not donor funds." Tawengwa, the director of the film, however, feels the budget was inadequate because many people on the set had to sacrifice, including taking pay

cuts to be on the film. The choice of locations was a convenient one too. About 90 percent of the film was shot at the former Rooftop premises in Eastlea (see Fig. 6.2 below). The crew also used Guzha's friend Barney Mapondera's house in Emerald Hill, UZ grounds and the streets Samora Machel Avenue and Enterprise road. This is a hallmark of STV productions in which "the villa/mansion on the outskirts of the city is a staple…frequently used as the venue for X-rated rendezvous, drug deals or shootouts" (Lobato, 2012:24) because it is a cheaper alternative to a studio soundstage.

Possibly, also to contain production costs, some of the production team members, already with numerous technical roles, feature as actors too. For instance Guzha, the film producer and his co-producer, O'Brian Mudyiwenyama, who is also the director of photography, feature as extras. First assistant director and production manager Blessing Hungwe, who also wrote the script and did casting as well, acts as a gardener. Charichafa who acts as Chipo's husband, Simba is also one of the casting members in addition to his locations responsibility. Sabina Musvati, who did wardrobe, also features as an extra. This set-up, though convenient may also have compromised the quality because it did not allow for diversity of creativity:

> It badly affects the production because it leads to a mono-vision. It just affects the quality. The more creative minds, the better a product turns out to be. But then sometimes it's also a function of budget because if I have a story and I have written it and I can't afford a director so I will direct it. Now I can't afford the budget for many actors so I'm gonna have to be one of the actors, so it might just be cost-cutting measures, that it's not actually a choice of I just wanna hog all the roles – because obviously that translates to more work – but the fact that I don't have enough, so I'm gonna have to wear as many hats as I possibly can (Tawengwa, 2016).

The film was made in 2013, in a relatively stable but highly informal socio-economic environment. Zimbabwe had abandoned its own dollar for a multiple currency system in which the South African Rand, the US dollar, the British pound sterling and the Euro had all become legal tender since 2009. This enabled organisations to conduct business under relatively stable conditions, by far better than the hyperinflationary environment of 2008, although by no means ideal. Other facets of the economy were still reeling from the decade long crisis experienced between 2007 and 2008, as they still do to date. The manufacturing industry was not functioning at optimum while levels of employment were still very high. Raising funds for film production, as such, was a huge challenge. Putting together a team of experts was an even bigger challenge as most professionals had left the country in search of the proverbial 'greener pastures.' Many more filmmakers had died. Most donor organisations

155

that had supported the film sector in the 1990s had also left the country. As a result, only daring, or rich filmmakers had a chance.

Fig 5.4: The former Rooftop offices in Eastlea, where most of _Sinners_ was filmed (Source: author).

Self-funding might be an emerging model of filmmaking in Zimbabwe if evidence from _Tanyaradzwa_ and _Sinners?_ is anything to go by. The film created from this funding model is necessarily a genre of convenience in which video entrepreneurs 'marry their money' to writers who can tell the stories they want or those with the best entertainment value. This model is favourable for STV productions, which cut out the distributor from the value chain as the film does not have to be exhibited in formal cinema spaces. One can discern the consequences of this funding model in the _Sinners?_ narrative. As Lobato (2012) observes, straight to video (STV) productions are typically low-budget endeavours, an aspect that constraints production quality but enables entrepreneurs to recoup their costs. In this endeavour to cut costs, often-amateur crews and actors are engaged because they wish to make names for themselves and would stay on the production at all costs. Lobato (2012) considers this characteristic of the STV model to be some form of exploitation. _Sinners?_ was shot over eight days and post-production was about two weeks. It employed a mix of seasoned crew and amateurs working on post-production. It is probably this mix that partly created the confusion mentioned above. Other complaints include the fact that the make-up

lady was new to feature film production and took unnecessarily long to apply simple make-up, resulting in the change of light within the same scenes (Tawengwa, 2016).

The video film was shot on Sony HVR-Z1 High Definition video (HDV) camera, which at the time was regarded out-dated, but Guzha expressed satisfaction with the image quality: "Many people discouraged us from using the Z1 saying the quality was not good. We did minimum manipulation in terms of colour-grading." All this was clearly part of a cost-cutting strategy. The desire to contain production costs, in turn leads to new production cultures with traceable consequences on the filmic fact product. The model remains *mégotage* as Sembene put it, or a *fembera-fembera* approach described by Elvas Mari (2015). It is both disorderly and desperate. This state of affairs is a continuation of the pessimistic picture painted by scholars on 'African cinema' (Diawara, 1987; Harrow, 2007; Haynes, 2011; Ukadike, 2002). Nevertheless, the circumstances of the funding model and the resultant production norms lead to the creation of a somewhat different visual genre of a hybrid nature. This genre hybridity gives the story a fluid identity, one that Aaron Chiundura Moyo (2015) has described as a *drasofi*; a combination of drama, soap opera and film:

> Normally, a soap opera has more interior than exterior scenes. Usually, it has 70 percent interior and 30 percent exterior scenes. It is normally shot in the studio with a four-camera set-up, because it has to broadcast daily so you can't carry cameras around and take too much time at it. A soapie is also character-based, not story-based. Characters remain the same, only the issues change. It's like a sentence without a full stop, with commas only. Drama and film are story-based, so when the story ends, the narrative ends (Moyo, 2015).

The fact that the theatre version of *Sinners?* ran for 16 weeks means the narrative is drawn out, revolving around the lives of key characters. Likewise, the video film narrative revolves around several key characters, among them a group of prostitutes controlled by a 'sperm harvesting' syndicate. The respective lives of several individuals motivated by the desire to make a living coincide in a story about prostitution, greed and corruption. Even though the filming was exterior, like a soap opera it did not involve much cinematographic manipulation, making it as good as a fixed-camera studio set.

The *drasofi* is a genre of both context and convenience. It is a contemporary genre borne out of Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political contexts. Its themes mirror everyday events in Zimbabwean life while its creation is conveniently constituted, its stylistic and professional inadequacies deriving from the economic hardships affecting its production value chain. It is a means of making a film and telling a story, whatever the circumstances. It epitomises the

157

kiya kiya (make a plan) concept that has become widespread in most Zimbabwean affairs. The same concept pervades the filmmaking sector with self-trained, non-specialised but enthusiastic individuals combining their resources and interests to produce visual stories. This concept entails making a plan for an intended outcome, even if the plan may not be conventional. This does not make the genre illegitimate; rather it points to a beckoning future of film production in Zimbabwe which both *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* are part of. This emerging trend is motivated by necessity and an insane desire to be creative. The filmic narratives that emerge from this context are part of what Kenneth Harrow (2013) has described as trashy auterist cinema – products of lunatic commitment and multiple roles for the crew. Theirs is a radical though necessary approach, which goes against the canons of institutionalised conformity. Economic hardships have endowed most Zimbabweans with this radical spirit of making things happen against the utmost of challenges.

Some observers, however, point out that in the endeavour to make things happen, the hybrid identity of a film made in Zimbabwe ironically makes it lose its identity (Mhlanga, 2016). Such a film is 'many things' at the same time; it is called film yet it is video, yet it is also drama and soap opera at the same time. Its creation and action is mired in confusion (Moyo, 2015) and its production affected by technical and technological shortcomings. The *drasofi* genre is one that best epitomises the political economy of film production in contemporary Zimbabwe. It demonstrates how much contexts of production affect the production context. The production value chain is as valuable as the broader economic context in which it obtains. In a setting of suppressed economic activity, filmmaking enterprises enjoy little to no competitive advantage. At the same time, the thematic concerns of films are influenced by the robustness of the film services employed in production. A poor film services infrastructure will produce films with poor aesthetic norms. Such practices will only support a film genre that they can feasibly produce – a genre in which the proportion between cinematography and performance favours the latter.

The emergent *drasofi* genre is partly an outcome of the cross-pollination of acting and technical talent from one genre to another, a characteristic that has long dwelt in Zimbabwe's film and TV sectors. This strategic deployment of resources has gradually become a norm in television drama produced in Zimbabwe. The nation has a strong TV drama tradition dating back to the 1980s when Safirio Madzikatire popularised the serial comedy drama *Mhuri yavaMukadota*. Other popular dramas include *Mutirowafanza*, *Gringo*, *Paraffin*, and soap

operas *Studio 263*, *Tiriparwendo* and *Amakhorokhoza*. It has grown into common practice, therefore, that actors and technical crews cross the genres of film and TV drama/soap opera with comparable success. For example, Godwin Mawuru, who directed *Studio 263*, also directed *Neria*. Stephen Chigorimbo, who directed many films in the 1980s and 1990s, including being assistant director in *King Solomon's Mines* and *Allan Quartermein and the Lost City of Gold* also acted in *Studio 263*. Sarah Mpofu, who rose to fame in the soap opera *Amakhorokhoza* also starred in *Sinners?* Aaron Chiundura Moyo, an actor in *Tanyaradzwa* has written several screenplays, including *Studio 263*, *Mafuro Manyoro* and *Tiriparwendo* as well as numerous novels. Simon Shumba, who featured in the films *King Solomon's Mines* and *Everyone's Child* was the lead actor in *Mutirowafanza*. This is why Zimbabwe's TV industry is more or less its film industry as well. Katrina Daly Thompson (2013) grapples with this unconventional identity in her book on Zimbabwe's cinematic arts, which is as much about film as it is about television. In comparison, Hollywood acting talent is recognised within particular genres. There are actors for the big screen and those for the small screen, and attempts to cross the divide have not always been successful. In Zimbabwe, this scenario means actors who may be good at acting in drama and service providers who are competent in producing the same, bring that expertise into feature film and vice-versa, thereby blurring the distinctions between the genres.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed findings on the making of the four films used as case studies, namely *King Solomon's Mines, Everyone's Child, Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* The classical occupation system (Clouse, 2012) allowed the researcher to determine the key and supplemental services employed in the production of the respective films. The cinematic fact of the films is appreciated by considering evidence from a variety of industry sources. Information gathered from people involved in the productions shows a cumulative diversity in the manner that production was constituted in the respective films. Importantly, it shows that filmic productions are as good or as bad as the film services that go into their productions. Evidence from the films show that film production in the different contexts has gradually moved from a formal and specialised, if not professional model of filmmaking with clearly defined modes of funding and production roles to one organised as a shadow economy, which in turn has given birth to new aesthetic norms. This transition has been borne out of necessity, informed by the broader socio-economic and political context obtaining in the country. The most recent cases show that filmmaking in Zimbabwe is increasingly

constituted as a shadow economy inclined towards the making of straight to video visual products. Among other things, this shadow economy of film production has created a distinct genre, now termed *drasofi*, which combines the aesthetic norms of drama, soap opera and film. It is a genre of convenience, as witnessed in the making of *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* The genre is necessarily trashy (Harrow, 2013) but artistic and is driven by a lunatic commitment by filmmakers operating under difficult socio-economic circumstances. At the same time, it shows the perpetuation of difficulties associated with the cinematic fact in Africa. The evidence presented in the chapter shows that the contexts of film production and indeed, film services have far reaching influences on filmic content. The next chapter is a continuation of data presentation and analysis. It attempts to relate findings from the current chapter and additional information gathered from policy-makers to the nature of the film industry in Zimbabwe. Both chapters aid the endeavour of this thesis; that of determining the nature of the film services industry in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER SIX:

The Crew Behind The 'Sins':

The Nature of the Film Services Industry in Zimbabwe

"The crew behind the scenes" has become a cliché in TV and film parlance to denote the technical crew, those people that are not visible to the viewer, whose team effort sustains cinematic productions. They are infact part of the cinematic fact (Stam et al, 1992) or film services (Goldsmith & O'Regan, 2005; Goldsmith et al, 2010) earlier discussed in this thesis. Those actors and anchors that appear on screen are part of the filmic fact (Stam et al, 1992) but often, they become the 'faces' of the productions or the semiotic ingredients of themes deciphered by viewers. However, the appeal of a filmic product has very little to do with these on-screen actors but the "crew behind the scenes". The aesthetics, narrative structure and overall quality of production all come down to the efforts of that crew. Similarly, behind the façade of what cineastes have indiscriminately termed "film industries," there are many other "industries" working spontaneously or through systematic interlinkages towards servicing the so-called film industries. The sustainability of filmmaking activities within a particular geographical space stems from those services industries. They, like in film/TV production, are the "crew behind the scenes." Where there appears to be challenges within the industry that produces cinematic productions, as has often been pointed out in Zimbabwe, investigations should attempt to uncover the *crew behind the sins*" instead. This is what this thesis attempts to do in this section.

The current chapter discusses the nature of film services in Zimbabwe and evaluates the very existence and efficacy of these services. This exploration is according to field data collected based on the four films used as case studies, but beyond that from other industry experts who may not necessarily have been involved in the production of the above-mentioned films, as well as the author's interpretation. The obvious point of departure is the definition of a "film industry," whose ambit includes related services industries in the Zimbabwean context. In this case the scope is delimited to the activities responsible for the production of films, although often times, this sector is interconnected to distribution and exhibition. As a result, and necessarily, the analysis may stray into a territory that appears to be on the distribution and exhibition value chain.

An argument can be made here that, to some extent, there is a film industry in Zimbabwe. In making that argument, one does not have to depend on classical definitions of industry but on the evidence of the visual products made by filmmakers and the processes and practices constituting such production. Whether the constitution of that sector conforms to classical definitions of industry or not, something worthy of academic scrutiny is occurring within it. The argument can be developed further to suggest that what Zimbabwe lacks, particularly in recent years, is a fully-fledged film services industry (as discussed in the context of *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* in the previous chapter). Instead of a fully-fledged industry, there is a shadow film services economy whose scope is a challenge to delineate but whose agenda remains that of producing film/video. This shadow economy comprises freelance camera operators/editors, first time directors/producers, undergraduate trainees, backyard 'studio' owners, and a plethora of other 'jack-of-all-trades' middlemen and personnel who will offer required services or conveniently link demand and supply. As a result of this informal economy, it is difficult to say how many films are produced in Zimbabwe each year, or to identify with certainty trained and skilled professionals who can offer film-related services. This is why some observers have pointed out that there is a lot of film to talk about but no industry to talk about (IMPI, 2014; Culture Fund, 2009). One can observe that perhaps there is some sort of film industry in Zimbabwe, but not one that meets the desires of the filmmakers themselves and, certainly, not one that conforms to canonised definitions. Below is a discussion of the contestations surrounding a film 'industry' in Zimbabwe and a dissection of this 'industry' into the various services that ought to support it, although at times they may be lacking; that is the nature of the Zimbabwean film services industry.

Some 'film industry' to talk about: Now you see it, now you don't

Empirical evidence may support the argument that there is some film industry worth talking about in Zimbabwe. Its basis, however lies chiefly in the fact that various observers have spoken (talked) about an 'industry' when discussing the sector that produces, distributes and exhibits film in Zimbabwe. Nyasha Mboti (2015) for instance, has authored an article titled *The Zimbabwean Film Industry*, which contrary to its title, posits several arguments to dispute the existence of a film industry in Zimbabwe. Several other writings, predominantly in the

162

mainstream media also discuss a film industry in Zimbabwe [35]. The colloquial term "Zollywood" has arisen in description of an imagined or real community of filmmakers and film/video products originating from Zimbabwe or made by Zimbabwean citizens, whatever their location. It is not entirely clear how this industry is constituted, making it cumbersome to describe how 'Zollywood' works, like Jane Wasko (2003) has done in her book *How Hollywood Works*. Commentators on the film industry in Zimbabwe are in a dilemma, like the industry itself. Evidently, the word 'industry' in Zimbabwe has acquired a more colloquial if not synthetic use. To add to the confusion, one can argue that there is a film industry in Zimbabwe, but it is not industrialised. These contestations make an exercise of mapping the 'film industry' in Zimbabwe a necessary, though admittedly difficult, endeavour.

Although some observers complain that the two should be distinguished from each other (for instance Mhlanga, 2016; Nongwana, 2016), it has become common in Zimbabwe to treat video productions as film, perhaps because what differs is the production and exhibition technology but the uses and gratifications of the visual media remain the same (see my earlier acknowledgement in the Introduction). During the data collection phase of this thesis, filmmakers often used the terms film and video indiscriminately when discussing their work, as much as they used the term 'film industry' even in the same responses that they denied its existence. This is a predicament that even academics find difficult to escape; to immediately adopt the term video and completely obliterate 'film' from contemporary Zimbabwean filmmaking vocabulary would make the former a completely novel genre. However, it is clear that video and film are part of the same continuum of the 'national' cinematic and filmic fact. For this reason, people that produce and feature in video film today are the same as those that occupied the film sector in the 1990s, as already discussed in Chapter Five.

In collecting data for the study, it became necessary to ask the question: *Do we have a film industry in Zimbabwe?* This was because the term "film services industry" was, and may still not be a common term among filmmakers. It is one that is confined to academic discussions,

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See for example: 1. "Film industry challenge" in Panorama Magazine:
www.panorama.co.zw/index.php/archives/117-visual-arts/448-film-industrys-challenge
2. "Sad tale of Zim film industry" in *The Patriot*:
www.thepatriot.co.zw/old_posts/sad-tale-of-zim-film-industry/
3. "Film industry under scrutiny" in News Day:
www.newsday.co.zw/2011/10/23/2011-10-23-film-industry-under-scrutiny/
4. A lot of informal conversations and social media posts also mention a 'film industry'

if at all. Respondents would not give straightforward answers to this question. Almost always, they had to qualify their responses. The major reason for this was due to the fact that there was no consensus on the definition of "industry" and definitely on "film industry." This is partly because of the uniqueness of each film product manufactured in this sector; "a different set of circumstances, deals and players are involved for every film" (Wasko 2003:2). For instance, although the films employed as case studies here were all filmed in Harare and surrounding areas, they utilised different services (crews, actors and sites) and pursued different themes. It is therefore problematic to regard them as "industry" films in the same manner that one could identify products of the car manufacturing industry or the classical studio productions of Hollywood. Film is on one hand, an individual art, dependent on individual creativity at various stages of the production value chain, but on the other hand some aspects of filmmaking are techno-scientific, systematic and mechanised as is the case with many manufacturing industries. The term industry in film discursive communities, particularly in Zimbabwe has thus assumed an equally pervasive and evasive status.

To digress a little, the phrase 'film' has become part of everyday discourses whose meaning is better understood in a specific discursive community. In the same manner, a lot of terms have emerged in Zimbabwe, particularly in reference to economic aspects, which may not mean the same thing as their common use elsewhere. For example, when Zimbabweans talk about a *murungu* (white person), they do not mean it in racial terms, but in terms of economic power, vis-à-vis, one who is in charge of the means of production or is more resourced than others in that particular context. Similarly when Zimbabweans talk about going *kubasa* (to work), they do not mean a formal space where they are employed, but they mean any enterprise that earns them money, just like the word *kambani* (company) is not a formal, registered institution as understood elsewhere, but any physical or ideological space where one engages in activities that earn them revenue. It is the same scenario in talk about *mafirimu* (films), where infact "African movies" is a term reserved to describe Nigerian films and nothing else. This could be an area of further exploration: the place of film in everyday discourses.

Most of the observers who contest the existence of a film industry in Zimbabwe, either base their definitions on privileged Western contexts, or compare the film services employed in

recent productions to those employed during the 1980s. For example, Farai Mpfunya, the executive director of the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe says:

> At the moment, if there is an industry in Zimbabwe, it is still very much in its infancy or it has stagnated from what it was in the early '80s. Due to economic downturn and political problems that we have had in the country, many of the facets or aspects of what you could have ascribed to an industry, have disappeared (Mpfunya, 2016).

The fact that Mpfunya thinks aspects of an industry "have disappeared" means that, in his view, they existed at some point. His argument is easy to comprehend given the circumstances discussed earlier in the transition from the Hollywood era, through to the donor-funded initiatives up to the current situation. It also further demonstrates the nostalgia that observers have when analysing this transition over time.

If Western definitions of industry were employed, then there would be no film industry to talk about in Zimbabwe (Mboti, 2015). If one were to be exacting in definition, taking into consideration the differences between video and film, then there has actually been no film to talk about in Zimbabwe for quite some time now. Conti Mhlanga (2016) argues that film, in its classical format, ceased to exist in Zimbabwe since the demise of the Central Film Laboratories (CFL) in the 1990s. In its stead, there has been a rise in video technology, which has resulted in the contemporary genre of video-film. The mobility of the video technology has also given birth to transient genres (such as the *drasofi* discussed in the pervious chapter) whose building blocks are not classically film.

Based on the empirical evidence gathered, one can argue that there is, to some extent, a film industry in Zimbabwe, but it is necessary to talk about it according to its own context. Its nature needs to be deconstructed, or broken down to its constituent elements. This is the essence of the film services approach to studying film industries. Rejecting claims of industry merely on grounds of the informality of the sector is, therefore, essentialist and absolutist. In the Zimbabwean context, the film industry might be defined as: *a sector constituted of personnel and corporate bodies working in individual or collective capacities, employing different audio-visual processing technologies and administrative expertise in servicing the production of documentary or fictional visual-filmic products for dissemination to a wider cinematic or television audience* (author's definition). The dissemination of cinematic

products in this industry may be for monetary or ideological profit, the latter exemplified by the donor-funded narratives of the 1990s and those made by the colonial regime. This distinguishes the Zimbabwean film industry from Nitin Govil's (2013) focus on economic value of creativity and formal enumerative structures, because as seen in the cases of *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* there is very little economic value in contemporary filmmaking because recent productions have largely been made in highly informalised production contexts and contexts of production.

To follow up on the above definition, it is important to consider the productivity of the film sector in Zimbabwe. The local industry produces dozens of video-filmic products each year. One cannot give an accurate estimate of these films or the capital investment circulating in the "industry" but by the evidence of local visual/filmic DVD products on the streets, one can discern that there is significant production activity taking place. While it is clear that many filmic products are made, most of them never make it into formal circulation. One can mention productions such as *Sinners?* (Tawengwa, 2013), *Sabhuku Vharazipi 2 & 3* (Dzatsunga, 2013; 2014), *VaMayaya: The Seed of Corruption* (Danha, 2014)*, Chinhoyi 7* (Matanda, 2015)*, Gringo Troublemaker* (Mahaka, 2013)*, Fidelis* (Musowe, 2014; 2015)*, Vavakidzani* (Muropa, 2015)*, Makunun'unu Maodza Moyo* (Mungoshi, in production), *The Purse* (Magombedze, 2016) as well as the internet skits *PO Box*, as evidence that production is thriving. On any day, a video film is being made somewhere in Zimbabwe, but its destination is not always known. Notwithstanding the absence of formal distribution and exhibition channels, the straight-to-DVD slaughterhouse appears to be flourishing, however the distribution and exhibition network is too small for cinematic products to attain universal reach. Characteristic of a shadow economy, the "dollar-for-two" DVD market has cut out most formal distributors and exhibitors of film, therefore local productions enjoy very little or no publicity. This means awareness about filmic productions is confined to academic circles and communities in which the productions were made as well as, to some extent, the diaspora community. For example the straight to video dramas *Fidelis* and *Sabhuku Vharazipi*, have popular appeal in the southern parts of the country and in South Africa but have not circulated enough to be regarded as films of national appeal. Only those films that made it on the national exhibition circuit have some semblance of national significance, although their exhibition was largely limited to Harare, the capital city whose infrastructure remains friendly for film exhibition.

Janet Wasko's (2003) view of an industry as a sector that manufactures products for profit may need to be problematised here. The Zimbabwean film sector produces filmic fact products, but whether these go on to earn a profit on the market is debatable. The lifestyles of most filmmakers do not suggest that they earn above average incomes. The case of *Tanyaradzwa* where Meck (2016) says she did not even break even, further demonstrates that point. The films may earn some revenue from street sales but the proceeds of such transactions are very minimal and shared among the film producers and "pirates" on the streets. It is for this reason that filmmakers have attempted to sell DVDs on the streets at $1 per copy or less, to match those prices charged on the informal market. Considering this reality, it means the sector is 'manufacturing' products, but not for profit, at least in the economic sense. Gunda Mupengo blames local productions' failure to earn revenue on the lack of business acumen by Zimbabwean filmmakers. He observes that: "Zimbabweans generally are good at showmanship but lack the business aspect of it to make it showbiz" (Gunda Mupengo, 2015). It is from this observation that he opines about his film *Tanyaradzwa*, that "with serious marketing and distribution, a profit could have been made."

This distinction between filmmaking and film business is at the core of the film services approach. People that make films are not necessarily the same as those that offer business services that support the making of films. Services such as insurance, security, catering, music scoring, fashion designing, make-up and hair-dressing can be important in the making of film but they are not necessarily core filmmaking activities. Although both filmmaking and film business can be considered part of a broader cinematic fact, the lack of film business people indicates that there may be an underdeveloped film services industry, without which a film industry is not complete, as argued by one interviewee:

> We've got commercial farmers. We have got small-scale farmers, subsistence farmers and communal farmers. Who can stop a communal farmer from saying I am a farmer? So, anyone who is making film is a filmmaker but the argument is: do we have an industry? There are people who are into filmmaking and there are some who are into film business, that's two different things. An industry only comes when there is commercial activity. There are many people making films but they don't have commercial value" (Chatiza, 2015).

Chatiza's comments echo Wasko's conditionality of an industry being one that earns profit. From that perspective, it means that the existence of filmmakers alone cannot be enough to

define the sector as an industry. The informal nature of the Zimbabwean economy, however, means that even those small-scale business people servicing film production are difficult to trace. Their earnings are not known because they are outside government's purview. As a result, the margins of this industry are not clearly visible. Many more filmmakers work outside formal establishments or as "one-man bands" that may be termed "videopreneurs" because they trade in anything video. This situation is well captured by Elvas Mari, the director of the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe:

> If you have a critical mass of people that are sustained by a particular activity of human endeavour then it is an industry from that point of view, but if industry in this sense would denote issues of structure, standards which are given, understood and well-articulated within the sector, issues of trade, then we might not say we have a film industry" (Mari, 2015).

Again, the above argument comes down to the issue of formal structure. It shows that analysts of the Zimbabwean cinematic fact are straightjacketed into an essentialist, positivist outlook of the sector. Data collected in this study shows that there is serious human endeavour in the production of films in Zimbabwe, which makes their community an "industry" worth talking about. Even when filmmakers are not constantly working on sustainable film projects, there is a critical mass of people that are trained to provide film services. These people denote the skill considered a key aspect within a film services framework. Most of these people received on-the-job training working on Hollywood and NGO films. Efforts to grow a formal, commercialised industry must be focused on these service providers:

> There is what is called a production designer, locations manager, special effects man, props guy, construction. The first things those people [international filmmakers] do, they hire people whom they train to do those things. Locals were trained to do that. I am among those locals who were trained to do that, and there's quite a number of us. Zimbabwe has produced a lot of people who are working in the country and a lot more who are working outside the country. Other than acting, just doing set dressing and all those things, we have a number of them (Chigorimbo, 2015).

Chigorimbo's comment outlines the key skills that are available and can be utilised in any production. There is enough evidence to support Chigorimbo's view. There are numerous people of Zimbabwean origin that are working in international TV and film production companies. Unless a definition of the Zimbabwean film industry is limited to those film services that are confined to the country's geo-political boundaries, then these expatriates can be listed as Zimbabwean film services (see Chapter Two for a discussion on the problems of

definitions of national cinema). Many Zimbabweans have gained valuable acting experience on local sets and are gaining prominence internationally. Actors like Leroy Gopal in *Seal Team Eight: Behind Enemy Lines* (Reiné, 2014), Adam Croasdell in *Werewolf: The Beast Among Us* (Morneau, 2012), Tongayi Chirisa in *Mr Bones 2* (Hofmeyr, 2008) and *Robinson Crusoe* (Various, 2008), Alois Moyo in *The Power of One* (Avildsen, 1992), Benu Mabhena in *Blood Diamonds* (Zwick, 2006), Kevin Mambo in *Law & Order* (Wolf, 1990-2010), Jane Benney in *Mr Bones* (Hofmyer, 2001), Paul Berenger in *Deadly Women* (Ryerson, 2013-14), Prudence Mabhena in *Music by Prudence* (Williams, 2010), Chipo Chung in *Doctor Who* (Various, 2005), Danai Gurira in *The Walking Dead* (Darabont, 2010) and Michael Chinyamurindi *Biogenesis: The X-Files* (Bowman, 1999) have gained experience featuring in international film and TV productions. Many more work as camera and lighting technicians. One can speculate that if Zimbabwe's economic and political fortunes improve, these people could be attracted to reside in and work on local film sets.

The emergence of fresh producers/directors such as Willard "Slimaz" Magombedze and Nafuna TV's Nqobizitha "Nqo" Mlilo as well as the sustained existence of traditional film/video production companies may also suggest that there is an industry to talk about. These companies include Mighty Movies, Video Promotions, Media for Development, Media Matrix, Chipawo Media, Nyerai Films, Mahaka Media, Chisamba Productions, Mega Video, Don-it, Zimbabwe Heritage Trust, Treasure Media, C Media and Vikstrom as well as church-based studios such as Celebration Media, Yada TV, Christ TV and Emmanuel Productions. Most of these, however, concentrate on the creation of corporate documentaries and advertisements, while the church studios produce religious testimonials and related events. Also of note is the work of students at training institutions such as ZIFTESSA and MSU. The vibrancy of local festivals such as ZIFF and IIFF and productions supported by these bodies, is also quite significant. Some of the most recent productions include: *Marrying the Devil* (Dimingo, 2014) and *When Evil Strikes* (Mazonde, 2016), which follow the dramatic Nollywood style and themes of tradition (evil) versus evangelism (good).

Policy: Politics, controversies and funding models

The importance of film can be demonstrated by the case of Nigeria, which has taken over from South Africa as Africa's largest economy, because of its film industry. Nollywood, contributing 1.2 percent of the Nigerian GDP as of 2013, was a negligible sector in the 1990s (Agencies, 2013). Nigeria's case is instructive for the Zimbabwean state because film can

help address the now perennial shortage of employment. The majority of Zimbabweans are not formally employed though most have more than basic education. Chigorimbo argues that if the nation considered film as a sector with potential to create employment, it could be taken seriously:

> You don't hear of unemployment in Nigeria, and yet Nigeria has got 10 times the population of Zimbabwe. When you go to Nigeria, they are not asking for a work permit. They are asking you; what can you do? Because there is somebody who needs your services. The film industry there is the biggest single industry. The film industry actually has the potential to employ every unemployed person in Zimbabwe. It's a creative industry. I don't look for a job. I stopped the day I discovered how to make movies, because I create my own job. My son picks up the camera because someone has got a wedding. He's got a job. There is nobody who does a wedding if they don't wanna film it. Weddings happen everyday, funerals happen everyday, church services happen everyday. The film industry is an employment creation [avenue], unless our leaders, that message has not gotten to them somehow (Chigorimbo, 2015).

The government does not share the same optimism, its actions suggesting that it does not treat film as a critical sector. Chigorimbo's hopes are at variance with Charamba's admission that the government was unaware "that film is such a critical area." Due to this unawareness, the film industry remains unregulated and at the periphery of economic priorities. The industry is now lost within the mayhem of informal activity characterising the Zimbabwean economy, which includes car dealing, vending, foreign exchange dealing and many other transactions that are fertile grounds for corruption. The political and economic situation is too dire for film to be treated as a priority. Any poor performance of the industry must be understood in light of these political and economic developments. Since the late 1990s, Zimbabwe has suffered a serious political and economic crisis leading to the incapacitation of most formal sectors. This crisis has been exacerbated by lack of foreign direct investment (FDI) particularly from Western countries in North America and the European Union. Targeted economic embargos are often sited in government circles, as a major obstacle for diplomatic engagements that may provide a panacea to the investment apathy. As a result, the government has adopted a 'Look East policy' mainly characterised by one-way trade with China. This has seen an influx of cheap but fragile Chinese manufactured goods, including accessories used in audio-video production and exhibition. Equipment is a major cost factor in film production, together with the hiring of transport and locations. While Zimbabwe has perfect locations, it does not have as many suppliers of film equipment. Traditionally, Strachaans and Leeya Brothers, both based in Harare, have been the major suppliers of film equipment, some of it pre-owned. The

costs of such equipment has increasingly grown prohibitive, thus many filmmakers import from countries such as South Africa, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) or resort to cheap but poor quality Chinese imports.

> Equipment is very important. For Nigeria's film sector to be so successful, it's because you find film equipment everywhere, whether cheap or expensive. Here we don't have cameras. If you find them, they are expensive. The Nigerian industry began from cheap foundations, producing low quality dramas that were constantly being criticised. Before we talk about funding, if there is abundant equipment, it means people can produce cheaply. The more products there are, someone will realise that they can be sold. They make money, we make money (Moyo, 2015).

In Moyo's view, easy access to film production equipment would directly influence production activities. He gives as an example the post-2000 street theatre tradition in which theatre groups performed on city streets and public spaces in high-density suburbs, recorded those performances and sold them on the streets. This tradition created its own stars such as Freddy 'Kapfupi' Manjalima, Charles 'Marabha' Merisi, Tawanda 'Kahembe' Masarira, Lloyd 'MaBla 10' Kurima as well as David 'Sabhuku Vharazipi' Mubaiwa. Conservativists argue that even then, the equipment used to record these performances was largely for video production, not for the traditional film medium. Their concern is that this cheap digital technology adversely affects the production quality. For example, the Nigerian film industry lauded by Moyo for having cheap equipment, has been criticised for the poor picture and sound quality of its productions, which is a direct result of the technology (c.f Geiger, 2012). It is for this reason that, parallel to the acquisition of cheap digital technology, there remains a need to invest in more traditional media of production whose quality is undoubted. Conti Mhlanga bemoans this dearth of professional equipment since the demise of the CFL:

> This country does not have one film camera. Me and you can now say we want to shoot a film. We can't get anyone to rent us a proper *film*, not video camera. This country does not have one lighting company. Even when we were doing *King Solomon's Mines*, we had to bring from outside. This country does not even have one single green studio (Mhlanga, 2016).

Mhlanga's comments bring to the fore, the importance of studio complexes or something approximating them. Studio complexes, in that equation becomes part of the 'fungible and malleable' infrastructures that constitute locations (when thinking of Zimbabwe as a film friendly location). The studio, just like nature, is another location for production. This means built studios and natural locations complement each other in propping up the location interest of a place. The studio acts as "a medium of illusion and artifice" while the natural location

acts as one of "verisimilitude and realism" (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:7). Mhlanga's point is that without such studio complexes or other high investment technological infrastructure, Zimbabwe lacks the capacity to support productions that match international standards. This strengthens the argument that players in the film production industry should not worry about particular film projects but should strive to endow locations/production precincts with the requisite infrastructure for the making of many other future productions (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005; Goldsmith et al, 2010). What Mhlanga is calling out for is a permanent studio system endowed with all the requisite technology for creating films as well as supporting digital production and post-production. Such a studio, as envisaged by Goldsmith and O'Regan (2005) would be equipped with lighting accessories, mock ups of locations as well as digital readiness, including the availability of fibre optic networks for the transmission of data between different film service providers. Though this may sound Utopian against Zimbabwean realities, Mhlanga's complaints clearly show that there is a serious lack of investment in film technology.

The development and maintenance of a studio system with up-to-date and reliable infrastructure, such as suggested by Mhlanga above, would only be achievable if there was a clear policy governing the operations of the film industry. Currently, there is no documented film policy in Zimbabwe. The sector operates almost on "autopilot," leading Mari (2015) to say that it is using a *fembera-fembera* (guesswork) approach. While on the sets of film productions, different production teams may have some tacit and proto policy (Cameron, 2002) governing their activities, there is still a gap at the macro-political level:

> There has not been a film policy framework for [the] film industry except to say that once a foreign filmmaker does a film using Zimbabwe as a setting then that filmmaker must deposit a copy with the Ministry of Information as well as the National Archives. Now that can't be passed for a policy, so essentially we are talking of an absence of a policy, which means an unawareness on the part of the government that film is such a critical area. If we admit as government that there isn't a film industry, it certainly means we haven't done enough but there is a beginning now being made, which is why you notice BAZ, in the absence of a films board, is playing that role of not just dispensing skills, not just demonstrating practical ways of doing film but also funding the nascent efforts which are under way (Charamba, 2016).

The lack of a policy framework adversely affects the funding of film production because the industry has no structure, no professional standards and therefore, no accountability. The sector and, certainly the economy, have too many unknown risks for anyone wishing to invest

large amounts of money. Traditionally, film funding has oscillated between government sponsorship and NGO grants. Earlier literature is exhaustive on the involvement of the government in film investment in the 1980s and the role of NGOs in the 1990s (Hungwe, 2005; Fisher, 2010; Mhiripiri, 2010; Thompson, 2013; Mboti, 2015). Findings of the study suggest that most recently the state's lethargy, coupled with the flight of donors in the aftermath of the land reform programme, has placed the onus on individual filmmakers to source funds for their productions. In some cases the filmmakers use personal finances while in other cases, they approach the few remaining NGOs. Given the heightened state scrutiny on the activities of civic organisations, the donor community has devised more subtle ways of funding film. They are less overbearing on the thematic concerns, but they still have specific criteria for funding, which may affect film content to some extent. NGOs such as SIDA and DANIDA still play active roles in film production initiatives, being among the chief funders of the Culture Fund, which has over the years extended critical support to the film sector. NGOs also fund ZIFFT, Zimbabwe's biggest film festival, in addition to supporting the production of short films under the short film project (SFP). Donor funding has therefore continued beyond the scope of the obvious didacticism of the 1990s, although the intensity has greatly diminished due to new political realities. The problem with this model, as experienced during the years of donor funding, is that it sometimes results in a donor-syndrome where filmmakers look forward to earning money for their scripts and proposals without worrying about the returns from distribution and exhibition:

> When I entered, I found that people were making money from donor funds, so all one needs to do is become an expert at writing project proposals, so once you get your funding, you have already made a profit and in certain instances the donor would take care of the distribution. You just make your film and then write another proposal, no emphasis was put on marketing and distribution, so even in the fundraising process, one is just looking for production money forgetting that after production, you need to reach a market (Gunda Mupengo, 2015).

Discourses of dependency and hidden agendas continue to haunt the film sector as long as donor funding remains in the frame. Moyo (2015) gives an example of *Studio 263*, the soap opera that rose to fame in the mid-2000s, which was funded by Population Services International (PSI). Its themes, particularly the issue of HIV/Aids are a reminder that as long as audio-visual narratives are sustained by donor-sponsorship, the trajectory of their stories follows the agenda of the funding agency. Donor funding is not a problem *per se* because it sustains production and provides income for those involved in the making of sponsored films. The problem is that some filmmakers fail to look beyond that source of funding, thus in its

absence, they become inactive, mourning the absence of an "industry" as the hindrance to their productivity. At the same time, some beneficiaries did not invest the NGO funds into film infrastructure that could sustain future productions, prioritising instead, the acquisition of personal property. Script supervisor and short film director, Angeline Dimingo, argues likewise:

> There could be some funding but there are some so-called producers that take the funding and the funding is not invested into the actual production which means they do not pay the people that are working in production but decide to use 90 or 95 percent of the production money for their personal use. To them it's like a grant and they have no need to get back what they have invested. It's different from a situation whereby one invests their personal money into a production, then they make efforts into the marketing of the production so that it actually gets returns and then they can do the next production (Dimingo, 2015).

What most of these filmmakers fail to realise is that donor-funding can never be a permanent source of support. Donors only respond to particular social and political needs and use filmmakers as communicative instruments to address those issues (see my discussion on *Everyone's Child* above). This 'project-based' work cycle means that when the critical issues are resolved, the funding also stops. John Riber, who has a long history working with NGOs during his time with MFD confirms this:

> One problem with donor funding is that it is fickle. Priorities change and funding for media comes and goes. It is not a sustainable source of income. A success with donor funding does not insure follow on funding. But I think this is the case with the private funding as well. I know commercially "successful" filmmakers who continue to struggle to get their projects funded, no matter how many successes they have had. We certainly constantly struggle to get funding to make films" (Riber, 2015).

Farai Mpfunya shares similar sentiments, suggesting that filmmakers should take donor funding as one of, not the sole source of production funding:

> Sustainability does not necessarily rely on funding from development entities such as MFD or the Culture Fund. The absence of government investment in film, the absence of the private sector investment in film and the inability of the sector itself to have business personnel or competencies who are able to say this year we are working on a social development project but next year we are working on a business project so this year we are doing proposal writing to NGOS, but next year we are doing a business plan not a proposal because we need to make money. So the onus is upon the players within a film industry. When they [services] are fully-fledged then you will not have the question of whether it is detrimental to have a variety of mechanisms for funding film. Some of them will be from the NGO

development sector, some of it will be from business, some of it from other spheres such as politics using film as propaganda vehicles and things like that (Mpfunya, 2016).

Mpfunya's approach is pragmatic and liberal. It means filmmakers do not need to rely on one model of funding. To some extent, this assessment captures what has been happening in Zimbabwe in recent years. Apart from donor funding, an entrepreneurial self-funding model has emerged. Individual videopreneurs, motivated by profit aspirations or sheer will, have invested personal funds in film productions. This was the case in *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* in which the greater proportion of funds used for production were Meck's and Guzha's personal finances, respectively. Enock Chihombori is also on record saying he personally borrowed funds for the production of *Gringo: Troublemaker*.

Most of the filmmakers interviewed in this study feel that in recent years, the government has not done enough to support film in terms of funding, mainly because there is no policy obligating it to do so. Compared to the early 1980s, when the government actively invested in films, the industry seems to be of less priority now. The state's interest died with the losses made in *Cry Freedom.* Some of the interviewed filmmakers argued that just like there was an agriculture finance company, Agribank, the government should put in place a film finance company or a film commission. Government does admit that it has not done enough for the film industry, the lack of a policy framework being the most glaring shortcoming, according to Charamba (2016). Within the film services framework, government has a huge responsibility not just to fund filmmaking, but also to support the establishment of studio complexes because they are of symbolic importance to the nation, often standing out as 'signature initiatives' (Goldsmith et al, 2010). Once set up and continuously maintained, these infrastructures could support numerous film projects in the future. In so-doing, they provide employment for those working in film and related industries. Governments that so-invest in the film industry are regarded as film friendly within the film services framework (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005; Goldsmith et al, 2010). Currently in Zimbabwe, the reverse is happening. Where the state used to actively invest in film production facilities such as the Central Film Laboratories and Production Services, it has now neglected this function. The Production Services, which is meant to facilitate the development of film and other visual media is now dormant and in a sorry state. Most of its equipment is now obsolete and irreparable. The CFL is completely non-existent, its facilities now housing the commercial radio station ZiFM, owned by ZANU (PF) politician and businessman Supa Mandiwanzira. Instead of investing

in production infrastructure, the government seems to have developed enthusiasm in the area of content production, as Charamba confirms:

> Let's get the film policy right and just now the environment is so propitious for that. In the first place, we have gone digital, which means there is a multiplication of channels and that means we need lots of content. Of course one must never confuse television productions and films, but the point is; there is a way in which [the] film industry can feed into television, so where you have an upward of 30 channels it means you will need a very buoyant production strategy for a country. This is what infact makes this moment the Golden moment for the development of a film policy and I think essentially what we need to do is to recognise that fact and then pool together all the intellectual resources there is in the country, look back at the poor experience we have had in the past, look at the rather elitist approach that I notice has been characterising the film industry in this country and then say 'on the basis of all those defects how do we move forward to start a new chapter?' I am very optimistic that this should be the make or break year or period for a film policy and therefore a film framework (Charamba, 2016).

Already, there seems to be some activity towards the execution of the 'strategy' mentioned by Charamba. A commissioning department has been mooted to identify prospective content providers (possibly those that prop up the state's hegemonic interests) that will receive state support. There is a provision for this generosity under the Broadcasting Services Act (2001) under Part VII, Section 30(h) under which it is an objective "to provide grants to encourage the growth of the Zimbabwean creative arts industry for the purpose of enabling the film and music industry to supply material to meet the local content obligations of broadcasting licensees." This move is meant to increase the competitive advantage of the state-controlled broadcaster ZBC in anticipation of the digitalisation of airwaves, which will usher in numerous competitors, some of them possibly privately-owned. One can speculate that, for this reason, government fears that investing in universally accessible film production infrastructure will equally capacitate producers of content connected to private broadcasting stations, which may harbour political agendas militating against ZANU (PF) hegemony. The state's interest, therefore, is ideological rationalisation rather than economic enterprise. The state is interested in a filmmaking framework that dovetails into its existing ideological apparatuses, not one that subverts it. George Charamba further reflects these fears with the claim that post-2000 film production had a regime change agenda:

> The donor factor has been driving film. If you look at the output of films from 2000, these are film efforts that were closely tied to the regime change programme, the anti-land reform programme lobbying which was largely funded by the West (Charamba, 2016).

As such, the state is vigilant to independent filmmaking initiatives that may harm its hegemony, such as *Mugabe and the White African* (Bailey and Thompson, 2009) and *Democrats* (Nielsson, 2014), a documentary on Zimbabwe's 2013 constitution-making process, which has raised the ire of the government for unearthing some controversies surrounding the national outreach. The Censorship Board of Zimbabwe, a state institution, banned the documentary in 2016 on the grounds that it was "unfit for viewership in the country" (Muguwu, 2016)[36].

If the film industry is characterised by chaos and confusion, this is a reflection of the state, as far as cultural policy frameworks are concerned. Over the years the functions of certain ministries in charge of national cultural affairs seem to occasionally overlap. The Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services' responsibilities in development of the film sector appears to coincide (previously) with that of the Ministry of Sport, Arts and Culture and (currently) the Ministry of Rural Development and Preservation of Cultural Heritage. The setting up of the latter ministry has been celebrated as an opportunity to bring all cultural activities, film included, under one 'roof':

> Issues to do with the funding of the audio-visual sector, whether they have to do with the funding of the exhibition of audio-visuals such as film festivals or the funding of film-making activities, are matters that should be considered under the funding of the arts as a major concern of the ministry responsible for culture (Chifunyise, 2015)[37].

Against the background of Chifunyise's argument, it is worthwhile to note that under the provisions of the AIPPA, organisations and individuals that engage in media production (including film) must be licenced and accredited under the Zimbabwe Media Commission, which in turn falls under the Information ministry. The BSA regulates broadcasters, while AIPPA considers film as incidental. According to Charamba, there is need for a policy and legislative framework informed by the findings of the state sponsored research, IMPI (2014), which made the government realise that it was not possible to continue conflating the film industry with broadcasting and print journalism.

In the absence of government and corporate support, the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe has become one of the critical service institutions as far as film production in Zimbabwe is

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[36] From https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2016/04/13/ban-on-documentary-slammed
[37] http://www.herald.co.zw/new-ministry-brings-hope-to-culture-sector/

concerned. The Culture Fund is registered as a non-profit civil society organisation that was established in 2006 to invest in cultural, artistic and heritage initiatives. It provides grants and technical support to individuals and groups working in the areas of film and audio-visual and multimedia productions, cultural heritage, fine arts and crafts, cultural industries, literature and languages and performing arts. The organisation perceives itself as a "service institution for the arts" and an "active transformation agent" (Culture Fund, n.d). It is mainly funded by international development agencies, including the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA), the Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation (Hivos) Foundation and the European Union (EU).

This study found out that inspite of the criticism levelled against it in some quarters, the Culture Fund has been one of the key service-providers towards film development in recent times. It has provided a lot of critical support for various film related enterprises, including the Bulawayo-based Ibhayisikopo Academy, a project aimed at empowering women filmmakers through training. In 2010 and 2014, the Culture Fund availed funds to the academy, for the purchase of filming equipment, which has been used to train aspiring women filmmakers. In 2012, the Culture Fund also supported the Midlands State University's Film and Theatre Arts department with a US$20 000 grant for the purchase of film equipment. This had positive spinoffs within the Gweru community where the university department was based as the equipment could also be accessed free of charge by filmmakers residing in the city (Culture Fund, 2015). This was, therefore, an investment that went a long way towards making Gweru more film friendly. In 2014, the organisation also awarded a US$10 000 grant to ZIFFT for the hosting of the Zimbabwe International Film Festival (ZIFF). The Culture Fund has also commissioned critical researches for the film industry, including the *Baseline Study on the Culture Sector in Zimbabwe* in 2009, as well as the *Cultural Statistics Survey Report* in 2012, which among other things attempted to yield formal data about the film industry.

The Culture Fund has been supporting the production of theme-based documentary films and recently, docu-drama and fiction products that carry a development theme within them. The criteria for funding has followed specific thematic areas, namely: promotion of good governance and professionalism, influencing policy and promoting artists' rights, empowerment of vulnerable groups and promotion of environmental stability (Culture Fund,

n.d). Most recently, the organisation has also responded to requests to fund animation projects such as Nafuna TV, in addition to providing grants for several TV programmes (Mpfunya, 2016). Inspite of these endeavours, some filmmakers criticise the Culture Fund's funding model arguing that its ambit of 'culture' was too broad, extending to all categories of culture, which included literature, dance and music. This means that its funds, when available, could not be entirely dedicated to film production. There is a perennial mismatch between filmmakers' expectations and the Culture Fund's financial capacities. On the one hand, filmmakers feel that their sector deserves larger grants because of the capital intensiveness of the sector. For instance, Chigorimbo (2015) argues that: "One scene from a film will gobble up money [with] which another artist can go and make an album. A painter will paint 100 pictures with a budget for one day of a film." On the other hand, the Culture Fund does not have the capacity to respond to the commercial side of filmmaking and hence has tended to dwell on capacity building along specific targeted thematic conditions:

> We have our own internal programming. We are a development organisation so our goals are mainly developmental. While profit-making is a complement of development under the thematic area which is the improvement of livelihoods and it feeds very well into our vision of helping Zimbabweans create wealth which translates also to reduced poverty, we respond number one on: who has submitted the application? What is the nature of the application? Are they legitimate in the area of film services? Have they made a film before? Are they new? Can they make a film? How realistic is the budget? If a young man from [the high density suburbs of] Sakubva, Mbare, Mucheke or Makokoba says 'Culture Fund I want to make a Hollywood-type fiction film and I need two helicopters and my budget is two million', it's unrealistic because the grants budget for the Culture Fund hovers just over a million every year, and because we cover the whole gamut of development in the culture, arts and heritage sector, our grants have generally not exceeded $50 000 per project though one can do part-funding. It's also reflective of where the film sector is at the moment in Zimbabwe where it's a standard norm internationally that very few films are fully funded by one entity, one executive producer or one funding organisation. Therefore you can see where people are relying on twenty, 30 000 dollars from the Culture Fund as the sole investor in a film project that it's still very much at a development level because if a product is attractive enough, Culture Fund investment should really be a component of a big budget (Mpfunya, 2016).

The evidence above buttresses the need for a more holistic triangulated funding model that embraces individual entrepreneurs, civic society and the public sector. It calls out for filmmakers to be proactive and design business models around film in order to make their productions lucrative to private investors and, ultimately become viable. Furthermore, it shows that if the government puts in place a film policy, the perennial challenge of funding may just be resolved.

Location (dis)interest and film (un)friendliness in a shadow economy

While in Goldsmith & O'Regan's (2003; 2005; 2010) theses, studio complexes play an important role in attracting productions to their precincts; Zimbabwe's major attraction is its temperate climate and scenic locations, which are conducive for filming. Harare was formerly nicknamed the Sunshine City for its temperate climate. The bright, often sunny conditions endow the country with plenty of filming hours. Tourist resorts such as Victoria Falls, Kariba, the Eastern Highlands, Great Zimbabwe, Hwange and Gonarezhou National Game Parks as well as Matopos attract thousands of tourists each year. Celebrities such as Arnold Schwarzenegger and Shakira have in the past visited the country to see these tourist attractions, while the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA) has initiated several programmes, among them the hosting of some renowned international music artists and sports personalities in a bid to market the country as a favourable tourism destination. Until the late 1990s, Zimbabwe boasted a good road network, world-class accommodation and a stable banking environment, making it a destination of choice for most international travellers and investors. For filmmakers, most Zimbabwean cities were endowed with "modern" infrastructure that could provide a cosmopolitan outlook for urban-set films. The capital city, Harare, particularly stood out as friendly location for the production of film. With a population of slightly over two million (Census National Report, 2012), the city currently houses most of Zimbabwe's governmental and private business entities. These include film production companies, financial institutions, media training institutions, theatre companies, media organisations, and individual producers working independently. Major carnivals, such as the Zimbabwe International Film Festival (ZIFF), International Images Film Festival (IIFF) and Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA) also occur in Harare, stimulating demand for local productions and talent. This geographical clustering of practices and processes has, in the past, seen Harare attracting a number of foreign and local productions. As already discussed in Chapters Two and Five, the city and its environs hosted major Hollywood and local productions. The four films cases studied in this thesis were all filmed in and around Harare.

The friendliness of Harare to film and video production, did not necessarily translate to similar impulses at national level in most cases. Presently, Zimbabwe no longer attracts international film projects because it has largely failed to maintain a "location interest…where the primary concern is to maintain a permanent production presence in a

particular location" (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:2). Several economic and political factors, infact, have combined to chase away potential film business. If anything, the government feels that the location interest did not have desirable consequences as it resulted in the casting of Zimbabwean talent in inferior, stereotypical roles, which did not necessarily advance the local industry (see Charamba's argument in Chapter Five). As has become the norm in Zimbabwean foreign and domestic policy, ideological impulses supersede economic purpose as far as the Zimbabwean state is concerned. Resultantly, the country no longer has a film milieu with the capacity and enthusiasm to host international production. Part of the reason for this is also the lack of a fully developed human resource base and infrastructure that can handle production and post-production to match international standards. The demise of the CFL mentioned above, coupled with the neglection of Production Services is partly to blame for this. Even the national broadcaster, ZBC – the main exhibition outlet for most local cinematic productions – is lagging behind in terms of capitalisation. The slow pace of the ITU-mandated digitalisation of the national broadcaster epitomises the state of many quasi-state institutions within the sector.

As a result of the foregoing, the country's competitiveness in terms of attracting film production has dwindled over the years. Because many Zimbabwean cities do not possess the same infrastructure and organisational networks as Harare, even at its worst, video producers outside the capital city tend to concentrate on home videos such as weddings, funerals and family celebrations instead of large-scale productions. The dire economic situation has negatively affected the entire film value system, with major exhibition facilities in Kwekwe, Gweru and Bulawayo having been turned into churches. As a result, outside film festivals, there are fewer exhibition opportunities for films produced locally. With demand for big screen production not stimulated, producers tend to channel their efforts into the creation of straight to video formats. At the same time, prospective funders are not attracted to subsidise projects that do not have a profitable market. Consequently, filmmakers do not make much money besides that acquired from the sale of DVDs, which they share with "pirates." In 2009, to counter piracy, Mighty Movies deployed sales people to hawk DVDs of *Lobola* on the streets of Harare, for $1 a disc, the same amount charged by pirates. Compared to Harare, only a few filmic productions hail from the smaller cities, for instance *Fidelis* (Musowe, 2015) in Gweru, *Sabhuku Vharazipi* in Masvingo and student productions in the Midlands State University's Film and Theatre Arts as well as Media and Society Studies departments, which do not circulate publicly. Most of the said productions are generally poor in terms of

their aesthetics and storylines, however. Some filmmakers feel that inspite of the reservations about quality, the dispersal of filmmaking activities and film services to locations beyond Harare is a critical condition for the resurgence of the film sector in Zimbabwe:

> At least let there be a competent crew in Masvingo. If that crew makes a film that is very successful, then they will breed a community of filmmakers. They will be training people on the ground when they are shooting and editing, so that we have vibrant little pockets (Gunda Mupengo, 2015).

A more detailed discussion on the role of training in the film industry follows in a section below.

The economic downturn experienced in Zimbabwe in bygone years has, as indicated earlier, resulted in a thriving informal sector trading mostly on the streets of the country's major cities. As a result, the film sector has withdrawn more and more into the corridors of informality, becoming simultaneously indigenised and alienated from the international scene. Located in a "dollar for two" economy, more and more formal enterprises have disappeared and have been replaced by backyard studios much different from the studio complexes and soundstages envisaged by Goldsmith and O'Regan (2005). The above evidence suggests that film production in Zimbabwe is constituted as a shadow economy, because its activities are unmeasured, untaxed and unregulated (cf. Lobato, 2012; IEA, 2013). While not necessarily illegal (infact it has become the norm) all the time, it escapes detection in official estimates of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In the absence of a proper film guild[38] and a film commission responsible for gathering official data, it is difficult to know all the activities taking place in the film production sector. Most filmmakers operate as freelancers and avoid registering with the Zimbabwe Media Commission because it is either expensive or undesirable to do so. As a result, the government cannot earn tax from these informal enterprises. Charamba, the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Information, which is the parent ministry of the ZMC, admits that government does not know who the major players and institutions are in the local film sector except that there are "some deadly rivalries between some Zimbabweans who thought they represented the film industry" (Charamba, 2016). Related to that, Dimingo (2015) says if one needs to locate film services for one's

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[38] There is an association named the Zimbabwe Filmmakers' Guild founded by lecturer and film producer Nox Chatiza, but many filmmakers said they did not recognize it and labeled it a "one man band."

production there are "clicks, so it's about whom you know." This further reflects the absence of state patronage and proper orientation in terms of how to develop a film industry. All these indicators point to the intractability of activities within the film production economy, making it undoubtedly a shadow economy.

Many other characteristics of the shadow economy are evident in Zimbabwe's film sector. For example, there is relative ease of entry. Anyone with an editing suite and a camcorder can regard themselves a filmmaker in the absence of clearly outlined regulations and standards. It is such people that are accused of creating trashy productions:

> There are no rules; there are no regulations. Anyone from anywhere can just pick up a camera and call themselves filmmakers. It's really undermining art in terms of quality of production in terms of professionalism because, to everybody else, the productions that are coming up represent *the* film industry and that's why it is not really taken seriously at times (Dimingo, 2016).

Filmmaking has thus become an experimental, if not lucrative enterprise for many unemployed individuals whose relatives in the diaspora may remit a camera or computer now and then. Inspite of the outcries about the poor quality of filmic products created in this context, one might argue that the shadow economy in Zimbabwe has transformed filmmaking from being elitist, and democratised its spaces and practices for mass benefit. Several training initiatives encourage this proliferation of citizen storytellers employing a variety of audio-visual production techniques, including 'phoneography' – photo/videography using mobile phones (see Mhiripiri and Ureke, 2016). Operating outside the purview of the state, emerging filmmakers rely on their own wit as well as other haphazardly located indigenous resources, including labour and locations. In this scenario, family ownership of entire film production value chains is a reality in Zimbabwe. As suggested by Meck (2016) for her production of *Tanyaradzwa*, it is not unusual in such a context, for family and friends to assist their kith and kin's endeavours. Most films are also evidently small-scale operations as shown by the small production budgets (less than $8 000 for *Tanyaradzwa* and $12 000 for *Sinners?*

Lobato (2012) also lists labour intensiveness and adopted technology as one of the characteristics of an informal economy. Technological advances have made this characteristic redundant as filmmaking technologies are increasingly within the financial reach of most consumers. Tasks that used to be performed by many people can now be done by one digital

machine. It is now possible for film enterprises to employ fewer people who possess general knowledge and skill on several aspects of the production value chain. As a result, many filmmakers have dual roles on their productions. For example, Meck, who produced *Tanyaradzwa* also doubled up as the editor while she says she also had an input in the script-writing (see **Table 5.1**). A similar pattern is evident in *Sinners* as well. This practice is less of an innovation than a cost-cutting measure, which further underlines the lack of resources, but also a will to navigate the difficult circumstances.

To have or not have a national film commission

The lack of a clear regulation makes it difficult for the government to collect any revenue from the sector or, at least, to monitor its activities. Charamba's admission that he is not aware of the major players and institutions in the 'film industry' epitomises the dialectical reality that the shadow economy of film production in Zimbabwe evades government monitoring and is untaxed, yet the government has not demonstrated any zeal in the direction of regulating and formalising it. Generally, there is a lack of rationalisation in the film production sector. One cannot easily locate the film services supporting production in Zimbabwe. In an economy where almost everyone has become a vendor, it is not surprising that technical film people often dually trade as hair-dressers, street vendors, loan sharks or commodity brokers who will sell anything that fetches money. This, as argued by Lobato (2012) is a repository of entrepreneurialism, which, in the Zimbabwean context, is necessitated by a genuine striving for survival under very challenging politico-economic circumstances. The informal activities constituting film production in Zimbabwe are not unique to the developing world. Even in the famously formal Hollywood "film production still involves many kinds of informal activity, including unpaid cameo appearances, shooting in unregulated third world sites and harnessing the promotional power of fans" (Lobato, 2012:41).

The above evidence justifies the call by most filmmakers for the government to occupy a central role in the administration of the film sector (Meck, 2016; Mupengo, 2015; Mhlanga, 2016; Dimingo, 2015). This resonates with the thinking of Goldsmith and O'Regan (2005:3) that "Governments at national and subnational levels are inevitably required to provide assistance in order to gain a local advantage in what is an increasingly competitive marketplace." Pursuant to this, filmmakers have agitated for a National Film Board (NAFIB) to be established in Zimbabwe. Efforts to establish such a board have been spearheaded by

the Filmmakers Guild, an association mooted by film producer and ZIFTESSA lecturer Nox Chatiza in 2010. Inspite of the severe criticism labelled against its constitution and efficacy[39], the Filmmakers Guild has made some of the boldest lobbying towards the establishment of a film commission. The guild held an indaba in 2010, bringing together filmmakers and the government to discuss the challenges faced by the film sector. From that, a committee was formed to further push the agenda. Some of the committee members were Rino Zhuwarara, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Timothy Makwarimba, Munyaradzi Muchena, Charity Maruta, Nocks Chatiza and Nyasha Mboti, all with active interests in the film industry. For a year, the committee embarked on a research towards drafting a proposal for a film board. In 2011, the draft was then presented to stakeholders and their additional input was factored in to improve the document, which was subsequently submitted to the government, particularly, the then Ministry of Information and Publicity. However, as indicated by Charamba, government prioritises the formulation of a film policy over the constitution of a board.

Among other things, this board would establish a sustainable film fund, facilitate the establishment of co-production treaties, encourage the private sector to finance local film, establish productive linkages between the film sector and other cultural industries, lobby for state guaranteed loans for the capitalisation of local production houses, lobby for exemption of duty on specific film equipment and support the establishment of film and video training institutions (Chatiza, 2015; IMPI, 2014). In film services terms, such an institution would be part of "systematic thinking on behalf of the situated location interest" because it would make Zimbabwe a stable, suitable and viable location for film production. It would also help local film producers to "identify key strengths and weaknesses in their capabilities" to supply film services (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:55). A film board/commission would provide key services such as location scouting, negotiating with local authorities on behalf of filmmakers as well as negotiating hotel discounts and tax rebates (Wasko, 2003). This is envisaged to remove the industry from the "*fembera-fembera*" (guesswork) approach to making film (Mari, 2015). It would help market Zimbabwe as a film location and foster the use of local services such as crews, talent and equipment by both international and local filmmakers. Using a particular local location for film purposes would be a 'soft sell' that promotes that particular place as a tourist destination such as is the case with Domboshava.

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[39] The Guild was self-funded by Chatiza and got logistical support from the film school where Chatiza works.

The location interest envisaged under the film services framework acknowledges the importance of film commissions and film offices that are "put in place by local and state authorities to attract production and advance the location interest" (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005:46). Such institutions would be enshrined in film policies that seek to link local film production with international production and consumption "in the name of national patrimony" (ibid). This means that the government (directly or through its agencies) has an obligation to facilitate the organisational arrangements, capabilities, and technological infrastructure of the film services sector. Presently, the lack of a policy framework and a formally constituted organisation to coordinate film production activities in the country militates against this endeavour. Filmmakers interviewed in this study argue that a clear film policy would enable corporates operating in the country to invest in film production with fewer ideological permutations, compared to donor funding (Mari, 2015). Currently, in the absence of donor capital and a film commission, there is no support structure that specifically targets the capitalisation of the film sector in Zimbabwe. The National Arts Council of Zimbabwe (NACZ) and the Culture Fund, although offering some forms of support, are not adequate, as their scope is too generic, being set up to develop and promote the arts, which include, dance, theatre, film and literary arts (Mari, 2015; Mpfunya, 2016). The role of these institutions are not film-specific, therefore, they are not obliged to dedicate all their efforts and resources to the development of the sector. As Mari (2015) argues, "Film is a capital intensive industry and you can't afford to make it a piecemeal industry in terms of its support."

While a film board would go a long way towards systematically co-ordinating the activities of the film sector, it would also centralise such activities under the state. The envisaged set-up would nationalise, instead of liberalising film production. The thinking behind a nationally coordinated film production policy is based on principles of coherence within national boundaries (Rosen, 2006). In the Zimbabwean context, where the state wields excessive power, it may reproduce political structures of power in which film could be exploited as part of the propaganda machinery as is the case with state controlled media enterprises such as the Zimbabwe Newspapers (Zimpapers) group and ZBC. Already, even without the coercion of a national film commission, fiction filmmakers tend to avoid narratives that reflect political realities on the ground:

> We have been having a very polarised political environment and that has discouraged some filmmakers especially to tackle those issues that can bring resources. We ended up having our filmmakers doing films for NGOs on Aids, child whatever, skirting around issues that can have a bearing on engagement of issues that affect Zimbabweans" (Mari, 2015).

Nhamo Mhiripiri (2010) has also previously noted this glaring gap in the narrative of post-2000 filmmaking initiatives in Zimbabwe. The envisaged structure of the NAFIB shows that the state would wield excessive authority in its constitution as well as functioning. The NAFIB would be constituted and enacted by the President and the parliament. Board members would be "appointed by the Minister from the parent ministry from a short list of no more than 25" (IMPI, 2014:275). Perhaps it is a mark of desperation on the part of filmmakers that this document, which is their own proposal, would unquestionably cede so much authority to the state. This would make the film industry, for all intends and purposes, an extension of the state. Already, there have been outcries concerning the constitution and activities of state appointed boards regulating the media industries. These include the BAZ and the ZMC. The former, for example, has been widely criticised for issuing radio broadcasting licenses to applicants perceived to be aligned to ZANU (PF), the ruling political party. Of note are Star FM and Diamond FM - both owned by the state-controlled media conglomerate, Zimpapers - and ZiFM, owned by AB Communications, whose proprietor is a ZANU (PF) legislator and government minister, Supa Mandiwanzira. Media practitioners have also complained about the ZMC's role as a regulator. They suggest an alternative dispute resolution framework without state interference. It is this thinking that has led to the creation of a Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ), a self regulatory structure favoured particularly by privately owned media (Mhiripiri, 2013).

Inadequate or misdirected training

One of the key characteristics of the shadow economy is the presence of skills acquired outside the formal education system (Lobato, 2012). Many filmmakers in Zimbabwe did not have to go to a formal school to train as filmmakers. Most are self-trained, with particularly the younger ones relying on internet tutorials as their main source of knowledge. Infact, some ended up in film by chance. For instance, Gunda Mupengo, whose primary training was in computers, says as part of his process of acquiring knowledge about filmmaking, he "spent a year watching and discussing films with seasoned professionals." Chigorimbo, originally an insurance broker, attributes his filmmaking abilities primarily to the fact that he was "born a storyteller" while Tawengwa later trained in film after initially studying commerce in the

USA. Most of the established filmmakers were trained through a workshop-based curriculum, co-ordinated by the UNESCO Film school in the 1990s, but donor flight soon afterwards scuttled plans that were there to turn this school into a more lucrative enterprise:

> There was a time when there was an intention on the part of UNESCO, backed by Western countries to turn Zimbabwe into a hub for filmmaking in Southern Africa but at the start of the land reform programme in 2000, that decision was rescinded by an angry Western world which pulled out of UNESCO and left us with plans and a building that was at foundational level. This is the building that we have had to take up as Ministry of Information, until we have had a fully completed film school [ZIFTESSA], so really you notice that whereas you can postulate a link between film and state, you still need to postulate a link between national film and international structures and in our case we said so what? Even without international patronage, we can still move on (Charamba, 2016).

Criticisms of media performance in Zimbabwe have often been targeted at training institutions. Observers point out that universities and colleges are not providing adequate practical training for students, and are therefore producing half-baked graduates that are not ready for the demands of industry (IMPI, 2014). The same criticism extends to film training institutions. Even ZIFTESSA, which is touted as the ideal film training institution, has its own shortcomings, for instance that it does not have expertise in film-related sound production (Charamba, 2016). It is ironic, however, that most of the old generation of film producers, who level criticism against training institutions, do not have any formal training in film production. They argue that back in the days, there were very few training opportunities available. Besides the UNESCO Film School, other training schools included the Vision Valley institute, the African Script Development Fund and the Zimbabwe International Film Festival, with only the latter still functional. Much of the training was offered as workshops with "international experts." Currently, Zimbabwe International Film and Television School of Southern Africa (ZIFTESSA), and the Midlands State University offer exclusive film production training. Other universities and polytechnics offering media and multimedia production training have been an alternative training avenue. These include Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) the Christian College of Southern Africa (CCOSA), UMAA Institute as well as the Harare Polytechnic. With little capacitation, these institutions are often accused of producing ill-equipped graduates. MSU, for example, has been criticised for its egalitarian curriculum model, under which it enrols hundreds of students but does not have enough instructional technology to match these numbers. The student to camera ratio, for example, can be as bad as 50 students per camera, if not worse. As a result, some students

may go through the entire training without getting the chance to use a camera. When such students are then involved in real productions, their shortcomings become too glaring to be missed:

> We have got youngsters who don't even know what is the meaning of a close-up or a long shot. They go to a place and they just start shooting a close-up of what is happening. There is no establishing [shot]. How do you make a film out of that? So long as they see an image on their cameras, to them it's fine and there is nobody to correct them so it's not really their problem. Nobody has taught them that this is the other way of doing it (Nongwana, 2016).

This point of view suggests that training should also focus on the lengthy and complex pre-production process to educate young filmmakers that "films do not begin when the camera starts rolling" (Wasko, 2003:15). Gamu Tawengwa is of the same view:

> I can just take my iPhone today and say I am a director of photography but no one has verified that. All I know is to just point and shoot, but I'm calling myself a D.O.P. There is space for independent filmmaking, but I think we do more harm than good by just saying any person can claim or take on any title. It would be the same as a person in the medical field saying I know how to do A, B, C and being received and saying you can treat patients. We already have this baggage of, we are seen through the lens of inferiority of people who don't know what we are doing, who do sub-standard things. Our community needs guidance (Tawengwa, 2016).

Other observers applaud filmmakers, trained or untrained, who have taken the initiative to venture into film production under the most adverse of conditions. They point out that only those who can afford, access formal training:

> They have shown a commitment. Some people are just there [at universities and training colleges] because that's what their parents or guardians think is best for them but it's not really their desire to be there. You cannot really blame them [filmmakers] when, from their perspective, this knowledge is inaccessible. But even when the first films were being made, there wasn't a college, people were learning from doing things, so gradually if they keep at it, in time their productions are going to improve. These are the people who are trying to reach the market directly (Gunda Mupengo, 2015).

The above evidence suggests that film production industry in Zimbabwe depends on talent and experience, more than formal training. These findings also lead to the discussion of another important facet of the film industry in Zimbabwe: that of the proliferation of video producers and the fragmentation of traditional film production economies.

Rise of one wo/man, back-packer studios: democratisation and fragmentation of film production economies
According to Porter (1979) in his conceptualisation of the five forces characterising industries, the threat of new entry is a key factor. As highlighted above, it is relatively easy to

enter the film/video production industry in Zimbabwe due to lack of a regulatory framework and standards systems governing the sector. Certainly, one does not need to work for a studio to be regarded as a filmmaker. While film services frameworks have fathomed studio complexes as dedicated facilities offering a range of production and post-production services (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005; Goldsmith et al, 2010), the Zimbabwean context is much less formal. In the place of the studio complex has emerged a one-man/woman backpacker 'studio' simultaneously fragmenting and centralising video production into the hands of single individuals or very small enterprises. As alluded by respondents in the study (Tawengwa, 2016; Nongwana, 2016), anyone with the capacity to digitally record and process visual images, can call themselves filmmakers. The government has put in place a policy where film equipment can be brought into the country duty-free. The availability of cheap equipment and fast digital means of processing images, has made entry into the industry easy. This has given birth to a critical mass of enthusiastic, sometimes idealistic filmmakers often criticised for the poor quality of their products. Important lessons on the importance of technical equipment can be drawn from the Nigerian experience:

> Equipment is very important, whether cheap or expensive. That is the case in Nigeria, that's why there are so many filmmakers. They may be low quality, but they are the origins of industry. Those people doing street theatre were actually developing the industry, unfortunately, they have been affected by piracy. If we also have more TV stations, it means there will be demand for content. There are also many film schools across the country. Their graduates will have somewhere to exhibit their work, so the future of the film industry is about to turn a positive corner (Moyo, 2015).

Even though AIPPA makes it mandatory that video production companies be registered with the Zimbabwe Media Commission, only a few heed this call. As of 2014, there were only six registered film and video production companies, with only three of them operating (IMPI, 2014). The reality, however is that there are hundreds of such 'companies' and many more individuals operating as freelancers. This scenario is typical of a shadow economy, where most operations happen outside the purview of the state (Lobato, 2016). As the data suggests film production in Zimbabwe is typical of a shadow economy, because it is unmeasured, untaxed and unregulated. There are a lot of handshake deals, theft and barter trading in this scenario. At the same time, it presents a window of opportunity for those excluded from participating in the formal economy, be it filmmaking or any other enterprise. Production practices under this shadow economy have also shifted drastically. In some cases a 'company' may actually be one individual working as the cameraperson, scriptwriter, editor

and many other things. Often some individuals have grown into 'jacks of all trades', claiming roles in all stages of film production, without specialising in any. For instance, Ben Mahaka, who worked in film in the 1990s, has since written, directed, produced and acted in numerous films and TV programmes and now runs his own production company, Mahaka Media (Thompson, 2013). Even when several individuals combine their expertise, they may each have numerous responsibilities. Evidence from *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* shows that this is increasingly becoming common practice. This trend is worrying for conservatives who wish to preserve industry norms and standards:

> Everything has been taken over by [the] digital. Much of the work is being done on computer and the editors do everything until the end. Probably the cameraperson, the producers and directors are the people who are still working. Post-production can be done by the editor – editing, rendering, everything on one machine. These days it's more confined on the desktop. Most of these editors, these Adobe guys are self-trained. They just go to the computer and train to use this software and start cutting, but the basics of what is editing, they don't have. When someone is trained, you know how to cut a film, you know how to mix a pan movement and a tilt movement but when somebody just knows this is how to cut from frame number so and so, the combination is not there (Nongwana, 2016).

At the same time, an argument can be made that the proliferation of one man studios has placed the power of telling stories in the hands of many zealous individuals, not capitalist entities. It has democratised the practice of filmmaking and made it a truly indigenous one. It is a Nollywood-styled cultural explosion responding to real demand of local filmic productions, which ZBC, as the sole broadcaster as well as the diminishing chain of cinema houses cannot satisfy. More democratic means of storytelling involving the citizen are being envisaged, including the use of mobile phones by specific communities to create documentaries about their local needs and aspirations. As envisaged in the Algiers Charter (1975), the concern for African filmmakers should not be to try and catch up with developed capitalist cultural economies but "to allow the masses to take control" and to give them back "the cultural initiative by drawing on the resources of a fully liberated popular creativity" (Black Camera, 2010:166). The situation is similar in other African contexts:

> Here in Tanzania there is a booming Nollywood-styled commercially driven indigenous film industry that releases 5-10 low budget feature films every week. This cultural explosion is fuelled by an audience of 150 million Swahili speakers across the region. It is a big deal both as a platform for creative and cultural expression and as a source of employment for young Tanzanians. Unfortunately this emerging industry receives no subsidies from the Government. I've heard that Zimbabweans are also using what I call "the Nollywood model" to produce films for national audiences, which makes a lot of sense, but I don't know what the

commercial viability of these films is or how they are being marketed and
distributed in Zimbabwe and the region" (Riber, 2015).

While the informal nature of the film sector may be worrying from a business perspective, it
has allowed the proliferation of indigenous fanatics interested in the artistic rather than
commercial aspects. Thus, one can argue that film in Zimbabwe is gradually becoming a truly
art form, moving away from rigid and often-canonised professionalism in which funding
institutions and other stakeholders in the production value system determine the themes of
films. From this perspective, capitalisation of the film sector does not matter as much as the
products it can make, even with the cheapest of technology, as happened with the celebrated
American film, the *Blair Witch Project* (Myrick, 1999). Commenting on that particular film,
Francis Copolla then gave a positive outlook about this artistic turn:

> To me the great hope is that now these little 8mm video recorders and stuff have
> come out, some people who normally wouldn't make movies are going to be
> making them [...] Suddenly one day some little fat girl in Ohio is going to be the
> new Mozart [...] and make a beautiful film with her father's little camera-corder,
> and for once this whole professionalism about movies will be destroyed forever and
> it will become an art form (Wasko, 2011: 309).

The above quotation is reminiscent of the making of *Sinners?* and *Tanyaradzwa.* It is the
same scenario hailed by Michael Raeburn in the making of *Home Sweet Home.* Chigorimbo
has also alluded to it, pointing out that his son earned a living from filming weddings and
church services. As such, the access to cheap technology and the involvement of many people
in making video films may herald a positive future for the sector. The development also
tallies with the government's controversial indigenisation drive, which seeks to vest the
majority of economic production in black indigenous entrepreneurs. For the reason that there
are many people working in film production, some observers argue that this may be a pointer
towards the emergence of a genuine industry:

> People should not worry about quality or numbers of professionals working in a
> sector or what equipment they are using. We spend too much time worrying about
> the wrong things. The more the merrier. If we say we don't have an industry, when
> will it start? When you are actually producing content, and you actually have got a
> rate that you charge, whether that rate has been formalised or not, then we are into
> something. For me: do we have an industry: absolutely, we have. Is it producing
> enough? It depends on our respective visions" (Guzha, 2015).

Even with this democratisation of the film industry to include many more players than before,
there may be need to break down filmmaking into its various constituents, to appreciate the
cinematic fact and through it, channel future efforts to develop a fully fledged industry. A

systematic way of exploiting various film services and the strength of the country's locations must then be put in place, coordinated by the government, according to Conti Mhlanga:

> What we need to do now is that we need to sit down on the drawing board. Ministry of Information particularly, needs to take a lead to say now we are going to start a film industry. What locations do we want to promote as Zimbabwe? These locations are unique to Zimbabwe. They will make someone want to come and access and then, what incentives? If we want to sell the Eastern Highlands, what incentives? If we want to sell the grass veldts in the Midlands, what incentives are you putting in the Midlands so that someone will say I want to go and shoot in Zimbabwe's grasslands? If you want to sell the savannahs of Matabeleland North, what is it that you are going to put there? If you want to sell Lake Kariba, what are we putting in place to shoot there? It's about locations, then after that, it's services for that particular area that you are saying you want people to come and shoot there. Then your commercial people doing adverts will run there. Your people doing television shows will go there, everyone will start to want to use the infrastructure that is there, and as government, your job is just to put the infrastructure. And then, you start to say which regional locations do we want to connect with? So if someone wants to shoot a desert, how do we connect them to Namibia, via which exit and how do we support them that if they come to Zimbabwe, we will make it easy for them to go and film the desert? Then if they want the sea, how do we connect them to Beira? (Mhlanga, 2016).

Mhlanga's comment suggests that it may not be too late to leverage the existing critical mass of filmmaking expertise by investing in infrastructure in particular locations so that they can become friendly to attract international productions and, in turn, grow the local industry. This means that with enough will and effort on the part of the state, a fully fledged, formal film services industry can still emerge or complement the current shadow economy. Mhlanga's thinking is the same as what Goldsmith and O'Regan (2005:41) call the "location interest" which focuses on increasing a location's chances of attracting film production on a regular basis.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the "crew behind the sins" of Zimbabwe's film production industry. It has been established that there are several factors militating against the growth of a genuine film services industry in Zimbabwe. The factors include lack of technological infrastructure, inadequate training and economic and political complexities all underlined by lack of government support and the attendant problems, particularly the lack of a clear policy governing the operations of the film production sector. It is due to this myriad of factors that many observers may see as if there is no industry to talk about in Zimbabwe. The chapter also showed that economic adversities have compelled the film industry to operate as a shadow

economy, whose operations are informal and escape government scrutiny. In this shadow economy, it is difficult to trace the nature of services within the industry, and even government admits that under the present circumstances, these are not known. It became apparent in this chapter that filmmakers are left with fewer and fewer options for funding, most of which comes from the Culture Fund and (or in conjunction with) international development aid agencies. Desperate for support, filmmakers feel that a national film board, consituted and supervised by the state, would be best way to regulate and support the industry. In so-thinking, the filmmakers are not wary of government's potential to turn the film industry into one of its ideologica state apparatuses. In this chapter, it is also acknowledged that, though not by design, the present shadow economy of film production in Zimbabwe, may have given birth to a crop of genuinely artistic and fanatic crop of filmmakers and entrepreneurs whose productions are genres of convenience.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

Conclusion

This chapter concludes the study. A summary of the study and its key findings are recapped below. The chapter also suggests potential areas of further study for scholars interested in exploring the nature of the film services industry in Zimbabwe or the cinematic fact. The chapter also demonstrates how the thesis addressed its objectives and questions. It postulates on a theory of shadow film services, acknowledging that Zimbabwe currently does not have a fully fledged film services industry, but an informal film/video economy. It is hoped that academics and policy-makers and filmmakers alike, may benefit somehow from the data presented in this research.

Summary of study

The thesis began by discussing the background of filmmaking in Zimbabwe, applying a periodised analysis that has been employed in studying the country's political and economic performance. Pursuing a similar approach, the thesis identified the main epochs as follows:

1. the post-independence era ending around 1990 in which the government took a proactive stance in funding films and inviting foreign organisations to use the country as a filmmaking location.

2. The period from around 1990 to 2000 charactreised by donor-funded development support films.

3. The time between 2000-2010, which saw the emergence of an indigenous film industry employing local people in key positions. The emergent film themes tackled local concerns but the aesthetic norms of the films began to prevaricate between those for drama, soap opera and film, as a result of the circumstances surrounding production.

4. The post-2010 era which saw the consolidation of the drasofi genre and continuation of largely informal economies of production.

This study was justified by the fact that most literature on Zimbabwean film tended to focus on content rather than context of film. They dwealt more on filmic rather than cinematic fact. The film services approach employed in the study allowed a more holistic examination of the various services employed in the production of films, which in turn helped explain the content

seen in those films. Based on available literature, it was noted in the study, that most film industries were structured and aspired to function like Hollywood. For this reason, some observers saw Hollywood as extending the cultural imperialism of the USA. However the interconnectedness of film industries worldwide, could also be seen as part of a global Hollywood, which was geographically dispersed, to the benefit of 'local' industries. However, due to the colonial history of Africa, filmmakers on the continent constantly suspect ill motives in global arrangements involving developed nations, which explains the now historical gravitation towards a Third Cinema. On the origins of the film industry in Zimbabwe, it was observed that Bantu Eedicational Kinema Experiment, the Colonial Film Unit and the Central African Film Unit employed production techniques that suited the end target of their films – the 'natives'. There are continuities between colonial film production style and post-colonial practices, particularly in the 1990s, when film production was supported by international development agencies.

The use of Western concepts to studying African phenomenon was also problematised in the thesis. The triangulation of theories employed in the study is an attempt to counter the weaknesses of each theory in investigating the distinctly Zimbabwean context of film production. The thesis proposes a Contextual Approach to studying film production, an approach that acknowledges the importance of both film services and political economy paradigms. It was apparent throughout the thesis, that the film services framework was highly useful in studying the film industry, although this needed to be complemented by a political economy approach to understand the impact of organisational arrangements on the filmic fact. Political economy theory helped understand the historical, socio-economic and political factors within the geographical space defined as Zimbabwe, that affected the production of films over time.

The study employed qualitative, interpretive methodology. An argument was advanced that the authoring of research results was steeped in the writer's experiences and was an exercise of interpretation. This interpretation was built around the author's perceptions and respondents' own interpretation of events.

Summary of Key Findings
This study explored the nature of the film services industry in Zimbabwe. This exploration was premised on three key questions as follows:

1. What are the key skills, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs exploited in the production of film/video in Zimbabwe?

2. How has the availability or non-availability of 'film services' affected the production of the films *King Solomon's Mines* (1985), *Everyone's Child* (1996), *Tanyaradzwa* (2005) and *Sinners?* (2013)?

3. What are the major thematic issues in the films and how do they relate to the socio-economic-political contexts during which the films were produced?

The study indicated the various organisational arrangements as well as intermediate inputs (film services) that went into the creation and production of the four films used as case studies. Value chain analyses of the different films showed the key and supplemental skills employed in their production; in a way providing a cross-cutting view of the cinematic fact in Zimbabwe, albeit within varying contexts of production. For example, the production of *King Solomon's Mines* and, to some extent, *Everyone's Child* employed numerous and diverse service providers, including talent and technical crews. At that time, Zimbabwe was friendly to the production of films due to its natural and technological endowments. *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* show a more informal film services structure in which production activities are vested in a few individuals on the production value chain. A comparative value chain of the two films illustrates this difference (see Fig. 5.3). The transition from formal services to a shadow economy, while necessary under the dire economic circumstances, was considered to curtail creativity. To that end, the findings of the study showed that filmic productions were as good or as bad as the film services that went into their productions.

Cummulatively, the evidence from the films showed that production had gradually shifted from a formal and specialised model of filmmaking with clearly defined modes of funding and production roles to one organised as a shadow economy, which in turn had given birth to new aesthetic norms. This transition was necessitated by the broader socio-economic and political context obtaining in the country. The shadow economy of film production has created a distinct genre, now termed *drasofi*, which combines the aesthetic norms of drama, soap opera and film. It is a genre of convenience, but is simmultaneously artistic and driven by serious devotion and endeavour, as seen in both the production and content of *Tanyaradzwa* and *Sinners?* This showed that film services have far reaching influences on filmic content, thus cinematic fact.

The study also found out that there were several factors affecting the production of film and video in Zimbabwe. These included lack of equipment or technological infrastructure, poor training and a general lack of enthusiasm by the government to regulate and financially support the film industry as well as the absence of a national body to formally run the film industry. As a result of the complexities of activities happening in and outside the film sector, there have been contestations whether Zimbabwe has a film industry or not. It was found out that the key factor behind these contestations and indeed confusion, was because the industry was now structured as a shadow economy, whose margins are difficult to trace. The study showed that this shadow economy of film production in Zimbabwe, may have given birth to a crop of genuinely artistic and fanatic crop of filmmakers and entrepreneurs whose productions, though trashy, are genres of convenience.

Towards a Shadow Film Services theory
The findings of this study offer fresh insights on film production in Zimbabwe, which can be useful in similar contexts in the developing world. They capture the cinematic fact and film services that many attempt to describe as a film industry. More importantly, these findings allow one to postulate a theory of shadow film services in a Zimbabwean context. Such a theory combines the principles of a film services approach and those of political economy theory. The proposed theory borrows from Lobato's (2012) theorisation of film distribution in a shadow economy as well as Goldsmith and O'Regan's (2005) theorisation on film services throughout the value chain. The current study delimits both theories to the study of film production and output. This ecclectic framework comes from the realisation that the film services theory alone or the shadow economy theory by itself, cannot holistically explain the cinematic fact in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The period 1980-2016 is characterised by different Kuznets cycles which in turn influence an assortment of styles, aesthetic norms and film services that cannot be described adequately by one straightforward theory. This calls for a re-think of the film services and shadow economy theory to something in between – a *shadow film services theory*, which when all is said and done, is situated within political economy theory.

The proposed shadow film services theory envisages a scenario where the film services approach is a highly useful framework for disaggregating or deconstructing the film industry into its different components, with equal attention paid to economic and ideological factors. From this disaggregation comes the realisation that the infrastructure, organisational

arrangements and intermediate inputs currently available for the production of film in Zimbabwe are informally constituted so as to escape government scrutiny, such that they are neither taxed nor regulated. In such a context, it is not business as usual, but it is about "making a plan" in order to make a film. A shadow film services theory may be useful for analysing film industries in most of the developing world, where funding remains a perennial challenge, with the net effect being that film production is assembled and executed at the convenience of the filmmakers, even when that includes 'guesswork'. It is a theory that acknowledges how such developing film economies emulate typical Hollywood value chains, but are limited by their own political and economic circumstances. It, therefore acknowledges the importance of context, in studying the production value chain. Such a theory would be useful to unpack emergent hybrid cinematic genres, such as the 'drasofi' in Zimbabwe, which are products of their contexts.

Inspite of the contestations surround the concept of "national" film industries, it is pertinent to suggest that a shadow film services theory would be perculiar to particular geo-political spheres. The shadow economy of production is a *space* of unregulated and unmeasured services employed in film production. That 'space' has both ideological and physical boundaries. As issues such as taxes and regulations are unique to particular geo-political spaces otherwise described as national economies, shadow film services also become national phenomena. The scrutiny that such cinematic fact escapes is one defined within its national scope. As such, the shadow film economy exisiting in Zimbabwe, is not the same as that in Guatemala, Kenya or Tanzania. It is forever fluid; influenced and defined by its own context. Shadow film service providers in Zimbabwe may well become *the* film services when hired outside the country, just as the Cannon Group appeared highly intricate and formalised when producing films in Zimbabwe, while in the US, it was criticised for exploiting cheap foreign labour and generally lacking taste in its endeavours. Therefore:

1. There is need for film analyses to appreciate the infrastructure, organisational arrangements and intermediate inputs (film services) installed in a location for the production of film.
2. Such analyses must acknowledge that film services are not always structured formally and may escape governmental (and even) academic scrutiny, therefore, it is important to examine the political and economic context in order to understand the production value chain (production context) of each film.
3. Filmic fact is the window to understanding cinametic fact and vice versa.

4. The shadow economy of film production is not by design but one that emerges in pursuit of convenience.

5. Shadow film services of film production exist complementary to, parallel to and in succession of formal film services.

Areas for future inquiry

This study was delimited to film production. A separate study could focus on distribution or exhibition within a shadow economy in Zimbabwe. Such a study would perfectly complement Lobato's theorisation on the shadow economy of film ditribution. In the future, possibly the next decade, it would be interesting to find out the trajectory of film production in Zimbabwe to check if the cyclical pattern discussed in Chapter One is consistent. Emerging consumption patterns of visual content appear to be concentrated around the internet. It would be worth studying the emergent production practices for this market. Nafuna TV, Slimmaz Productions and the *PO Box* skits may provide insightful case studies.

There will always be a rational for studying film production in Zimbabwe. A different dimension to the current study might focus on quantitative aspects when formal data becomes more easily accessible. Alternatively, one might be interested in pursuing indepth why the fiction film genre in Zimbabwe has shunned political themes in its creation. The environment is highly political and all the other media discuss political issues but they have been spared in film.

Conclusion

The thesis concludes on the note the nature of the film services industry in Zimbabwe is constantly changing in response to political and economic circumstances. In the current era characterised by political and economic turmoil, a new cinematic fact has risen in response. Currently, film production is constituted as a matter of convenience, employing shadow film services and as a result, creating a new mixed genre described as drasofi. This revelation may be useful for those pursuing film production in Zimbabwe and those formulating policy about the industry.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Schedules

SCHEDULE 1: INTERVIEW WITH PRODUCTION MEMBER

Project Title

CINEMATIC FACT AND THE FILM SERVICES INDUSTRY. PRODUCTION CONTEXTS AND CONTEXTS OF PRODUCTION IN ZIMBABWE (1980-2016).

My name is Oswelled Ureke, PhD candidate with the Centre for Communication, Media and Culture (CCMS), University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), South Africa. I am conducting a research on the film services industry in Zimbabwe, and I felt I should interview you as one of the key players in the film industry.

I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences in Zimbabwean film, your thoughts about the support services going into film production and your opinions about the nature of the film services industry in the country.

I hope to use this information to gain a better understanding of the film services industry in Zimbabwe.

The interview should take about 30 minutes. Are you in a position to speak to me now?

I will start by asking some general questions about you.

----

1. What is your name and position?

2. How long have you worked in film production?

3. Can you tell me more about your role in the production of the film *King Solomon's Mines/Everyone's Child/Tanyaradzwa/Sinners?*.

4. In your opinion, how important was your role in the making of the movie?

5. Tell me your key experiences in the production of this film.

6. What challenges did you encounter in the making of this film?

7. Do you think the film had enough support required for the production of a movie?

8. To what extent do you think the availability/lack of services required for the production of the movie affected its quality and content? (How much did the financing, for instance, affect the subject of your film?)

9. Do we have a film industry in Zimbabwe? Can you describe it?

Thank you very much for such important information. Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you once again. I think that is all I wanted to ask. If any related issues come up, can I give you a call or e-mail you?

SCHEDULE 2: INTERVIEW WITH FILM/THEATRE TRAINER

Project Title

CINEMATIC FACT AND THE FILM SERVICES INDUSTRY. PRODUCTION CONTEXTS AND CONTEXTS OF PRODUCTION IN ZIMBABWE (1980-2016).

My name is Oswelled Ureke, PhD candidate with the Centre for Communication, Media and Culture (CCMS), University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), South Africa. I am conducting a research on the film services industry in Zimbabwe, and I felt I should interview you as one of the key players in the film industry.

I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences in Zimbabwean film, your thoughts about the support services going into film production and your opinions about the nature of the film services industry in the country.

I hope to use this information to gain a better understanding of the film services industry in Zimbabwe.

The interview should take about 30 minutes. Are you in a position to speak to me now?

I will start by asking some general questions about you.

----

1. What is your name and position?

2. How long have you worked in film/theatre training?

3. Can you tell me about your role in the training of film personnel?

4. How do you think your training has impacted on the people's execution of their roles in the production?

6. What are some of the key issues, including successes and challenges, that you can talk about, with regards to film training?

7. To what extent do you think the availability/lack of well trained actors/actresses affects a film?

8. What is the importance of training to the film industry?

9. In your opinion, can we say that we have a film industry in Zimbabwe?

Thank you very much for such important information. Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you once again. I think that is all I wanted to ask. If any related issues come up, can I give you a call or e-mail you?

SCHEDULE 3: INTERVIEW WITH GOVERNMENT/ ARTS SECTOR REPRESENTATIVE

Project Title

CINEMATIC FACT AND THE FILM SERVICES INDUSTRY. PRODUCTION CONTEXTS AND CONTEXTS OF PRODUCTION IN ZIMBABWE (1980-2016).

My name is Oswelled Ureke, PhD candidate with the Centre for Communication, Media and Culture (CCMS), University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), South Africa. I am conducting a research on the film services industry in Zimbabwe, and I felt I should interview you as one of the key players in the film industry.

I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences in Zimbabwean film, your thoughts about the support services going into film production and your opinions about the nature of the film services industry in the country.

I hope to use this information to gain a better understanding of the film services industry in Zimbabwe.

The interview should take about 30 minutes. Are you in a position to speak to me now?

I will start by asking some general questions about you.

----

1. What is your name and position?

2. How has your department/organisation been involved in supporting film?

3. What are some of the key regulations/policies governing the film industry in Zimbabwe?

5. In your opinion, how friendly is Zimbabwe in terms of filmmaking i.e how favourable are its locations, production facilities, policies and other services related to the production of film?

6. To what extent do you think the availability/lack of support from government/policy-makers affects film production?

7. What are some of the key skills and organisational arrangements in the film industry today?

8. What measures fo you think need to be put in place to grow a film industry?

9. In your opinion, do we have a film industry in Zimbabwe?

910 What is the role of an organisation like the Central Film Laboratories and Production Services to film production in Zimbabwe

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Thank you very much for such important information. Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you once again. I think that is all I wanted to ask. If any related issues come up, can I give you a call or e-mail you?

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

Howard Campus
P. Bag X54001
Durban
4000

[Informed Consent Form for _____ **(PRINT NAME)**

Principal Researcher: Oswelled Ureke

Name of Institution: Centre for Communication Media and Society (CCMS), University of KwaZulu Natal

Research Title: CINEMATICFACT AND THE FILM SERVICES INDUSTRY. PRODUCTION CONTEXTS AND CONTEXTS OF PRODUCTION IN ZIMBABWE (1980-2016).

This Informed Consent Form is in two parts:

1. Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)

2. Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

My name is Oswelled Ureke, PhD candidate at UKZN in the Centre for Communication Media and Society. I am inviting you to participate in my research, titled **CINEMATIC FACT AND THE FILM SERVICES INDUSTRY. PRODUCTION CONTEXTS AND CONTEXTS OF PRODUCTION IN ZIMBABWE (1980-2016).** You may choose to participate or not participate in this research. You can also ask any other person you feel comfortable talking to, for you to decide whether to participate or not. If there are any words

or concepts that you do not understand, please feel free to ask questions and I can explain them to you.

Purpose of the research

The film services industry entails the various inputs and services that go into the making of a film. These services may include, but are not limited to: production facilities, funding, production personnel, and locations in which to shoot films. I intend to find out the nature of this industry in Zimbabwe – how it has been in the past, and how it is now. I wish to know who is involved in this industry and how it affects the production of films in Zimbabwe.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve an interview, which will not take more than 30 minutes. Should you have any other documents or film material connected to the subject, you would be most welcome to show me as part of your explanation. Should you feel any need to stop the interview during that time, please feel free to do so.

Reasons for selecting participant

I am inviting you to participate in this research because I feel you are one of the key persons in the provision of film services in Zimbabwe. I feel you can contribute much to my understanding of this industry.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. There will not be any consequences as a result of your choice not to participate in this study.

Procedures

Should you accept to take part in the research, you will be asked to participate in an interview with myself. During the interview, I will sit down with you in a place in which you feel comfortable. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and it will be skipped. No one else but the interviewer will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except myself will access the information documented during your interview. The entire interview will be tape-recorded, but no-one will be identified by name on the tape. I will store the tape and will destroy it as soon as the research has been assessed.

Duration

The research takes place over three years in total. During that time, I might visit you more than once for interviewing dependent on the nature of information gathered during the research. However, there may not be need for a follow-up, but should you desire to contact me or my project supervisors with any more information or retraction of earlier information, you can do so on details to be provided.

Risks

There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. As I do not wish for this to happen, you do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help me understand the film services industry better.

Incentive

Please note that you will not be provided any incentive to take part in the research.

Confidentiality

The study may draw attention of observers or your workmates and they may want ask about the research. I would like to assure you that I will not share information about you to anyone outside of myself and those assessing the study. The raw information that I collect from this research project will be kept private. It will not be shared with or given to anyone and will be destroyed at the end of the research.

Sharing the Results

Nothing that you tell me today will be shared with anybody outside the research team and, if you so desire, nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge that I get from this research will be shared with you before it is made widely available to the public. I may then publish the results so that other interested people may learn from the research.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

As indicated earlier, you do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so and choosing to participate will not have any consequences on yourself or your job. If you wish, I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly or for any reason whatsoever.

Who to Contact

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact me on +263 772 613 587 or +27710370741 or e-mail: ozzieureke@yahoo.com. You may also contact my research supervisor, Prof. Ruth Teer-Tomaselli on +2733950621 or e-mail him on TEERTOMA@ukzn.ac.za.

This proposal has been reviewed and approved by the Centre for Communication, Media and Society, whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. If

you wish to find about more about the CCMS, please contact Prof. Ruth Tomaselli on +2733950621.

If further information is required, please contact:

Humanities & Social Science Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC)

Mariette Snyman

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Tel: 031 260 8350

Fax: 031 260 3093

Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

You can ask me any more questions about any part of the research study, if you wish to. Do you have any questions?

Part II: Certificate of Consent

(This section is mandatory)

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study. I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

 I hereby consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded

Print Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of witness (if participant is illiterate) _____

Signature of witness _____

Date _____

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands what will be done.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this form has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent_____

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent_____

Date

_____

Appendix 3: Ethical Clearance Protocol

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

24 April 2015

Mr Oswelled Ureke (213573242)
School of Applied Human Sciences – CCMS
Howard College Campus

Dear Mr Ureke,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0551/014D
Project title: The Film Services Industry. Production contexts and contexts of production in Zimbabwe (1980-2013)

Full Approval – Expedited Application

With regards to your application received on 12 August 2014. The documents submitted have been accepted by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and **FULL APPROVAL** for the protocol has been granted.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

..................../..
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Ruth Teer-Tomaselli
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P McCracken
Cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli / Ms Ausie Luthuli