Playing catch up: A critical examination of filmmaking and the film sector in Zambia

by

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Declaration

I, Elastus Mambwe, hereby declare that the work on which this thesis is based is my original work (except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise) and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university. I authorise the University to reproduce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents in any manner whatsoever.

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Abstract

This study examined the development and the state of filmmaking in Zambia from 1964 to 2021. Using the Political Economy of Film as the theoretical lens, the study sheds light on the ways that filmmaking has evolved during three key dispensations in Zambian political economic history, namely, the (United National Independence Party) UNIP years (1964 – 1991), the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) years (1991 – 2011), and the Patriotic Front (PF) years (2011 – 2021). This was done with the assumption that a country's political and economic positionality can significantly affect the development of its film sector because it establishes the context in which filmmaking, a cultural, economic and meaning-making activity, occurs (Wasko, 2003; McQuail & Deuze, 2020). The study also sought to understand why Zambia did not develop a recognisable film sector in Africa despite having had a long history with filmmaking that dates to its colonial past.

The examination was done in two layers, the first of which analysed film sector or industry-related elements as they have been experienced in post-colonial Zambia, while the second layer comprised a reading of selected Zambian film texts in the three epochs. The study appropriated the Small Nation Cinema approach (Hjort and Petrie, 2007) as an analytical frame, assuming that it could be used to examine the cinema of countries at the margins of film scholarship and the global film industry order. The qualitative study employed various data collection methods, including key informant (in-depth) interviews, observation and the analysis of selected Zambian productions.

The study's findings show that the prevailing socio-political and economic conditions have influenced the context of film production in postcolonial Zambia. These conditions have determined the resources available for production and distribution and have influenced the state's overall approach to film in the different epochs. Further, filmmaking and the emerging screen industries continue to be plagued by old and new challenges, including the lack of funding or film financing, limited education and skills training in various aspects of film, little or no access to distribution channels, and an absence of government policy and support, necessary to develop filmmaking. The study also shows how television remains crucial to the development of screen production in the country but also highlights how this does not always serve the film industry well. Another key finding is that digitalisation, exemplified by the migration to digital broadcasting and the rise of over-the-top (OTT) platforms, is driving new optimism and opportunities in Zambian screen production. Lastly, a critical examination of selected film texts across the epochs reveals how didacticism and social value storytelling

characterise many Zambian films. However, the study notes that this tendency is beginning to change as filmmakers embrace more narrative styles and aesthetic influences in recent years.

Overall, the study highlights Zambian filmmaking and positions it as an activity of historical, cultural and, more recently, economic significance. It offers clear examples of filmic texts, textual practices, filmmakers, and information essential to appreciating Zambian filmmaking. By situating Zambia as a small cinema nation, the study expounds on how this 'smallness' has affected the development of filmmaking in the country. The study also contributes to emerging national discourses on the development of the creative industries or the creative economy.

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Elastus Mambwe
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Dedication

To my daughters, Elsa Mwika and Eleanor Atupiye. You were born to be awesome. So go ahead, be awesome!

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List of Abbreviations and Initialism

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMVC	Africa Magic Viewer's Choice Award
BEKE	Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAFU	Central African Film Unit
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CFU	Colonial Film Unit
DTT	Digital Terrestrial Television
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
FESPACO	Festival panafricain du cinéma de Ouagadougou/ Pan African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou
FNDP	Fifth National Development Plan
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBA	Independent Broadcasting Authority
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LONRHO	London Rhodesia Mining and Land Company
MCA	MultiChoice Africa
MFDI	Media for Development International
MIBS	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MMD	Movement for Multi-Party Democracy
MTF	MultiChoice Talent Factory
NAC	National Arts Council of Zambia
NAIS	National Agricultural Information Services
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PF	Patriotic Front
S-SNDP	Revised Sixth National Development Plan
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes

SFH	Society for Family Health
SMEs	Small and Medium Scale Enterprises
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SNDP	Sixth National Development Plan
SVOD	Subscription Video on Demand
TEVET	Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training
TV	Television
UK	United Kingdom
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.
UNZA	University of Zambia
UPND	United Party for National Development
US	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCD	Video Compact Disc
VHS	Video Home System
VOD	Video on Demand
ZAMCOM	Zambia Institute of Mass Communications
ZANA	Zambia News Agency
ZANIS	Zambia National News and Information Service
ZICTA	Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority
ZIMCO	Zambia Industrial Mining Corporation
ZIS	Zambia Information Services
ZMK	Zambian Kwacha
ZNBC	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND: PLAYING CATCH-UP

1.1 Introduction and Problem

Filmmaking in Zambia is by no means a new and unfamiliar activity. The country has a long and storied history with filmmaking that traces to its colonial past. The recent international success of Zambian films such as Jessie Chisi's award-winning *Between Rings: The Esther Phiri Story* (2014), Rungano Nyoni's acclaimed short film *Mwansa the Great* (2011) and Ngosa Chungu's documentary film, *E18hteam* (2014) demonstrates the existence of a filmmaking culture that is perhaps even comparable to some well-known film cultures in Africa. However, Zambian filmmaking seems only to be emerging now, and it appears to be playing catch up. Little is known about it, and questions about the current state and context of filmmaking and screen production in the country or why Zambia did not develop a recognisable film industry remain unanswered. The current study is an attempt to address these questions.

Therefore, this thesis aims to examine the development and state of filmmaking in Zambia. I specifically examine the development of filmmaking from Zambia's independence in 1964 to 2021. By appropriating the Political Economy of Film (Wasko 2005) and the Cinema of Small Nations approach (Hjort & Petrie, 2007) as theoretical lenses and analytical lenses, respectively, I examine how filmmaking has developed throughout Zambia's political, socioeconomic, and cultural transformation as seen in the various administrations that have governed the country. In doing this, the study sets out to ask the following specific questions:

1. Considering the processes, political, economic and cultural structures, and the people involved, what has been the context of film production and distribution in post-colonial Zambia?
2. What specific challenges, internal and external, have impacted the development of filmmaking in Zambia?
3. How have the country's social, political and economic policies over the years influenced filmmaking?
4. What textual strategies or tendencies can be observed in Zambian films to enrich our understanding of Zambian filmmaking over the years?

This study examines the development and state of filmmaking in Zambia in two layers. The first layer of the study considers film sector or industry-related elements as they have been experienced in post-colonial Zambia. This layer attempts to meet the following objectives: (a) to examine the context of film production and distribution in post-colonial Zambia; (b) to identify the factors, internal and external, that have contributed to the state of filmmaking in Zambia; and (c) to determine the influence of social, political and economic policies on Zambian filmmaking. The second layer of the study involves a reading of selected Zambian screen media texts. This layer seeks to address a fourth objective of the study: (d) to identify the textual strategies used in selected Zambian productions and the observable tendencies over the years to enrich our understanding of Zambian filmmaking. This analysis considers both narrative and documentary film forms, as well as selected television drama texts. Documentaries, sometimes defined as non-fiction film texts that aim to document or record subject matter based on factual or actual people and events (Stadler and McWilliam, 2009: 190), have been included because they have been an enduring part of Zambian filmmaking and are a legacy of British colonial rule, having been a part of the cultural policy that, according to African cinema scholar Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike (2014: 109), the British "gave" to its colonies.

When putting together this study on filmmaking in Zambia, a connection between filmmaking and television in the country became apparent early. Therefore, it is crucial to clarify and contextualise my use of the terms 'film' and 'filmmaking' in a study that also incorporated elements of television.

Different scholars have defined or explained what film is in different ways. For instance, Pramaggiore and Wallis (2005: 2,3) argue that film is a complex art form, medium, and cultural institution. Fascinated by film, philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, economists, politicians, and others have contributed to its study, understanding, and making over the years. Even governments worldwide have come to understand the power of film and have used it to "propagandise values and ideologies" (Kolker, 2006: 2).

Though relatively young, film has become an important medium and art form. It has developed as a medium that is dependent on technology and collaboration and continues to be closely linked to the social and economic contexts (Bordwell, Thompson and Smith, 2017: 1). A film's

form and stylistic elements, such as its cinematography, sound, editing and mise-en-scene, come together to create a powerful tool that will evoke emotion, occupy viewers' thoughts and influence actions. Film is an essential part of a society whose role is more than being an artistic object. For example, it is "an end product of economic, technological, sociological, psychic, and semiotic processes" (Elsaesser and Buckland, 2002: 2), while it is also a cultural commodity meant for mass consumption and the reproduction of culture. It is also text - *an intelligible, delimited, understandable structure of meaning that contains a compound of events that are linked to each other and occur in a given context* – that can be read (Kolker, 1998). Because of these and different roles, film opens itself to various interpretations with varying complexities and backgrounds. Graeme Turner (2006) argues then that film should be seen and studied as a social practice, not only for filmmakers and film audiences but also in its narratives and meanings because it is a source of significance and pleasure for many in culture.

Given this understanding, the terms 'film' or 'filmmaking' are somewhat limiting when discussing the Zambian context. Television, which forms an integral part of the audio-visual production in the country, is often left out. For instance, the development of filmmaking in Zambia after independence is inextricably linked to the growth of television. This relationship is also rooted in colonial experiences, where scholars such as Valerie Orlando (2017) have argued that the British in their former colonies tended to favour television over film. To this day, the line between filmmaker and television producer is somewhat blurred. Further, the recent surge in filmmaking activities in Zambia, discussed in later chapters, is initiated by developments in the television industry, such as the liberalisation of broadcasting and increased investment in television production. Further, the terms technically also exclude video, which has become the foremost form of expression for the moving image in Africa.

While I focus on film and filmmaking in the traditional sense of the terms as elucidated above, I sometimes interchange two other terms to encompass film or cinema, video and television production. The first is "cinematic arts", as used by Katrina Daly Thompson (2013), and the second is "screen media", as used by Lindiwe Dovey (2010).

According to Thompson (2013), 'cinematic arts' is a collective term that can is used to examine film and television, two closely related cultural products. They involve moving images and text and "exist in complex relationships to foreign and local cultures" (2013: 25). Thompson's use of the term emerges from her experience studying language, power and identity in Zimbabwean

film and television. Her research shows how filmmakers and audiences hardly make distinctions between film and television in Zimbabwe. While they may have different histories and industrial specificities, film and television are "discursively treated as the same" (2013: 29). As a result, Thompson concludes that for the Zimbabwean context, it is unavoidable to examine film with television together. This thesis shows how the same can be said for the Zambian case, hence the appropriateness of the collective term 'cinematic arts' to acknowledge this relationship. I thus apply the term primarily in situations where television productions are also considered.

Dovey's use of the term "(African) screen media" resembles Thompson's use of 'cinematic arts'. The term arises from the connotative omission of video films and video filmmaking implied in 'African film' or 'African cinema' (Dovey, 2010). Video films constitute a significant part of audiovisual production on the continent and have long surpassed celluloid films in distribution and consumption. The term "screen media" is reconciliatory because it acknowledges the coexistence of these different practices in African cinema, including the contribution of television. Therefore, as Dovey argues (2010: 2), "oppositional categories such as 'FESPACO films' versus 'video films', 'arthouse films' versus 'commercial films', or 'serious films' and 'entertainment films'" are not necessary when discussing African screen media. FESPACO refers to the Pan-African Festival of Cinema and Television of Ouagadougou (Festival panafricain du cinéma et de la télévision de Ouagadougou), one of the foremost film festivals in Africa, historically known for promoting celluloid filmmaking.

In this regard, I use the term to acknowledge video as a technology and practice that, in the Zambian context, has been central to the development of the film industry. Further, I use it to acknowledge the role of the various types of screens used to consume African audio-visual content beyond cinema, which has been in decline for years.

1.2 Rationale for Study

This study on Zambian film and its development is a valuable contribution to African cinematic arts and screen media scholarship and discourse, which Zambian filmmaking has manifestly not been a part of. Most literature on African cinema has concentrated on cinemas from the continent's more established film industries, such as those in Francophone and Anglophone West Africa, Lusophone Africa and North. The influential works of scholars such as Manthia Diawara (1992), Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike (1994, 2004, 2014), Olivier Barlet (2000), Mbye

Cham (1998, 2004), and a few others were instrumental in shaping contemporary African film scholarship. However, as this scholarship has developed, there seems to have been an unintended negation of the films and the film industries from 'other' countries in favour of those where filmmaking has been more visible and sustained. There is a need to examine the 'marginal' or 'neglected' filmmaking countries and cultures to have a deeper and fuller comprehension of African film. Put differently, there is a need for what Falicov and Middents (2012: 116, 117) call an amplification of the voices from the "*remaining cinemas"*. This should, among other aspects, include a broader scholarly examination of industries and texts, increased theoretical scrutiny and development, as well as comparative studies within the continent and beyond.

Therefore, this study on Zambian filmmaking emerges as an example of a 'voice' from one of those *remaining* countries whose perspectives have often been absent, grossly homogenised or oddly generalised (Mhando, 2000; Tomaselli, 2007). This need is not to suggest that something is outstanding about Zambian filmmaking. Instead, it is a case for an inclusive approach to scholarship that brings on board more of the missing pieces to the medley that African film or cinema is.

African film scholarship has broadly highlighted the challenges faced by the film sector on the continent. Low or limited access to financing, limited access to international markets, scarcity of local technical personnel and poor production facilities are just some of the more common ones that have greatly plagued the sector in different countries (Barlet, 2000; Ukadike, 2002; Gugler, 2003; Thompson, Bordwell & Smith, 2003; Saul & Austen, 2010).

Even with these challenges, as well documented as they are, African film has managed to establish itself as an innovative and challenging body of filmmaking (Williams and Murphy, 2007: 1). The context in which respective countries, including those at the margins of scholarship, have encountered, negotiated or navigated the challenges and sought solutions is worth considering. Each country has had unique experiences and often shares limited or no equality in production, distribution and consumption processes or patterns. These contextual differences need to be acknowledged and appreciated.

In this sense, examining the context of filmmaking is essential because context influences the type of films produced (Turner, 2006: 94). Investigating context provides researchers with information about how films are or have been made, the processes and people that have been involved, as well as the economic, political, social and cultural structures within which it takes place (Andrade-Watkins, 1995: 134). The study of context, including what Toby Miller (2004: 4) calls "its historicisation", is now an essential element of film studies. Scholars have used it to analyse filmmaking and film sectors in different nations or regions. Thus, in addition to the study of a film's textual processes, an examination of the condition that existed when a particular text was made, distributed, received, construed and even criticised must be included (Miller, 2004). Therefore, in looking at these contextual elements, the study in this thesis highlights how filmmaking in Zambia has developed over the years and identifies its unique idiosyncrasies.

I am aware that there are arguments, such as those held by Femi Okiremuete Shaka (1994: 73), that scholarship on African film tilts in favour of looking at the history of the film industry and against theory and textual analysis. Despite this, I contend that the value of another such study rests in the realisation that a need exists to understand how film has developed in other African countries besides those that have already amassed a great deal of inquiry. Further, Piotr Cieplak's (2010: 74) response to Shaka's assessment is valid when he argues that the need for such studies in Africa is significant "as the mode and organisation of production, as well as the acquisition of resources, remain major obstacles in the development" of African Cinema. This study attempts to bring together elements of both arguments, looking at both the historical and industrial aspects and the textual elements of the films in their historical context.

The present study is also motivated by recent developments within the global, regional and local television and film sectors, such as digital migration and digital content delivery. There has been an increase in investment in the television sector and over-the-top (OTT) distribution via the Internet. The demand for local or homegrown audio-visual content, such as films, in regions traditionally inundated with foreign content has increased. There is mounting pressure on filmmakers to produce content that can satisfy this demand. This thesis also highlights filmmakers' challenges and opportunities in achieving this.

Lastly, the need to chronicle the largely disjointed and under-researched filmmaking history in post-colonial Zambia motivates this study. However, the study does not claim to achieve an

immutable and unreservedly conclusive body of work. Instead, the hope is that the work presented here contributes to scholarship and aids future research.

1.3 Historical Context: Zambia, Colonial film and beyond

Zambia is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. The country shares its borders with eight other countries, including Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the north, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia in the south. Angola lies in the west, while Malawi and Mozambique are in the east and south-east, respectively. Zambia's geographical position has contributed to the country's post-colonial condition in different ways, which will be highlighted in this thesis. The country's linguistic profile is also influenced by its geographical location, and many of these languages are part of the Bantu language family (Kashoki, 1978; Marten & Kula, 2008). Scholars generally argue that there are between 20 and 26 languages or language clusters and up to 80 dialects (Mambwe, 2014; Simungala & Jimaima, 2021). Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, and Lozi are the primary languages spoken, and English is the official language. The country has ten provinces, including the copper-rich Copperbelt Province, and an estimated population of 19,610,769 as of September 2022 (Zambia Statistics Agency, 2022) . The main economic activity in Zambia is copper mining, but there have been efforts to diversify into agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism over the decades. The Zambian Kwacha is the official currency.

To better understand the context of filmmaking in Zambia, it is essential to consider the historical realities that helped shape filmmaking in the country. For Zambia, as it is for most African states, this implies tunnelling deep into the country's colonial past. Scholars such as Abrams, Bell and Urdis (2001: 272) argue that this relationship to colonialism is a significant reason for filmmaking's poor development and challenges in most of the continent. Despite political independence, several formerly colonised countries, such as Zambia, still lack the political and economic muscle to gain control of the transnational flow of images. Glen Reynolds (2015: 1, 2) contends that this is why the evolution of an independent cinema sector in Africa has been widely influenced by national politics, which are closely tied to colonial legacies. However, like Shaka (2004: 74), this study does not solely treat colonial history as the source of these challenges. However, it recognises colonial filmmaking's role in forging the state-led approach to cinema that many African countries, including Zambia, took.

Film historians such as Glenn Reynolds, John Burns, Rosaleen Smyth and Tim Rice have written extensively about film in pre-independence British colonial Africa. By the 1920s, the British Colonial authorities in Africa had already been considering how they would use film in their territories. The British Colonial Office saw film in the colonies from two vantage points: "(a) how the cinema affected the economic and political interests of the imperial power; and (b) how the imperial power might use the cinema to promote what it determined to be the economic, social and moral welfare of colonial peoples" (Smyth, 1979). The spread of film as a source of entertainment in Northern Rhodesia was influenced mainly by the development of the copper mining industry in the late 1920s. Colonial officials and mine operators were determined to provide suitable leisure activities for their African workforce. From the first public showing of a film in 1928, the viewing of film, or 'the bioscope' as it was commonly referred to, spread steadily across the copper-rich Copperbelt region, first with silent films, and later the sound films mainly from the United States distributed through South Africa (Ambler, 2001). Soon after, the British Colonial administration, intent on making colonial rule more acceptable to the natives, became concerned about the dominance of American films in their colonies, especially on the Copperbelt (Ambler, 2001; Burns, 2002; Reynolds, 2015). The Colonial officials were concerned that the Hollywood films were conscientizing Africans and not serving the colonialists' agenda. The British government also began calling for the development and use of film primarily as a means of instruction across the empire.

One of the region's most notable and earlier filmmaking projects was called the Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment (BEKE). Its pioneers, which include John Merle Davis, Leslie A. Nottcutt, and Geoffrey Chitty Latham, believed in the ability of positive didactic cinema to have a constructive influence on Africans (Nottcutt and Latham, 1937; Smyth, 1979; Sanogo, 2011). The BEKE's work in Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland has laid a significant foundation for what film would be for Africa and involved Africans in the production process (Diawara, 1992). Examples of BEKE productions include the didactic films, *Post Office Savings Bank* and *Tax*, which were meant to educate Africans on savings and paying taxes, respectively. Despite achieving some success, the BEKE project did not last. Towards the latter period of the BEKE, only the colonial administration in Northern Rhodesia held a positive attitude towards it. In other regions, BEKE films were mostly criticised by an already cinema-conscious African audience for being too amateurish, non-representative and technically poor (Smyth, 1979).

Just as the BEKE was ending, the British Ministry of Information established the Colonial Film Unit in 1939, after the start of World War II (Smyth, 1979). The CFU was to produce propaganda films about Britain's World War II efforts, mobilise support for it and tell of the effects of the war on English people. These films were mainly mediated through literate African commentators. The British Government's involvement in colonial film only came after it had rejected proposals to finance private film initiatives post-BEKE. Smyth (1979, 1988) argues that the war gave the Colonial Office impetus to fund the production of instructional films. The CFU produced several films that were distributed to territories such as Northern Rhodesia. However, many films received mixed reviews from African audiences because they often took a propagandist tone.

According to Smyth (1988), the Colonial Film Unit was not entirely successful in its aim of producing instructional films despite an increased budget and staff complement between 1941 and 1942. The failure of the CFU posed questions about its effectiveness in Africa. The unit got a new lease of life following a suggestion from among its ranks that there was a need for more African footage. This marked the start of the Raw Stock Scheme in 1943, which required colonial information officers to take film on 16mm raw stock and send the films to England for processing, editing and use in CFU productions (Ibid).

Following the end of the war, the CFU embraced instructional filmmaking even more. By 1948 calls were made for less centralised production and an increased involvement by Africans in filmmaking. In line with this, the CFU, which already had units in East and West Africa, established the Central African Film Unit (CAFU) later that year. Film production by the CAFU immediately began with a unit in Salisbury (Harare) and another in Lusaka in Northern Rhodesia. The CAFU's films targeted the less educated Africans to provide the educational function and to diminish the influence of the more educated ones. Many of these films portrayed what CFU pioneer George Pearson (1949) termed 'the parable of Mr Wise and Mr Foolish', showing the wise choices and consequences of not making them. Rosaleen Smyth (1983) gives examples of such films made in Northern Rhodesia following her review in the Zambia Information Services Archives. For example, *Zimbani* (CAFU No. 3), set in Petauke, a district in the Eastern part of the country, compared two farming families, a progressive one and an unreceptive one. Another one, *The Story of Petale* (CAFU No. 39), is an admonitory

film set in Chingola, a town on the Copperbelt, about a schoolboy who gets involved with bad company and is later saved by a team of welfare officers.

Smyth identifies the 'profile' film as another instructional film produced by the CAFU. These featured non-fiction, documentary-style success stories about Africans from various fields. Examples of such productions in Northern Rhodesia were told in a series called *Africans in Action* (CAFU No. 17), and a film called *Lusaka Calling* (CAFU No. 15), produced to promote the 'saucepan special', a short-wave receiver invented to provide a cheap radio set for the African population in the region (Smyth, 1983).

In 1953, Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland combined into the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. CAFU became a part of the Federation's Department of Information. The unit produced several types of films but mainly focused on propaganda intended to promote the Federation. As was the case in other colonies, these films were also used to sponsor the myth of the "superiority and legitimacy of the white rule over the colonised people" (Modisane, 2013: 5). Instructional films continued but were significantly reduced. While the CFU before it undertook to develop African filmmakers, the CAFU did not. Africans would mostly be limited to acting, interpretation or driving positions. Smyth (1983) even suggests that some Africans who could have had the relevant training or education stayed away from filmmaking because they found themselves ideologically opposed to the CAFU's pro-federation propagandist intention for film. In the end, CAFU's propaganda efforts failed to contain the support ordinary Africans gave to their politicians who were calling for the British government to end the Federation.

The literature above discussing the development of colonial filmmaking (Smyth, 1979, 1983, 1988; Burns, 2002; Reynolds, 2015) is useful in highlighting the antecedents of filmmaking in Zambia before independence. Filmmaking was a domain for white settlers and colonial administrators.

On 24th October 1964, Zambia obtained its independence from Britain, and Kenneth D. Kaunda became the President of the new republic after elections earlier that year that saw Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP) emerge victorious. After independence, many of the means of mass communication under the colonial offices remained under the new government's control. For example, the Information Office, under which the filmmaking

activities fell, became part of the Ministry of Information and Postal Services. The Film Unit was now part of the Zambia Information Services (ZIS), a new department under the same Ministry, which was also in charge of broadcasting, postal services and telecommunications (Willings, 1965; Kasoma, 1990: 46, 47). The Film Unit continued to make films, including producing a 35mm black and white newsreel for release in cinemas, then stepped down to 16mm prints for rural distribution on cinema vans (Willings, 1965).

David Kerr's book *Dance, Media Entertainment and Popular Theatre in South East Africa* (1998) provides some crucial insights on Zambian filmmaking after independence, albeit brief. Kerr contends that the film industry in Zambia, more clearly than other mediums, is an example of how the West's technical and economic stranglehold on small peripheral nations can lead to cultural encroachment and frustration (Kerr, 1998). According to Kerr, the UNIP government used film to help protect the Zambian population from foreign influences and cultural products that were predominant and threatened African culture. In this period, filmmaking mostly remained a state-run activity through ZIS.

Kerr primarily attributes Zambia's economic challenges to its failure to establish a viable film industry. These challenges are the result of Kaunda's government's political economic policies. Problems such as the failure to move beyond didactic filmmaking, lack of access to distribution networks, and a dependence on mobile cinema are also listed. However, Kerr's crucial account does not clearly explain how these factors emerged and played out in the years following independence. Further, his discussion does not provide much detail on the films produced in the period his book covers, and it only focuses on the operations of the ZIS film unit. Lastly, Kerr is silent on how filmmaking and the film sector evolved after 1991, when Zambia returned to liberal political economic policies.

Kerr's analysis, while important and insightful, leaves several gaps, as demonstrated above. Nevertheless, my study uses his work in concert with other relevant data from primary and secondary sources to fill in some of the gaps and answer questions on the development of film in postcolonial Zambia. This thesis partially serves as a much-needed follow-up to Kerr's work. It also combines the undocumented knowledge and experience representing various voices in the film sector over the years.

1.4 Theoretical Framing: Political Economy meets Small Nation Cinema Approach

Film remains an attractive area for scholarship because of its ubiquity and varied societal functions. The study of film has also seen a shift from being an effort only interested in texts or the aesthetics of films, to a broader approach that seeks to interrogate the industrial and cultural conditions within which those films are produced and consumed (Turner, 2006; Kolker, 2006). This thesis primarily subscribes the latter approach of contextual and industrial analysis while still embracing the value of textual analysis.

Undertaking a multifaceted study, such as the one presented in this thesis, requires appropriating different approaches in analysis, theoretical framing and methodology. Film studies has developed as an area where this amalgamation and reapplication of perspectives from other social sciences is possible. It is interesting to observe how some of these theoretical approaches have been applied in the African context, particularly concerning filmmaking, the development of film industries, and the reading of films in the post-colonial nation-state. For instance, Postcolonial theory and the Third Cinema Approaches, as articulated by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino (Solanas & Getino, 1970), Teshome Gabriel (Gabriel, 1982), Patrick Williams & David Murphy (Williams & Murphy, 2007), Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (Shohat & Stam, 2014), and others, are useful in the examination that this thesis undertook. Both are useful in explaining the cinema of post-independence Africa as it grappled with Western hegemonic strangleholds over film.

Without negating Postcolonial Theory and Third Cinema approaches, this thesis assumes that the Zambian experience with filmmaking may have a lot more to it than just its colonial past and its being a Third World country. For instance, Zambia's absence and lack of participation in the continental post-colonial or Third-world film manifestos and movements that amplified African concerns and aspirations for film between 1970 and 1990 are indications that its experience has been somewhat different and thus worth investigating. By acknowledging the vast terrain of theoretical positions to inform such an inquiry, this study appropriated the Political Economy of Film as a theoretical lens to understand how filmmaking has developed in Zambia.

The Political Economy of Film is an extension of Political Economy of Communication or Media. According to key proponent Janet Wasko (2003: 221), it assumes that film is a "form

of mediated communication" and can be studied using the same approaches used in the application of political economy in communication and media. Vincent Mosco defines Political Economy of Communication as "the study of the social relations, particularly power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources" (Mosco, 1996). For McQuail & Deuze (2020), it "focuses primarily on the relation between the economic structure and dynamics of the media industries and ideological content of media." Media institutions, or in this case, the film industry, are part of an economic system closely related to the political system. The ideas of political economic theory continue to change over years of scholarship, and there remains room for a more widened and renewed approach to its application and understanding (Mansell, 2004).

Political economy, as applied in this study, has developed from the work of scholars such as Wasko (2003), Mosco (2009) and Pendakur (1990), who combined elements of Marxist political economy with media and communications research methodologies such as textual, reception or audience analysis. Mosco (1996) describes four fundamental characteristics of political economy to which this study subscribes. Firstly, it looks at the importance of history even as it makes a case for change. Secondly, it is holistic as it considers totality, going beyond mere economic analysis and considering elements such as social and power relations. Thirdly, it emphasises moral philosophy, like classical theorists, discussing and tackling policy problems and moral issues such as equity and justice (Golding & Murdock, 1991). Fourthly, its orientation is towards actual social change and practice. According to (Wasko, 2005), these four facets of political economy set the foundation for appropriating political economy to study communications, media, and film.

In applying political economy to film studies, Wasko (2005) suggests that film is a special commodity in a capitalist economy because it is an art from, a communications medium and an ideological tool. She argues that processes related to film, such as production, distribution and exhibition, all take place under market (economic) conditions that affect the types of films that are made, who makes them, and how they reach the public. While political economy would ideally look at aspects of market structure and performance, the Political Economy of Film sees these and other elements as part of a larger communication and media system and a broader social context (Wasko, 2005: 10,11).

Political economic analysis is relevant because it not only allows for an examination of film within an entire social, economic, and political context, but also provides a basis for a critique of its contribution to the maintaining and reproduction of the structures of power (Wasko, 2005: 1). For Wasko, a political economic approach in film studies is justified because film is a form of mediated communication much like other forms of media. In this understanding, assertions that political economy (in communication) solely focuses on the economic or production side and is only concerned with ownership and control are taken to be misconceptions.

The political economic approach has not widely been used in African film scholarship. Nevertheless, recent studies, such as those by Astrid Treffry-Goatley (2010) for South Africa, Mona Mwakalinga (2013) for Tanzania, Edwin Nyutho (2015) for Kenya and Oswelled Ureke (2016) for Zimbabwe, are examples of how the approach has gained some import and can complement the more popular textual and cultural studies approaches. These and several more studies show how the Political Economy of Film approach is useful in highlighting and examining the political and ideological implications of existing economic arrangements within which a film sector operates. The approach also acknowledges the uneven distribution of power within the film sector, particularly with the dominance of Western, primarily Hollywood, products supported by a functioning system, availability of resources, skilled workforce and markets. This is a crucial factor to acknowledge in the study of a post-colonial, Third World film industries.

For this study, Political Economy of Film was expressly employed to inform the analysis of how policies, ownership and particular institutions (or lack thereof) have influenced filmmaking and the films produced. This analysis was valuable for the Zambian context, where for most of the country's history, aspects such as ownership and film practice have been controlled by the government of the day. Additionally, the approach informed the analysis of the strategies the Zambian government and the film sector implemented to deal with the ubiquity of Hollywood's or Western power over film (Pendakur, 1990). The struggles of filmmaking in African countries such as Zambia can be viewed from the structural challenges that the capitalist mode of production has brought, given that cultural production and distribution is tailored towards a market and profit-oriented goal in such a system.

Having identified the political economy of film as the study's theoretical underpinning, it became crucial to determine how the political economic analysis would be done. This is a critical decision because there is no single way of conducting this activity. To achieve this and with the study's objectives in mind, I adopted the 'Small Nation Cinema Approach' as the analytical framework elucidated by Mette Hjort and Duncan Petrie (2007). This approach, I argue, is useful in examining film sectors from the 'remaining' countries (Falicov & Middents, 2012).

In the book *The Cinema of Small Nations*, (Hjort & Petrie, 2007) argue that the concept of the *small nation*, as a tool of analysis in the context of film studies, can "shed light on at least some of the ways in which subnational, national, international, transnational, and global forces dovetail and compete in the sphere of the cinema (2007: 2)." Hjort and Petrie (2007) operationalise their conception of *'small'* to be more than the global geographical classification of the small nations related to size. Instead, they establish four criteria for what may constitute a small nation in this approach: population size; the geographical size of the nation; the nation's gross national product (GNP); and a history of subjugation to another nation. The approach uses size, in this case 'smallness', to also imply the need for change that can lead to growth. Therefore, while a country may not fit into the size-only definition of small nationhood, it may share some of the other facets included in this approach and could thus benefit from its application as an analytical tool. For instance, Hjort and Petrie (2007: 7) argue that this is particularly true for countries with a low GNP and those with a history of subjugation. Following this understanding, a further justification for this analytical framework lies in the prospect of finding strength or new opportunities despite being in a position of disadvantage.

More importantly, the approach posits four analytical loci of examination. Considered in this analysis are the following: (a) information about institutional parameters governing cinematic production in the country's context; (b) identification of the persistent challenges faced by filmmakers in that context; (c) an assessment of the impact of any solutions to the identified challenges that might have been explored over the years; and (d) key cinematic texts or tendencies, and other features relating to their production within the constraints and opportunities that the given nation affords.

Most literature on African Cinema has concentrated on cinemas from the continent's more established cinemas. For instance, many papers discussing English-language films or film industries in Africa consider the cinema from Nigeria, South Africa and Ghana, among a few. The cinemas of these countries have also garnered the most interest from Western scholars who, in addition to the African academics, continue to add to this body of work. While there is a shared optimism about the future of African film, it is apparent that a look at the 'remaining' cinemas is also necessary. The Small Nation Cinema Approach, though almost absent in much of African cinema studies, does, therefore, provide a possible starting point.

The approach is applied by Jørholt (2007) in her analysis of filmmaking in Burkina Faso. Early in her assessment, Jørholt states that while Burkina Faso may face the same challenges that African film industries have, the country holds a very certain position in African cinema as it is considered a role model for sub-Saharan African cinema. Jørholt (ibid) provides a comprehensive look at the country's film policy and cinematic institutions from independence in 1960. For Burkina Faso, the institutional parameters governing cinematic production in the country are clear – it is one of few African countries that has an active national film policy that has appropriated cinema as a tool for nation-building. Despite several economic challenges over the years, Burkina Faso remains committed to its film industry.

The Small Nations Cinemas Approach and its four critical elements highlighted have provided an analytical frame in line with this study's objectives. This analytical frame allows the study to identify the areas in the film sector that necessitate this transformation and systematically consider the production context at a specific time. This is articulated further in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

It should be emphasised here, as Hjort and Petrie (2007: 7) have stated, that the term 'small nation' is not being projected to be the absolute classification element. The use of size in this sense points to the need for change, which is the case with the Zambia scenario. While Zambia may not be classified as a small nation based on geographical scale, the country does meet two significant criteria that the approach uses: a history of subjection to a ruling nation long enough to become a structural relation (Zambia has had such a relationship with the United Kingdom); and a nation's Gross National Product (GNP) being the indicator of the size of the internal market and military potential (Zambia being a lower-middle income county with an average GNP of USD 3000 between 2007 and 2016 according to (World Bank, 2017) data.

The juxtaposition of Political Economy of Film with the Small Nation Cinema Approach as applied works well when we consider that Zambian filmmaking was tied to the country's politics for a long time, and its development was grossly affected by the nation's economic trajectory. Both approaches acknowledge that the political cannot be separated from the economic. With the combination of the approaches as outlined, the thesis developed a research design that aligned to the aims and objectives of the study. This design is explicated in Chapter Three.

1.5 Situating Film Analysis in the study

Examining Zambian film texts is also timely, considering the absence of Zambian perspectives in conversations on African films. Over the years of African film scholarship, various approaches or theories have been articulated to understand African films. Examples of these include Manthia Diawara's typology of African film narratives - return to the Sources films; colonial confrontation films and social realist films (Diawara, 1992); Férid Boughedir's functional tendencies in African cinema (Boughedir, 2000); or the various articulations on the relationship between African oral culture and film (Tomaselli & Eke, 1995; Tomaselli, Shepperson & Eke, 1995). Despite the wealth of theoretical frameworks applied to African cinema, a critical gap exists in the analysis of Zambian film texts through these lenses. This study aims to fill this void by examining Zambian films from various theoretical perspectives.

The study subscribes to a study of film texts that not only considers content as Boughedir's functional tendencies or Diawara's typology seem to emphasise (Murphy & Williams, 2007), but shall also consider some elements of style and narration. While the films discussed are not exhaustive, those selected offer a valuable sample that will be useful in meeting the study objectives. They differ in style and form, and the focus of the examination varies from the stylistic and narrative elements to the context of production or both.

The selection of films applies the following criteria: (a) films produced for cinematic release or other forms of public viewing, and (b) films that were distributed widely or had a considerable reach, whether within Zambia, abroad, or both. The films have been selected to represent different periods of Zambia's political and economic history. Purposely, three of these periods or epochs have been identified based on the country's overarching political

economic philosophies as determined by governing political parties at a given time. This was done with the acknowledgement that ruling government policies significantly influence political, economic, social and cultural life in Zambia, and perhaps more importantly for this study, how they shape media and cultural policy. It is also important to acknowledge that policies do not always resonate with stakeholders and ordinary people on the ground. Several factors, including contextual ones, often affect the effectiveness of policies. Notwithstanding, political economic policies have a greater potential to influence various sectors of society and culture.

For example, founding President Kenneth Kaunda and his United National Independence Party (UNIP) formulated and pursued a unique brand of African socialism called Zambian Humanism from 1967, which justified state control of industry and single-party rule, among other features up to 1991. Vigorous liberalisation and market reform, structural adjustment, and their consequences characterised the twenty-year rule (1991 to 2011) of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) under presidents Frederick Chiluba, Levy Patrick Mwanawasa and Ruphiah Banda. In 2011, Michael Sata became Zambia's fifth president after running a hugely populist campaign with his Patriotic Front (PF). In countering the MMD, the PF, under Sata and his successor Edgar Lungu, pursued social democratic policies that saw increased social and infrastructure spending and heightened government presence in economic activities.

The epochs have been organised as follows: (a) Filmmaking in the UNIP years (1964 – 1991); (b) Filmmaking under the MMD (1991 – 2011); and Filmmaking in PF years (2011 – 2021). This organisation is meant to help distinguish between the different periods in Zambian film history and see how filmmaking has been influenced by the prevailing political and economic context at a given time. Each epoch will include a discussion on selected texts in varying detail.

For the first epoch, discussed in Chapter 4, the analysis of films will be based on a general assessment of films from that period. Without focusing on a detailed analysis of specific films to represent the entire period, the study will provide a general review of selected texts to help form an understanding of the sector from independence to 1991. This generalised analysis aims to provide an understanding of the narrative and visual elements and techniques that characterised films made in that period. Also, it has proved difficult to select a specific film

from that period that would help meet the study's objectives because many have not been digitised, while many others have gone missing or have been damaged.

These films are important in understanding how Zambian film has evolved over the years. The films will help inform the discussion on how early Zambian films struggled to attract audiences. The films will also be instrumental in showing how policy influenced the productions and how Zambia was represented in the films. They further provide details about the production and textual practices of the period they were made in to help compare with later practices.

After that, the film *Zambia: Birthplace of Freedom Struggle* (1997) by Chola Chifukushi and Patrick Lungu and *Suwi* (2009) by Musola Catherine Kaseketi, will be analysed in Chapters 5 and 7, respectively for the period between 1991 – 2011 when Zambia was under the MMD.

Produced and directed by Chola Chifukushi and Patrick Lungu, the documentary film *Zambia: Birthplace of Freedom Struggle* (1997) tells the story of Zambia's involvement in the regional liberation movements following its independence in 1964. The film describes in detail how the country was drawn into the liberation wars that swept the region up to 1980, mainly focusing on how Zambia provided support for the liberation forces of Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe, and the consequences of this support to Zambia, which came at a considerable cost.

The film was produced by ZIS, a unit of the country's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services to highlight Zambia's role in the region's liberation and bolster Zambia's reputation as a 'beckon of peace' in the region. *Zambia: Birthplace of Freedom Struggle* was selected to show how filmmaking developed in the early years of Zambia's Third Republic (from 1991). The film critically engages with Zambia's post-independence positionality and ingeniously suggests that Zambia's economic downturn was partly caused by its contribution to the liberation struggles. The film also depicts aspects of Zambia's political, social and economic life, in both the period it was produced and the one it represents. These aspects are essential to the study as it endeavours to understand the context of production and how it influences the film texts.

The film *Suwi* (2009), has been selected as it allows the study to explore the productions that signified a resurgence in filmmaking in Zambia during the latter part of the MMD years.

Together with Dominic Chisembele's *The Lawyer* (2008), Jabbes Mvula's *Bad Timing* (2008) and Henry Joe Sakala's *Reflections of Sadness* (2009), Musola Catherine Kaseketi's *Suwi* hails from a class of productions that were representative of the re-emerging film sector. The film tells the story of a young woman named Suwilanji, an intelligent university graduate who struggles to take control of her life after a traffic accident leaves her disabled.

My reading of the film focuses on the narrative to establish it as a didactic film that tackles the subject of disability. The analysis also considers how disability is represented and how various stylistic elements, such as cinematography and editing, are used to complement its representation. I also consider the context of production, highlighting the bi-national interactions in the film's development, production, and development.

Lastly, I analyse the television drama series *Mpali* (2018 -), created and principally directed by Frank Sibbuku. The series is one of the flagship productions on MultiChoice Africa's regional channel, Zambezi Magic, which is part of the media conglomerate's television satellite service, DStv. *Mpali* follows the story of a polygamist farmer named Shadrack Nguzu and his family. The series highlights the everyday struggles of the Nguzu family and their farming business using various soap opera and telenovela codes.

I chose to examine *Mpali* to highlight how central television has been in the development of Zambian cinematic arts. The series was also selected to discuss the impact of MultiChoice's involvement in Zambian filmmaking. In this regard, my examination not only focused on the textual strategies used but highlighted the contextual arrangements around its production. I examine the series' classification as telenovela and a soap opera. As a comparator, this examination is important because it provides insight into the different dynamics that influence production practices and storytelling for content not meant for cinematic viewing (Modisane, 2010).

1.6 Thesis Structure

This thesis has been divided into ten chapters.

Chapter One introduces and provides the context in which this study has been developed. In this chapter, I have outlined, in detail, the problem being investigated, the rationale, and the study's objectives. The chapter also provides the historical background that not only adds to the context of the study but helps justify the need for the study on film and filmmaking in

Zambia. It has further introduced the theoretical lens through which this study was undertaken and has given a synopsis and justification of the analysed film texts.

Chapter Two reviews the literature on selected approaches that have informed the study of African filmmaking and industries. Building on the first chapter, it introduces African cinema as a growing and highly contested sphere of study and discusses how it has been studied. The discussion in this chapter is meant to highlight how these approaches may or may not explain the Zambian experience with filmmaking.

Chapter Three describes the research design and methodological decisions that guided my study. I show how I apply the analytical frame and provide details about the research paradigm in which the study was grounded. A brief discussion is also given on the overall methodology employed and the data collection and sampling methods used in the study. I provide a rationale or justification for these choices. The chapter also details the various ethical considerations made during the study.

The next six chapters consist of the epochal analysis that this thesis adopts, beginning with Chapter Four, which discusses the development of film in Zambia from the country's independence in 1964 to 1991 when the country was under the UNIP and Kenneth Kaunda regime. It details the early years of filmmaking in Zambia, describing the ideological, political, and economic dynamics of Zambia's First and Second Republics and how filmmaking eventually collapsed by the end of the epoch.

Chapter Five is the first of three chapters that examine the development of film and filmmaking in Zambia during the rule of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) from 1991 to 2011. The focus here is to highlight the country's experience with filmmaking following the democratic and economic liberalisation turn in 1991. I deliberate on the policy and regulatory shifts that affected the film sector and highlight some of the developments in the adjacent television broadcasting sector and their influence on the film sector. The chapter concludes with reading Chola Chifukushi and Patrick Lungu's documentary film, *Zambia: Birthplace of Freedom Struggle* (1995).

Chapter Six continues with the examination of filmmaking during the MMD rule. Much of the chapter is centred on the developments in the film sector that occurred during or just before the second half of the 20 years the MMD was in power. This chapter also discusses the development of commercial filmmaking in Zambia. Additionally, the influence of television on filmmaking is further expanded upon, including an exposition of the influence of Muvi Television, the country's first private commercial television station, on the sector. Following this discussion, Chapter Seven gives a contextual and textual analysis of Musola Catherine Keseketi's award-winning film, *Suwi: Faith Beyond Limits* (2009).

Chapter Eight and Chapter Nine address filmmaking in the Patriotic Front government era, from 2011 to 2021. These chapters highlight what I argue to be *a take-off* for Zambian filmmaking. Specific aspects discussed in Chapter Eight include the development and implementation of polices that have impacted the film sector in this epoch, as well as some of the challenges in the sector and the solutions to them. Chapter Nine focuses on the impact of developments in the broadcasting industry on Zambian filmmaking during the PF years. Here, I discuss the impact of emerging digital technologies and that of MultiChoice's Zambezi Magic on Zambian cinematic arts.

Chapter Ten is the concluding chapter of the thesis. Here, I weave together the findings and attendant discussions in the forgoing chapters. The purpose of this discussion is to consolidate the findings of the study in the different epochs examined in relation to its objectives. The chapter also considers this study's implications and highlights its unique contribution to scholarship. Limitations of the study are also highlighted, and I make some propositions on areas that may require further research.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCHING AFRICAN CINEMA: APPROACHES, THEORIES AND CHALLENGES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on selected perspectives and approaches that have informed the study of African filmmaking and film industries. This review is essential as it not only gives an understanding of some of the critical approaches articulated in scholarship but also helps contextualise the relevance of this study on Zambian filmmaking further. The first part of the chapter demonstrates how African cinema is a growing and highly contested sphere of study and discusses some of the different ways it has been explicated. The chapter then discusses some theoretical and textual approaches to film in Africa. The chapter then attempts to locate the Zambian experience within these approaches and to position the study and its relevance further.

Part of the motivation for this chapter is to provide an appreciation of some of the undercurrents and forces that have influenced filmmaking on the continent. With this comprehension, providing a nation-specific examination of the film sector becomes easier, given that a firm contextual foundation is established. The corpus of the literature in the study relates to what has been written about African film. However, no claim of entirety is made in this review as that would be an exercise in futility since the field continues to grow and change, and it remains highly interrogated. This chapter highlights perspectives I surmise relevant to the Zambian case being examined.

2.2 African Cinema and its scholarship

African film has continued to generate significant scholarly interest mostly due to its peculiarities. According to Imruh Bakari (2000: 4), the cultural and political reality of the continent and the films produced have significantly challenged and contradicted established approaches to cinema. Further, African cinema seems to be constantly changing as it is influenced by various forces, expectations, and the impacts of the ever-changing political and media economy (Cham, 1996: 1). Factors such as the lack of a dynamic film culture, the stressed social and economic conditions, as well as Hollywood's continued dominance over

the international film industry, have made African film a source of "contention, anger and frustration" (Bakari, 2000: 4, 5).

The concept of *African Cinema* or *African Film* is contentious for many reasons. These contentions can be observed from recurring questions that plague its study. For example, should African film be limited to African language films? Does it only apply to films produced by black Africans? Furthermore, perhaps more persistent are the debates on whether there is such a thing as authentic African cinema and how the tag 'African cinema' seems to homogenise the markedly different socioeconomic, political and historical contexts in which filmmaking occurs on the continent (Tomaselli, 1993; Murphy, 2000; Tcheuyap, 2011; McGuffie, 2014; Mano, Knorpp and Agina, 2017). Taking this further, Mhando (2000) argues that the 'African cinema' is a Western construct under which African films are labelled in "ethnographic and authenticity constituencies" and its cinema as a manifestation of "defined and bordered cultural homogeneity."

An example of this homogeneity is expressed in how African cinema is represented in scholarly literature. For instance, some of the most widely read volumes on the subject have tended to focus on the films and film industries of one or two regions while taking the 'African cinema' label in their title. For example, Roy Armes' *Filmmaking North and South of the Sahara* (2006) focuses on the cinema of the two regions, spherically looking at filmmaking in Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Chad, all Francophone cinemas. Where South African film is considered, the analysis is limited to comparisons between post-apartheid texts and those produced during apartheid (Armes, 2006: 26, 27). Similarly, Nwachukwu Frank Ukadikes' *Questioning African Cinemas* (2002) only includes interviews with filmmakers from countries north of the equator and only South Africa, from the south.

Also in contention is the history of African cinema. Some scholars, such as Saul and Austen (2010), only date African cinema from the postcolonial era of the twentieth century, while others, such as Jaqueline Maingard (2007) and Martin Botha (2013), when writing about South African cinema, have included films that predate that the independence wave that swept the rest of the continent. For South Africa, many early films are often dismissed or excluded from mainstream African film scholarship, mostly for their ties to apartheid and white-centred narratives (Armes, 2006: 26; Bisschoff, 2009: 448).

Austen and Saul (2010: 2) further distinguish between what they call "FESPACO Films" and the Nollywood style video films. The FESPACO films are named after the Pan African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (*Le Festival panafricain du cinéma et de la télévision de Ouagadougou*) that featured art films mostly shot on 35mm film and in the French language. Lizelle Bisschoff (2009), McCain (2011) and others have highlighted how films shot on video, predominantly Anglophone films, were often in the fringes of the festival in the 1980s and 1990s. This further created a gap in the conception and understanding of African cinema.

With these and other distinctions, Ukadike (2002: xviii) argues that African cinema is today "characterised by aesthetic and ideological diversity, and it maintains a vital cultural agenda despite its various challenges." Further, it remains in a space that continues to undergo constant and sweeping transformations. The perspectives I have presented on African cinema are merely a foretaste of the many debates that characterize its scholarship. While others subside and some are sustained, new ones also emerge and influence how film in Africa is understood and appreciated. Notwithstanding the different perspectives, what is visible in whatever conception of the term, African cinema is a diversity of the films, their modes of production and the context in which these films are produced. This speaks to the "plurality" of what is African "cinemas" (McGuffie, 2014; Mano, Knorpp & Agina, 2017). Because of this plurality, scholars such as Mano, Knorpp & Agina (2017), McGuffie (2014) and Wilmink (2014), agree that the term African Cinema or, indeed African film must be further elucidated. As Mano et al. (2017: 6, 7) argue, there exists differences in the stylistic choices, which are influenced by factors that could be social, economic, political and cultural.

The arguments above must not be taken to imply a call for the negation of the well-established Africa-centric frameworks in favour of the national perspectives. Even the national approaches could be even more complex as seen in Nigeria where there is further in-country diversity (in language and style) that exists beyond what is often referred to as Nollywood (Esan, 2008; Agba, 2014; Haynes, 2016).

In this thesis, I take a 'unity in diversity' approach that embraces both bottom-up and top-down considerations of film cultures and contexts. Here, the bottom-up approach builds from the in-country specificities, while the top-down starts from the more general continental assessments to the local. This is important because while each country has its assortment of films by individual filmmakers of various backgrounds and with different agendas, the films produced

in Africa are, as Wilmink (2014: 363) observes, “hybrid – postmodern compilations” that incorporate various histories and practices from the national to the regional, and from the continental to the global. Put differently, there is a need to embrace as many approaches as possible because of the multifariousness of what African cinema(s) or film may mean.

The thesis further takes on a position that views the category of African Cinema as playing a descriptive, rather than a prescriptive function. This is because the cinema of a whole continent cannot simply be lumped into one unit, and neither can it follow a foreordained framework that already exists (Murphy, 2000; Ukadike, 2002). And while there seems to be a rush to uncover new ways of theorizing African Cinema with terms such as “trash”, “postcolonial melancholia” or “afropolitanism” to show that modern African cinema has moved on from its early more revolutionary or Afrocentric forms, as noted by Petty (2017: 14), it remains relevant to look at the older pedagogical perspectives that preceded current scholarship on African cinema. These perspectives are helpful in understanding the various historical, ideological and structural factors that have contributed to making African cinema into what it is today.

With the foregoing, I now discuss some of these and a few other perspectives to highlight how they influenced African filmmaking and film cultures.

2.2.1 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is a multidimensional approach that is a concatenation of various perspectives and approaches from both the humanities and social sciences. In *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2006) highlight the complexity and multidimensionality of postcolonial theory and argue that the concept of postcolonial is neither seamless nor homogeneous.

The theory is concerned with understanding postcolonialism, examining the effects of colonialism and the responses to those effects in societies that were once under colonial rule. Various disciplines have informed postcolonial theory. Though the term ‘postcolonial’ has already been used for longer, it is widely accepted that Edward Saïd’s book *Orientalism* (1978) was seminal in establishing postcolonial theory as it is known today. This work was instrumental in illuminating the varied representational challenges that characterised Western

views of the non-western, colonised other, strengthened by the West's hegemony and power over these societies (Hayward, 2000; Ponzanesi & Waller, 2012).

Postcolonial theory's relation to film studies is tied to its interest in these elements of representation and postcolonial life, and how elements such as mediation and power relations shape them (Ponzanesi, 2018). Frantz Fanon's work in the 1950s and 1960s formed the antecedent of this argument in postcolonial theory. Hayward (2000: 268) argues that Fanon (in *The Wretched of the Earth,* 1968), believed that once independence had been achieved, the native poet (or artist and educated intellectual) had the duty to revive the history, tradition and signification bleached out by colonialism and help bring his people to a national consciousness, anew. Therefore, postcolonial theory focused on uncovering how art forms such as film continually contribute to the hegemonic Western point of view, eventually challenging and deconstructing these notions. This need for 'a fresh look' at the 'other' or 'orient' (Africa) spurred early African filmmakers.

African cinema, or sub-Saharan African cinema effectively emerged alongside (and perhaps as a result of) the independence wave that swept the continent beginning in the late 1950s. As many of the newly independent states were charting the course for their countries and asserting their national identity, it became clear that cultural production would play a significant role in the process. Filmmaking, an activity inherited from the colonial regimes, would be reorganized and reoriented to the people's service to affirm the newly found independence. It had been acknowledged that colonialism had significantly suppressed indigenous culture and cultural expression in favour of the dominant European versions that were thrust upon the people. Film was one of the tools used for this purpose (Maingard, 2007; Williams & Murphy, 2007; Ponzanesi & Waller, 2012; Modisane, 2013). The 1960s hence marked a significant period for African filmmaking when many of the now independent states ventured to support filmmakers whose films echoed the decolonisation wave on the continent and sought to counter the long-held Eurocentric representations of Africa (Murphy, 2000; Saul & Austen, 2010).

Several African cinema scholars have observed the influence of postcolonial thought on early African cinema cinema (Tcheuyap, 2011; Murphy, 2000; Ukadike, 1994; Diawara, 1991; etc). Tcheuyap (2011: 13), for instance, notes that due to Fanonian influence, early films in postcolonial Africa were associated with nation formation. 'Nation formation films' took a revisionist stance on representation that was intended to achieve social transformation and

political action. This view of the role of cinema was further expressed in the various manifestos that were formulated by postcolonial filmmakers on the continent and around the world (MacKenzie, 2014). For example, the Algiers Charter on African Cinema (1975), put together by the Pan African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI) (founded in 1969), called for a rejection of Western codes and points of view and for African filmmakers to see themselves as **artists in service of their people.**

2.2.2 Third Cinema

Postcolonial thought is also credited as the foundation of the radical and revolutionary filmmaking and theoretical approach known as 'Third Cinema'. Tomaselli and Eke (1995: 114) define it as the "cinema of resistance to imperialism and oppression, a cinema of emancipation" that "articulates the codes of an essentially First World technology into indigenous aesthetics and mythologies." The term was conceived and first used by Argentine filmmakers and critical thinkers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, and has been elaborated on by many more scholars over the years.

The first wave of the Third Cinema approach, articulated mainly by Solanas and Getino (1970) in the 1960s and early 1970s, bemoaned the power that Hollywood possessed that seemed to erode the national modes of cinema in Latin America (and the Third World). In Third Cinema postulation, the First Cinema was understood to be Hollywood's globally dominant commercial cinema, and Second Cinema was the more auteurist or bourgeois cinema (Tomaselli and Eke, 1995; Wayne, 2001; Sarkar, 2008). It, therefore, called for an alternative cinema that not only subverted Hollywood (or the system) but was more effective and revolutionary than the Second (artistic) Cinema (Solanas and Getino, 1997: 42, 43). Third Cinema came to represent a form of an interposition to the status quo that, according to Sarkar (2008: 129), helped create the opposing dichotomies. For example, rather than a cinema that valued entertainment, Third Cinema films emphasised education; rather than films that passively maintained and complied with Western film approaches, Third Cinema films enthusiastically stood for the struggle to challenge the status quo.

In Africa, Third Cinema was the philosophy behind several critical African films that expressed and stood on the belief that Africans had the right to represent themselves (to themselves and others) in a way that differs from the stereotypical images that permeated Western views of the continent and its peoples (Maingard, 1995; Tomaselli & Eke, 1995). Third Cinema filmmakers

were to take advantage of and appropriate Western technologies, including cinema itself, not to maintain storytelling that followed the cinematic codes, thematic interests and practices of Hollywood or Western cinema. They were also to serve "African themes, stories, forms of oral storytelling, and cultural expression (Tomaselli and Eke, 1995: 115)." (See also Murphey, 2009: 240-241). An example of a Third Cinema film is Ousmane Sembene's *Xala (1974)*. According to Murphy (2000) and Tcheuyap (2011), the film (*Xala)* showed how the neo-colonial bourgeoisie and political elites in independent Senegal (and Africa), despite much euphoric promise, were an impotent class.

In what Wayne (2001: 6) calls its second wave of interest in the 1980s, and as articulated by scholars such as Gabriel (1982) and Pines and Willemen (1989), Third Cinema scholarship in Africa took on a less Marxist tone. Part of the focus was still critical of Western modes of narration and analysis. Western critical models were seen to be inappropriate in the criticism of Third World films because there were significant differences, such as the use of time and space, the value of community, the definition of the hero, and the use of various shots and camera movements in the actual films (Shaka, 2004: 81, 82).

By the late 1980s and into the 1990s, it was clear that many of the aspirations of the proponents of Third Cinema would not be attained. Third Cinema films could not maintain audience interest, and there was no rousing demand for the films made at this time. Solanas and Getino (2014) argued years earlier that without a public that asks for these films, attempts to have new ways of distribution would fail. Besides the lack of interest, political and economic factors were also at play. For example, there was a significant reduction in ideological and postcolonial connotations in the films and in their scholarship (Orlando, 2017). Scholars also grew interested in engaging more with the film texts and developing new ways of viewing African films. At the same time, filmmaking was undergoing a massive shift towards cheaper and more accessible video technologies. Lastly, filmmakers were becoming more critical of their governments and targeting their political messaging from the West to African leaders amid massive economic and political upheavals. Third Cinema approaches remained a symbol of an era that was now in the past.

2.2.3 Textual Approaches: typologies, tendencies and cultural readings

In addition to the more theoretical discourses discussed above, African film has also been thoroughly examined in textual terms. Various analytical lenses meant to create an understanding of the films and their narrative construction exist. These approaches, though

interested in the filmic texts, are in varying ways shaped by the context in which the films are produced. Different scholars have approached the reading of African film texts in different ways. One of the fundamental thrusts for such scholarship was to establish non-Western perspectives on the study of African film. Film studies has been modelled on Western ideological and theoretical frameworks and industry practices, many of which did not speak to the African film aesthetic.

Ferid Boughedir was one of the earliest critics and scholars to provide an aesthetic reading of African films. In *The Principal Tendencies of African Cinema* (1982: 74), Boughedir advanced a classification system based on his analysis of the texts and "according to the theoretical positions of their auteurs and their effect on the public . . . their ultimate function." A total of six tendencies were identified. Stephen Zacks (1995: 8) summarizes them as follows:

> "[T]he *"political tendency"* is a consciousness raising exercise designed to mobilize the people in common resistance; the *"moralist tendency"* represents a shortsighted political analysis that individualizes the problems of African society; the *"commercial tendency"* attempts to entertain by selling emotions; the *"cultural tendency"* reevaluates contemporary African culture in relation to folk traditions; the *"self-expression"* tendency expresses the personal views of an alienated author; and the *"narcissistic intellectual"* tendency, a subcategory of the previous one, is characterized by the naive idealization of traditional African culture and perpetuation of myths about Africa."

Even though Boughedir re-envisioned the tendencies in later work, his framework was an essential contribution to growing African film scholarship and, in a way, helped lay a foundation for a venture into a deeper analysis of the texts and a broader understanding of the African aesthetic.

Another textual classification framework based on a critical reading of African film texts was developed by Teshome Gabriel, whose work on Third Cinema has been highlighted above. In *Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films* (2011: 187-191), Gabriel provided a "genealogy of Third World film culture" in three phases. According to Gabriel (ibid.: 188), the first phase included films whose images mimicked Western tropes and were based on formal

Hollywood style and aesthetics. These escapist films, produced for entertainment and adventure, were critiqued for alienating African audiences.

The second phase, called “the remembrance phase”, involved the “indigenization” of the industry with more African control of the processes of filmmaking, including production, exhibition and distribution (ibid.: 189). Thematically, Gabriel noted that films in this phase were about the “return of the exile to the Third World's source of strength.” These featured a renewed and romanticized interest in African culture, values, traditional practices and history, and often depicted various iterations of the clash between traditional versus modern values or rural versus urban life.

In the third phase, or what Gabriel calls “the combative phase,” filmmaking is seen as a public service institution involving ordinary people and their lives and struggles, which are central themes in the films (ibid.: 189). Stylistically, these films take on ideological points of view rather than a single character’s view. Flashbacks are also used to tell stories effectively. Despite the well-elaborated phases, Gabriel interestingly observes some grey areas on all the phases and suggests that the phases are not mutually exclusive.

Another important body of work that provided a reading of African films was Manthia Diawara’s *African Cinema* (1992). This volume examines African films from a historical and contextual perspective. Diawara approached filmmaking and film cultures in more specific terms, considering their respective realities and experiences. In the book’s final chapter, "African Cinema Today", Diawara argues that African films could be placed in three thematic groups. Diawara’s three typologies are congruent to Gabriel's phases. These three are: the social realist tendency, the return to the source tendency, and the colonial confrontation tendency.

The social realist tendency includes films that derive their stories from and depict the everyday experiences of ordinary people, drawing on the popular, and using music, romance, and comedy (Diawara, 1992; Zacks, 1995). In this typology, Diawara effectively contends that popular culture does exist and works in Africa. In the “return to source” tendency, similar to Gabriel's "remembrance phase", films lean towards taking a relook at precolonial African life. Diawara noted that at the core, these films sought “to prove the existence of a dynamic African history and culture before the European colonization (1992: 160).” And in the third tendency, the “colonial confrontation” films, Africa’s clash with colonial and neo-colonial hegemony is

a central theme. In many ways, Diawara's "colonial confrontation" typology can be likened to Gabriel's "combative phase,". "For Diawara, films in this category deal with the redefinition of African history from an African point of view, of liberation from colonial cultural influences and the reassertion of the place of Africans in global history" (Nanbigne, 2012: 39).

These typologies have been criticized for, among other things being essentialist (Zacks, 1995: 13; Tcheuyap, 2011: 17). In later work, Diawara (2000: 81) acknowledges the difficulty that exists in establishing what constitutes an authentic or African film language due to the many differences, peculiarities and contradictions all existing in the varying political and economic cultures. Tomaselli (1993) acknowledges Diawara's contribution but is also critical of the typologies regarding their relevance to the South African experience with filmue to that country's peculiar experience with colonization and decolonization (Tomaselli, 1993). Tomaselli's reading of African films takes a rather different approach that departs from the categorizations to instead focus on the concept of orality (Tomaselli & Eke, 1995; Tomaselli, Shepperson & Eke, 1995).

Part of what makes the orality approach intriguing in African film scholarship is that it does not struggle to find application and suitability to the African context as do the many First World, Marxist or any other theories and methodologies that do not necessarily provide an understanding of African films and audiences (Tomaselli and Eke, 1995; Tomaselli, Shepperson and Eke, 1995). These approaches, methods and theories fail to acknowledge the difference between traditionally written cultures, and traditionally and historically oral cultures, and are therefore not able to account for the way Africans interpret or use the medium of film.

Tomaselli, Shepperson and Eke (1995) re-emphasise the role of filmmakers as griots or bards whose role is to tell African stories and to "recover and preserve" what modernisation took away and alienated the present generation (Tomaselli et al., 1995: 23). In this view, there is a belief that that storytelling techniques of narration in African film influence the filmmakers. African filmmakers have thus assumed the function of "recoding and articulating African philosophies", and how they perform this function is determined by factors that could be social, artistic, economic, or ideological (ibid., 1995: 32). They take on the varied roles of griots/bards, roles that include social critics, historians, bards and seers; critics of the present, re-examining

and reconstructing the past to understand the present; and transmitting cultures and histories from one generation to another.

However, scholars such as Murphy (2000), dismiss the citing of oral tradition as the sole determining factor in the African films. Murphy (2000: 244, 245) suggests that it is wrong to assume that African cinema audiences can only understand films if they followed structures within oral tradition. This critique notwithstanding, the orality approach remains helpful in many regards, including its conceptions of the peculiar role of the filmmaker in the modern age. A better reading of African films can be made upon understanding this peculiarity about African filmmakers and their assumed role. African texts, read with this understanding, further challenge the usefulness of some Western screen theories to African films.

Another common tendency in African film worth noting and based on critical readings of African film texts is what Martin Mhando (2000) called the "pedagogic imperatives". Mhando traces this practice to the colonial films produced to educate Africans on various things to bring them to modernity and maintain the hegemonic status quo (see Smyth, 1983; Hungwe, 1991). This pedagogic code is reflected in African films in a way that brings together ideology and style. Tied to this tendency is the use of documentary film, which, as stated in Chapter 1, is part of African film's colonial legacy.

Following the independence wave of the 1950s and 1960s, African-produced documentaries were committed to challenging the narratives that most Western documentaries about the continent had, both during and after colonialism. In Anglophone Africa, the documentary tradition continued to be strong partly due to the influence of the Colonial Film Units in the former colonies (Maingard, 1995). Pedagogical attributes from the colonial era have been maintained in contemporary documentary practice within African film. In this sense, the filmmaker assumes a "position of power as teacher and informed storyteller" to encourage "responses from audiences" (Mhando, 2000).

The tendency by African filmmakers to include some form of social messaging in their productions has been enduring over the decades. This chapter has shown how this didactic leaning in storytelling has been implemented in both colonial and post-independence settings. According to Rachael Diang'a (2016), emphasising the message at the expense of filmic codes

has often left these films lacking entertainment value. Diang'a argues that three main factors have contributed to the persistence of this approach to filmmaking.

Firstly, she argues that the interaction of film with African oral history and traditions has seen the medium morph into one where the art form takes on an entertainment and socio-educational role. Diang'a argues that Diawara's "return to source" tendency, discussed above, is rooted in this duality. Here, contemporary filmmakers feel the need to return to pre-colonial approaches to storytelling that embraced oral traditions, were free of overtly political propositions, and whose role was to encourage the adoption of positive social morals (2016: 7).

Secondly, Diang'a (2016) avers that the proclivity for message films is linked to Africa's colonial contact when film was introduced for predominantly didactive purposes. From the short-lived Bantu Educational Kinema Experiment (BEKE) to the Colonial Film Unit (CFU) and its regional off-shoots, film was used ostensibly to enlighten the African. In the latter case, films were loaded with information (and propaganda)eant to 'teach the African into modern society' (Smyth, 1983; Burns, 2002; Modisane, 2013; Reynolds, 2015). This practice continued even after the independence wave of the 1950s and 1960s. The new African governments supported "didactic entertainment" and filmmaking that was "socially committed" (Diang'a: 2016: 5). According to Christine Giraud (2008), colonial governments in countries such as Ghana, Kenya and Burkina Faso, "saw film as a way to enlighten and educate the people and as a way to explain policies".

Lastly, Diang'a contends that the emergence of alternative cinema culture in many post-colonial settings - such as Third Cinema (Solanas & Getino, 1970, 2021) or Imperfect cinema (Espinosa, 1979, 2019) - further influenced the didactic mode. In Africa, the impact of these movements led to an approach to filmmaking that focussed on countering the images that colonialists and Western media established about Africa to the world and to Africans themselves. Film was used to correct these distorted representations by, among other things, placing emphasis on African historical figures and events, and allowing African viewers to see themselves differently.

In this thesis, I will show how this didactic tendency has been experienced in Zambian filmmaking in the various periods of the country's history. I will also highlight how the tendency is applied across different types of films and the consequence of this approach in these epochs.

2.3 Informal Economies of Film Production

So far, this literature review has focused on some of the grander perspectives that have been used to analyse African cinema. In this section, I would like to highlight, in brief, three recent studies or analyses whose insights I found helpful in my study concerning shadow or informal economies of film production. The works of Roman Lobato (2012), Oswelled Ureke (2018) and Haseenah Ebrahim (2020) provide noteworthy analysis and observations that were also recognisable in my study.

Ramon Lobato's elucidation of the concept of shadow economies of cinema in the eponymous volume *Shadow Economies of Cinema* (2012) is an essential contribution to the study of cinemas that are not based on the Hollywood system. This text discusses how movies are across the globe are accessed, focusing on the informal and sometimes not-so-legal systems in the shadow economies (Lobato, 2012). According to Lobato (2012: 40), the shadow economy refers to "economic production and exchange occurring within capitalist economies but outside the purview of the state" and it is "a space of *unmeasured, untaxed* and *unregulated* economic activity".

Lobato argues that it is important to look at the informal systems of film access because the traditional formalised systems such as theatrical releases are not always the focal point of cinema culture around the world. Among the examples of shadow economies, Lobato examines Nollywood and demonstrates how it (Nollywood) was built on pirate networks in to reach the scale it did. Key to my study is how Lobato highlights the tug of war between formality and informality as film industries grow. I will seek to highlight the workings of the shadow economy of Zambian filmmaking and discuss some of its idiosyncrasies, including the lack of quantifiable data on distribution, sales and other processes within the sector. Aspects of this conflict between the formal and informal as experienced in Zambia will be highlighted in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

In the article *'Introducing the 'drasofi': A genre of convenience and context in Zimbabwean film production'*, Oswelled Ureke (2018) proposes the existence of what he calls the 'drasafi' genre, a contemporary type of video film production in Zimbabwe that combines aesthetic patterns of drama soap opera and film production. Ureke posits that the emergent genre,

‘drasofi’ (drama–soapie–film), is one of convenience that has arisen because of the social, economic and political context that obtains in contemporary Zimbabwe (Ureke, 2018). Ureke’s work focuses on context and seeks to map out the capacity and capabilities of the film industry. The author demonstrates how the ‘drasofi’ genre is comparable to the Nollywood films and that video films in this genre are part of a shadow film economy (drawing from Lobato) whose services borrow significantly from television and theatre in Zimbabwe.

Ureke undertakes a political economic analysis of the Zimbabwean film industry and applies the film services approach, (Goldsmith and O’Regan, 2005) to argue that the emergence of the ‘drasofi’ films, whether good or bad, reflects the context (the organizational arrangements networks and technological infrastructure that support production) in which they are produced. Building on earlier work on Zimbabwean filmmaking by scholars such as K.N. Hungwe and Nyasha Mboti (Hungwe, 2005; Mboti, 2016), Ureke argues that the nature of the film services that obtain within a cinema economy (cinematic fact) influences the content (filmic fact

Ureke’s study highlights some of the contextual challenges within the Zimbabwean filmmaking industry. My interest in Ureke’s work is primarily grounded in Zambia and Zimbabwe's shared film history from the colonial period. The film sectors of the two countries were only effectively decoupled in 1965 following Ian Smith’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) for Rhodesia. Drawing from Ureke’s research, I seek to determine whether we can observe the ‘drasofi’ genre in Zambian filmmaking and highlight some fundamental observations about the Zambian version of the video films.

The third body of work I consider in this section is Ebrahim’s article ‘*Cinematic Sidestreams: A Political Economy of Small Cinemas in South Africa* (2020). In this paper, Ebrahim presents a critical political economy of “small cinemas” in South Africa that deviates from the majority of existing scholarship of the country’s film industry that is focused on the highly formalised and well-established production and distribution system.

Ebrahim (2020: 23) reconceptualises ‘small cinema’ as it is articulated in Hjort’s (2005) and Hjort and Petrie’s (2007) Small Nation Cinema Approach to instead include sub-national or “ethnic” cinema within a country’s local context. Ebrahim argues that this localised small cinema phenomenon has been absent from scholarship even when it is ubiquitous within parts of the South African population. With this, Ebrahim suggests that small cinemas that use low-

budget video have emerged in post-apartheid South Africa as side-streams that should be seen as part and parcel of discourse on South African film because they are important sites of cultural expression in the country. These local cinemas are small in scale, have a diverse range of formality, exist at the margins, and appeal and relate to specific ethnolinguistic groups (Ebrahim, 2020: 9-18).

Ebrahim's paper presents an approach to describing the marginal forms of film production in any country. A critical question that then emerges in relation to my study is: how can the side-stream nodes of filmmaking be included in film industry discourse in Zambia? Chapter 6 of this thesis explores this question.

Whether 'drasofi' or 'cinematic side-streams', there is need to examine the extent and experience of the shadow economies of cinema in Zambia. This thesis endeavours to highlight these important aspects.

2.4 Conclusion: Locating the Zambian experience in the literature

The literature and theoretical perspectives discussed in this chapter provide the foundation to address the questions this thesis seeks to answer. There is a need to locate the Zambia experience with filmmaking within these approaches as presented to establish the study and its relevance further. For instance, when we consider the discussion on African Cinema scholarship and the few theoretical and textual approaches presented, it immediately becomes clear that Zambia and Zambian texts have been absent from much of the scholarship. This begs the question, *why?* Interrogating this phenomenon lies at the core of this study. Consequently, it is necessary to determine the extent to which some theoretical and ideological approaches to African film are observed in Zambian filmmaking. Further, it is imperative to appreciate the philosophical or ideological underpinnings that have guided filmmaking in the various epochs and how they relate to regional or continental experiences, as captured in the literature.

In this thesis, I endeavour to show that Zambia's immediate enigmatic economic position after independence placed the cinematic arts at the tail-end of state interest. I shall also argue that the lack an official policy on film, despite various pronouncements, negatively impacted the development of the film sector.

This thesis also highlights how Zambian filmmaking has interacted with the audio-visual sectors from South Africa and Nigeria. For instance, I will highlight how the South African

industry has influenced Zambian filmmakers. For instance, I highlight the impact of the South African media corporation Multichoice, and the replication of the South African soap opera tendencies in Zambian productions. The spread of South African film and television products into Zambia also helped tip the consumption of cinematic arts from the dominant Western entertainment content to the African content from South Africa. Further, as it has been demonstrated, a discussion about Nollywood is germane to the Zambian case this thesis examines. Zambia is one of the many countries these films have left their mark. The thesis will intermittently discuss the influence of the Nigerian mode of production on Zambian filmmaking. This discussion will consider some crucial elements raised here relating to Nollywood and shadow economies.

The country-specific discussions presented in this chapter show that political and economic factors are often at play in African film industries, however different they are. This is because the post-colonial African experience with film is linked to its colonial past and the post-independence political and socioeconomic arrangements in respective countries. Whether it be for the overtly militant and ideological Third Cinema, or the apolitical video films of the 1990s and beyond, or indeed those that fall in between, prevailing political economic realities have consistently influenced the context of filmmaking, distribution and consumption.

This Chapter reviewed literature on selected perspectives and approaches that have informed the study of African filmmaking and industries. The chapter first problematised African Cinema as a contested arena, highlighting how these contestations emerged. The chapter then identified and discussed some essential theoretical (and ideological) and textual approaches to African film that are significant to the present study. The overall motivation for this chapter was to provide an understanding of factors that have shaped filmmaking and film scholarship on the continent to better contextualize and examine filmmaking in Zambian over the years.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the research design employed for this study and its philosophical and methodological construction.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

Research is a process of enquiry and discovery. Rubin, Rubin & Haridakis (2010) define research as "an objective, systematic, empirical, and cumulative process by which we seek to solve theoretical and applied problems." When this process is complete, a more profound understanding is expected to be acquired, a discovery or observation is made, a hypothesis or theory is proved or disproven, or a question is answered. The process may also lead to further questions that may lead to further enquiry. In this sense, "scientific evaluation of any problem must follow a sequence of steps to increase the probability that it will produce relevant data" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). This means that researchers should be ready to follow recommended processes to generate the best results.

This chapter describes how the study was conducted. It highlights the decisions made about the procedures and methods of the research and the experiences drawn from the process. In this chapter, I describe the analytical framework, research paradigm, study design and methodology used in the study. I begin by briefly discussing the analytical frame that guided the study. I then discuss the methodological decisions I made in the study, such as the use, rationale and justification for the study's design and the data collection and sampling methods employed. This discussion includes examples of specific experiences while conducting the research. The chapter also includes details on how the data was explicated and analysed.

3.2 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework of a study refers to "a model that helps explain how a certain type of analysis will be conducted" (Pacheco-Vega, 2018). Its purpose is to help the researcher undertake analysis as it provides details on how the various elements of the study will work together. For this study, I adopt the Small Nation Cinema Approach (Hjort and Petrie, 2007) as the analytical framework for applying the Political Economy of Film theory, as articulated in Chapter 1.

My choice of the Small Nation Cinema Approach is meant to provide a systematic path to achieving the political economic examination of the development and state of Zambian filmmaking. In the book *The Cinema of Small Nations,* Mette Hjort and Duncan Petrie suggest that using the *small nation* as an analytical tool in film studies can help create an understanding of how various elements of the film sector fit together and operate within the local and international context. The principal areas of examination in this analytical frame are:

(a) information about institutional parameters governing cinematic production in the country's context;
(b) identification of the persistent challenges faced by filmmakers in that context;
(c) an assessment of the impact of any solutions to the identified challenges that might have been explored over the years;
(d) key cinematic texts or tendencies, and other features relating to their production within the constraints and opportunities that the given nation affords.

I applied these elements to each of the epochs of Zambia's history that my study considers. I then systematically adapted the four analytical points to each period. For instance, for the first epoch I discuss in Chapter 4, the UNIP years (1964 – 1991), the analysis was framed as follows:

a) Establishing what information about Zambia's institutional parameters (policies, guidelines, etc) governing and influencing film production in the country can be identified, employing a political economic perspective, in the UNIP years;
b) Identifying the persistent challenges faced by Zambian filmmakers in this period;
c) Determining how the identified challenges were addressed and what the impact of these solutions on the Zambian film sector in this era was;
d) Identifying and reading key film texts, examining their tendencies and other features relating to their production within the constraints and opportunities of the film sector in the UNIP years.

I aligned the study's objectives to the theoretical framework using this analytical frame. I also used it to determine the most suitable research design and methodology.

3.3 Research Design and Methodology

Denzin and Lincoln (2018: 58) describe a study's research design as an adaptable set of guidelines that "connect theoretical paradigms, first, to strategies of inquiry and, second, to methods for collecting empirical material." In other words, it refers to the overarching strategy or blueprint that a researcher uses to bring together the various components of the study in a structured way to ensure that the overall research questions of the study are addressed. Informed by the constructivist or interpretative paradigm, this research used a qualitative design to guide the study.

Qualitative research, according to John W. Creswell's classic definition, is "an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting" (Creswell, 1994). It is a form of research that is typified by an inductive pathway to the generation of knowledge. Leavy (2017) notes that the fundamental values in qualitative research, among others, include the significance of the participants' subjective views on a phenomenon, and the processes of making meaning and obtaining in-depth understanding. Other than context, embedded in the qualitative approach is the understanding that knowledge is relative by nature and that what we may consider a fact is socially constructed in reality (Coolican, 2009).

For this study, I adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive research helps present a picture of the specific details of a situation or social relationship by focusing on the 'how' and 'who' questions (Neuman, 2007: 16). A descriptive design helps describe phenomena or events for which little or nothing is known about, or those that are beginning to emerge (Dulock, 1993). Using this understanding, I endeavoured to collect data that would describe the state of the film sector, presenting a clear picture of the different epochs identified. In conducting this qualitative study, I adopted a bricolage approach that brings together data from varying sources, much like a quilter. However, instead of putting together different fabrics, I interweave varying standpoints, perspectives and ideas to fashion a whole (Tracy, 2013). I used various qualitative data collection methods to help me knit this data.

3.4 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process of selecting the sample that will be used in a study. Sampling is selecting what cases would be studied to learn more about a phenomenon's larger group of cases (a population) (Payne & Payne, 2004; Neuman, 2014). The selected case or set is called a sample. For a qualitative study such as this one, the sample helps create and extend knowledge and understanding about a population or given group of cases from which the sample is drawn.

In this study, I opted to use purposive sampling and snowballing. Purposive sampling is the process by which a researcher, by their judgement, intentionally selects the parameters of who or what will constitute the sample without any randomisation (Bryman, 2012; Neuman, 2014). Purposive sampling is used to identify specific types of cases to be investigated to gain a greater understanding. As required when using purposive sampling, different methods and criteria were used to identify the interviewees with the study's objectives in mind.

I used purposive sampling to identify the specialized and relevant sources that could speak about Zambian filmmaking or films and provide valuable insights crucial to this study. I also used this sampling method because the sources needed for the study could not be identified from any probability-based sampling method. The required data from those sampled was specific and specialised.

As a qualitative approach, the study does not claim to be exclusively nomothetic (generalizable). However, attempts are made to achieve a level of representation while predominantly remaining ideographic (specific to the Zambian case) and focusing on the desired and appropriate characteristics (Thomae, 1999; Coolican, 2009). Acknowledging these elements was key in determining who would make the sample. For example, because of the nature of the study, specific people involved in the film sector with the necessary experience and knowledge needed to be identified and selected for the interviews. I did this with the knowledge that not every filmmaker could be interviewed and that filmmakers representing different interests and epochs would be ideal for the questions I set for the study.

In addition to purposive sampling, snowball sampling was also used. According to Neuman (2014: 275) snowball sampling, sometimes called network, chain referral, reputational, and respondent-driven sampling, “is a method for sampling the cases in a network” beginning with one or a few cases and spreading to others “based on links to the initial cases.” Snowballing

depends on people's interconnectedness and communities. This interconnectedness could be based on professional, social, or personal interactions. For this study, several identified sources suggested other people who possessed relevant information and were suitable for the study. Snowballing was applied with the sampling plan and the overall study objectives in mind. It was also crucial that the snowball did not skew in favour of one type of filmmaker or industry stakeholder simply because they were recommended.

Sample Population

While this study uses purposive sampling, defining the larger population from which the sample was drawn is critical. This study's population comprises people who have been active in or knowledgeable about the Zambian film sector throughout history. This list includes filmmakers, stakeholders from the industry engaged in various aspects of film production, distribution, and exhibition in Zambia, policymakers or government officials, and researchers since independence in 1964. Also included are the various representatives from arts associations and organizations working with or close to the filmmaking community in Zambia.

3.5 Data Collections Procedures Methods

Different data collection methods suitable for the chosen study design were employed to meet the study's objectives and provide answers to its principal questions. The data collection methods also reflected the analytical framework that guided the study. Both primary and secondary data collection were used. Primary data collection included in-depth interviews and observation, while secondary data involved the analysis of key documents.

3.5.1 Interviews

Interviews are guided conversation with questions and answers or about a theme of mutual interest to the people involved (Tracy, 2013: 131). When used in qualitative studies, interviews allow the researcher to discover something new or obtain new explanations from the conversations. Rubin and Rubin (2005: vii) compare interviews to "night-vision goggles" in reference to how they allow the researcher to find and further investigate a particular phenomenon that would normally not be visible. At the core of the in-depth interview, according to (Seidman, 2006), "is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience."

Key informants or interviewees were purposefully identified. I ensured the selected informants would provide the study with diversity in ideas and experience. Through the interviews, I obtained important insights into the film sector in Zambia. I was careful to ensure that the overall objectives of the study were reflected in preparation for the research interviews. Relevant data that helped answer the study's objectives was gleaned from shared perspectives. The in-depth interviews also allowed for follow-up questions to probe the information that was given in the discussion.

Specific questionnaires were prepared reflecting the categories of sources that were identified. These categories were as follows: (a) filmmakers (directors and producers); (b) academics, film trainers or representatives of training institutions; (c) film or arts associations representatives; (d) broadcasters and cinema houses or distributors; (e) other stakeholders. Interview schedules were prepared to guide the interview process. Specific interviews schedules were developed for the six groups of interviewees. All the interviews were conducted in English at the convenience of the interviewees in three cities: Lusaka, Livingstone, and Kitwe. Twenty-four (24) in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants.

The questionnaires were the primary data collection tool developed to draw a wealth of information from the key informants. The questionnaires mainly consisted of open-ended questions that effectively generated depth and clarity (see Appendix II for the interview questions).

3.5.2 Observation

Observation is a qualitative data collection method "in which the researcher takes field notes and behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site" (Creswell, 2014). It is a technique, widely used in anthropology following the ethnographic tradition and is useful in assisting researchers describe what is visible or invisible in a study setting. The observation approach has increasingly been used to study working practices and workplace dynamics (Stokes, 2013).

I used observation techniques to complement other data collection processes. I spent three days on the set of a Zambian television production, *Mpali* (*Zambezi Magic, 2018 – present*) at the invitation of the series creator, Frank Sibbuku. I obtained insights about the production process

and interacted with various cast and crew members of the production. I took notes and recorded voice notes in the process. This experience on the set helped me to make better linkages to the annotations from the interviews and literature review.

3.5.3 Document Analysis

Documents are a conduit for important messages or information. Their value lies in the circumstances in which they were produced historically, how and to whom they were circulated, how they were received, the purpose they served, how they were interpreted and the effect they had or are associated with (Wharton, 2006; Prior, 2008). According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is a systematic process of reviewing, evaluating, or examining documents. These electronic or printed documents are examined to generate deeper understanding and meaning. In this approach, documents are seen as 'social facts' as they represent a part of society (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011).

Document analysis has several advantages: documents are effective and less time-consuming, they are available (for example, in libraries or on the internet), and they are unobtrusive, non-reactive, and cost-effective. Documents are also stable (they will not change), they are exact (vital details), and they tend to provide broader coverage (Bowen, 2009: 32, 33).

John Scott's criteria (1990: 6), as used by Bryman (2004: 544), was helpful in assessing the quality of the documents I used. For Scoot, four elements need to be considered: a*uthenticity* (having genuine and certain origins), credibility (being free of error and distortion), representativeness (fitting with what obtains typically) and meaning (being clear and comprehensible). Additionally, I adopted a hermeneutic approach to the analysis that seeks to draw out meaning in the text from the standpoint of the author of the text and the specific context in which they were produced (Bryman, 2004: 560).

For this thesis, I reviewed various national, international, and institutional documents and reports as part of the document analysis. The review included various published work in academic journals and the media. I also reviewed selected policies that affected the film sector. For example, the National Cultural Policy, the Digital Migration Policy, and the National Film Policy.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the processes, practices and procedures, such as organising or coding, used by a researcher to process and interpret data to generate an understanding and meaning of the data (McNabb, 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2018). The analysis of data is fundamental to the credibility of any qualitative study. The insights, arguments, positions, and conclusions I make in this thesis are drawn from the trends, patterns, and interpretations made during the data analysis stage of the study.

3.6.1 Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data

Though practised as part of other methods, thematic coding or analysis should also be considered a method, according to Braun & Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis has been used widely despite not having a uniform approach among scholars. For Braun and Clark (2006: 79), thematic analysis refers to a method used to identify, analyse and report patterns within given data, while modestly organizing it and describing it in detail. Admittedly, qualitative research has different ways of performing a thematic analysis. However, each technique, at the basic level, involves breaking down the raw data, categorising it in suitable groups (that may also be further categorised), summarising the observations, and putting it all together again in a way that presents a new understanding of the data (Firmin, 2008).

According to Boyatzis (1998), a theme is "a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon". It identifies something important in the data that relates to a research question and represents a pattern or meaning from the data set (Braun & Clark, 2006). The themes (or subthemes) can be viewed as repeated motifs in the text.

Different techniques helped me identify the themes. Broadly, the themes were guided by the four broad categories in the analytical frame which are:

(a) the institutional parameters governing cinematic production in the country's context;
(b) the persistent challenges faced by filmmakers in that context;
(c) the impact of any solutions to the identified challenges that might have been explored over the years; and
(d) key cinematic texts or tendencies.

In presenting the findings from the interviews, I also considered the view by (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) to identify, among other things, repetitions (recurring topics), metaphors and analogies used by the interviewees and how they are used, transitions and shifts in topics, as well as the similarities and differences in approach to the topic. From this, I was able to create specific thematic sections informed by the analytical framework in the results chapters. For instance, a section discussing the theme "challenges to filmmaking" or another addressing "key developments" has been given for each epoch. The findings of the analysis constitute a significant part of this thesis, spread in an epochal arrangement from Chapters Four to Nine.

3.6.2 Analysis of Film Texts

A textual analysis of the films identified was conducted for the second layer of the study. The analysis aimed to broadly highlight stylistic and narrative tendencies used by Zambian filmmakers in the various epochs examined. This was essential to learning more about Zambian filmmaking, the Zambian films themselves, and the meanings they convey to the viewer. Germane details such as the mode of funding, production and distribution for the selected films are also discussed.

In the study of the film texts selected, caution was given to specific assumptions from film theory in guiding the analysis. Since the study considers both narrative and documentary forms, I was cognizant of the similarities and differences that come with the study of narrative and documentary texts. For instance, aspects such as cinematography, editing, and lighting, among others, can be used to reflect what the film is about or its ideological position for both forms, while aesthetic style can also reinforce the organization of non-narrative films (Stadler & McWilliam, 2009; Bordwell, Thompson & Smith, 2017).

For the narrative form, the analysis focused on the various formal elements of the films and how those elements interacted (Lewis, 2014). In analysing style, Bordwell and Thompson (2012: 306 - 309) suggest four broad questions to help inform the analysis: (i) What is the film's overall form (how is it put together)? (ii) what are the primary techniques (colour, lighting, framing, cutting and sound) being used? (iii) what patterns (repetitions or parallels) are formed by the techniques? (iv) what functions (meaning) do the patterns and techniques fulfil? These questions helped me in my reading of the texts.

Documentaries make for exciting reading based on how they engage with audiences and the world. Nichols (2010: 43, 44) argues that they do this in three ways: firstly, they offer a depiction of the world that is familiar or recognisable; secondly, they can represent the interests of others; and thirdly, they could make a case for specific arguments. Reading documentary films may seem complicated because of the variances in documentary practice. However, Stadler and McWilliam (2009: 190) suggest two essential questions to ask when looking at the different styles, genres or modes of documentary and thus make analysis easier. Firstly, what types of evidence are being used, and how dependable are they? Second, to what extent are the representational techniques deployed in documenting, interpreting, modifying, manipulating or fictionalising the subject matter, and for what purpose?

Documentaries have been a significant part of filmmaking in Africa. For this study on Zambian filmmaking, the importance of documentary filmmaking could not be ignored. It was crucial then that the analysis was also done within the context of existing ideas on African documentary film production. For example, Nwachukwu Frank Ukadike has argued that documentary in Africa interrogates the lived experience on the continent and gives the viewer a glimpse into its people's history, culture and concerns (Ukadike, 2004). In this view, the African documentary represents social issues, cultural values, and politics sensitively and realistically. My detailed analysis of the documentary film *Zambia: Birthplace of the Struggle* (1995) and discussion of other documentaries, albeit brief, considers such views.

In this thesis, my approach to analysing the films is not solely focused on the style or form. Instead, it is also concerned with the production context and the relevance of the text in the given epoch. This reflects the broader scope of the study, for which film analysis is one of the other concerns. Further, while the film analyses sections or chapters may be short, I am careful to ensure that their conciseness does not limit how effective they are to meeting the objectives of this study.

3.7 Research Ethics

At the heart of research is the need for ethical practice. Ethics legitimise the endeavour of research, and they help researchers to delineate what can or cannot be done, what constitutes "moral" research procedure (Neuman, 2007: 48; Payne and Payne, 2004). Concerns about

research ethics are, for the most part, mainly around the issues of harm, consent, privacy, data confidentiality, and honest conduct (Bryman, 2012; Lune & Berg, 2017).

I made sure to follow ethical research practices during this study. My adherence to the ethical principles was informed by a personal belief in doing what is right and doing no harm, as supported by Kantian virtue ethics (Resnik, 2012). I was also guided by the University of Cape Town's Faculty of Humanities' Policy on Research on Human Participants, which demands all ethical considerations be reviewed and approved. As required, I obtained ethical clearance through the Centre for Film and Media Studies and the Faculty of Humanities.

After identifying the initial key informants that would be the participants, I contacted them to request an interview. The requests were made by letter, email or telephone, where applicable. The requests included a summary of the research project and details on what they would expect in the interview. I informed the would-be participants that if they agreed to participate, they could determine the time and place of the interview.

On the interview day, I presented the participants with reasonable and sufficient information about me, my background and my research intentions. This was part of an information package I prepared that included a one-page summary of the study and its goals and a prescribed consent form. The consent form also explained the aim and objectives of the research in a summary with reasonable detail. The form also detailed how the information l provided would be used. It further included details on the risks and benefits of participation and highlighted the rights of the interviewees. The consent form also included a confidentiality agreement that obliged me to treat all confidential information with the highest level of privacy when requested. Though there was a provision for participants to request that their identities be kept confidential, none of them made this request. I also obtained permission from the participants to record the interviews, which they all granted.

As for government documents, I obtained the necessary permissions to access and use them for the study. Additionally, all necessary permissions to access certain information and facilities were obtained with the appropriate officials. Permission was necessary to access the ZIS and National Archives, as they are state property. I made formal requests in writing with my supervisor's official introductory letter. Government officials who helped provide the

documentation emphasised the need for ethical use. For example, ethical and fair use was stressed by officials at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, where I obtained the National Film Policy, since it had not been launched.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has described how the study was conducted. In clear sections, it highlighted the decisions made in the process and provided the rationale for these decisions. This discussion has been presented with the understanding that these procedures or methodologies are necessary for ensuring that the procedures and results of the study are sound and acceptable.

The chapter has also given details about the analytical frame that informed the study, i.e., the use of the Small Nation Cinema Approach (Hjort and Petrie, 2007) to facilitate the application of political economy to the study of film (Wasko, 2005; 2007). This section described how the analytical approach was used to frame the arrangement of the epochal examination of filmmaking in Zambia that was conducted. The chapter has also provided a rationale for using a qualitative design in the study and has highlighted the specific methods used to gather and analyse the data. Further, I have also discussed the ethical considerations that informed the study. They included seeking ethical clearance and committing to ethical practices such as avoiding harm, obtaining consent, respecting privacy and confidentiality, and remaining honest.

The next chapter is the first of six chapters that detail the study's results. The chapter discusses the development of film in the first epoch of the study, which is the period between 1964 and 1991.

CHAPTER 4

FROM NEW NATION TO STAGNATION: FILM AND FILMAKING IN THE UNIP YEARS (1964 – 1991)

"We are frustrated individuals in retirement, we just look at the situation and mourn about the opportunities missed." – Billy Nkunika

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the development of filmmaking in Zambia from the country's independence in 1964 to 1991. The chapter represents the findings of the first of three epochs examined in this thesis. This first epoch considers the 27 years when the country was under President Kenneth Kaunda, and his United National Independence Party (UNIP). This period comprises Zambia's First and Second Republics, from 1964 to 1972, and 1972 to 1991, respectively, so named after crucial changes to the country's constitution.

The chapter is a direct follow-up to the discussion on Zambia's colonial experiences with filmmaking as presented in Chapter 1, as it addresses the question of what happened after independence. It begins with an exposition of Zambia's political and economic situation during this period, capturing relevant moments in the country's political, social, and economic history. I argue that these moments are crucial in understanding the conditions in which the film sector functioned.

Backed by key-informant accounts, document analysis and key literature, I describe the early years of filmmaking in Zambia, including details on some of the aspirational thrusts for film in the country. I further highlight some of the changes, actions and discussions that would stir the film sector in the rest of the 'Kaunda years'. Using the study's analytical frame grounded in the Small Nation Cinema Approach (Hjort and Petrie, 2007), the chapter sets out to provide details about Zambia's institutional parameters (policies, guidelines, etc) that governed, influenced and affected film production in the country during the period under consideration. It also identifies some of the persistent challenges that filmmakers in this period faced and examines how these challenges were addressed, if they were at all. The chapter also includes brief discussions of some of the key film texts from this epoch, analysing some of their textual tendencies and their production contexts. Overall, the chapter shows how Zambia's political,

ideological and economic trajectory in its formative years sealed the fate of the film sector for years to come.

This chapter faces several methodological challenges when researching Zambian filmmaking's early history, particularly after independence. Many archival films from this era were inaccessible or adequately preserved, making a more comprehensive textual analysis difficult. Specifically, ZIS reels were unavailable due to a lack of functioning projectors damaged from water leaks and poor storage. Similarly, ZNBC's available reels were also inaccessible, hindered by limited viewing technology and denied permission. As a result, I rely on secondary sources such as David Kerr's (1998) writings. However, to reduce my reliance on secondary data, I sought to verify the information with primary sources such as interviews with filmmaking veterans from the era, media articles, and available government records. I've also attempted to analyse any footage or clips from this early period that may have been used in later productions. However, as will be shown, the poor state of film preservation in Zambia has led to many reels being irreparably damaged or unusable.

4.2 Political and Economic Context of the First and Second Republic

Zambia's early years were characterised by an exhilaration for self-rule and a spirited quest to establish a national identity. Having just gained independence in October 1964, the new UNIP government led by Kenneth Kaunda was keen on steering the country on a growth path. Even though the country upheld pluralist politics, some in the ruling elite felt that the new nation had inherited a political and economic system that was not suited to its post-independence needs (Pettman, 1974: 231). Despite this and evidence that some of the alliances that had been formed leading to independence were now cracking, the new government was determined to pursue nation-building as an agenda. New government structures, ministries and departments were thus created just as some old ones were realigned in this pursuit.

President Kaunda introduced a new national ideology to change the inherited colonial system and forge a Zambian identity (Idoye, 1988). Kaunda began propagating the philosophy of Zambian Humanism, and by 1967, it decidedly became Zambia's official national ideology. Zambian Humanism was a left-leaning, Christian-themed philosophy that placed man or humanity at the centre of society (Kaunda, 1967). As a socialist idea, Humanism rejected capitalism and its Western values, instead espousing an equitable society with more traditional

African values. The philosophy was articulated in published literature, including volumes such as *Humanism in Zambia and a Guide to its Implementation* (Kaunda, 1967), all of which were widely distributed in the country and taught in schools. Humanism would shape Zambian life beyond the political and economic spheres. William Tordoff (1977: 64) has argued that Zambian Humanism was successful in boosting rural development for a while. It would also influence the affairs and way of life of professionals, the political and military class, and businesspeople.

Post-independence, Zambia's economy underwent various noteworthy adjustments at different times. The country's copper mining activities consistently drove the economy. Olivier (1981: 34) observes that the first few years would see the government pursue an export-oriented economy hugely dependent on copper. Richard Sklar (1974: 321) states Zambia's copper accounted for about 12 per cent of global production. Between 1964 and 1968, copper contributed about 93 per cent of export value.

One of the earliest economic challenges the country faced was the result of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Rhodesia in 1965 by that country's leader, Ian Douglas Smith. The UDI resulted from the disagreement between the Rhodesian and British governments on the terms that would lead to the independence of the former Southern Rhodesia (Anglin, 1994). Britain considered UDI illegal, and the United Nations Security Council imposed economic sanctions on the territory in 1966 and 1968 (Nyamunda, 2016). Only South Africa and, for a while, Portugal (until 1974) would aid Rhodesia.

Zambia was still hugely dependent on Rhodesia for essential supplies and services and the transportation of critical commodities. Aware of the potential impact on the economy, Kaunda was careful in implementing the sanctions but had to support the majority black liberation movement in Rhodesia (Sutcliffe, 1967; Anglin, 1994). In retaliation against Kaunda, the Rhodesian regime acted aggressively against Zambia. The regime cut off railway transportation, which was essential for imports and exports, imposed taxes on key exports, and disrupted petroleum supplies, 90 per cent of which came via Rhodesia (Todoroff, 1975: 323 - 362). The Zambian government found economic alternatives by engaging neighbours such as Angola and Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) for the Benguela Railway and Tanzania for an oil pipeline and later a railway line. The Tanzania Zambia Mafuta (TAZAMA)

Pipelines Limited and the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) were formed from this engagement, respectively, with the assistance of the Chinese government (Mwase, 1987).

The earliest economic reforms, the Mulungushi Reforms, were announced in 1968. Under these reforms, the government began taking significant stakes in companies as a part of what Kaunda called Zambia's Economic Revolution (Kaunda, 1968). From 1969, an additional set of reforms, the Matero Reforms, initiated the partial nationalisation of the country's copper mines and the 'Zambianisation' (having Zambians take over the running) of businesses such as financial institutions. The state committed itself to actively participating in the economy through widespread nationalisation (Kaunda, 1968; Burdette, 1977).

Zambia officially became a one-party state on 13th December 1972 after Kaunda signed the Constitution Amendment Bill, ushering in Zambia's Second Republic. Opposition parties were banned in what was now a one-party participatory democracy under UNIP. Kaunda argued that democracy could still be practised in the one-party system and that the country had an opportunity to depart from the Westminster political model that was a colonial legacy (Olivier, 1981). Kaunda also justified the one-party system to address the growing concerns about sectionalism (tribalism) in the country's political sphere (Molteno, 1974; Wiseman, 1995; Kabemba & Eiseman, 2004; Larmer, 2006). Various writers have observed the decision was made to curtail the consequences of increasing public concern at the government's economic mismanagement, fearing it would affect UNIP's chances in the scheduled elections in 1973 (Tordoff, 1974; Pettman, 1974). Further, Kaunda's successor, President Frederick T.J. Chiluba (1995: 53, argues that the system was imposed to ensure that the "increasingly faction-ridden UNIP" would maintain its hold on power. [1]

Following the transition into the one-party system, the government increased its already high public service spending in social sectors such as health and education, while capital expenditure followed suit. The state also increased subsidies for essential commodities and invested heavily in training and skills development for the population (Grant, 2009; Tordoff, 1980). Private

[1] Vice President of UNIP and Zambia Simon Kapwepwe resigned and left the party to form the United Progressive Party (UPP), a party that threatened Kaunda's popularity in the Bemba speaking regions of the country, including the copper-rich Copperbelt Province. The possibility of a UPP alliance with the Harry Mwaanga Nkumbila's African National Congress (ANC), popular in the Southern and Western Provinces, in the scheduled 1973 general elections was a serious concern for Kaunda and UNIP (see Tordoff, 1974; Lermar, 2006)

enterprises suffered in this period. By 1973, the mines had been completely nationalized. There was heavy state participation in the economy with the highly subsidised parastatals in the marketplace (Grant, 2009).

The cost of the reforms and social investment put pressure on the already strained economy. The sudden decline in copper prices on the global market in the mid-1970s came as an unwanted development for Zambia as the government had gambled their costly development programmes on the proceeds from copper exports. As the copper prices fell, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) announced a sharp hike in the price of oil, setting into motion a global oil crisis. The result was catastrophic for the Zambian economy, which had already begun to face the stark reality of worsening international terms of trade, deepening balance of payment deficits and a weakening currency. By the early 1980s, the value of the Zambian Kwacha had plunged, import levels were significantly low, and manufacturing was operating below capacity due to the shortage of foreign exchange (Burdette, 1977; Chiluba, 1995; Grant, 2009). To continue funding the already bloated public expenditure and uncontrolled government profligacy, the Zambian government turned to debt, plunging the country into a debt crisis that would haunt the economy for years to come (Grant, 2009; Good, 1989).

Various commentators (Sklar, 1974; Olivier, 1981; Grant, 2009; etc) also identify the situation at Zambia's borders as having contributed to the country's economic challenges. Due to the conflicts in countries such as Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia, and South Africa, there was an increase in military spending, in addition to the expenses the country covered in its support for the various liberation movements in the region.

4.3 Mass Media in Independent Zambia

In order to understand the role of mass media in Zambia after independence, it is vital to highlight the continental scenario during the independence wave. After decades of colonial exploitation, African countries attaining self-rule from the late 1950s through to the 1960s were eager to achieve economic and social development for their people. In order to achieve this, governments implemented varied development agendas under broader ideologies. Mass communication means, whether inherited or newly established, were aligned according to these ideas. Generally, the function of mass communication media such as television, radio and film

was to facilitate nation-building and national development. While colonialists espoused the view that the means of mass communication should be used to bring 'the African' to modernisation (Golding, 1974; Fair, 1989), the new African governments saw the mass media as a means to promote economic and social development, as well as facilitate nation-building and mobilisation, while also accentuating a return to African values and culture. The mass media in Zambia developed in this context.

The Zambian government under Kaunda incorporated the various means of mass communication into its developmental agenda. Kenny Makungu (2004: 13) argues that the function of mass communication in Zambia was to "mobilise people for the economic and social development of the country" and to promote Zambian cultural values. However, Makungu (2004) notes that in the long run, the various means of communication were instead used "to promote the interests of the ruling class", especially Kaunda and UNIP.

In the Second Republic, the mass media were now almost entirely owned by the government. Influenced by dependency theories[2], Kaunda embraced the Marxist/Socialist views on the role of the mass media, which was to rally the masses to participate in the developmental activities that the state was implementing and to highlight (praise) state programmes, often seeing criticism as being unproductive for the nations (Makungu, 2004). Service to 'the Party (UNIP) and its government' took precedence for all means of mass communication. B.J Olivier (1981: 34) observes that the government required that "the mass media would help cultivate a spirit of patriotism" in its work.

Film and filmmaking in Zambia's First and Second Republics was organised in this context.

4.4 Filmmaking and the New Nation: ZIS and Early Zambian Filmmaking

Filmmaking and film practice in post-colonial Zambia were primarily maintained within the state system, as was the case in the colonial period. Filmmaking activities were reorganized into the new Zambia Information Services (ZIS), a department in the newly established Ministry of Information and Postal Services (Kasoma: 1990, 46-47; Willings, 1965). ZIS was to provide information to "the last man in the last village" (ZIS, 1966). The department's

[2] As articulated by proponents such as Paul Alexander Baran (1959), Andre Gunder Frank (1969), Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1969) Samir Amin (1976a, 1976b).

function was to inform and educate Zambians on government policies and development programmes. ZIS was also tasked to advance a positive image of Zambia and the government, both in the country and abroad, by highlighting the government's achievements or programmes and Zambia's attractions. Film's primary role in the new nation was to complement the government's development agenda, protect African values, and show the life of Zambians to Zambians (ZIS, 1966; Kerr, 1998). Film was, therefore, a tool in the government's agenda to present Zambia as a sovereign state on the path to development after years of colonial conquest and exploitation. In Ukadike's terms (1995: 85), film was seen as "an emancipatory project" that would contribute to the telling stories by Zambians and for Zambians devoid of colonial biases and misrepresentations for the betterment of the country. Furthermore, because of this role, ZIS was decentralized to extend its operations in all the country's provinces.

The ZIS Film Unit produced 35mm. colour and black and white newsreels for use at cinema halls, while stepped-down 16mm. prints were also made for rural distribution on cinema vans (Willings, 1965). The use of the mobile cinema was central to the process. According to Kasoma (1990: 41, 42), the Zambian government procured Land Rovers and boats for the nation's 52 districts (at the time) to achieve this purpose. The boats would be used for areas with a lakeside. As mandated, ZIS used the mobile cinema fans to provide information to all Zambians. Once in the districts, the cinema vans were the centre of attraction. People would gather in various towns to view the night's features, including a ZIS production and some foreign films. The ZIS mobile cinemas were essentially an upgrade of the Central African Film Unit's set-up (Burns, 2002; Rice, 2010).

In 1965 alone, 22 issues of the flagship ZIS newsreel film, *Focus on Zambia,* were produced and distributed abroad to Zambia's foreign missions and locally to commercial cinemas, colleges, mission stations and welfare halls through the cinema vans (ZIS, 1966: 14). *Focus on Zambia* was produced fortnightly on 35mm. and released in commercial cinemas, and on 16 mm. for the cinema vans. Early screenings were arranged for a limited audience comprising high-ranking provincial or district officials such as Resident Ministers, permanent secretaries, and other prominent people from various sections of society (ZIS, 1966; Kerr, 1998).

Until 1965, Zambian films used to be sent to Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) for processing. This was an expensive venture whose cost worsened following the UDI in Rhodesia. The fallout with Rhodesia affected the *Focus on Zambia's* processing the most because of its two-week release

schedule (Kerr, 1998). According to Jeff Sitali, a former ZIS filmmaker, the Zambian government sent the film reels to London for processing at establishments such as Humphries Laboratories and Kay Film Laboratories (personal interview, 2018 June 19). Film and sound editing were done in Lusaka, while the film processing was completed in London. This process meant that delays in exhibition now and then were inevitable. Duplicate negatives of the newsreel were sent to Visnews, a news agency that distributed newsreel stories to television stations across Africa and the world (Sitali, personal interview, 2018 June 19).

Besides *Focus on Zambia*, another popular ZIS production was its coverage of the Zambia National Dance Troupe performing various dances from different parts of the country. The film's production design mimicked a village setting. The village was meant to represent Zambia (Kerr, 1998: 173). The creation of the National Dance Troupe reflected the government's intention to strengthen national unity through cultural arts in a country with over seventy tribes. According to Kerr (1998), even though this cultural production did not accurately depict village life in Zambia, it was useful in representing the national motto of "One Zambia One Nation" as shown by the coming together of the different dances from different ethnolinguistic groups in the country.

Several ZIS documentary films were also sent and shown in various countries, including the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Canada, and New Zealand. Two films, *This is Zambia* (1965) and *Flight to Adventure* (1965) were used in Zambia's diplomatic missions to market the country. The long-form documentaries (1698 ft. and 2000 ft., respectively) were shot in colour on 35mm. film gauge. Earlier films, *Zambia 64* (1964) and *The Little Boy and the Big Boy* (1964) were reported to have been in high demand at the Zambian High Commission in London, where more and more people wanted to know about the new nation (ZIS, 1966).

In 1967, President Kaunda appointed a Special Committee of Inquiry into Information and Broadcast Services in Zambia. Its purpose was to examine the objectives, organization, administration, and effectiveness of government information and publicity media and make recommendations. The Committee recognized films as effective visual aids for informing, educating and entertaining Zambians, especially among the illiterate (GRZ, 1968: 51). Their investigations found that films distributed through cinema vans to rural areas and diplomatic missions were very popular. While these films were welcome, the committee reported public

criticism that some local films were of poorer quality than preferred foreign films. Audiences also criticized documentaries that "projected personalities" detached from local contexts. Instead, there was a demand for films reflecting Zambia's economic and social development activities or featuring personalities within local contexts (GRZ, 1968: 51).

The inquiry was instrumental in influencing government policy on the role of the audiovisual industry for years to come. The recommendations from the inquiry led to increased investment in new equipment, training more officers in the film and broadcasting sector, prioritising broadcasting, and drawing up content standards for audio-visual work (ibid. 1968). Notably, the inquiry informed the government's position on the mass media and its role for the remainder of the First Republic and the entire Second Republic. However, as the functions and reach of the mass media grew (including filmmaking by ZIS), operations became more expensive and problematic as the country began experiencing an economic downturn.

Despite these challenges, the Zambian government invested in equipping ZIS to the extent that ZIS films were visually and audibly superior to colonial productions (Kerr, 1998). The investment would later include a new, well-stocked film processing laboratory meant to give ZIS full autonomy and control of the film production process. The ZIS film unit had colour film stock, allowing for synchronized sound. According to Jeff Sitali, a filmmaker and former production crew member in the ZIS film unit, the ZIS facilities were generally quite advanced and well-stocked even before the laboratory was established (Sitali, personal interview, 2018 June 19).

Cinema exhibitions in Zambia were organised within the dictates of the Theatres and Cinematograph Exhibition Act, Chapter 157 (1932). The 1932 law was enacted "to regulate and control theatres and cinematograph exhibitions; and to provide for matters incidental thereto or connected therewith" (*Theatres and Cinematograph Exhibition Act (1932)*, 1932). It established the procedures relating to the licensing of theatres and places of cinematographic exhibition and safety in the theatres. Following Kaunda's address, the Act was amended to strengthen the Film Censorship Board, which was established in an earlier amendment. The Film Censorship Board was responsible for granting exhibition licenses and permits for posters and inspecting cinematographs. The Minister of Information appointed board members responsible for implementing the Films Censorship Regulations, which the Act also established.

The Board was mandated to examine all cinematographs intended for public exhibition. The Regulations established the country's film classification system, which would be assigned to each film upon review. The committee was also legally mandated to make cuts to films until they were suitable by the committee's standards. The regulations also completely banned films from South Africa as part of the Zambian response to the oppressive South African government's segregationist Apartheid system and support for Ian Smith and the Rhodesian Front regime in Rhodesia. The Act also paved the way for District Executive Secretaries to act as the Board for films produced in Zambia or those imported through other points of entry besides Lusaka.

In the Second Republic, the government kept the ZIS mandate relatively unchanged, except for a stronger emphasis on projecting Zambian culture and promoting humanistic values. ZIS worked closely with the Zambia Broadcasting Services (ZBS) to fulfil this mandate. By this time, television viewing had grown steadily across the country. President Kaunda further emphasised and fortified the agenda for the two organisations and the press in 1975 in his famous "Watershed Speech" (Kaunda, 1975). Speaking at the UNIP National Council in Lusaka, Kaunda directly addressed "The Role of Mass Media in Promoting Humanist Moral and Cultural Values." Kaunda was critical of the dominance of foreign film and television shows on Zambian screens and the impact this content would have on Zambian morals. He argued that while Zambians were at liberty "to borrow positive aspects of foreign cultures" to enrich local cultures, there was need to defend Zambian culture and nationhood from being undermined by "cultural conquest" (Kaunda, 1975: 27). Kaunda instructed the mass media in Zambia to be "an instrument of humanism and not decadent values" and that entertainment through the mass media must include lessons from which people could learn about the "Zambian revolution" (Kaunda, 1975: 27).

Kaunda noted that cinema was a vital medium whose role was to reflect Zambian values rather than foreign ones. He committed his government to developing the cinema industry and raising the decency standards to those that reflected Zambia's national values. In order to achieve this, Kaunda announced that the government would take over all cinemas and hand them over to local government authorities.

In both the First and Second Republics, ZIS adopted documentary production as the primary form for the didactic purpose the films were meant to serve. Kerr (1998) is critical of some

early productions, describing them as “unambitious” because they were formulaic and predictable, an approach that remained unchanged for a long time. The 1968 Inquiry also noted the need to improve the quality of the films (GRZ, 1968). ZIS films were packaged in a journalistic reporting style. They were very informational, as per ZIS terms of reference, sometimes with privileged detail resulting from the fact that ZIS would have more access to government officials, resources and information. The content would include the coverage of development projects and their impact, government achievements, and progress in various sectors of society since independence, among others, as recommended by the government (GRZ, 1968).

Responding to the criticism, Sitali (2018) argues that the ZIS production crew endeavoured to make the films as interesting, educative, and engaging as possible for local and international audiences. Furthermore, because ZIS was state-owned, it was impossible to tell stories that were political commentaries on the Zambian situation or those who were critical of the government. Unlike the films from other African countries, the ZIS films did not particularly follow any film movement. However, these films, guided by Marxist ideas within Zambian Humanism, were also made to counter the dominance of Western films and their cultural hegemony established since colonial times. This makes them akin to the Third Cinema movements emerging on the continent in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Through the Ministry of Broadcasting, the Zambian government was willing to spend money on developmental stories and those that highlighted the good things the government was doing around the country. Further, it was important for the films to show people working or participating in productive activities to encourage other Zambians to follow suit. According to Sitali, “It was important showing people using their hands and tools to work in agriculture [for example], tilling the land, and so they believed, you lead by example” (Sitali, personal interview, 2018 June 19).

The ZIS films consistently maintained their didactic imperative. The films would cover various topics to educate Zambians, including agriculture, health and government policy in specific sectors. The ZIS films also played an essential role in educating everyday Zambians about Kaunda’s Humanism and what it meant for them. The fact that ZIS was a government department also meant that some perceived the films to be laden with government propaganda,

or at least nuanced and leaning towards perspectives shared by the government. This view was buttressed by the fact that the films were not critical of the government. However, this argument does not imply that the films were not analytical and rational (Kerr, 1998; Sitali, 2018). According to Nalishebo Mundia, another former filmmaker and journalist at ZIS, who also served as ZIS Director in the 1990s, significant effort went into research and content development in the early days (personal interview, 2018 June 22). Crews working on the productions would demonstrate great storytelling ability comparable to international feature documentary standards. Nalishebo notes that scripting for films went through rigorous editorial processes because of the strong journalistic influence.

Filmmakers at ZIS were given creative freedom for their stories provided they aligned with overall government policy or position on the subject. Sitali rejects the notion that the films were used for propaganda and loaded with manipulation. Instead, he suggests that the films reflected what was happening in the country, highlighting challenges and the solutions provided for those problems. The films also represented the best of Zambians when they came together in communities to address their challenges with the government's support. Sitali argues that the presence of Kaunda or government leaders in the films was not intended to manipulate but to encourage viewers to take specific actions. According to Sitali, showing "the President planting the first tree" in an area would "show people how important it is to plant trees" and it would encourage them to do it too (Sitali, personal interview, 2018 June 19).

It is worth mentioning here that apart from ZIS, the National Farming Information Services (or Rural Information Services, RIS), a department in the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Development, also took part in filmmaking activities (Kerr, 1998) However, RIS operated much like ZIS but at a smaller scale. Various film strips were produced at RIS for instructional purposes and distributed to farm institutes and farmer training centres nationwide. Short films such as *Diseases in Local Cattle, Ferrumbu: its Construction and Correct Use, Groundnut Production, and Sunflower Production,* among others, were produced for rural distribution (Kerr, 1998).

Zambia's economic downturn in the 1970s began taking its toll on filmmaking. Film distribution was one of the sector's main areas to be affected. The mobile cinema *modus operandi* started to fall apart as many of the vans experienced frequent breakdowns. According

to Kasoma (1990) and Kerr (1998), there was a lack of funds to service or replace them. Together with other factors, the disruption in distribution also caused a decline in the number of screenings ZIS would conduct. For example, by 1977, the number of shows had reduced five-fold from 25 screenings per district to an average of 5 screenings, while some districts would not have any screenings at all as no film rover would be sent (Kasoma,1990: 41; Kerr, 1998: 173).

4.5 Non-State Filmmaking

a. Malachite Film and the Roan Selection Trust

As stated above, Zambian filmmaking was mostly a state-driven activity. Independent or non-state filmmaking was rare, and when it existed, it was often specialized. The earliest example of such filmmaking was by Malachite Film Company, owned by Zambia's mining corporation Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines (NCCM). Initially, Malachite was part of the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa's holdings in Northern Rhodesia and had made films for the corporation's mining firms dating to 1940s. The Anglo-American Corporation's counterpart and sometimes rival, the Rhodesia Selection Trust[3] (RST) also established its own film unit, later called the Roan Selection Trust Film Unit. With the Matero Reforms initiating the nationalisation of the mines in 1969, RST assets, including its film unit, were transferred to the newly constituted Roan Copper Mines (RCM) in 1970 (Hammer, 1970; Sikamo, Mwanza & Mweemba, 2016). Malachite Films, a unit in the Zambian Anglo-American Corporation (Zamanglo), became a part of the newly established NCCM in 1970.

The two film units merged under the Malachite brand, and it maintained two studios, one in Chingola and the other in Ndola, both on the Copperbelt. The Chingola facility was a film studio, while the Ndola one was mostly an audio studio. Malachite and the RST Film Unit were created to make films about the mining industry and the communities where the mines operated in (Sitali, 2018). The films also mostly took the documentary format and where either didactic or made for marketing purposes. The didactic films included instructional films for miners on topics such as mine safety or mine policies. Malachite produced both non-fictional and fictional films. The marketing films were produced to advertise Zambia's copper to the world.

[3] The Rhodesia Selection Trust was later renamed the Roan Selection Trust in 1964 shortly after the disintegration of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the year before. It was a subsidiary of American Metal Climax (Butler, 2007: 265).

According to Sitali, Malachite studios in Ndola hosted the company's audio recording track, which was also used to provide audio recording services for musicians.

Even though RCM and NCCM where state-owned through the parastatal holding company, Mining Development Corporation (MINDECO), their operations were not determined by the state (Sitali, 2018). Later, MINDECO was folded into the Zambia Industrial and Mining Corporation (ZIMCO), and by 1982, RCM and NCCM merged to form Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM). Despite all this, unlike ZIS, Malachite Films still enjoyed a lot of freedom and distance from formal state structures.

From 1964, several films were produced under the Roan Selection Trust Film Unit pennon. These include: *Land of the Four Rivers* (1964), a documentary narrated by Dominic Mulaisho, who later became the Governor of the Bank of Zambia between 1992 and 1995; *Mining Copper* (John Roulet, 1965), *Twenty-four Hours* (John Roulet, 1966), and *Zambian Heritage* (John Roulet, 1968). Others were *Copper Airlift* (John Roulet, 1969), and the travelogue *Luapula Journey* (John Roulet, 1967)(British Film Institute [BFI], n.d.). Director John Roulet had previously worked with the Central African Film Unit as a cinematographer on productions such as the regular newsreel film, *Federal Spotlight*. He joined the Roan Selection Trust Film Unit, where he worked on various productions in different capacities. Roulet was one of several former CAFU staff who, according to Louis Nell (1998), dispersed 'far and wide' following the breakup of the Federation and its film unit, which "witnessed its own final fade-out" (Nell, 1998: 193).

Some of Malachite's productions include *'To Walk' 'to Play' 'to Work and to Live'* (1970), and *Milestones at Mindolo* (1968), a 28-minute 16 mm. documentary sponsored by the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation, highlighting the work of the Christian social thought and training organisation at Mindolo in Kitwe (BFI, n.d.). Malachite also produced the documentaries *African Legacy* (1971) and *Kansanshe* (1972), with Vladimír Skalský and Paul Davies serving as both director and producer in the respective films. Skalsky, a Czech cinematographer and director, is regarded as a significant contributor to the visual style of Czech documentary filmmaking (BFI, n.d.). His directorial work included his films in Zambia under Malachite, such as *African Legacy* with Paul Davies, a Canadian national who was the Manager of Malachite Films in the 1970s and a contributor for Visnews (ibid, n.d.)

b. The Film and Television Corporative (FITECO)

The Film and Television Cooperative (FITECO) was created as an attempt to form an independent film production entity mooted by Billy Nkunika and Masautso Phiri. The idea came after the two successfully screened Ghanaian filmmaker Kwaw Ansah's *Love Brewed in an African Pot* (1980) in Zambia. The film screenings in Zambia were a huge success, considering Hollywood films were overwhelmingly popular at local cinemas. FITECO was established using the profits made from the undertaking.

> "We started developing scripts in order to produce films but then the support that we had was from a German organisation called the Friedrich Naumann Foundation, they were supporting the Ministry of Information (and Broadcasting Services) and other private organisations like ourselves as a cooperative, so they offered us to use their equipment to produce films" (Nkunika, personal interview, 2018 July 1).

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation offered FITECO the use of its ENG (electronic news gathering) cameras. However, according to Nkunika, the Ministry of Information was not pleased that a private organisation would produce films instead of ZIS, and it blocked the use of the equipment and withdrew their support altogether.

> "We had started our films, one was called *Fombe*, one was called *Titi*, and I can't remember the other one, but they just ended up on films or tapes so we didn't last long, we tried to get our own equipment but it was impossible, so that's how we packed up with the Film and Television Cooperative" (Nkunika, personal interview, 2018 July 1).

Fombe was a love story between the titular character, Fombe and his love interest, while *Titi* was a life interest story about a young woman called Titi, and both were influenced by Zambian society at the time. According to Nkunika, the films were to serve as social commentary on Zambian ordinary life as a counter to the Western stories that dominated cinemas. The writing team at FITECO was also developing a script on the history of Zambia and the role that Kaunda played in the liberation struggle, but it also remained unfinished. Despite starting principal

photography for its films, the FITECO project was abandoned after it did not raise enough capital to sustain it.

c. Hickey Studios

Errol Hickey, a Rhodesian-born Zambian, founded Hickey Studios. Hickey worked as a photojournalist for the Times of Zambia before venturing out to establish Hickey Studios. The studio was established when private sector involvement in mass communication was uncommon in Zambia. The company was primarily a photo studio but grew into a fully-fledged advertising agency that offered professional videography services when video technologies became more accessible. Even by the start of the 1990s, Hickey would be hired to produce or shoot documentaries for international organizations such as aid agencies and broadcasters, in addition to the advertising work. Hickey also set himself apart as a tourism content producer because of the television features he produced about that sector. He later established Zambia's first private radio station, Radio Phoenix, in 1996.

d. Multimedia Zambia

Multimedia Zambia was established as a media and communications company for the church in Zambia by the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) and the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC). The firm produced Christian content and equally focused on other development-oriented content in print and electronic formats (Saluseki, 2006). Multimedia would go on to produce a few documentaries, but these were mostly either evangelical or developmental, targeting particular sectors. The organisation's newspaper, The Mirror (later called National Mirror), became an influential voice in the Zambian media (Kasoma, 1986; Kerr, 1998; Makungu, 2004a; Hamusokwe, 2012).

4.6 Challenges that Affected Filmmaking in the UNIP Era

Filmmaking in the First and Second Republics faced several challenges, many of which can be linked to the country's political and economic organisation. Factors already identified, such as the implementation of socialist economic policies and the pursuit of the socio-political ideology of Humanism, generally exemplify these challenges. In this section, I discuss these challenges in more specific terms.

a. The rising cost of processing

The rising cost of film processing significantly contributed to halting filmmaking activities in the country. As discussed, the cost of processing films initially increased when the government was forced to fly films to London for processing following Zambia's fallout with Rhodesia. ZIS continued to work with this costly arrangement until the government facilitated the establishment of a local processing laboratory. However, even after the new processing unit was operational, procuring the chemicals needed to process the films came at an enormous cost that ZIS and the Ministry of Information only managed to bear for a few more years (Kerr, 1988: 172). The shrinking economy in the 1970s meant that the resources allocated to supporting this cost would also shrink significantly. This made it even harder to finance the expensive processing costs.

Despite the high cost of processing, the heavily subsidised ZIS film unit continued to produce their documentaries. Some within ZIS were critical of the persistence of the documentary format. Expensive 35mm and 16mm film stock would be used for UNIP events and still sent abroad for processing (Sitali, personal interview, 2018 June 19). Sitali recalls the government financing the production of a film called the *Film History of Zambia,* which turned out to be a four-hour film focusing on the history of Zambia from a UNIP perspective and the role the party played in Zambia's liberation struggle. Sitali and some of his colleagues within ZIS argued that audiences both locally and abroad would struggle with the length of the film and instead suggested that it be cut into 15-minute short films or episodes that would be broadcast or shown over a period. Despite what Sitali describes as a considerable investment into its production, the film was left as it was and did not get any public viewing.

b. A lack of commercialisation

Zambian filmmaking was not a commercial endeavour. Films were made within nation-building and public service confines but not for the commercial cinema circuit. Even though ZIS productions were sometimes shown in commercial cinemas, ZIS heavily relied on mobile cinema vans to distribute their productions (Mytton, 1974; Kerr, 1998). The vans helped ensure that the ZIS productions were viewed in as many parts of the country as possible, most of which did not have cinema facilities. However, the lack of commercialisation implied that the government would continue financing production at any cost. The government was more

interested in the educational, cultural and ideological impact of the films on Zambians. There was no financial return on investment for these films. At the same time, cinema owners were more willing to dedicate their screens to foreign films that were wildly popular than the ZIS films, for which they would not earn any revenue.

c. Lack of trained human capital and training facilities

After independence, Zambia faced the immediate challenge of a severe lack of trained human capital. The civil service immediately felt the lack of administrative capacity as the new government took the reins. According to Tordoff (1974: 242), only 38 out of 848 professional administrative posts could be filled by Africans. Additionally, several white settlers with essential technical skills migrated to Rhodesia and South Africa just before or after independence, thus creating enormous gaps in public service delivery. The new Zambian government had the mammoth task of reorganising the civil service in order to fill these gaps. Several line ministries, including the new Ministry of Information and Postal Services, were created. To counter the human resource gap, the Zambian government embarked on multi sector training programme that would see many government employees in various departments obtain specialised training overseas.

Following a recommendation in the Report of the Inquiry into the Information Services and Broadcasting Services (GRZ, 1968) to increase the skills capacity at ZIS, the government identified the various skills gaps and scaled up its training strategy for the department. ZIS staff from different departments were sent for training in countries such as Yugoslavia, Romania, the Soviet Union, West Germany, and the United Kingdom. Former ZIS Director Mundia Nalishebo, who was one of those sent to Yugoslavia, notes that the Ministry ensured that the training focused on practical skills and that the staff would also be attached to media organizations where they would obtain hands-on experience (personal interview, 2018 June 22). According to Sitali, some of the ZIS film unit staff became highly skilled and sought after in the region because of their training and practical experience.

While the foreign training programmes were instrumental in developing a class of highly qualified filmmakers, they were insufficient to meet the training needs of the film sector in Zambia. Despite this need, no film course or programme was developed at local tertiary institutions. Mulenga Kapwepwe, an author, producer and arts expert, argues that Zambian

filmmaking remained nascent because there was minimal effort to build local training capacity for the sector. According to Kapwepwe, "there was no one to captain that ship in terms of institutionalizing film and making sure that it was in vocational or tertiary institutions" (Kapwepwe, personal interview, 2018 June 19).

The lack of a local training facility in film made filmmaking an activity reserved for those with the privilege to receive sponsorship for training abroad. Training programmes would only emerge in the 1980s when video production courses were introduced at technical vocational education and training (TVET) institutions such as Evelyn Hone College and at the University of Zambia when the Department of Mass Communication developed broadcast courses in 1989. However, as Kapwepwe also observes, these programmes focused on television video production, not cinematic productions.

d. Neglect and poor appreciation of the medium

ZIS acquired a lot of equipment and resources, such as vehicles and cameras, over the First and Second Republics. These ensured the smooth operation of the department's various units. However, according to Sitali, a poor appreciation of the equipment and the lack of training on how to use some of it contributed to the failure of ZIS's film unit.

Maintenance had always been an essential component of the operations at ZIS. The Maintenance Section, led by a Chief Maintenance Engineer, was established in 1965 to provide maintenance services to the film unit and the entire department. However, some of the maintenance staff still needed training to perform their functions. This training gap affected how well equipment would be maintained. Further, Sitali argues that there was no deliberate effort to ensure the equipment was well taken care of over the years. He notes that it became common among staff to bemoan a lack of equipment even when there, but simply because it was not taken care of. Sitali recalls:

> "There was a donation of a mobile facility from the Germans, it was parked for many years outside the Zambia Information Services from the time it came, it had a genset (power generator) in there… it stayed there until cobwebs started getting on it*" (personal interview, 2018 June 19)*.

As filmmaking activities plummeted, much of the equipment remained unused for long periods. The reduced usage was also due to changing technologies, especially as video formats became popular. ZIS would later hire out their equipment to other film producers. Various interview sources, including Nalishebo, Sitali, Nkunika and Kapwepwe, all attested that ZIS was also hiring out equipment. However, Sitali noted that hiring out of the equipment was sometimes done without oversight as some staff members would pocket the money obtained from the hiring production companies. This could explain why the equipment endured wear and tear despite the lack of filmmaking activities.

e. The dominance of foreign film

In this period, local cinema houses were entirely dominated by foreign films. The dominance of foreign film is part of what Kerr (1998: 178) describes as the "technical and economic stranglehold" that Western countries have possessed and enjoyed over marginal nations. This stranglehold became a source of alarm for many African governments who had envisaged some form of control and participation in the continental film economy. Western films enjoyed the benefit of larger budgets, control of distribution circuits, hegemony of language (English in this case), and generally cheaper products on the market. Cultural imperialism would become a significant subject of international debate between the 1970s and 1980s, leading to a push from countries in the Non-Aligned Movement, which Zambia was a part of, for a New World Information Communication Order (NWICO) (Carlsson, 2003; Nordenstreng, 2012).

Concerned about the potential dangers that the foreign values in foreign films would have on national values and the Zambian way of life, the Government set up the Film Censorship Board in 1975. The Zambian government believed that the Censorship Board intervention would protect Zambian values by determining what would be seen on the screens. However, the board could not restrain the demand these films continued to have, and the determination distributors and cinema owners had to meet this demand. Further, video technology in the latter part of the 80s made controls even more difficult as people would have access to VHS cassette tapes of the films that the Board had censored or banned.

f. The growth of television broadcasting:

Zambia was one of the few African countries that inherited a functional albeit small and undeveloped television broadcasting system at independence. Television, also government-controlled, grew gradually to become a critical mass communication tool for the UNIP government (Kerr, 1998). In later years, the growth of television in Zambia meant that the objectives of state-led filmmaking activities through ZIS could easily be achieved through broadcasting without the added cost of celluloid film processing and mobile distribution. ZIS had already been contributing content to ZBS. The two organisations were housed at Mass Media Complex in Lusaka and fell under the same Ministry. In the end, those within the UNIP government who seemed to favour the increased investment in television broadcasting over film had their way, even though more people were reached via film distribution (Mytton, 1993; Kerr, 1998).

Television's influence on filmmaking in Zambia is discussed in the next section of the chapter.

4.7 Television's Contribution to Filmmaking

Television in Zambia officially started in 1961 when the first television station was set-up by the London Rhodesia (Lonrho) Company in Kitwe, in the Copperbelt Province (Kerr, 1998; Hamungole, 2015). The private station, established to cater for the white settler community working for the mines and the colonial administration, was directly linked to Rhodesia Television Limited (RTL) of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) (Kapeya, 2011). Following Zambia's independence, the RTL affiliate station was renamed Zambia Television Limited. The Zambian government launched the state-owned Zambia Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) in 1966, and 1967 Zambia Television was integrated into ZBC. ZBC was later renamed the Zambia Broadcasting Services (ZBS) to emphasize the public service role that broadcasting was to play in Zambia. The ZBS channel was often called Television Zambia or TVZ (Hamungole, 2015).

Bourgault (1995) observes that most post-colonial governments had the monumental task of forging national consciousness and national identity among their ordinarily diverse peoples. Highlighting the significant role of mass media, particularly government-owned African media, in nurturing these new national identities, Bourgault argues that television was an emblem of national status in many African countries. After independence, the UNIP administration knew they could use television to help forge the new nation's identity.

Television, like film, would be used to strengthen national cultural values as determined by Humanism, and educate Zambians on several issues that the state deemed important (Kasoma, 1990; Sitali, 2018).

In his 1975 Watershed Speech, President Kaunda, a strong supporter of African cultural independence, perhaps most clearly articulated the role the media would play in his vision of attaining social and economic development under Humanism. Kaunda (1975) stressed that Zambian television "must, apart from disseminating information, express in depth the various cultural aspects of this nation, apart from entertainment." Kaunda's directive was fuelled by his long-standing concern over Western cultural influence on Zambian life. He emphasized the need to reject the influence of foreign cultures on national values.

Despite the government's emphasis on television, the public had limited access to it. Very few homes had television sets because of the high cost of purchasing one at the time. This was compounded by the lack of electricity supply in most of the country in the 1960s and 1970s (Mytton, 1983). Much of television viewing in the 1970s was within the extended family or neighbourhood setting (Mytton, 1983: 189).

TVZ was often the subject of debate in the Zambian National Assembly, where some members of parliament raised various concerns about the channel. The channel was criticized for lack of local content, poor reception, frequent breaks in transmission and limited coverage despite the government's enormous investments in training and infrastructure (Kerr, 1998). The criticism became so intense that then Minister of Information, Broadcasting and Tourism, Mr. Sikota Wina went on the floor of the National Assembly to defend the need for television despite its challenges (Mytton 1983: 80).

Following the concerns about foreign content on television, as with cinemas, the government instructed TVZ to pull any content featuring cowboys, crime, sex, or martial arts, in favour of sports, children's or wildlife programmes and acceptable comedy and variety shows. Further, feature films on television were also subject to cuts meant to remove scenes featuring kissing and excessive violence (Kasoma, 1990: 50). This directive created a significant content gap that was only countered by increased local productions. A 1976 Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services Annual Report stated that local productions on TV Z increased from 10 percent in 1975 to 25 percent in 1976 (MIBPS, 1976). In addition to various local productions,

TVZ was able to obtain television content from other African countries, either directly or through Zambia's membership to the Union for Radio and Television Networks for Africa (URTNA), a pan-African body of broadcasters formed in 1962 to encourage professionalism and programme exchange among independent states (Eko, 2001: 370-372).

The government's efforts at improving television reception included constructing and commissioning the Mass Media Complex that would house ZBS and ZIS. The government also invested in an expensive colour television system beginning in 1977. Two years prior, the government had paid for converting ZBS's broadcast system from telecine equipment to video-based systems (Hamungole, 2015). The government also commissioned ITT Supersonic Limited to assemble television sets in Zambia to reduce purchase costs. Another company, Philips Electrical Zambia, also ventured to assemble television sets for most of the 1970s and 80s.[4] ITT Supersonic stopped its television assembly operation by the mid-1980s, leaving Philips Electrical to meet the growing demand for television sets. With increased investment in microwave transmission links, more districts and rural towns were able to receive television transmission by 1986. However, television sets were still unaffordable for most people in the country. Furthermore, many parts of the country did not have electricity, and many people could not afford the batteries that were used asn alternative power source (Kaplan, 1974; Matousek, 1988; Hamungole, 2015).

Play for Today

An important intervention meant to address the local content problem was the creation of the drama show called *Play for Today*. This was a drama anthology series produced in ZBS studios in the style of popular American and British TV play programmes such as *Armstrong Circle Theatre* (NBC, 1950–1957/CBS, 1957–1963), *Wednesday Play* (ITV, 1964-1970) and *Play for Today* (BBC, 1970-1984). The ZBS studio could accommodate up to three sets, making it possible for the production of the play format to take off (Kerr, 1998: 184). While it did not have the production values and aesthetic of a typical television drama or film, *Play for Today* would, for a long time, act as the only avenue for local storytelling through the screen medium.

[4] According to Irving Kaplan, writing in the Area Handbook for Zambia, Volume 550 (1974: xxxiv), there were an estimated 18,500 television sets in Zambia in 1971. This number is estimated to have grown to somewhere between 100,000 and 250,000 working sets by 1988, according to a UNIDO report prepared by Karl Matousek (1988: 4).

The plays were arranged for by the Zambian National Theatre Arts Association (ZANTAA) with input from its affiliated theatre groups. The show did not have its own dedicated production team at TVZ but used available ZBS crew members who also worked on other production at the station (Kerr, 1998). Productions were almost always in the studio. Despite its format, the programme brought interesting Zambian stories to local screens. Many of the plays tackled themes relevant to Zambian life, including labour relations, behavioural change, the conflict between traditional and modern practices, politics, and neo-colonialism. Several playwrights, including Steven Chifunyse, Mulenga N'gandu, David Kerr, Dickson Mwansa, and others contributed their works to *Play for Today*.

TVZ's production arrangement with ZANTAA came to an end in the early 1980s. Kerr (1998: 188 - 190) argues that the break-up resulted from the differences in ideological standpoints. Several ZANTAA playwrights told stories that became openly critical of the UNIP government in areas such as human rights, growing poverty, and unemployment amid government excesses. TVZ, a state-run organisation, found it increasingly incongruent for plays highly critical of the government to be aired. For example, after Dickson Mwansa's production of Darius Lungu's play *The Man in the Street* aired three times, a senior government official stormed TVZ and, took away the videotape and instructed the playwright, Lungu, to change its ending (Mwansa, 1982). The play addressed the growing problem of unemployment in urban areas and its consequences on those perceived to be responsible for denying people jobs.

From 1982, TVZ resorted to working with the Zambian National Service's theatre troupe, popularly known as ZANASE, to produce *Play for Today*. The Zambia National Service (ZNS) is a defence force wing established to train Zambia citizens "to serve the republic, develop infrastructure, enhance national food security and contribute to the social economic development" (Ministry of Defence, n.d.). ZNS also implemented the mandatory national service programme for Zambian school leavers. The ZNS or ZANASE Theatre Group was a social and cultural ensemble founded within the defence wing and composed of officers and civilians.

Led by Captain Greg Lungu, ZANASE set out to change *Play for Today*, focusing on more development-oriented and social themes. Kerr (1998: 191) argues that the focus of *Play for Today* moved from having "broad", "thought-provoking" stories told in "a variety

of genres and styles" to a "narrower, more instrumental and less controversial depiction of specific development issues within a fairly formulaic satirical genre." ZANASE brought aesthetic differences, including ensemble acting and stereotyped characterization, where the actors would play the same or similar characters across different stories. For Example, Lungu would often be the romantic lover or the naive young brother, his wife, Jane, also an accomplished actress, would play the wife or girlfriend. Danny Kanengoki, popularly known as Mr. Sauzande would often play the sweet-talking or pretending hard-liner and Chanda 'Maximo' Mwale would play the chaotic comical figure (Kerr, 1998b; Mwansa, 2019).

In 1988, ZBS was finally transformed into Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), making it a state corporation that would generate revenue and take care of its costs instead of the government (Kasoma, 1990). *Play for Today* would run through to the 1990s as a much-loved local production on ZNBC. Viewership of the programme also increased as more and more Zambians gained access to television sets and as the ZNBC transmission covered more areas.

4.8 Zambia in Foreign Films

In the Second Republic, Zambia became the setting of two foreign motion picture productions, *A Touch of the Sun* (1979) and *Killing Heat* (1981). The Zambian government, through the Department of Cultural Services, paved the way for the producers of both films to not only use Zambia as a setting but also to employ Zambians for both off and on-screen roles (Wesley Kaonga, personal interview, 4 June 2019). While the films are not Zambian, they both were embraced as productions that Zambia was a part of at a time when the country was not producing feature films.

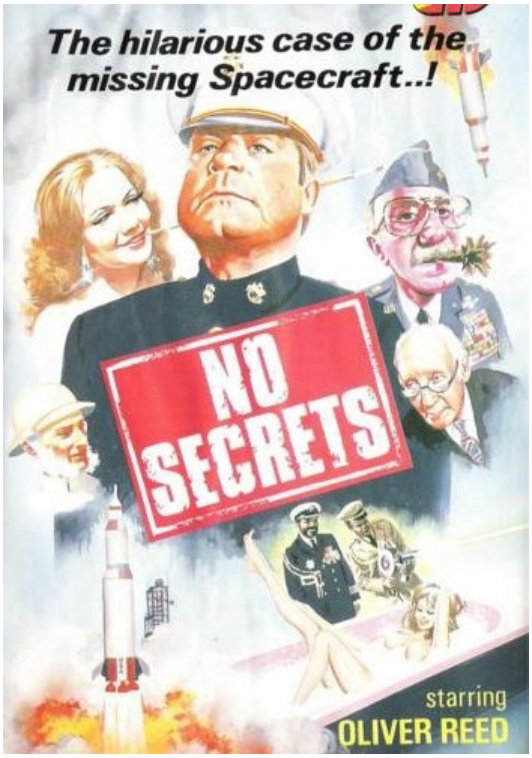

Figure 1: 'A Touch of the Sun' poster in markets it was called 'No Secrets'. [IMBD]

A Touch of the Sun (1979) is a British and American comedy film directed by Peter Curran. The film, also released as *No Secrets*, was mostly shot in Zambia between August and September 1978, with the blessing of Zambia's Department of Cultural Services (DSC). According to Kapwepwe, the Zambian government was interested in seeing how such a collaboration would boost the creation and production of films in the country (personal interview, 2018 June 19). Apart from arranging for the Zambian actors and extras in the film, the government, through DCS, also attached a few ZIS staff to the production, namely, Davis Ndawa, Joel Nyoni and Guy Mulonga, who are also credited as crew members (BFI, n.d).

In *A Touch of the Sun*, an American Marine Captain Daniel Nelson, played by Oliver Reed, is assigned by his supervisor, General Spellman (Keenan Wynn), to travel to the fictional African nation of Akasuba to retrieve an American space capsule that is assumed to have crash-landed with two astronauts on board. Akasuba's leader, Emperor Sumumba, played by Zambian actor Edwin Manda, held the capsule and demanded US$ 25 million for its release with the astronauts. The film's comedic elements are centred on Nelson's antics and ludicrousness on this mission and his interaction with the Africans.

A Touch of the Sun was released in Zambia in 1979. Several edits were made to the film shown in Zambia because of the legal provisions at the time. For instance, the full version of the film

has a few pointless nude scenes of a female character who is either shown showering or dressing up. These scenes, clearly intended for the male gaze, were removed in the Zambian version of the film. The film also had significant problems in how it represented Africa and its people. The film was never released outside Africa and only got released on VHS and terrestrial television in the United Kingdom in 1996.

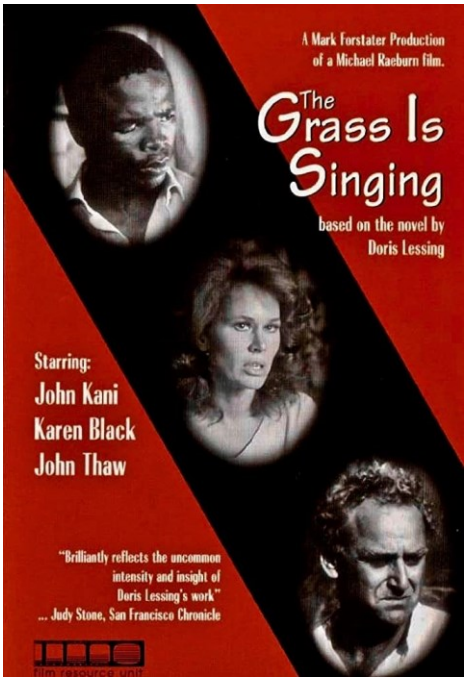

Figure 2: Movie poster for 'The Grass is Singing', the alternate title for 'Killing Heat' [IMDB]

Killing Heat (1981), written and directed by Michael Raeburn, was an adaptation of Doris Lessing's novel titled *The Grass is Singing*. The film was also released as *The Grass Is Singing* in some regions. It was predominantly shot in Zambia, although this is not mentioned in the film. It also has several scenes shot in Sweden.

In the film, Mary, played by Karen Black, leaves her city life in Sweden to join her new husband Dick Turner, on his farm in a rural African town. Dick, played by John Thaw, is determined to build a life in Africa and make his earnings from his struggling farm. Mary attempts to acclimatise to life on the farm , but shortly, the realities of her new life begin to take shape, and her struggle becomes visible. Her breakdown is evident as the routine of farm life, a crumbling marriage, and the scorching heat appear to torment her mentally. Amid various struggles, she develops an unlikely attraction and relationship with their semi-educated black servant, Moses, played by South African actor John Kani. Set in pre-colonial Africa, the film addresses various themes such as race, class and gender relations in colonial times.

The film was a critical failure when it was released in Europe and the United States. For example, Stephen Holden (1984) of the New York Times criticised some of the film's exaggerated performances and pacing. For Holden, *Killing Heat*'s portrayal of African colonial life is dramatically skewed. Scott Weinberg (2003), another US-based reviewer, described it as a melodrama with very little worth remembering.

4.9 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter discussed the development of filmmaking in Zambia in the First (1964-1972) and Second Republics (1972-1991) under Kenneth Kaunda and his party, UNIP. It analysed Zambia's political and economic situation in these periods to provide details about the context in which filmmaking developed. The chapter demonstrated that filmmaking in the Kaunda years was co-opted within the government agenda of nation-building and provided education and information to Zambians (Golding, 1974; Kasoma, 1990; Makungu, 2004b). For this reason, film was used for information and didactic purposes. Further, Zambian filmmaking activities, which were mostly state-run, were conducted and guided by Kaunda's Zambian Humanism ideology that merged socialist, Christian and humanistic values and placed man at the centre. The didactic films were thus supposed to help improve the welfare of Zambian people and further educate them on humanism and the state's achievements.

The chapter discussed the activities of the Zambia Information Services (ZIS) film unit whose purpose was to fulfil the government-mandated use for film. ZIS produced mainly didactic films that were distributed to the districts for public viewing through mobile cinema vans and at community halls or cinemas. ZIS enjoyed creative control as long as the productions met the government's requirements. The chapter has also highlighted some of the activities and efforts of non-state actors at producing films. For example, Malachite Films and the Roan Selection Trust, the failed Film and Television Corporative (FITECO) and Multimedia Zambia were some notable producers of films in the Second Republic.

The chapter also discussed some of the challenges that affected filmmaking in the UNIP era, and the efforts that were made to address them. For instance, it has been established that the rising cost of film processing was a major complication to filmmaking, especially as the country's economic situation deteriorated. Further, filmmaking was never commercialized as

its was mostly for information and educational purposes. Commercial fiction titles were never made in the state system that controlled production. ZIS was financed by the government and had no impetus to commercialize filmmaking because filmmaking was a public service. Other persistent challenges were the lack of an adequately trained workforce and training facilities, the dominance of foreign films on the local cinema circuit, and the general neglect and poor appreciation of the film medium. The growth of television broadcasting in Zambia was also identified as a challenge for filmmaking. While the development of television broadcasting was welcome for Zambia, its impact on filmmaking at the time significantly undercut funding for production, distribution and exhibition. Here, I argued that rather than develop the film sector, the government was seemingly more interested in television broadcasting as more resources were channelled into the development of broadcasting infrastructure when very few people had access to television sets.

Together, these factors contributed to the decline of Zambian filmmaking. Most of these factors find their footing in Zambia's political and economic context in both republics. For example, the policy of producing non-commercial films was politically and ideologically influenced yet it was not financially sustainable. The government bore all the costs. When it was not possible to adequately finance production, processing, maintenance, purchase of equipment, and distribution as the economy worsened, filmmaking at ZIS took a tumble. ZIS began focussing on productions for television and abandoned celluloid film for the broadcast formats used at ZBS.

From the findings presented in this chapter, it is clear that Zambia did not develop a viable and vibrant film sector in the Kaunda years because of the political and economic context in which the sector operated. The chapter has shown that due to the socio-political position of the government on the role of film, coupled with excessive political influence over all means of mass communication, filmmaking in Zambia could not grow beyond its development and didactic function. Further, economic policies discouraging private participation in sectors such as the mass media gave the state the power to determine how film could be used. As a result, the state continued to subsidize productions that supported UNIP ideals and policies in the name of nation-building without considering developing a film industry. Bearing in mind the assumption held by scholars of political economy that media institutions are part of an economic system that is closely tied to the political system (McQuail, 2010), it is then possible to conclude that filmmaking activities were at the same time furthered and impeded by the

policy decisions made by the UNIP government in Zambia's First and Second Republics.

Under various influences and using myriad justifications, African Governments embraced state control of mass communication, making it a norm in most parts of the continent. Whether under military regimes or the varied iterations of one-party systems, mass communication was accountable to and in service of those in power. In most cases, as Hatchen (1993: 26 - 27) argues, this "accountability required unquestioning supports of the nation's leaders and their policies and persistent exhortations to the public to do likewise." This is what filmmaking in Zambia eventually came down to in this epoch. It was about using the art form and cultural artefact of film to promote nation-building, in whatever way UNIP defined nation-building, and to show, without question, what the government is doing for the people.

The Zambian experience discussed in this chapter also exemplifies the failure of the primarily Western theories that predicted mass communication's role in post-colonial Africa following the independence waves of the late 1950s and 1960s. It was argued among theorists that the mass media, being "magical multipliers", would help lead the continent into modernisation and economic development (Hachten, 1993: 4). On the contrary, many African governments used these means to promote their ideologies and, in some cases, strengthen their hold on power. In Zambia, filmmaking moved from being "an emancipatory project" (Ukadike, 1995: 85) to becoming a promotional apparatus that peddled the policies of the ruling elites to the population, hid their superfluous wastefulness, and helped reinforce the status quo.

This chapter has detailed the development of filmmaking in Zambia during the Kaunda years. It has shown how filmmaking collapsed even before the end of Kaunda's rule and has highlighted some of the reasons for the collapse. In this epoch, I have demonstrated how these reasons can be attributed to the country's political economic trajectory.

The end of Kaunda and UNIP's 27-year rule in 1991 came with much promise and hope for Zambia. For those concerned, it was hoped that democratic and economic liberalisation would resurrect filmmaking and foster the development of a film industry. The next chapter explores this further as it considers the development of filmmaking in the first ten years of the county's Third Republic.

CHAPTER 5

STARTING OVER: FILM AND FILMMAKING UNDER THE MMD YEARS (1991 – 2011): PART ONE

5.1 Introduction

This is the first of two chapters that discuss the development of film and filmmaking in Zambia during the rule of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy from 1991 to 2011. In this twenty-year period, which marked the start of the Third Republic, Zambia had three presidents, namely Frederick T.J. Chiluba (1991 – 2001), Levy Patrick Mwanawasa (2001 – 2008), and Rupiah Banda (2008 – 2011). All three Presidents espoused the fundamental thrust of the MMD to take Zambia on a path of political and economic liberalisation, albeit to varying degrees. This marked a significant shift from the 27-year UNIP rule characterised by heavy-handedness of the state, excessive controls, and a lack of pluralism. This chapter generally seeks to highlight Zambia's experience with filmmaking following the country's democratic and economic liberalisation turn in 1991.

In this chapter, I set out to achieve several goals: firstly, to provide details about the political and economic context that the film sector in Zambia operated in during the MMD years; secondly, to highlight and discuss the policies and regulatory shifts implemented in this period with a direct or indirect bearing on the film sector; and thirdly, to show the impact of these policies in this period under review. Fourthly and more crucially, I also endeavour to show how filmmaking activities developed, identifying the factors that influenced production and the people involved and discussing various aspects relating to the contextual and textual arrangements in some of the productions in this epoch.

The chapter summarises Zambia's political and economic context in the MMD years. This period can best be described as one that consisted of both reform and a sardonic irresoluteness to follow through on that reform. I present this contextual analysis to argue that the development of Zambia's film sector in this period is closely tied to the country's economic and policy structure. This discussion is followed by an examination of some of the key developments in the adjacent television broadcasting sector, which has markedly influenced filmmaking in Zambia. Here, I consider some changes in the country's policy and regulatory structure that were part of the MMD's

broad reform programme. I will show that while policy reforms are essential to the development of the film sector, the reforms must require political will and economic commitments to ensure a take-off. I will then show that the rise of a filmmaking class in the later part of the MMD's 20-year rule is closely linked to a concatenation of factors, including changes in the country's economy, private sector investment in audio-visual industries and efforts taken to meet the training gap that was characteristic of the UNIP years as described in Chapter 4. My approach in this chapter is to present and discuss my findings simultaneously, making the various linkages from the various data sources that I rely on, such as key informant accounts, the analysis of various documents and the use of important literature.

This chapter also reads Chola Chifukushi and Patrick Lungu's documentary film, *Zambia: Birthplace of Freedom Struggle* (1995). In this reading, I analyse some of the textual and stylistic strategies employed by the filmmakers and try to relate the context of its production to the study's theoretical application of the political economy of film approach.

5.2 Zambia's Political and Economic Context in the MMD Years

The change to multipartyism can be seen within the context of the shifts in the global political economy in the 1980s. The challenges observed in several socialist-leaning countries worldwide, including the communist behemoths of the Soviet Union, East Germany, and many others in Eastern Europe, were also visible in African countries such as Zambia. Economic reform became the order of the day, and shake-ups subsequently followed these reforms in the political systems. As established in the previous Chapter, Zambia's inevitable road to reform occurred with this background.

Sichone and Chikulo (1996) argue that the change to political pluralism is best understood from the backdrop of the economic crisis, which they believe resulted from Kaunda's mismanagement. The effects of this mismanagement, which included the skyrocketing of food prices, sparked massive protests and unrest. UNIP had already become widely unpopular, and calls for constitutional reform became frequent. In 1990, Kaunda bowed to pressure and assented to a constitutional change that would return Zambia to multiparty politics and officially usher in the Third Republic. Zambia's 1991 general elections would see the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD), led by former trade unionist Frederick J. T. Chiluba, emerge victorious (Chiluba, 1995; 1995; Sichone & Chikulo, 1996; Rakner, 2003).

Frederick Chiluba and the MMD campaigned on liberalisation, widespread reform, and pro-business sentiment. Upon assuming office, the MMD implemented various policies to achieve concomitant economic and political liberalisation. Policy reforms would include privatising state-owned enterprises, removing subsidies, and implementing structural adjustment programmes (Chiluba, 1995:126). Rakner (2003:14) describes Zambia's economic reform record in the 1990s as being "exceedingly complex and mixed". Chiluba (1995) believed that it was essential to immediately implement these liberal economic policies because the country had lost several years to poor economic management and that the return to a multiparty system needed to be protected.

Chiluba's second term, beginning in 1996, was characterised by economic decline. There was growing dissatisfaction with the MMD government's mismanagement of the country's economy and resources. The privatisation process, a product of the liberalisation policy, was significantly flawed to the extent that even senior government officials would use their influence to purchase state-owned companies earmarked for privatisation (Sardanis, 2014). According to Grant (2009: 168), the country paid five times more on debt servicing than on education and three times more on health by the late 1990s. Adjustment led to cuts in food subsidies, the trimming of the civil service, joblessness due to privatisation and closure of state-owned enterprises. In addition to these economic challenges, Zambia was experiencing the ravaging effects of the HIV and AIDS pandemic (Grant, 2009). All these challenges did not stop the MMD from seeking re-election and a third term of office for Chiluba in 2001

Chiluba's attempt to have the constitution changed to enable him to stand for a third term was thwarted. When that endeavour failed, Chiluba handpicked a successor, Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, who was widely expected to be a puppet or an extension of Chiluba in the presidency. Mwanawasa won the 2001 elections, and contrary to expectations, he distanced himself from Chiluba, moving to implement widespread reform in the country and within the MMD. He called his government the *New Deal* administration (Mulikita, 2002), borrowing from the 32nd president of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's recovery programme during the Great Depression. Mwanawasa's ethos in the New Deal was that his administration would be "a government of laws and not a government of men", a principle popularised by the second president of the United States, John Adams (Adams, 1776)

Mwanawasa maintained the party's pro-business policies and implemented further reforms, including those meant to achieve debt cancellation and attain credibility with international financiers. The reform process was challenging but necessary for the MMD, which had to contend with declining popularity and more vigorous opposition in the 2006 elections. Mwanawasa committed to getting debt relief for Zambia and vigorously pursued attaining the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative's completion point, which involved strict austerity measures and reforms. The MMD government faced broad criticism as the impact of austerity took its toll on the social sector between 2002 and 2005. Zambia reached the HIPC competition point and qualified to have $3.8 billion of its $6.8 billion debt to the IMF, World Bank, and other multilateral institutions cancelled. Further debt relief was achieved through the Jubilee campaign (Larmer & Fraser, 2007; Zulu, 2006).

Despite these achievements, the MMD's support waned by 2006, with Mwanawasa securing only a marginal majority. His second term saw Zambia's economy improve significantly, but he died in 2008 before completing his mandate. Vice-President Rupiah Banda won the subsequent by-election, becoming Zambia's fourth president. However, Banda's presidency reversed some of Mwanawasa's good governance progress, further diminishing the MMD's popularity (Bwalya & Maharaj, 2018; Fraser, 2017). Banda was not as strict on corruption, and his unpopular political and economic policies sealed the fate of the MMD in the 2011 general elections. In those elections, Banda lost the presidency to Michael Sata, whose Patriotic Front formed government. The MMD lost its majority in parliament, and its reign of pro-Western, pro-business policies came to an end, at least for the time being (Burnell, 2001; Cheeseman et al., 2014; Mambwe, 2019; Rakner, 2003; Seekings, 2020; Siachiwena, 2020; etc).

5.3 Policy and Regulation of the Audiovisual Sector in the Third Republic

5.3.1 Early Reforms in Broadcasting

There was great optimism that the state-heavy policies that had turned the country's mass communication means into government mouthpieces would finally come to an end in the new dispensation (Phiri, 1999: 54). In keeping up with its liberalisation project, the MMD government moved to open up the broadcast sector, enacting and amending various laws in the

process. The reforms can be divided into two categories: the early reforms (from 1993 to 1996) and the later ones (2002 – 2010).

The early reforms included enacting new legislation and regulations in line with the change to a liberal democratic political economic order. Among the key pieces of legislation in the early reforms include the ZNBC (Licensing) Regulations (1993), enacted to change the licensing procedures, and the Radio Communications Act (1994) to liberalise and regulate the airwaves. The regulatory changes saw the emergence of private broadcasting, initially in radio and later in television (Banda, 2006b; Mambwe, 2013). In 1996, the Zambian government launched the National Information and Media Policy, the first such policy in the country. In the policy, the government committed to promoting "the growth of a sustainable media industry capable of enhancing the free flow of information and freedom of expression for national development" (GRZ, 1996). While the policy primarily focused on mainstream news media, it also included a commitment by the government to have television coverage reach the entire country. This is important because television would later be central to the Zambian film industry.

The new government retained a firm grip over state-owned mass media while maintaining regulatory control over the private media despite all the promises made about reform (Hamasaka, 2008; Chirwa, 1997). The process of reform found itself in what Isaac Phiri describes as "a labyrinth" consisting of "economic, political, social, professional, academic and legal" challenges (Phiri, 2010: 187). The mass media were employed to maintain the status quo (Hamasaka, 2008; Makungu, 2004; Phiri, 2010). In practice, the MMD repeated UNIP's approach to the mass media in the Second Republic.

The later MMD reforms aimed to address gaps in earlier efforts and to fulfil unmet promises in the broadcast and audio-visual industry. These changes were influenced by improving economic conditions and emerging technologies. The ZNBC (Amendment) Act of 2002 introduced television licence fees, promoting financial independence for the state broadcaster and emphasising the promotion of Zambian culture. The Independent Broadcasting Authority Act (2002) established a regulatory body for the industry, empowered to manage broadcast licences. However, the full implementation of both acts was delayed until 2010 due to legal challenges. Subsequent amendments in 2010 and 2017 refined the regulatory framework for private operators. These reforms reflected the government's evolving approach to the sector,

balancing financial sustainability, cultural promotion, and industry regulation in response to changing technological and economic landscapes.

Despite their flaws and limitations, early reforms in the broadcast sector under the MMD's liberalisation political economic pursuits were significantly instrumental in spurring private investment and growth. As Hamusokwe (2016: 75) argues, Zambia's transforming political economy post-1991 likely paved the way "for the development of a commercial media system" in Zambia.

The entrance into the Zambian market of Multichoice Africa was a testament to the new commercial broadcasting establishment. Multichoice Zambia was established in 1994 as a joint venture between Multichoice Africa and ZNBC, with the former having a 49% shareholding while the latter had 51% shareholding in the company (Lingela and Tembo, 2013; Mambwe, 2019). The new entity initially provided the first subscription television service in Zambia with its analogue terrestrial service and later introduced its flagship satellite television service, Digital Satellite Television or DStv. Multichoice's entry into the Zambian market was part of a continent-wide expansion strategy by its parent company, Naspers (Teer-Tomaselli, 2014; Ndlela, 2017; Mambwe, 2023a). Naspers, the media and entertainment giant, also operated Electronic Media Network (M-Net), a platform that provided a wide range of programming content over various channels carried by Multichoice's terrestrial or satellite platform. It must be noted that even after the initial investment in Zambia, MultiChoice did not effectively fund or produce any local content in its first 15 years (Mambwe, 2023a).

During the privatisation exercise, larger state-owned enterprises such as the copper mines and manufacturing companies received much attention from the public and international community. However, also included in the privatisation programme and of greater interest to this study was the sale of the cinema halls from local authorities to private owners. This was rationalised as a way of potentially having the new owners recapitalise the cinemas and make them viable. However, by the end of the 20-year MMD rule in 2011, many cinemas had closed or had been transformed to serve other purposes, such as worship centres or venues for hire (Mwansa, 2019).

While there were significant reforms in the broadcasting sector, no legal, policy and regulatory reform directly related to filmmaking was observed. For instance, the MMD government did not amend or repeal the Theatres and Cinematograph Exhibition Act, Chapter 157 of 1932.

5.3.2 Arts Administration: The National Arts Council

Besides the changes in Zambia's broadcasting regime, the new MMD government undertook various reforms related to arts and culture administration in the country. These changes sought to determine the place and role of these sectors in the new government and to develop new policies that would guide how they would operate.

One of the earliest decisions came when determining the function and positioning of the Department of Cultural Services (DCS). The department, which had previously been moved to and from different line ministries, was now housed in the new Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS). Lamba (2006) argues that this movement of the DCS is a demonstration of the government's wavering stance on arts and culture and their role in the country. For Lamba, the various realignments of the Department contribute to the diminished view of the sector's value.

In 1994, the Zambian government established the National Arts Council (NAC) by an act of parliament, the National Arts Council Act No. 31 of 1994. The Act, together with Statutory Instruments (SI) 128 and 129 of 1995, outlines the role of the arts body. NAC was established as a semi-autonomous body in the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) with a mandate to coordinate, supervise and monitor all arts activities in Zambia on behalf of the Zambian government.[5] These functions were previously either undertaken by the Department of Cultural Affairs or were undefined. After the establishment of NAC, the Department of Cultural Affairs remained a mainline government department whose focus was on developing, preserving and promoting Zambian culture and identity, as it did before (Mwansa, 2019:121-122).

NAC functions include disseminating government policies concerning the arts, serving as the ultimate advisory body on policy and decisions on all forms of the arts in Zambia, and

[5] National Arts Council, http://www.naczambia.org.zm [Accessed: 19 August 2019]

promoting the development and organisation of the arts in the country. According to the official website of the Ministry of Tourism and Arts[6], the line ministry to which the arts council is currently affiliated, NAC was also mandated to assist in the formation of national arts organisations and provide representation in those bodies, and to assist Zambian groups or individuals representing the country in artistic activity or seeking artistic training within or outside the country. The arts body is also responsible for providing regulation and guidance for all national arts programmes in the country and for awarding national honours for artistic merit. The Council's establishment was in response to pleas from the various arts groups that felt that the arts had been marginalised in the government's agenda (Lamba, 2007).

The impact of the National Arts Council on the arts in Zambia is significant. For example, Lamba (2007: 17-18) argues that the Council was responsible for ushering in an "era of professionalism" in the arts, and through its work, issues such as social security for artists, intellectual property, contractual obligations and international exposure were brought to the fore. Additionally, NAC's brainchild, the Ngoma Awards, has been instrumental in motivating artists, rewarding exceptional works and generating substantial interest in the arts from corporate organisations and the public (Mwansa, 2019; Lamba, 2007).

Today, NAC comprises several arts associations representing performing arts, literary media, and fine arts. These include the National Theatre Arts Association of Zambia (NATAAZ), the Zambia Folk Dance and Music Society (ZAFODAMUS), the Zambia Association of Musicians (ZAM), and the National Media Arts Association (NAMA), among others (Mwansa, 2019). The council's governing body comprises the elected heads of these associations and an elected chairperson, while the Secretariat, headed by the Director, runs day-to-day operations.

Since its establishment, NAC has faced several challenges, the foremost of which has been inconsistent and limited government funding. According to Adrian Maanka Chipindi, the NAC Director, funding to the Council has been limited and sometimes late (personal interview, 2018 May 14). Instead, NAC has depended on financial support from cooperating partners and donors to meet planned activities. For example, NAC reports from 1998 to 2002 show that a more significant portion of the council's budget was financed by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the European Union (EU) (Lamba, 2007). Other than

[6] Ministry of Tourism and Arts https://www.mota.gov.zm/?page_id=5187 [30 August 2019]

funding, NAC was crippled by its lack of outreach to artists in other provinces. In this epoch, the council was only located in Lusaka, where most of its activities were also conducted.

Concerning filmmaking, NAC is condemned for not paying attention to the development of film in the country. Lottie Siame, the president of the National Association of Media Arts (NAMA), argues that NAC focused on other arts, so much so that filmmakers felt underrepresented. According to Siame:

> Filmmakers have long felt that the National Arts Council was not completely interested in the film sector and that filmmakers were not effectively represented. This is why there was push for the creation of NAMA *(personal interview, 2019 May 14).*

NAMA was established in the year 2000 as the umbrella body of all media arts activities in the country (Lamba, 2007). The association's conception of media arts is expansive; hence, its membership includes broadcasters, media content production companies, individual artists, producers, and journalists producing for radio, television and film.

Despite criticism, NAC remains an important body within the Zambia arts and cultural sectors. It has also been influential in promoting the arts and developing various policies, including the National Cultural Policy.

5.3.3 The National Cultural Policy

Zambia did not have a formal cultural policy before 2003. Despite the solid governmental emphasis on national culture and values throughout the First and Second Republics, there was no specific cultural policy except as it was dictated under Humanism. The first and only one, the National Cultural Policy, was only launched in June 2003 (GRZ, 2003). The drawing up of the policy begun in 1992, making it another example of the delayed reforms that characterized the MMD years. Various stakeholders were involved at different stages in the process; these included the National Heritage Conservation Commission of Zambia, the University of Zambia, the National Museums Board and National Archives, as well as various arts and cultural organisations, including NAC, and individual contributors (GRZ, 2003).

According to then Minister of Community Development and Social Services, Marina Nsingo, the policy was "aimed at facilitating participation by all in the creation and enjoyment" of Zambia's wealth (GRZ, 2003). The mainstreaming of culture was rationalised following the realisation that: (a) "development divorced from its cultural context is like growth without a soul"; b) "the right to culture is a fundamental human right; (c) "art and creative expression contribute to the strengthening of democracy" and that "culture gives identity to the nation" (GRZ, 2003).

Various strategies directly or indirectly related to screen production or the film industry were drawn. For instance, the policy identified the documenting on video of local language literature such as poetry and narrative, as a strategy for promoting cultural identity. Other strategies noted were the encouragement of private sector investment and participation in the development of the arts by, for instance, providing tax incentives for equipment importation, developing curricula that would encourage arts education and training in schools at all levels, and strengthening intellectual property protections and awareness in the country (GRZ, 2003).

Implementation of the policy began soon after its launch through the relevant government line ministries and agencies. The policy was incorporated in Zambia's Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP) for 2006 – 2010, acknowledging the vital role of arts and culture. However, the implementation of the policy seemed convoluted owing to the number of line ministries and government agencies responsible for its success. For example, the policy was administered and monitored by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, under which the Department of Cultural Affairs and the National Arts Council of Zambia were designated (GRZ, 2003). Other ministries crucial to its successful implementation included the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services, where broadcasting and film were overseen; the then Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, under which the National Museum Board and National Heritage Conservation Commission were administered; and the Ministry of Local Government and Housing, where the administration of chiefs, traditional affairs, and local cinema houses were overseen. Others were the then Ministry of Science, Technology and Vocational Training, for the training of artists in colleges, and the Ministry of Home Affairs, which oversaw the National Archives.

Cultural policy, according to Miller and Yúdice (2002: 7), is typified by "systematic, regulatory guides to action that are adopted by organizations to achieve their goals." This implies that policy is not so much about the creative, artistic, or cultural activities *per se* but more about the official, bureaucratic and institutional structures formed to ensure that the activities are developed. Zambia's cultural policy has been deficient in creating and strengthening such structures and systems. While the National Cultural Policy was an important step in outlining the government's agenda for the arts and culture, it has not done much to influence Zambian filmmaking. I believe many of the policy objectives and strategies were too general and did not highlight the specific intricacies of each industry. For example, while important, the development of arts education and training curricula in schools does not reflect the likely challenge of finding trained Zambian personnel in filmmaking to develop these courses and conduct the training.

Perhaps the challenge could lie in how culture is defined. There is still debate among scholars on the definition and scope of culture (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005: 6), and as a result, governments have ended up delineating the terrain of the cultural and creative industries in many ways. Ultimately, some aspects are emphasised more than others within policy or action. In the Zambian case, the policy borrows from a UNESCO definition that emerged from the 1982 Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, which states that culture is "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group" and "includes not only the arts and letters but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs, " (UNESCO, 1982: 41). The policy acknowledged the broadness of culture and limited its reach to the six areas noted above. However, even with this delimitation, policy measures relating to the film industry seemed to be peripheral at the most.

It must be stated here that processes leading to the drawing of a National Film Policy, discussed in Chapter 8, emerged partly because of the failure of the National Cultural Policy to adequately address the specific issues of concern to the screen media industry.

5.4 State-led efforts in Screen Production and Training

5.4.1 Screen production in public institutions

Screen production in the first decade of the MMD rule was primarily state-driven, as in the UNIP era. The two state entities, ZNBC and ZIS were at the forefront of screen production and

almost all the productions were meant for television. ZIS maintained its mandate in the new republic and benefited from increased financing, enabling the institution to purchase more production equipment. However, the news reporting wing of the organisation enjoyed the most attention. ZIS documentaries were almost exclusively shown on ZNBC. A few continued to be sent to Zambia's diplomatic missions to promote the country. Even after 1991, ZIS was still unable to resume the production of documentaries for nationwide distribution, though the mobile film project had permanently shut down.

The documentaries were mainly informational and educational, maintaining the organization's approach to storytelling. Producers and directors such as Mundia Nalishebo, Patrick Lungu, Chola Chafukushi, Robert Mubiana, and others worked to ensure that the productions were of international standard, even though they would end up on television. ZIS began hiring out its equipment to local and foreign producers and companies. For instance, both Jeff Sitali (2018), Nalishebo Munida (2018) and Mulenga Kapwepwe (2018), in separate personal interviews, confirm that the Media Development Trust (MDT) of Zimbabwe rented dollies and cranes from ZIS in the production of the famous film *Neria* (1992). This practice was reflective of reduced filmmaking activities at the government entity.

The role of ZIS as the primary producer of films slowly faded as the institution increasingly began to focus on its news agency role. The department was merged with the government news wire service, the Zambia News Agency (ZANA), to form the Zambian News and Information Agency (ZANIS) in 2005 (Mutale, 2016). ZANA, established in January 1969, had a presence in all the country's districts. Before the merger, the two institutions operated separately despite being under the same Ministry for several years. ZANIS was created to provide broader news and information coverage of the country, including areas not covered by most news media. The film unit was aligned to support this news function.

Over at ZNBC, filmmaking activities were also limited to informational or news documentary formats. Despite a revised regulatory regime that allowed for increased commercialisation of ZNBC, the national broadcaster continued to depend on foreign-produced entertainment content. Post-1991, ZNBC did not produce any feature films for its channel but continued to produce *Play for Today*. Writers and producers from ZANASE and the other drama groups that featured on the show did not shy away from tackling themes that reflected the political and

economic mood of the time and the consequences thereof (Kerr, 1998; Mwansa, 2019). ZNBC, also undergoing massive changes as an institution, changed the title of the programme to *Play Circle* in 1993. More plays were now shot on location because the station now had better outside broadcasting capabilities (Kerr, 1998). This greatly improved the production quality and the number of settings, essentially transforming the plays into television drama adaptations with improved production values. ZNBC also monetized *Play Circle*, bringing in corporate sponsorship for specific productions. For instance, companies such as the Zambia Telecommunications Company (Zamtel), formerly called the Post and Telecommunications Corporation (PTC), and the Zambia Electricity Supply Company (ZESCO) sponsored productions that discouraged vandalism, promoted honest use of services and encouraged safety (Kerr, 1998).

Play Circle also continued to tackle stories addressing domestic, cultural and national issues, including matrimonial challenges, corruption, drug abuse, and the clash between modernity and traditional African life. The drama series also featured several moralist stories influenced by traditional African values and Christian teachings. In 1992, President Chiluba declared Zambia a Christian Nation. Christianity would now be enshrined in the country's constitution as the country's official religion, and as Phiri (2003: 406-411) notes, it would be a national guide on what was accepted as morally acceptable to Zambians. *Play Circle* was used to promote Christian values artistically (Mwansa, 2019; Kerr, 1998).

Play Circle quietly came to an end between 1997 and 1998. ZNBC made several attempts to restart the show, but they were short-lived. Many of the show's actors returned to solely performing in theatre. Some of the more popular ones would appear in television advertisements, sometimes returning their signature characters. Such was the case with Danny Kaningoki's Mr. Sauzande and Chanda Mwale's Maximo characters. In the years following the end of *Play Circle*, there was a dearth of dramatic productions on television. At this time, television documentaries characterized homegrown filmmaking. However, these documentaries were also primarily informational (news and current affairs) and educational. ZNBC also produced various paid-for documentaries for organizations that sought to showcase or highlight specific issues or activities (Mwansa, 2019).

Even with *Play Circle*, entertainment programming was still dominated by foreign content, including movies and serials from the United States and Britain. ZNBC also aired Japanese and Chinese dramas and children's programmes. In the mid-1990s, the station aired a popular Mexican telenovela, *No One But You* (Televisa, 1985), a series that proved to be very popular among audiences. By the later part of the first decade, the station began sourcing South African productions. This move followed reforms implemented in the South African film and television sector after the end of Apartheid (Shepperson and Tomaselli, 2002; Botha, 2003; Ndlovu, 2003; Tuomi, 2007). Examples of the South African shows included soap operas *Egoli: Place of Gold* (1992 – 2010) and *Isidingo (SABC, 1998 -)*, and comedy shows Going Up (1998 – 2002) and Suburban Bliss (1996). ZNBC also aired Soul City (1993 – 2014), the famed health communication drama series produced by the Soul City Institute for Health & Development Communication. Zimbabwean films were aired from time to time. These include *Neria* (1993), *More Time* (1993) and *Everyone's Child* (1996).

5.4.2 Addressing the training gap: ZAMCOM and other efforts

As established in the previous chapter, a severe lack of training facilities characterised the audio-visual sector. By 1991, only the Evelyn Hone College of Applied Sciences and the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Zambia (UNZA), both in Lusaka, offered some form of training in screen media production. However, the academic programmes at these institutions focused on journalism and broadcast production. Further, graduates from the UNZA programme often embarked on public relations or corporate communication careers after stints in the mainstream media (Nyondo, 2011). The lack of programmes or courses offering specialised training in aspects such as cinematography, editing and screenwriting significantly contributed to the considerable gap in technical skills needed to enhance filmmaking.

In addressing this challenge, the Zambian government established the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication (ZAMCOM) with the enactment of the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication Act No.9 of 1991. Through the Act, the government transformed the in-service training department of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services, which provided and coordinated in-service training since the early 1980s to journalists and production staff working for the ministry's departments, ZIS and ZANA. ZAMCOM was to provide professional media and communications training and offer production services in the country.

In 1996, the Zambia Institute of Mass Communications Repeal Act, No. 19 of 1996, was passed to transform ZAMCOM into an autonomous self-financing educational trust. The Repeal Act broadened its training activities to help address the training needs in the audio-visual sector, beyond journalism, in both public and private media organisations (Zambia Institute of Mass Communications Repeal Act, No. 19 of 1996, 1996). ZAMCOM's mandate focused on three pillars: providing media training at different levels and certifications; promoting media development through capacity building and specialised upskilling for media practitioners; and offering various broadcast services, including production services and training.[7]

One of ZAMCOMs earliest and notable interventions came in 1997 when the Zimbabwe office of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) approached the institution about possibly conducting a film training programme for Zambians under the expanded Zimbabwe Film Training Project. The project began in June 1990 and was established to support the Zimbabwean government's programme of restructuring and democratising the media, extending it to the development of filmmaking following the progress made in radio broadcasting and print journalism (Boafo, 1994). With technical support from UNESCO Zimbabwe and funding from the Government of Denmark through the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), the project contributed to the establishment of a permanent film training programme in Zimbabwe's local film industry. The decision to extend the programme to other countries in the Southern African region was recommended at a review meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1994. Zambia was one of the Southern African countries that would benefit from the project's second and expanded phase.

ZAMCOM, with its antecedent in-service training department, already had a knack for offering short, intensive professional training over the years. The UNESCO training would help meet the training gap that was a known factor in Zambia's lack of filmmaking activities. The call for participants in the six-week programme was sent, and despite overwhelming interest, only 15 participants were selected for what would be the first training programme in Zambia specifically conducted for filmmaking (Musola C. Kaseketi, personal interview, July 2018 13). The selected participants, including Musola Catherine Kaseketi, Angel Phiri, Anna Phiri,

[7] As indicated in the About Us section of the ZAMCOM Website: https://zamcom.co.zm/about-us/ [Accessed: 22 March 2020]

Augustine Lungu, Mildred Chumbwe, and Bennie Banda, among others, were enrolled from various backgrounds but based on their experience and their potential to contribute the development of the film sector. For example, Angel Phiri recalls being selected because of his previous training and experience as an animator, a skill that would be useful for storyboarding (personal interview, 2018 June 27). Kaseketi was a writer and director chosen from theatre, while Lungu and Anna Phiri, were noted for their acting and directing abilities in theatre. According to Kaseketi (2018), Golden Mawuru, the director of the Zimbabwean film *Neria* (1992), was one of the trainers at the workshop.

As UNESCO hoped, several workshop participants embarked on careers within screen media in Zambia and were involved in various film and television productions (Anna Phiri, personal interview, 2019 November 21). However, training would continue to be a significant challenge in the development of filmmaking in Zambia. Short and sometimes intensive capacity-building workshops were the only form of training some of the entrants in the cinematic arts would receive. Some short courses would tackle specific aspects of filmmaking. For instance, in 1996, a year before the UNESCO training, the National Theatre Resource Project conducted a script-writing workshop at the University of Zambia (Kapesa, 2016). Various theatre writers, producers, actors, and other personalities attended this training, including Bright Banda, Augustine Lungu and Bennie Banda. In other instances, NGOs seeking to build capacity for film projects they were embarking on would also organise workshops to help meet their specific needs. For filmmakers who did not participate in such workshops, training was informal and based on apprenticeships as they worked with professionals in television or media production companies or on their own when they had access to video cameras.

5.5 Non-state screen production: NGO Films and Advertising

5.5.1 NGOs, the HIV Pandemic and Filmmaking

One of the results of the MMD government's reform and liberalization policies was the proliferation of civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Zambia. According to Peter Henriot (1997: 57), this surge in the number of NGOs was an "encouraging development" of the multi-party era after 1991, in contrast to the Kaunda regime's closed-up, inward-looking approach. The surge in the NGO sector in Africa corresponds to the period of structural adjustment the continent was undergoing, beginning in the 1980s. Michael Bratton (1989: 569) has described the 1980s as the "NGO decade" in his analysis of

NGO relations in Africa. Ian Gary (1996: 149) contends that the expansion of the NGO sector in the 1990s was a perfect fit with the "anti-statist structural adjustment driven by free market ideology" that many countries on the continent were beginning to embrace. The World Bank and IMF's push for reduced state intervention paved the way for numerous NGOs to enter and operate across various sectors.

Henriot (1997: 52) argues that NGOs perform two major functions: (1) service, as they directly assist people in meeting different needs (e.g., street children associations and women's groups), and (2) advocacy, where they pressure the government for policies that would make the governors fulfil their responsibilities to the governed. In order to achieve these functions, NGOs use various tools and solutions, one of which has been film. For instance, in explaining the use of film in health education, a significant area for NGOs, Jane Stadler (2003: 88) argues that film engages audiences "physically as well as intellectually in acts of perception, attention, imagining, and the adoption of perspectives." For Stadler (2003), film gives viewers an embodied response grounded in the strong, empathic and visual signals that film has.

Even though she explicitly emphasises films, Stadler's arguments can be easily attributed to television. Television is significant for African filmmakers and proponents of Entertainment Education. Films and drama series seen on television have the same capacity as a film seen in the cinema to give the viewer "enduring memories, ideas and insights" that they can draw from film as they live their lives (Stadler, 2003: 98). This view is supported by various models and theories such as the Social Learning Theory, that link human behaviour to what they observe others do, even if those models are from a visual medium such as television (Bandura, 1994, 2002; Bushman and Huesmann, 2001; etc.). Entertainment Education, which Singhal and Rogers (1999: 9) define as "the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message both to entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members' knowledge about an educational issue, create favourable attitudes, and change overt behaviour," is to a large extent also informed by this belief.

In studying the development of filmmaking in this epoch, it became evident how several of the new NGOs began using screen productions to achieve their goals and made a valuable contribution to the growth of filmmaking activities. Documentary and sometimes fictional films

were tools that the NGOs used to communicate various messages in their advocacy, fundraising, education and information campaigns. The NGO films focussed on themes that the respective organisations worked on. It must be noted that international aid and development agencies and religious organisations had already been involved in producing documentary films, even before 1991. For example, as shown in Chapter 4, the church-backed production company Multimedia Zambia Limited produced documentaries about the church's activities and other development topics related to the church. That said, it is clear that the coming of more NGOs post-1991 saw an increase in the use of film in their work.

One of the most prominent themes in the NGO documentaries was public health. Films were used as part of health promotion projects meant to address various health issues. For instance, several NGO films addressed Zambia's HIV and AIDS situation, which had already begun to cause alarm by 1991. According to the National AIDS Council of Zambia, the country's first HIV case was reported in 1986.[8] By 1991, the country had recorded 15,000 cases. The growing number of HIV cases was worrisome as there was no cure, and experts were only beginning to determine the main drivers of the virus in the country. The pandemic's effects on economic development, productivity and society were increasingly visible in the 1990s. The National AIDS Council estimated that 1 in 5 adults had been infected with HIV by the early nineties, and Zambia's life expectancy had taken a nosedive from 54 years in the mid 1980s to only 37 years in 1998.[9] The Zambian government introduced various initiatives to curb the spread of HIV. These efforts were and continue to be supported by the United Nations through The World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNAIDS, international development agencies, bilateral partners and an array of local and international NGOs.

The public health films were produced by independent or media-backed creators and by NGO-sponsored producers, who sometimes focused on the specific work the NGOs were doing to address a given health issue. Whether NGO-funded and produced or otherwise, HIV was a prominent subject in both documentary and fiction films produced in Zambia by both foreign and local producers.[10] For instance, the 1995 anthology documentary *Living in Africa* (1995), addressed HIV in Zambia in a 27-minute feature called *This Virus That Has No Cure.*

[8] National AIDS Council Website: https://www.nac.org.zm/?q=historical-background [Accessed: 10 July 2019]
[9] National AIDS Council Website: https://www.nac.org.zm/?q=historical-background [Accessed: 10 July 2019]
[10] In making this assessment, I conducted a deep review of Zambian film or films about Zambia that were archived in the University of Cape Town's African Studies Library, most of which was later destroyed by fire. My description of some of the films in these sections is based on this review.

In the film, Director Mark Newman looks at the impact of HIV on the Zambian population, highlighting the various constraints that characterise the pandemic in the country, including the limited medical resources and strained hospital system. The film was produced by Mark Newman and Robyn Hofmeyer, working with Phakathi Films and SABC, and distributed by the Film Resource Unit.

In *AIDS: Live and Let Die* (1999), Director Jonathan Miller looks at the impact of HIV in Zambia, making a case for the need to have drugs made available to poor countries such as Zambia, where the likely spread of drug-resistant strains of the virus that causes AIDS was higher. The documentary, also part of a series, addresses the subject by foregrounding the story of a 14-year-old girl who was raped at the age of 6 and is living with AIDS but cannot afford the drugs that could save her.

Another HIV-themed documentary, *Choka! Get Lost!'* (2001) candidly follows the lives of children in a Lusaka-based street gang as they go about their daily routine, including scavenging, begging, playing and surviving (Bush, 2016). Most of the children are orphans because of HIV and AIDS. *Choka!* was produced by Tanvir Naomi Bush through her Ambush Productions and directed by Danish director Kasper Bisgaard. Bush had been working with the Willie Mwale Film Foundation, a non-profit she established in 1999 that worked with local communities, street kids and people affected by HIV and AIDS. Unlike some of the other producers behind the HIV and AIDS films, Bush was familiar with the impact of the pandemic on the Zambian population and was able to tell a story that was compelling and well-balanced. Bush had lived in Zambia since the 1970s when her family moved from the United Kingdom (G'Schwind, 2015; Bush, 2016). *Choka!* received international acclaim and was nominated for various honours, including the International Documentary Association (L.A.) Award for Most Distinguished Film and The Pare Lorenz Award for Social Activism in Film in 2001 (G'Schwind, 2015). A similar film*, Imiti Ikula (2001),* produced and directed by Sampa Kangwa-Wilkie and Simon Wilkie, was also released in 2001 and tackled the same themes.

Other notable HIV-related films include *The Lazarus Effect* (2010), an HBO documentary directed by Lance Bangs that followed the lives of AIDS patients before and after they received anti-AIDS medication, and *The Carrier* (2010), directed by Maggie Betts, which follows the story of a polygamous family threatened by the spread of HIV as a wife discovers she is infected and has to learn to live with the disease and prevent her unborn child from contracting

it. *Their Brothers' Keepers: Orphaned by AIDS* (2005) is another notable HIV film. Directed by Catherine Mullins with Bullfrog Films, the 56-minute film follows the story of two child-headed families from a Lusaka township orphaned by AIDS. The documentary uses the families' experiences to highlight the challenges that orphaned children endure to provide for their siblings in communities where resources, employment and local assistance are scarce.

In addition to the films highlighted above, organisations such as the Society for Family Health (SFH) and the Zambia Centre for Communication Programmes (ZCCP) actively embraced entertainment education through film and television in their interventions. SFH, founded in 1992, is a Zambian non-profit affiliated with Population Services International (PSI) that works to promote and implement programmes in areas such as HIV prevention, maternal and child health, and malaria prevention through social marketing. SFH produced various dramatized public service announcements related to their HIV messaging. They often worked with creative agencies that would engage actors, scriptwriters and directors on these productions. For instance, Claude Vlahakis of Langa Visions produced and directed many of these short films for SFH, and later, Muvi Studios, the forerunner to Muvi Television, was also involved in the production of these short film adverts (Angel Phiri, personal interview, 2018 June 27). Muvi also developed the interactive television talk show *Inside Look,* which discussed health and social issues for SFH (van Rossem and Meekers, 2007)

Chris Puta directed two films for the Zambia Centre for Communication Programmes (ZCCP), a Soul City Institute-backed organisation in Zambia, *Ulendo Wa Rose (*2008) and *After the Music Stops* (2009). In *Ulendo Wa Rose (Rose's Journey*), a recently orphaned HIV-positive child, after moving from one relative's home to the next, faces the challenge of being accepted in her new home. *After the Music Stops* tells the story of a married religious couple's struggle to deal with unhappiness in the marriage and are faced with the reality of an extramarital affair and its consequences on their family. Both films were produced by Swatulani Munthali of Viswa Production for the Soul City Institute's cross-border health communication project meant to tackle HIV and AIDS. The films were part of two different Soul City campaigns, "Untold Stories: In a time of HIV" and "Love – Stories in a time of HIV and AIDS" respectively. Leading up to the production of the first series of films, The Soul City Institute financed the training of writers and filmmakers from the region in an intensive 18-month accredited course in scriptwriting and film production.

Soldier Watch Out (2007), another NGO-sponsored film, is an adaptation of a Theatre for Development (TFD) play of the same title, written and directed by the playwright and academic Dickson Mwansa. The film, which depicts the spread of HIV in a Zambian military base, was part of a project meant to combat HIV in the Zambia Defence Forces funded by Project Concern International (PCI). *Soldier Watch Out*, featuring acting talent from the defence forces' theatre groups such as ZANESE, was released directly to DVD and only circulated to about 70 military bases nationwide. Mwansa estimates that the film was seen by about 10,000 people consisting of members of the defence forces and their families in the bases, making it one of the most widely seen films despite its closed audience and non-cinematic release (Mwansa, personal interview, 2019 November 20).

Another NGO-backed, HIV-themed entertainment education production called *Club Risky Business (2009)* is worth noting. *Club Risky Business* examined multiple and concurrent sexual partnerships, a key driver of HIV in Zambia (Amin and Clark, 2010), through the lens of three male friends and their partners. The 10-episode mini-series was broadcast on ZNBC and later uploaded to YouTube for continued consumption. Media 365, a Zambian creative media agency and production house with reasonable entertainment education campaign experience, produced the series. Media 365's team of producers and writers included siblings Catherine and Fred Muthandeni Phiri, also co-founders of the firm. The production was co-financed by a consortium of non-governmental organisations, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) backed Health Communication Partnership (HCP) Zambia, working with SFH and ZCCP. The series was part of these organisations' joint campaign, *One Love Kwasila!* (which translated to '*one love, that is it!'*). According to Cathrine Phiri, the show illuminates the sexual networks of its central characters, three male friends ages ranging between their 20s to 40s, who often converge at a local club called *Club Risky Business* and exchange stories about their relationships and sex lives (personal interview, 2018 June 28).

5.5.2 Advertising's contribution to the film industry in Zambia

In the conclusion of his analysis of Zambia's film sector up to 1998, David Kerr (1998: 177) suggests that Zambian filmmaking would need "imaginative approaches" to rise and capture the market. While there is no clarity on what that would entail, I would like to argue here that the emergence of Zambian feature film production in the 21st century came from the imaginative and sometimes out-of-the-box activities of a few individuals and organisations. This did not come easy, nor was it fast. Among other antecedents, some of which have been

discussed so far, the roots of Zambia's present screen industry can also be traced to the exponential growth in television advertising in the 1990s, following liberalisation and economic reform.

Academic enquiry into advertising in Zambia is still growing. Apart from Basil Hamusokwe's investigation on advertising and its impact on the media (2009), there are hardly any academic outputs on advertising related to media and communication in Zambia. Hamusokwe's work is thus invaluable in foregrounding key elements in the evolution of advertising as it relates to this study on the development of filmmaking in Zambia.

Hamusokwe details the development of commercial advertising, locating its *fons et origo* to pre-colonial Zambia after the first newspaper, *Livingston Mail*, was established in 1906. Advertising in Zambia post-1964 was dominated by white-owned agencies with the capacity to develop sophisticated adverts with the good facilities they managed to acquire. Many of these firms had lucrative contracts from the mines, state-owned enterprises, multinational corporations and white-owned companies that were still operational in Zambia before nationalisation. Agencies such as Lightfoot Advertising, founded in 1966 by Donald Lightfoot, and Gilbert Advertising, founded in 1972 by Humphrey Gilbert, were powerhouses in the country (Hamusokwe, 2009). International ad agencies such as McCann Erickson and Young and Rubicum were also present before 1991, representing multinational corporations such as Colgate Palmolive, Lever Brothers and the Coca-Cola Company, among others.

Between the 1960s and early 1980s, television advertising was still in its infancy. According to Hamusokwe (2009: 26), production processes were still "tedious and laborious", and agencies often relied on foreign companies to process their film reels. It was a time-consuming and expensive process. Technological advancements and the proliferation of video in the late 1980s and early 1990s were a boon for the advertising industry. Video formats and cheaper video cameras meant that timelines were significantly reduced, and copywriters could now develop complex narratives for adverts without worrying about the number of cuts on the celluloid films and the time it would take to process the films.

Few African-owned agencies existed before 1991. These include Kenneth Chibesakunda's Impact Advertising, Sikota Wina's Industrial and Advertising Promotions (IAP), Vernon

Mwaanga's Fleetlight Advertising, and Errol Hickey's Hickey Studios, which was more of a production house than an agency.

Zambia's neo-liberal turn in 1991 brought about significant changes in advertising. The impact of the political economic shift was immediately felt in the industry. For instance, ZNBC, the only television channel, became increasingly dependent on advertising revenue as the MMD government reduced its financial support for the station. By 1997, 70 per cent of the station's income was from advertising (Hamusokwe, 2009). The coming of more international investment into the local economy and the growth of local businesses were all opportunities for advertising firms. More Zambian entrepreneurs took advantage of the deregulated environment and the various technological changes around the same period to venture into advertising. The proliferation of video technologies benefited them, paving the way for the self-taught practice phenomenon that would also characterise filmmaking. According to Fackson Banda (2006), most of these agencies also acted as independent television or film production companies. Banda thus describes them as "opportunistic" (2006: 31). Perhaps even more than establishing advertising agencies, many more local entrepreneurs began investing in media production companies. These production firms worked with advertising agencies as creative boutiques or directly with companies, organisations and government departments that needed commercial productions.

For instance, filmmaker Jeff Sitali, who had retired from ZIS, established Jeff Sitali Advertising Limited. Sitali, already a famed local producer, leveraged his vast experience and international training to develop creative scripts and incorporate cinematic techniques in his productions. In the 1990s, Sitali produced adverts for companies such as Trade Kings Zambia Limited. Production companies such as Muvi Studios and Litovia Studios were some of the other new firms in this market. The growing local advertising space also meant that talent was now in demand to work and feature on advertisements or *advertainment* productions. Recognisable and new acting talent from theatre and television, such as Danny Kanengoki, who sometimes assumed the Mr. Sausande character from Play for Today, and veteran actor Wesley Kaonga, were regular faces on Zambian television adverts. Angel Phiri, a producer and animator at Muvi Studios in the late 1990s, suggests that the production of adverts helped Muvi gather the confidence to work on larger productions. For instance, Phiri recalls Muvi being

contracted by Society for Family Health to produce a television series for one of the social marketing organisation's new line of products. Phiri states:

> After producing several adverts and short PSA films for SFH, we were given the opportunity to produce a longer format programme for them because they could see what we could do. We had the confidence and experience because of the adverts and shorts we were already making *(Phiri, personal interview, 2018 June 27)*.

Advertising played a significant role in financing local television shows when ZNBC and Muvi Television started airing local productions. For instance, *Kabanana*, the first Zambia soap opera discussed in the next chapter, depended on advertising revenue through product placement and spot advert sales in the years it was on the air on ZNBC.

5.5.3 Liluwa Lofuwera (or Red Flower)

A production worth highlighting in this section is the student film *Liluwa Lofuwera* (1996) by Christopher Aylward, a Canadian national. The film was part of Aylward's Masters in Fine Arts project and was shot in Zambia. According to Aylward, *Liluwa Lofuwer*a (or Red Flower) is about the clash that often occurs when people from two completely different orbits come together. Aylward notes that "it's a fictional drama that follows the relationship that develops between honky-tonk Canadian Bobbi-Jo and Gift, the security guard at the house of her sister in Lusaka, whom she's visiting" (personal communication, 2022 March 31). The film stands out from the films discussed in the chapter as it is a fiction film that was made at a time when documentary film was popular. Furthermore, as Aylward notes, many Zambians were part of the cast and crew, and people from several countries participated in making the film.

5.6 Reading a ZIS Film: Zambia: Birthplace of the Struggle (1995)

Zambia: Birthplace of the Struggle (1997), produced and directed by Chola Chifukushi and Patrick Lungu, is a Zambia Information Services (ZIS) historical documentary production for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services (MIBS). The film was produced for television viewership, and VHS copies of the production were circulated to Zambian missions abroad and at special regional meetings. The documentary traces Zambia's contribution to the liberation movements in Southern Africa between 1964 and 1994. It chronicles critical events that influenced President Kenneth Kaunda's decision to support the liberation movements from

Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, as well as the consequences of that support on Zambia. Throughout the film, which I will refer to as *Birthplace*, the viewer is presented with arguments and examples that support the idea that Zambia could not avoid getting involved in the various liberation wars in the Southern African region because of its geopolitical positionality and its early transition to self-rule before many of its neighbours.

The 57-minute film is a well-constructed retelling of the Zambian experience in which the producers are careful not to gloss over details. *Birthplace*'s approach to history falls in the category of films Robert Rosenstone (2001: 53) would call history as a document. This type of historical film, in its most common form, has a narrator and/or historical witnesses or experts that speak as recent footage of the historical subject of the film is shown, and these visuals are interpolated with older footage that could be from old films, newsreels, photographs, paintings, graphics and artefacts, as well as old newspaper and magazine clippings.

The documentary opens with a large title, "From the Political Archives" on a black background. This immediately gives the viewer an indication that the film uses archived footage. The archived footage is central to the story's advancement and meeting the film's goal of highlighting Zambia's contribution to the regional liberation struggles. The title is juxtaposed with the non-diegetic sound of gunfire until the black title background fades into archival footage of soldiers in a battle. We can now see that the gunfire sound heard at the start was coming from this footage of soldiers involved in heavy fighting. The archival footage seen throughout the film includes material from ZIS and other sources such as Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), United Nations Television, Global Visions and the BBC's Channel 4. The ZIS material used in the film gives us a glimpse of old ZIS and Central African Film Unit (CAFU) film footage collected over the years. However, the documentary does not indicate when ZIS and non-ZIS material is used. Viewers are only made aware that there is content from other sources in the closing credits sequence of the documentary.

The documentary's title appears with visuals of Zambia's Freedom Statue in the background. The Freedom Statue, one of Zambia's strongest national symbols, depicts a man breaking free from chains representing the shackles of colonialism. It was erected in 1974 to mark the country's 10th independence anniversary celebrations and honour the freedom fighters who were a part of the violent liberation struggle that led to independence. At this point in the film,

we hear the narrator's voice. The narration sets the tone for the documentary in his first two sentences: “This is the Liberation story of Southern Africa. It is the story told and lived through Zambia’s tears, blood and sacrifice in the battle of the racist reign of terror and distraction.”

After the introduction, a montage of visuals and sound bites of speeches from four different sources appearing in a silhouette of the Zambia map superimposed on a green background is then shown. The montage begins with a clip of Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad, the Prime Minister of Malaysia at the time, followed by President Kenneth Kaunda and President Nelson Mandela, and lastly, General Kingsley Chinkuli, Zambia’s first army commander. All the clips are central to *Birthplace* and its crux. They intend to establish Zambia and its capital, Lusaka, as having been critical to the liberation movements in Southern Africa. For example, Dr. Mohamad’s words are perhaps even the inspiration for the documentary’s title. Dr Mohamad is shown saying, “We know that Lusaka has been the birthplace of many struggles, and the ANC has chosen Lusaka as its base.” In Mandela’s clip, the celebrated South African leader states, “This is not just my other city; it is Lusaka, the home of our headquarters. Because of the important contribution of this city in the freedom struggles in the South and elsewhere, it no longer belongs to Zambia alone; it belongs to the continent as a whole.” Footage from another historical monument, the Golden Needles Monument, is used to transition from one clip to another. The Golden Needles Monument was erected in Lusaka to celebrate Zambia’s hosting of the 3rd International Conference of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) held in Lusaka from 8 to 10 September 1970 (1971). The use of the NAM symbol is interesting, considering that the documentary references the influence of the West (the United States of America) and the East (USSR or China) in the liberation struggles. The film shows how Zambia, a member of the Non-aligned block, is somehow forced to take a side.

The video montage at the beginning of the film gives the impression that the four individuals will reappear somewhere in the documentary. However, only two appear: Kaunda, in more archival footage, and General Chinkuli, who is a primary interviewee for the documentary. Chinkuli is one of only two key interview sources. The other is Lt. General Benjamin Mibenge, who served as the Army Chief of Staff during the regional liberation struggles. In the film’s other interviews, the individuals speaking are not identified. This is perhaps because these interviews are obtained from more archived footage from other sources.

From the onset, *Birthplace* contextualizes and problematises Zambia's positionality in Southern African political history. The narrator points out that Zambia's colonial experience was interlinked with its neighbours in southern Africa. This argument is further developed when the narrator posits that Zambia's dependence on its southern neighbours (Rhodesia and South Africa) for its road and rail link to the sea after independence in 1964, was a calculated strategy by the colonialists. It also highlights how Zambia's primary economic activity, copper mining, was set up to depend on the two countries. For example, the coal used in the copper smelters came from Wankie Colliery and the power used in the mines was exported from Kariba South Bank Station, both in Rhodesia. At the same time, copper exports were dependent on the Rhodesian Railways and alternative routes in Portuguese-administered Angola and Mozambique were unusable due to the Portuguese Colonial War.

Birthplace further argues that colonialists in the region saw the Zambian government's push to develop its own infrastructure to reduce its dependence on the South as a threat. Fearing that a developing Zambia would be used to spring guerrilla warfare against the white regimes because of its geopolitical position, the country became the target of widespread acts of sabotage and destabilisation. These acts were mainly carried out by the Ian Smith administration in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and supported by John Vorster's apartheid government in South Africa.

The documentary also contextualises in brief but very clearly the history and political climate in the home countries of the liberation movements it supported, namely, South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola and Mozambique. The liberation groups that were supported include the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) from Portuguese Angola, the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) from Rhodesia[11], the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN)[12] on South West Africa (Namibia), and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) from Portuguese Mozambique. The documentary uses historical research and archival footage to make key arguments. In all the cases, the documentary shows how the governments of these countries orchestrated incursions into Zambia to make acts of aggression and sabotage. The first case the documentary highlights is that of Mozambique.

[11] ZIPRA and ZANLA were the military wings of Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), which Robert Mugabe was a part of, respectively.
[12] PLAN was the military wing of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO).

At about 15 minutes into the film, the first interview, given by General Chinkuli, who was first introduced in the opening montage, is shown. The placement of this interview is appropriate because, by now, the narration has given significant background about the liberation struggles. In this interview, we learn that the first liberation movement Zambia supported was from Mozambique. Chinkuli addresses how this came about.

The narrator remains prominent throughout the documentary and consistently provides passionate narration, sometimes giving the sense that this topic is close to him. Rather than merely being a disembodied, highly knowledgeable yet unknowable individual who exists outside spatial and temporal margins that exist in the world represented in the film as expected in most voice-of-God documentaries (Nichols, 2010), the narrator in *Birthplace*, it seems, wants the viewer to feel a part of the world of the documentary. Though disembodied, the narrator, Robert Mubiana, also credited as the film editor, is at times emphatic and emotive, bringing the Chifukushi and Lungu penned script to life.

At several points in the documentary, the script, with its postcolonial themes expressed by the narration, takes an advocacy role and appropriates the language and literary tools such as poetry and metaphor to further the film's message and its anti-colonial sentiment. For example, the narrator demonstrates a disdain for Europe's Scramble for Africa when describing the colonisation of South West Africa (Namibia). He likens the process to a fisherman picking sardines. In the narration, Mubiana states:

> At the turn of the century, European explores had already pegged on the Atlantic shores of South West Africa, a symbol of their perceived claim to the territory: a cross and a white man's statue carved out of rock. South West Africa or Namibia became a German colony in 1894 during the scramble for Africa when European powers picked slices of African territories like a fisherman picking or selecting sardines.

In another instance, after contextualising Zambia's standing in the region after the country's independence, the narrator states that "Zambia was a war baby, born to the sound of gunfire on the eastern and western frontiers in Zaire, Angola and Mozambique." He uses the term 'war

baby' to illustrate how the Zambian nation emerged when some of its neighbours were involved in armed conflicts and had to endure the consequences of being caught up in these circumstances.

While *Birthplace* is not oppositional in the overt ways that Third Cinema films are described (Solanas and Getino, 1970; Gabriel, 1982), its anti-colonial tones give cause for such a classification. For instance, the narration again gives this impression when describing Portugal's decision to withdraw from Angola and end the Portuguese Colonial Wars. Mubiana does not hold back his frustration with the colonialists. He states:

> On the 10th of November 1975, the Portuguese brought five centuries of colonial rule to a sudden, pathetic and whimpering end, but already, three liberation movements had been allowed to arm themselves in the run-up to elections.

At many points, the documentary switches between following and circumventing the conventions of documentary film. However, this does not affect the flow of the narrative because, at the end of viewing, the primary aim of the production would have been fulfilled. For instance, *Birthplace* fails to acknowledge the source of some of the archival material it uses. The absence of such information in the film, it seems, could be deliberate. Without acknowledging texts on screen, audiences are presented with a story from what looks like one source and with one aim. Again, Mubiana's impassioned narration helps strengthen this approach. However, this circumvention raises questions about the documentary's assumed claim for truth and authenticity. The creators of *Birthplace* assume that viewers will accept this version of the story and the voices it represents without question.

Another interesting technique the filmmakers use in *Birthplace* is scrolling text and tables to show various figures helpful to the viewer's comprehension of the story. This technique works well when it is used to explain the financial toll of the liberation wars on Zambia. The data is presented in scrolling tabulation overlaid over a blue background that shows the military spending of the Zambia Armed Forces between 1964 and 1977. Rather than use the narrator, General Chinkuli's voiceover explains why recruitment and spending are necessary. This technique helps break the monotony of the narrator and interviews, which we have seen quite

often this far into the film. The text enables the viewer to see the trends in spending in this period without being overloaded with the narration of all the numbers.

The film's use of images of newspaper clippings is also worth noting. Birthplace must present historical data as accurately as possible as a historical documentary. Newspaper articles are a vital source of information that serve as primary data in research on historical and current events. When used in a documentary, they give us a glimpse into the event as and when it happened, including how it was framed, how it escalated or developed over time and a snapshot of the general feeling around the event. *Birthplace* achieves this by using newspaper clippings.

For example, in presenting Zambia's experience with the Angolan liberation and civil wars, the film depends on newspaper clippings for its visuals. A montage of images of newspaper headlines, working with the narration, contextualises the Angolan situation, detailing the acts of aggression from the Portuguese government before that country's independence and the South African and US-backed National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, or in Portuguese *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA), after independence in 1975. The newspaper images are then used to show stories of the incursions in Zambia. The use of this technique here suggests that there was very little film footage of these military activities in Zambia at the time. At this point, we are introduced to the second main interviewee in the film, Lt. General Benjamin Mibenge. Again, the images of newspaper articles are used with narration in the section about Zimbabwe. At one point, a montage of these images is used for 2 minutes and 38 seconds, broken off with a part of the Chinkuli interview, followed by an extra minute of the newspaper headline images, before other archival footage is used.

Birthplace takes a condensation approach to deliver the Zambian experience in documentary form. According to Robert Rosenstone (1995), condensation is a process in historical filmmaking that allows researchers and producers to assemble evidence to represent a more extensive historical experience. Central to condensation is the idea that the experience of the many present during a historical event can be expressed by the experience of the few when the story is told. The condensation arises from the demands of space and time. In *Birthplace*, this approach visibly influences the selection of sources and interviews. The Chinkuli and Mibenge interviews are instrumental in achieving this.

Mibenge's interview was conducted outside, while Chinkuli was indoors. The choice to have the two primary sources in the different spaces helps provide a contrast for the interviews. In both, the camera person uses a medium shot with a strict adherence to the rule of thirds. The resulting image has the right headroom, and we can see the subjects' faces. *Birthplace* uses close-ups and medium shots to allow the viewer to appreciate the facial expressions and connect with the interviewee in the story (Balázs, 2003). Facial close-ups are often juxtaposed with newsreel footage or images of newspaper clippings. This helps the viewer establish a visual understanding of what the sources are describing.

It is hard to ignore the lack of female representation in the film. The only woman in the film is seen and heard 18 minutes into the film in an interview obtained from archived footage. The unnamed woman is inserted after a link that addresses the impact of the post-independence civil war in Mozambique between the governing FRELIMO and the United States and South African-backed Mozambican National Resistance or in Portuguese, Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO), and their raid on Zambian village and infrastructure. The woman, a Mozambican refugee, is seen and heard for about 17 seconds, and she explains why she is in Zambia.

The film's lack of women's voices can be attributed to how political and military life was mostly male-centred at the time. Various scholars have sought to highlight the 'maleness' of the liberation struggles in southern Africa and the problem of a male-centric approach to the movements (Akawa, 2014; Meer, 2005; Suttner, 2005; Whitelaw, 2022). However, as Whitelaw (2022) argues, the lack of or poor representation of female characterisation in liberation struggle discourse has thwarted what their actual contribution was. In this sense, we can argue that more could have been done to add women's voices because they were a part of the liberation struggles.

Another key element in *Birthplace* is how the film uses music and sound to enhance the storytelling. Music and sound are not accidental or an afterthought but a key element in our understanding and appreciation of the film. As Jeffrey Ruoff (1993: 33) notes, music in a documentary "provides continuity, covers up edits, facilitates changes of scenes, provides mood, offers entertaining spectacle, allows for narrative interludes and montage sequences, and comments on the action." This is the case in *Birthplace*. Emotive instrumental and classical

music act as the score to accompany the narration. These non-diegetic melodies match the mood of the script and narrator at a particular point. This matching is very effective in sequences that use archival footage depicting the war's devastation and the acts of sabotage that the documentary highlights. The music compliments the visuals depicting the war's horror in the regions where it occurred and its impact on the people in those areas. The producers allow the gunshots to be heard, especially in sequences with archival footage of war or military tactics. The gunfire sound is quite menacing and effectively enhances the viewers' emotional response to the film. The sound from this footage is not always clear, yet it does not take away from its impact. There is lack of clarity in some of the sound from the old footage. This is a stylistic element used in some documentaries whose aim is not to match the controlled sound in fiction films, as Ruoff (1993: 27) observes, but to provide helpful audio that transports and immerses the viewer into the period seen in the old footage.

Nichols (2015: ix) notes, "few things help us to better understand what it feels like to be in a particular time or place, in the midst of a specific challenge or situation, than music." Music, as used in *Birthplace*, is not merely a colouring but is an integral part of the messaging in the film and, later, a part of the world of the film. The latter occurs when the narrator introduces us to Alick Nkhata, a broadcaster and musician who was a victim of one of the bombings. The narrator indicates that "In his brutal death, the family lost a guiding light; the nation, a gifted entertainer; and the world, the conscience of mankind." As these words are uttered, a popular song by Nhhata, *'Imbote*" (which translates to 'roots' in the Bemba language) begins to play in the background as still images of Nkhata's funeral are shown. The film then cuts to a video of a guitar being strummed, and we see Nkhata and his band members performing the song in the background. The performance of the song is played for a minute before the frame is frozen on Nkhata's face while the documentary's credits begin to roll, and the song continues to play. Towards the end of the credits, with Nkhata's face still on screen, we hear the narrator's voice one last time, stating, "To him and the many Zambians who perished in the protracted liberation wars of Africa, the nation remembers." The rest of the credits roll on as the song ends.

The story of Nkhata's death and his song are used to give the documentary a human face and effectively show the liberation struggles' impact on individual life. At his death, Nkhata had

become a national and regional icon known for his music and broadcast work.[13] The incorporation of his story at the end of the film effectively personalises a documentary that has been grand and national in focus until that moment. As one whose life had an impact beyond the Zambian borders, Nkhata's story brings it down to the individual at a scale that is perhaps more relatable to ordinary people.

By the end of the documentary, we can see how Birthplace's various production, stylistic and narrative elements all communicate the idea that the liberation struggle and Zambia's involvement was about people. As Rosenstone (1995) observes about historical films, whether dramatic or documentaries, the individual is placed in the forefront of the historical process. Their experience is used as a substitute for the experience and story of the larger society the film seeks to represent. In *Birthplace*, it is through the narrated encounters of the interviewees that we learn of the Zambian experience. The other interviews from archived footage also effectively meet the film's goal. However, there are not many interviews that strengthen the overall storytelling. Instead, there is a strong dependence on the narration, the archived footage, and the images of newspaper articles. Nevertheless, even with the few interviews, our understanding of Zambia's contribution is, in the end, shaped by how well all these elements work together.

In the end, the documentary comes together, not just as a story about Zambia's encounter for the sake of it, but as a story about people such as Alick Nkhata, Kingley Chinkuli or the unidentified woman from the archival footage, and their unique and in some cases, tragic experiences in the regional freedom struggles.

5.7 Summary and Discussion

This chapter examined the development of filmmaking in Zambia during the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) rule in the country. The chapter primarily looked at the first decade of the MMD, beginning in 1991 following the change to multiparty politics and economic liberalization, right through to the turn of the century in 2001. In this period, Zambia went from having a historic general election in 1991 with a promise of significant liberal

[13] Nkhata began his career as a broadcaster with the Central African Service (CABS) and worked in Lusaka and Salisbury (Harare). He was also trained filmmaker and went on to head Zambia Broadcasting Services (ZBS, now ZNBC). He founded the Lusaka Radio Band and his own Alick Nkhata Band. His music was popular among Africans in Nyasaland (Malawi) and parts of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) (Sichinga, 2008).

economic reform and development to a debate on whether President Frederick Chiluba, who came to office in 1991, could run for an unconstitutional third term in 2001, amid an ebbing economy.

The chapter began by providing details about the political and economic context that the film sector in Zambia operated in during the MMD years. It has demonstrated that the development of mass media sectors such as film is linked to what the authorities determined to be the role of the media in the liberalised society. The country struggled economically, even as it pursued legal and policy reform in all sectors, including the media. The chapter highlighted some of the critical reforms in the audio-visual sector, focusing primarily on television broadcasting, arts administration and the development of the first cultural policy. The chapter has shown that although the reforms did not directly address filmmaking or film practice, they did impact the later development of Zambia's film industry and culture. These policy and regulatory changes laid a foundation for activities that would eventually lead to the country's film production development. For example, liberalising television airwaves was fundamental to the emergence of private television stations such as Muvi Television in 2002. Muvi Television (discussed in Chapter 6) would become a major player in the local film industry.

The chapter also discussed the development of state- and non-state-led efforts at screen production. It has shown how ZIS continued to lead state-led filmmaking in the 1990s, continuing with its historical mandate but embracing video technologies (rather than celluloid film) to air them on the national broadcaster, ZNBC and for use in diplomatic missions. ZIS maintained its old approach to producing informative and educative documentaries over fiction. Further, the organisation's merger with the Zambia News Agency (ZANA) further influenced its adoption of a more journalistic approach to storytelling.

For its part, ZNBC continued with the production of *Play for Today*, which was renamed *Play Circle*. The production evolved from the teleplay aesthetic to a more traditional television drama look, influenced by video technologies that allowed more location shoots. ZNBC would, in the later part of the decade, partner with Laurence Thompson's Picture Perfect Productions to produce Zambia's first soap opera, *Kabanana* in 2001, as will be shown in the next Chapter.

The chapter has revealed how a 1997 training programme funded by UNESCO Zimbabwe and conducted at the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication (ZAMCOM) was instrumental in creating a new generation of filmmakers critical in developing the film sector at the start of the new millennium.

An observation this chapter makes about Zambian filming in this decade is the prominence of the documentary mode in both state and non-state films. The chapter has also demonstrated how non-state filmmaking was mainly a preserve of NGO-supported, foreign documentary filmmakers that tackled various social themes. Several of such films addressed the country's growing HIV and AIDS prevalence. In the second half of the MMD rule, also discussed in the next chapter, HIV and AIDS-themed productions increasingly became dramatized and involved more local filmmakers.

The chapter has also established how the growth of commercial advertising in the liberalised economy contributed to the development of filmmaking. By embracing the growing private business space and the coming in of foreign conglomerates, advertising agencies increased their production capacity while embracing video, producing dramatized adverts and using local talent. The result was a developing class of producers, directors, and actors that gained production confidence to venture into filmmaking as a commercial activity later.

Lastly, the chapter also provided a reading of Chola Chifukushi and Patrick Lungu's documentary film, *Zambia: Birthplace of Freedom Struggle* (1997). The film is an example of ZIS's approach to documentary storytelling that was driven by a strong imperative to educate and inform audiences. As a result, great efforts went towards research, which is evident in the quality of the script in *Birthplace*. This approach to filmmaking has been characteristic of ZIS productions since its establishment. The filmmakers delve into providing the historical contexts in detail. They use archival footage, newspaper clippings, interviews, music and sound to enrich the storytelling. Narration prominently drives the film but not in a disembodied, detached way. The narration is active, emphatic and emotive at times. In all this, we can assume the aim is to educate viewers, both local and abroad, about Zambia's contribution to and experience in the liberation wars in the region. The narrator takes the role of the teacher in the classroom, and the audience is the pupils. By the end of 'the class' (the film), learners (viewers) should be able to explain the reasons for Zambia's involvement in the regional liberation struggles and the country's experience in these conflicts.

The evidence presented in the chapter shows that Zambia's political economic shift at the start of the MMD rule was instrumental in developing the country's audiovisual sectors. Though limited, the emergence of filmmaking activities in the first ten years of the MMD rule is directly linked to the changes brought about by political and economic liberalisation. Liberalisation brought about reform, and reform brought opportunity. However, even with the political and economic reform, only people or groups with capital or economic power (such as the government, NGOs, or advertising agencies on behalf of clients) could effectively participate in filmmaking. The coming of economic and regulatory reform in the 1990s was an opportunity to see increased growth in many sectors in Zambia. For the film sector, the period was, in some respects, a missed opportunity, especially for the state. In many ways, the continued support for non-commercial (documentary) films perpetuated the pre-1991 status quo. Except for a few entrepreneurs and those who had access to video technologies early on, such as those involved with advertising agencies, filmmaking remained a farfetched idea for most people, at least until the latter part of the 1990s.

The next chapter is a continuation of the discussion on the development of filmmaking in the MMD years. It will focus on the second half of the MMD rule between 2001 and 2011 and will discuss some emerging activities that built up to a take-off in screen production in Zambia. Many of the developments in that period are indeed linked to some of the policies, interventions or activities discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6

THE TAKE-OFF: FILM AND SCREEN PRODUCTION IN THE MMD YEARS, CONTINUED (2001 – 2011)

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I continue discussing the development of film in Zambia during the MMD years, focusing on what I argue to be some of the outcomes from the activities highlighted in Chapter 5. The events, films and debates considered in this chapter are primarily concentrated in the second half of the 20-year MMD rule. I highlight how commercial filmmaking activities eventually took off and discuss the contribution of television broadcasters and video filmmakers. This chapter seeks to connect the various dots and bridge some of the arguments layered in the thesis so far to present a clearer picture of the growth of film in Zambia in this epoch.

I begin by building up on the influence and contribution of television on Zambian cinematic arts. For instance, I will highlight the work of Lawrence Thompson on *Kabanana* (2001-2003) and Chala Tumelo on *Loose Ends* (2002-2012), Zambia's first soap opera productions, which were part of ZNBC's attempt to boost local content. I also detail the contribution of Muvi Television, Zambia's first private commercial television station. The discussion on Muvi TV is essential as it details the 'journey' to the release of Zambia's first feature films. I show how Muvi TV through its various television series and films influenced narrative practices in Zambian cinematic arts.

The chapter also brings into focus the growth of video films in this period. Here, I discuss both the formal and the more vibrant informal video film market in this epoch and examine their place in the broader context of the take-off period. I identify some video film creators and highlight some issues surrounding their work. Beyond this, the chapter also briefly highlights the contributions of other key filmmakers in this period, such as Jabbes Mvula and Abdon Yezi. Overall, the chapter presents a much-needed historical, analytical and introspective look at this period that I argue signified a take-off in filmmaking in Zambia.

6.2 Independent Television productions take the lead on ZNBC

As already established, cinematic arts in this epoch mainly concentrated on television productions. Without structures and resources to support filmmaking and the film industry, television productions emerged as an avenue of cultural expression among Zambian producers. By the later part of the 1990s and into the early 2000s, various producers and writers were willing to put their experience to the test, and more enthusiasts and entrepreneurs were willing to stake their investments in production companies. Many took advantage of factors such as the rise of video technologies, occasional training programmes, and newly acquired skills learned from advertising jobs and skills transfer working with foreign producers. In this section, I will discuss some early productions that contributed in many ways to the development of Zambian screen arts.

6.2.1 Lawrence Thompson and *Kabanana*

In 1999, `video journalist Lawrence Thompson developed the concept for the television soap opera *Kabanana* (ZNBC, 2001 – 2002, 2004). When the show premiered on ZNBC TV in 2001, *Kabanana* became Zambia's first-ever scripted television drama series and soap opera production. It was a departure and a long way from the teleplay format that had existed years earlier (as seen in *Play Circle*). The soap was thus an important milestone for Zambian screen arts. Through his production company, Picture Perfect Productions, Thompson was able to attract a pool of new and experienced (mostly stage) actors and crew members to achieve this feat. Before *Kabanana*, almost all scripted entertainment content on Zambian television was imported.

Thompson started as an electronic news gathering (ENG) camera operator in the 1980s. He developed his camera skills working with various international news agencies as they covered stories in Zambia and other countries on the continent. Thompson was proficient with both celluloid film and video technologies. His first experience on a major film production came when he was contracted to work with Sir Richard Attenborough and his crew as they conducted research and captured material for Attenborough's *Cry Freedom* (1987), a film based on South African anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko and the journalist Donald Woods. Thompson continued to produce news and documentary pieces through the 1990s, including various HIV awareness shorts for the health and social marketing organisation Society for Family Health (L. Thompson, personal interview, 2018 July 11).

Thompson began developing *Kabanana* in the late 1990s. He engaged different people and organisations for whatever form of support he could get in readiness for production. Thompson assembled a team of experienced and inexperienced acting talent, writers, and other crew members. However, even some of the 'experienced' personnel had never worked on a production of this scale but were more accustomed to stage-based or current affairs productions. The lack of training that had characterised Zambia's screen production over the years was evident from the beginning of the soap's production as some of the crew members did not understand aspects such as composition, blocking or directorial cues, and the specific responsibilities they would have on set. As a result of the training deficiencies, Thompson "mobilised resources to send some of his crew members for training in these and other facets of production in South Africa" (L. Thompson, personal interview, 2018 July 11).

Kabanana follows the glamourous and sometimes chaotic lives of the wealthy Kabanana family, led by the family patriarch, Maybin Kabanana (Fred Chanda). Mr Kabanana fights to keep his children at bay as they compete for a place at the head of the company as their father ages. At the same time, his sweet-talking sly brother, Patrick (Chomba Kalumba), schemes to take over the family business. Mr Kabanana is by and large an honourable man, but behind the veil, he has a secret girlfriend, Dorcas (Lumbiwe Tembo), who is determined to secure and cement her place in the Kabanana empire. Further drama unfolds when the affair is exposed. The show merges the main plot surrounding the Kabanana family with various auxiliary storylines through twists and turns that employ several tropes influenced by American and South African day-time soaps, such as being dynastic when it centres on a wealthy family (Tamar Liebes and Sonia Livingstone, 1998), attempting to achieve verisimilitude to its off-screen setting, or a proclivity to stereotypical representations of women (Gledhill, 2003).

According to Thompson (2018), ZNBC had no experience in commissioning creative content when he took *Kabanana* to the broadcaster. ZNBC's policy was that independently produced content had to be paid for by its producers or a sponsor. In the long run, this policy prevented independent producers from taking their creative projects to the station. Further, ZNBC could not also buy content because of its liquidity challenges. Thus, Thompson opted to source funds through sponsors that would pay for *Kabanana's* airtime. However, this also meant that financial resources that could fund production were often channelled towards keeping the show on air.

Kabanana premiered on ZNBC TV in 2001 with much fanfare and publicity. According to Thompson, the production was well received by audiences. After a few more episodes aired, executives at ZNBC revised their stance on requiring Thompson to pay for airtime after seeing *Kabanana*'s potential to earn the broadcaster even more income from advertising. Picture Perfect Productions and ZNBC struck an advertising revenue sharing agreement, and it would see both entities split revenues earned from the advertisement slots sold during the show.

To further support production, Thompson also introduced product placement opportunities in episodes to earn more income for the show. The marketing of *Kabanana* also included using some of the soap's actors to endorse sponsors' products in separate adverts. In a later season, ZNBC offered up one of its studios for the taping of *Kabanana*. Thompson's team built up various sets for the soap at ZNBC and this helped reduce the cost of production by reducing the need to move around from one location to another.

Despite these marketing interventions, *Kabanana* still ended because the income from the sponsorships and other fundraising initiatives could not match the cost of production. According to Thompson, some sponsors became inconsistent, sometimes taking several months to honour commitments. Thompson no longer saw the project as viable when he found himself paying out of pocket for several costs. Consequently, the soap's production stopped after an initial 52 episodes. Thompson sold his stake in the *Kabanana* project to his Zambian business partner, David Kombe, a marketing and communication specialist, and Savannah Pictures, a firm owned by Munyaradzi Hwengwere, a Zimbabwean advertising entrepreneur. *Kabanana* only returned to the screen in 2004 for an extra season before it ended the same year. Following its run on ZNBC, and with the help of production partners such as Savannah Pictures, *Kabanana* was later syndicated to broadcast stations in Zimbabwe and Namibia. This deal was another first for a Zambian production.

In its time, *Kabanana* served as a training ground for both onscreen and off-screen talent. It was instrumental in helping shape the technical and production capacity of many people who worked behind the scenes on the show. In later years, some of the show's cast and crew became key figures in Zambia's screen industry. For instance, Owas Ray Mwape, who starred in the soap, became a celebrated filmmaker and actor, while others, such as series writers Becky Ngoma and Mingeli Palata, also became accomplished screenwriters and producers.

6.2.2 Chala Tumelo and *Loose Ends*

While Thompson was developing *Kabanana* in Lusaka, another new project was being worked on in the Copperbelt Province. Chala Tumelo, a theology graduate, musician and record producer, was in talks with ZNBC's Kitwe Studios to develop a drama series that would be part of the line-up of content from the Copperbelt. Tumelo, had just completed the production of a successful gospel music programme for the broadcaster and was looking for his next project. This was the genesis of *Loose Ends* (ZNBC, 2002 – 2012).

Like Thompson, Tumelo put together a team of experienced and new talent. In search for on-screen talent, Tumelo's BGM Studio III made a public casting call and "people from all over the Copperbelt showed up for auditions", which he took as an indication of how much people were interested in being a part of the cinematic arts in Zambia (Tumelo, personal interview, 2021 August 12).

Loose Ends follows the life of Mwaka Sichiza (Given Kateule), a young, beautiful and naïve woman from a respected and well-to-do family in Ndola. Mwaka is engaged to Mike Mbao (Clive Mwape), who, upon his arrival from South Africa to marry Mwaka, is instead arrested at the airport on a sham drug possession charge. Their lives are set off-balance, and Mwaka, who is supposed to take over her father's business, gets entangled with a notorious playboy and criminal called Beenzu Hachilensa (Mupeta Mweshi), who is determined to have Mwaka for himself. Meanwhile, Mike escapes detention to discover who framed him and possibly save his relationship. *Loose Ends* explores themes of love, friendship, greed, wealth, poverty, and religion as they are experienced in Zambian families and urban life. According to Tumelo, the title *Loose End* was meant to signify the open-endedness of life, as seen through the life of Mwaka.

Loose Ends is a hybrid series combining soap opera tropes with other dramatic styles. The show also falls within the dynastic typology of soap opera as it centres around the question of kinship and inheritance in the Sichiza family (Tamar Liebes and Sonia Livingstone, 1998). However, rather than solely contingent on melodramatic elements as a soap, Tumelo successfully balances the protracted storyline around the Sichizas and the other main characters with various subplots that borrow from different subgenres such as crime procedural and situational comedy. By doing this, *Loose Ends* becomes a complex juxtaposition of storytelling elements that provide viewers with compelling plotlines that are engaging and unpredictable,

all the while remaining true to the main story. Coincidentally, the fact that the show is aired on a weekly basis further adds to its differentiation from traditional soap operas.

Tumelo argues that *Loose Ends* was well received by audiences because of its originality and authenticity (personal interview, 2021 August 12). The series ran up to Season 9, becoming Zambia's longest-running scripted drama series on television. ZNBC allowed Tumelo to place adverts he sourced during the episode breaks to finance production. Income from these placements would be directly channelled to production expenses.

Tumelo's partnership with ZNBC faced numerous challenges. One of the challenges came to light in 2007 when the national broadcaster failed to air an episode due to overrunning in programming. This failure did not go unnoticed by advertisers whose buy-in directly funded production. Overrunning was a recurring challenge in ZNBC programming. Another challenge arose when ZNBC demanded that Tumelo relinquish advertising control on *Loose Ends*. Eventually, ZNBC took over ad placement on *Loose Ends* and unilaterally determined how much money the show's producers would get from the ad revenue. Due to the inconsistencies in programming, *Loose Ends* lost many its viewers by Season 9. ZNBC ordered and paid for a 10th season, which Tumelo's team delivered, even though the broadcaster never aired a single episode. This marked the end of the series on the station.

According to Tumelo, viewers often compared *Loose Ends* and *Kabanana*, creating a faux competition between the two series. On the one hand, *Kabanana*'s storyline, though popular, was often seen as elitist as it depicted a lifestyle that a privileged few were familiar with in Zambia at the time. On the other hand*, Loose Ends*, was perceived to be closer to the everyday Zambian life audiences could relate to. Despite such perceptions, *Kabanana*, enjoyed significantly more commercial support, and with the ad revenue, the producers ensured its production values were consistently higher. *Loose Ends* did not enjoy the same attention in its initial seasons. However, as the story developed, the series drew more viewers and sponsors. The consistency over the years also gave the Ndola-based production an edge as it became ZNBC's longest-running drama series (Tumelo, personal interview, 2021 August 12). Ultimately, both shows were ground-breaking and vital milestones in developing Zambian screen production.

In February 2018, *Loose Ends* was relaunched and renamed Shadows on 1Zed, an M-Net channel part of MultiChoice's digital terrestrial television (DTT) platform, GOTv. *Shadows*

ran as a continuation of *Loose Ends*, picking up the story six years after the original series ended, with most of the original cast returning.

6.2.3 Other Productions

In 2004, ZNBC began airing *At Least a Smile*, a comedy series that follows the life of a character called Dr. Jose, a crafty Congolese migrant doctor who often finds himself in problems as he impishly navigates various aspects of Zambian society. Through Dr. Jose (played by Chomba Kalungu, who also starred in *Kabanana*), the series engages with various social subjects, including marriage and infidelity, alcoholism, professionalism and religion. His poor command of English and his conspicuous Congolese francophone accent are used together as a comic device for the series. However, his depicted foreignness is not explored or adequately addressed.

CK Entertainment produced the show in partnership with Audio Video Studios (AVS), a unit of Mission Press, a Catholic Church-owned multimedia company based in Ndola. Mission Press was founded in 1970 as a printing press for the Catholic Church. In 2000, then Mission Press Director, Father Miha Drevensek, created AVS to support the church's evangelistic efforts (Kabombwe, 2015: 29, 30). Father Drevensek also offered AVS equipment for commercial use to support various media arts in the province and the country.

According to Kabombwe (2015: 86), At Least a Smile was created to "illustrate Christian double standards" and to reprimand hypocritical behaviours and attitudes. Interestingly, the show's representation of Christianity often put Mission Press at odds with the Catholic Bishops, who felt that a church institution should not be associated with a production that misrepresented the faith (Kabombwe, 2015).

Between 2005 and 2007, ZNBC also aired another independently produced drama called *Bupilo* (ZNBC, 2005 – 2007). The series was created by Florence Mulenga, who partnered with Lusaka Systems Studios, an independent production house known for music and video production. *Bupilo*, written by Collins Zulu, primarily follows the story of a family whose breadwinner is retrenched but must find a way to provide for his household. The experience of retrenchment was all too familiar for many families in Zambia as it reflected the challenges of structural adjustment and privatisation in the 1990s (as highlighted in Chapter 5). The word *'bupilo'* translates to 'life' in several Zambian languages, and thus, the storylines in the drama series are developed to tackle various subjects as they are experienced in everyday Zambian

life. The show also confronted the subject of modernity through the 'city versus village life' and the 'novel versus traditional' way of life dichotomies. Here, the focus was to contrast the lives and choices of characters from either side.

While *Bupilo* did not receive the attention that *Kabanana* or even *Loose Ends* had, it was a welcome addition to the national broadcaster's content offering, which was still dominated by foreign entertainment content. *Bupilo* also contributed to the development of talent, giving both cast and crew experience working on relatively large, scripted television productions.

Kabanana, *Loose Ends* and *Bupilo* are important examples of the progress made in Zambian screen media production at the time. However, despite this progress, various challenges plagued these productions. Generally, the lack of financing and the limited revenue from the sponsorship arrangements with the national broadcaster, coupled with other show-specific difficulties, were often enough to bring productions to a halt. Producers continued working in a context devoid of institutionalised support or economic incentives. As seen with Thompson's case above, it was commonplace for individual producers to go out of their way to ensure that their productions were ready for broadcast, in most cases using their own money with minimal or no returns. Actors and crew members would go unpaid until the producers found some money for their remuneration. Further, sponsorships and advertising revenue were limited as the Zambian businesses endured the economic downturn of the late 1990s and the austerity period that came with the government's resolve to reach the HIPC completion point in the first few years of the Mwanawasa presidency when these shows were developed (see Chapter 5).

It is also important to note how these independent productions were subject to ZNBC's dominance over screen media in Zambia. From a political economic perspective, we can argue that the national broadcaster's historical positionality and monopoly gave it the power to determine the conditions for the broadcast arrangements and change them when suitable. As shown above, ZNBC had significant leverage in negotiations, leaving independent producers at a disadvantage that often meant working extra hard to meet the conditions set for them. Thus, producers such as Tumelo and Thompson had to navigate both the economic challenges associated with independent production and the domineering tendencies of ZNBC that signified the power the broadcaster enjoyed at the time.

The production of these and a few other titles continued amid several challenges, as highlighted. However, even with these challenges, these productions were important in furthering screen media production in Zambia. They helped lay the foundation for a take-off in

commercial cinematic arts in the country. These productions also bolstered the emergence of an on-screen and off-screen talent community that was recognisable, locally appreciated and instrumental in demonstrating what a thriving screen media industry in Zambia would achieve.

6.3 Muvi TV's Contribution: From the small screen to the big screen

6.3.1 Humble beginnings

Established in 2002 by Steve Nyirenda, an engineer and digital animator, Muvi Television became Zambia's first private commercial television station. When it started transmitting, Muvi TV was only limited to broadcasting in Lusaka, where the station is based. The new free-to-air terrestrial station was a welcome alternative to the state-run national broadcaster ZNBC and to DStv, the satellite-based subscription service offered by Multichoice Zambia. Before Muvi TV, Nyirenda had established Muvi Studios between 1994 and 1995 as a creative multimedia production company whose vision was to produce high-quality music and videos for different uses. 'Muvi' combines the words 'music' and 'videos'. Nyirenda brought together a team of talented artists, animators, scriptwriters and producers. As a creative boutique, Muvi produced music videos, adverts and television variety shows in the 1990s.

Muvi quickly rose to prominence in the capital because of the station's policy to stay close to the community in its news coverage, productions and engagement activities. Most of the station's productions, from advertisements to drama productions, as well as its news content, featured stories, characters or issues that Lusaka's urban poor could resonate with (Phiri, 2010). Muvi's decision to produce local language content further cemented the station's newfound popularity and gains among audiences and advertisers. The station's language policy extended to its news items as well, a decision that greatly distinguished Muvi from ZNBC, which, according to Isaac Phiri (2010: 189), often featured senior government officials as they read "incomprehensible speeches" and ran dated SABC dramas for entertainment. Fackson Banda (2009: 65) argues that using local languages gave the station an edge as it could interact with people from local communities that had been "marginalised from mainstream broadcasting" simply because they could not speak English.

According to Angel Phiri (personal interview, 2018 June 27), Nyirenda's decision to transform Muvi Studios into a television station was influenced by his frustration with ZNBC's policy to charge independent producers who want their productions to air on the channel. This policy prevented independent producers from taking their content to ZNBC. Nyirenda took advantage

of the changing broadcast regulatory framework and applied for a television license in 2002. Muvi was granted a license and began transmission tests in 2004.

In the station's earlier years, when resources were limited, Muvi TV producers experimented with different types of productions that would eventually pave the way for feature film production. One such production was a reality comedy show titled *Difikoti and Bikiloni* (2004-2009), which featured the two titular characters played by Thomas Sipalo and Levi Ngoma, respectively. According to Phiri, the series creator, the show was inspired by F. Gray Gray's *Friday* (1995), which featured two characters, Craig Jones and Smokey, played by O'Shea Jackson and Chris Tucker, who regularly had conversations on their front porch as they observed what was happening in their neighbourhood. Phiri instead had his characters take an unending walk to Zambia's State House to see the President while discussing various issues. "*Diffikoti* was an uneducated city man who pretended to know many things when, in fact, he only knew things about Muvi TV, and *Bikiloni* was raised in the village but had migrated to the city and was also uneducated yet pretended to be very knowledgeable on issues" (Phiri, personal interview, 2018 June 27).

In the show, Diffikoti and Bikiloni are clad in costumes that contribute to the show's comical tone, with Difikoti donning a tattered jacket and pair of trousers, both a size or two over, and Bikiloni in a green polo neck top and oddly coloured pair of dungarees. Both characters have outlandish hats: a crocodile-shaped one for Difikoti, and an old woollen beanie or a shark-shaped for Bikiloni. The pair debate various socio-economic, cultural and political subjects in a satirical and sensational manner. For example, one popular subject is the Zambian constitution, which was undergoing a review exercise at the time, and the two characters would suggest what should be included in it. Each character attempts to explain a subject to the other in a humorous way that often satirises an actual position or event in Zambian political and social life. Phiri also used *Difikoti* and *Bikiloni* to promote Muvi TV and give information about how viewers would access the newly established station.

According to Phiri, one of the reasons for Muvi TV's early success was the station's language policy. Producers at Muvi knew that most of the station's target audience used local languages. They capitalized on this knowledge by using the main local languages spoken in Lusaka (Nyanja and Bemba) for storytelling to grow the station's viewership. *Difikoti* and *Bikiloni* as well as another series from the early years called *Konstable*, which parodied the life of police officers stationed at a police post in a poor residential area, used Nyanja with traces of broken

English as part of their comedic motifs. Nyanja is a lingua franca mainly used in Lusaka Province. According to the 2000 Zambian Census of Population and Housing (CSO, 2003), Nyanja was the main language in Lusaka Province, spoken by over 52 per cent of the population and 10 per cent of the entire Zambian population. Bemba was the second most spoken language in the province, used by 14.5 per cent of the population. However, it was the most used in the country, at 30.1 per cent (CSO, 2003): 49). The use of local languages coupled with the ability to tell stories inspired by the communities proved to be a winning formula for the station.

In the early days at Muvi, content production faced many hurdles, including the lack of equipment and income to fund production. In the first year of operations, the station only had one digital video camera (camcorder) that would be shared among the station's different units. Phiri recalls:

> "We used to have one camera, the same one camera you used it for news, you go and film dramas, you film marketing products, and so on. So, we had to juggle it around. We devised a way of filming *Difikoti* and *Bikiloni* for one or two hours continuously" (Phiri, personal interview, 2018 June 27).

Production often began with Phrir giving the actors a written rundown of what topics they two would cover and what jokes they would tell. Sipalo and Ngoma would interpret the rundown in their way and mostly improvise during the shoot. Despite these challenges, *Difikoti and Bikiloni* became a sensation in Lusaka and later around the country. Following their unexpected success, the characters were featured in local adverts, hired as hosts for events, and appeared in character at comedy shows.

With time, Phiri built a team of young creatives to help shape Zambian cinematic arts for years. This team included playwright and actor turned screenwriter Henry Joe Sakala; the cinematography and editing duo Gerald Singwa and Frank Sibukku; actor and producer Augustine Lungu; and others. Between 2004 and 2006, Muvi created more locally oriented drama series, including *Banja*, *Ilyashi*, and *Kapotwe*. According to Phiri, the station focused on creating content to match the overwhelming demand for local drama. As such, the station's producers focused on storytelling and content development instead of the productions' technical quality. Phiri notes that the station had observed that audiences were more attentive to the storylines and less to the stylistic techniques or the technical quality. As a result, the station focused on developing more stories with a local focus. Increased viewership for the

channel was proof that this formula was working. To keep up with the interest, shooting for the drama productions would take place every day, even after the station purchased a few more cameras. Phiri recalls how his production team did not have time for editing or retakes during shoots. As a result, "content was sometimes taken for transmission right after shooting it" (Phiri, 2018).

Following the success of these drama productions and increased revenue resulting from increased viewership and corporate buy-in into the Muvi formula, Phiri and team began planning to produce their first feature film. By then, the station had already produced a few corporate documentaries and scripted TV series but had not ventured into feature film production. The foundation had been set for what many consider Zambia's first feature film, *The Lawyer* (2008).

According to Phiri, the production team at Muvi wanted to produce a film that was different from what had already been on television and would appeal to a broader audience beyond the station's mostly 'blue-collar' viewers. A script for *The Lawyer* was developed by Chris Mukuli, and preproduction began in 2007. A creative block in the development of the film led to the decision to engage an independent director to take over the project. The internal production team led by Phiri focused on another project called *Smokes and Mirror*s. Dominic Chisembele, who prior to this had worked on a comedic short that also featured on Muvi TV, *Mbama of the Eagle*, was then hired as director to bring *The Lawyer* to life.

The Lawyer follows the story of a rising young female lawyer called Samantha (Nalukuwi Mufungulwa), who works for a law firm and is married to a state prosecutor (Owas Ray Mwape). Their paths unexpectedly collide when Samantha is assigned to defend a client in a high-profile case her husband is prosecuting. Winning the case would guarantee Samantha a partnership position at her firm, while victory for her husband would make him eligible for an appointment as the country's Attorney General. Outside the case, the couple are facing a marital dispute compounded by the protagonist's inability to bear a child. With the tensions already high, the conflict at home underlies the couple's complex legal fight in the courtroom.

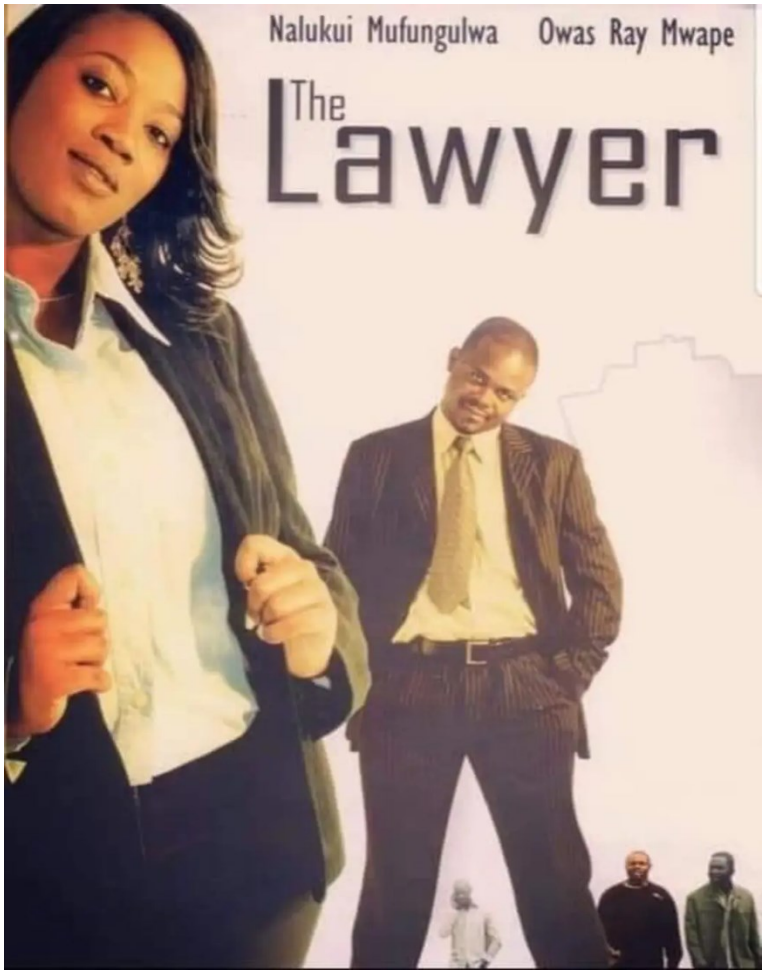

Figure 3: The official movie poster for The Lawyer (2008), Courtesy of Muvi TV

The Lawyer was released in 2008 at Lusaka's Ster-Kinekor Theatres, becoming Zambia's first ever theatrically released feature film. Zambia's President at the time, Levy Mwanawasa led a team of government officials to a viewing a few days after its premier. This was an important show of support from the Government that until this stage had not been involved in the cinematic arts but had signaled interest in the potential of a film industry for the country. *The Lawyer* played in the cinema for four weeks until Muvi TV withdrew the film, in protest against the high exhibition fees Ster-Kinekor required Muvi to pay to have the film shown. Even though the film was still in demand, the producers at Muvi felt that the exhibition fees the station was charged did not make business sense and were exploitative (Phiri, personal interview, 2018 June 27).

While Chisembele was working on completing *The Lawyer*, preproduction on *Smokes and Mirrors*, steadily gained momentum. The project was later renamed *The Vanguards*. In *The Vanguards* (2010), another film written by Chris Mukuli, a vocal opposition leader becomes

the country's president after an election. Soon, he realizes that there are bigger and more threatening forces at play that prove that they are in control and not him. As President, he devises a plan to address this situation by creating a shadow group called the vanguards, to push his agenda and challenge the taunting forces. Phiri describes the film as having "a complicated script, with complex story elements" that, at the time, made it more suited for a drama series or a book. The story's multiple layers made consolidating the various story elements difficult, causing a delay in production.

Meanwhile, Henry Joe Sakala was developing another project at Muvi TV, following the success of his independent video films, *Silent Voice* (2005) and *Guns and Rings* (2009), which he shot using camcorders and produced with his brother Joakim Sakala. Before joining Muvi TV, Sakala worked as a journalist and had written and directed a few theatre productions. Teaming up with Frank Sibbuku as cinematographer and editor, and Angel Phiri as co-producer, Sakala wrote and directed *When the Curtain Falls* (2009), a successful straight-to-television film. *When the Curtain Falls* is a story about a young woman named Susan (Mirriam Baxton), whose life begins to unravel as she seeks to disentangle herself from a dangerous gangster (Malumba Malumba). The action film follows her journey to break free and redeem herself from the criminal underworld she has been a part of, while her past pursues her.

When the Curtain Falls was a significant achievement for the television station. The producers at Muvi had demonstrated that they could not only make melancholic drama films but could also put together a thrilling action film that audiences would love. The film was also aesthetically different from the station's other productions, such as the drama series *Banja or* the feature film, *The Lawyer*. It was mostly shot at night and relied on shadows to reinforce a darkness essential to the film's world. Sakala relies on shadows to portray the lead character's darkened world and her desire to move from the shadows into the light (Sakala, personal interview, 2018 June 8). According to Sakala, most of the scenes are shot in low light or the night to reflect Susan's struggle until the light triumphs.

Even though *When the Curtain Falls* did not generate the same amount of interest as *The Lawyer*, it was a critical moment for the filmmakers at Muvi. The film gave them added momentum to produce even bolder and more complex narratives. Sibbuku and Sakala went on to form a successful writer-director partnership on various television and film productions.

Following the television premier of *When the Curtain Falls*, the production team at Muvi resumed work on *The Vangards* (2010). Production went ahead with a reworked script by

Angel Phiri that now told the story from the perspective of one of the vanguards. This changed the film's narrative flow but maintained the initial script's main themes. *The Vanguards* was Zambia's first political film that subtly examined Zambia's experience with foreign powers such as big mining corporations, multilateral institutions (the World Bank and IMF) and big donor governments such as the United States, that used their power to influence government policy. Zambia's previous experience with Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and the pressure that came with the need to reach the HIPC Initiative's completion point just years before, are all themes that the Steven Nyirenda-directed film addresses. It sought to show what would happen if an African country that had been victim to these neocolonial influences challenged the global order. In its own unique way, the *Vanguards* advances the idea that using the global order to challenge the grip of neocolonialism would not work, instead, it suggests that such a challenge would require unconventional methods.

The Vanguards became an instant draw when it premiered at Ster Kinekor Cinemas in Lusaka. It attracted capacity crowds in the days following its release, but the film's actual box office numbers have never been released. Unfortunately, *The Vanguards* was also pulled out of the cinema for the same reason as *The Lawyer* a few years earlier. Most of the proceeds from ticket sales were retained by the cinema company, much to Nyirenda's frustration (Phiri, personal interview, 2018 June 27).

Muvi TV's desire to distribute its movies to the cinemas was positive, but there was an evident dissatisfaction with how the model worked. The station's problem with Ster Kinekor speaks to the political economic challenges of distribution that small cinemas often have to contend with. Local film producers often receive the brunt of policies or actions of the corporations that have the power to determine and control how the small players will participate in either the domestic or international market. The exploitative nature of such policies has also contributed to the dominance of foreign films on local screens, as they are backed by even larger global corporations who can pay for the exhibition of their titles.

Later, Muvi TV proprietor Steve Nyirenda also invested in a cinema multiplex called Freshview Cinemas as a solution to the high exhibition fees that Muvi TV had been subjected to pay to have its' productions show at Ster Kinekor. Muvi TV films would now have first run at Freshview, and income from ticket sales would remain within the Muvi TV organisation. In the months following the official opening of the cinema, Muvi began to re-release some of its

earlier productions. For example, *When the Curtain Falls* was finally theatrically released in December 2011, and *The Vanguards*, was re-released in August 2012.

Following the release of *The Vanguards*, Muvi TV cemented its place in Zambia's cinematic arts sector as a pioneer and leader. More interesting local productions, such as *Street Circles* (2012)*, LSK Heroes* (2014), *The Red Bag (2014)* and others, were released in the few years that followed. Freshview Cinemas also began to support the exhibition of other local productions from filmmakers outside Muvi TV. This move was welcome by the emerging yet scattered filmmaking community in the country.

Muvi TV's contribution to the development of cinematic arts in Zambia in this epoch can be summarised as follows: (a) Muvi popularised cheaper production strategies that did not focus on techniques but on story development; (b) Muvi encouraged local language use in audio-visual storytelling; (c) Muvi fostered skills development for filmmakers and on-screen talent by way of consistent practice-based learning; (d) Muvi created distribution or exhibition opportunities for local filmmakers through Freshview Cinemas; (e) Muvi demonstrated that there was demand for local productions and worked to meet that demand; and lasty, (f) Muvi helped promote a film-going and local drama consumption culture that other broadcasters and producers would also later benefit from.

Despite the context of production at Muvi TV, the station's early productions were able to accomplish what Modisane (2010) calls "public critical potency", which occurs when a (film) production is directly or indirectly able to resonate with social and political struggles in society. As Phiri (2010) notes, Muvi productions stimulated public engagement and interest, especially among people who had felt excluded from mediated stories seen on the national broadcaster ZNBC and the pay television platform DStv due to language and economic barriers. It is not farfetched then to argue that by the time Muvi TV began to produce feature films, the station had already built for itself a reputation of being able to produce content that was engaging and relevant for the local audiences. Even with the various challenges, the broadcaster's local series told relatable stories, introduced likeable characters and often gave desirable resolutions that added to their public critical potency.

It is important to note that besides the Muvi TV features, other important films were produced in this epoch, including Jabbez Mvula's *Bad Timing!* (2009), and Musola Catherine Kaseketi's *Suwi: Faith Beyond Limit* (2009). The latter film will be the subject of Chapter 7 of this thesis.

6.4 Video Filmmaking: The formal and the informal

As established in the literature review (Chapter 2), video filmmaking has had an entirely different social, political, and historical character from that of cinema in Africa. Video emerged in Africa as a disruptive technology that was simultaneously "inexpensive, widely available, and easy to use" (Garritano, 2013). For Zambia, the ability to produce films on video essentially tipped the status quo in favour of creatives who were ready to take advantage of the opportunities the technology presented.

It is not easy to trace the start of video filmmaking in Zambia. Evidence from the early 1990s shows how video had started to gain a foothold in Zambian screen media production. Among other factors, the rise of video can be attributed to the shifts in Zambia's political economic environment. Liberalizing the economy in the early 1990s following the 1991 elections opened Zambia to the global economy. The lifting of various controls meant that more goods could be imported and introduced into the Zambian market. Before the period, only ZNBC, ZIS and a few other organisations had experience with video formats. The fact that video was significantly cheaper meant that Zambians interested in production could access video recording devices and other electronic equipment in the new dispensation. According to Lawrence Thompson, "ordinary people didn't bother (about making films) because the film was expensive", but the coming of video "created an awakening" for those that had an interest in filmmaking (personal interview, 2018 July 11).

Among the early participants in video film production were the various broadcast professionals and journalists who either had left the public media establishments or were still involved in broadcasting somehow. These filmmakers were a part of the more formalised strand of video filmmaking that emerged in Zambia. Many of these individuals were already familiar with video technologies or were ready to transition to what was still a novel and exciting technology at the time. For instance, Jeff Sitali, formerly of ZIS, founded Jeff Sitali Advertising, which produced adverts and corporate videos. Errol Hickey, who had already established Hickey Studios, took advantage of video to bolster his production agency's capacity to produce adverts and documentaries. One of Hickey Studios' most well-known productions is the documentary film, *The Gold that Grows* (1997), which highlighted the nutritional value of soyabeans and how it could be used to curb malnutrition among children. It featured the work of Renate Schempp, who led a community-based effort to promote soyabeans as a nutritional supplement

for Zambian children.[14] Other Hickey Studios documentaries included *Zambia, The Jewel of Africa* (1997), which showcased the different investment opportunities available to interested investors in the liberalised Zambia; and *Norman Carr: The Man, the Legend* (1997), a biography of Norman Carr, a British conservationist who worked in Zambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe and popularised conservation tourism in these countries.

Some of the other early video producers include Claude Vlahakis of Langa Visions, Alec Mugala who founded Prime Time Productions in 1994 while still working for ZNBC until 2001, and Lawrence Thompson, a video journalist and local producer for various international news and entertainment media organisations.

Even with the various video filmmaking activities, feature films on video remained elusive through most of the 1990s. However, this changed after the turn of the century. With production equipment becoming increasingly more affordable and a growing interest in screen media from more Zambians, there was an increase in filmmaking activities. From the interviews and document analysis for this thesis, we see that between the years 2002 and 2005, two types of video producers emerged. On one hand, there was a class of professionals who had some form of training or professional experience in media for a few years or more. These producers worked with and within formalised structures such as registered production companies or access to corporate clients and broadcast stations.

On the other hand, there was a group of primarily amateur filmmakers and enthusiasts who, in most cases, lacked training or could barely afford video equipment and were mainly looking for a way out of the harsh economic realities in Zambia around that period. A few of them were familiar with the medium of film thanks to some work experience or training workshops. Whatever the scenario, these individuals were passionate about production even though they worked outside any form of structure or established system such as television broadcasting. They were responsible for the birth of Zambia's underground video films, which are defined here as films produced with video cameras to sell on media such as DVDs or VCDs (Shule, 2014). These productions constitute Zambia's "cinematic sidestreams" or "shadow economy" of filmmaking, borrowing the terms popularised by Haseenah Ebrahim (2020) and Ramon Lobato (2012), respectively.

[14] "Bean with explosive power", DER SPIEGEL 2/1991 https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13487432.html

As screen media productions for broadcast television gained momentum in the first few years of the new millennium, underground informal filmmaking was equally growing. The widely scattered and heterogeneous guerrilla filmmakers took advantage of changing video technologies and began producing different video product types (Anne Phiri, personal interview, 2019 November 18). Despite existing outside the established television and advertising industry, these filmmakers were equally eager to make the most of the ability to tell stories using video films. Others used their newfound 'expertise' to establish (informal) video production businesses, initially only filming weddings, birthday parties, religious events and music videos, but later adding feature films to their portfolio. Access to free video editing software packages (such as Windows Movie Maker) and, in an increasing number of circumstances, copied versions of commercial edit suites, editing processes were also significantly improved, compared to the old celluloid filmmaking process. Some commercial editing packages were already being used by advertising agencies such as Muvi Studios (before becoming a TV station) and Litovia Studios which also emerged as video grew in the country in the 1990s (Phiri, personal interview, 2018 June 27).

Two pioneering participants in video feature film production were the film enthusiast brothers, Joakim and Henry Joe Sakala. With the assistance of their family members, the duo worked to produce their first film, *Silent Voice* (2005). The film's release strategy was an early attempt at commercially exhibiting a film even though it was first cut to DVD. Henry Joe wanted the film to be more than just a DVD release, so he organised a screening at the Lusaka Playhouse. Using a DVD player, a projector and plain white fabric sewn together to create a screen, the Sakalas pulled off a premier for *Silent Voice,* which attracted a sizable audience. The film was later released on DVD under their production company, JoelHood Pictures. Joakim's other films, *Jailed* (2010), *Chipondo* (2011) and *NaMusonda* (2012), were also released on DVD.

In the Copperbelt Province, Chala Tumelo, also produced four direct-to-DVD films, some of which had a public premiere at Broadway Cinema in Ndola. All four films were shot while he was also producing *Loose Ends* on ZNBC. The first film was a spin-off from *Loose Ends* (2002 – 2012) called *Victors of the Party* (2004), which followed a story arc introduced in the television show. This was followed up with *Behind the Closed Door* (2005), an adaptation of famous Zambian author Susan Chitabanta's 1992 novel of the same title. Tumelo released *My Brother, My Sister* (2006), and *Over My Dead Body* (2006) the following year. Both dramatic films explored various societal issues with a didactic leaning, but they also included strong religious messaging, perhaps because of Tumelo's background as a pastor. The films were

promoted on ZNBC during commercial breaks on *Loose Ends*. They both also premiered at Broadway Cinema in Ndola as a way of launching their DVD sales. Soon after their release, Tumelo abandoned video film projects to focus on his weekly television production of *Loose Ends*.

In keeping up the well-established didactic documentary tradition, playwright, director and researcher Abdon Yezi and his partners at Yezi Arts, ventured into producing historical films. Yezi produced the documentary video film *Battle for Kavalamanja: In Defence of the Nation* (2008). The direct-to-VHS and DVD film explores the bombing of two villages, Kavalamanja and Kakaro, in Zambia's Luangwa District, by the Rhodesian military under instruction from Ian Smith, the former Prime Minister of present-day Zimbabwe, in 1978. Several villagers and Zimbabwean freedom fighters camped in the area were killed in the 72-hour aerial and ground assault that left bridges destroyed and hundreds of people displaced. The documentary details the experiences of survivors of the bombardment that was meant to frustrate the efforts of freedom fighters in the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe's independence.

Battle for Kavalamanja won the Best Documentary award at the 2008 Ngoma Awards and has been shown in various countries at festivals and events exploring themes in the film. *Kavalamanja* was pioneering in that it was an independent documentary produced without institutional support from the state or an NGO. Yezi worked to tell a story close to him and sought resources to do so on his own. In 2020, Yezi released *Kavalamanja Remembered*, a follow-up to the first Kavalamanja feature but with more detail and context about the Kavalamanja raid.

Zambia's shadow economy of video filmmaking

The informal video filmmaking sidestream began to peak around 2005. For instance, Copperbelt-based filmmaker Douglas Muma Mumbi, one of the pioneers of the shadow video film market, ventured into the video film business to save his theatre group from completely collapsing (Mumbi, personal interview, 2019 April 4). According to Mumbi, who had worked as a stage actor and playwright in Kitwe, a steep decline in attendance at theatre houses as Zambia endured austere economic programmes (Mwansa, 2019) meant that incomes for him and fellow artists were at their lowest. At the time, unemployment in the country was already significantly high. Factors such as the shutting down of various parastatals or privatised companies and the massive layoffs that came with privatisation and public sector reforms all contributed to the high unemployment (Larmer & Fraser, 2007; Hampwaye, 2008). people

were willing to take on any activity that would bring financial relief to make ends meet. Thanks to the liberalisation policies that eased the importation of equipment and the proliferation of less expensive video and digital technologies, video filmmaking was one of those activities that was taken up by storytellers such as Mumbi.

Inspired by the boom in Nigerian video film consumption in Zambian homes, Mumbi was convinced that telling Zambian stories through film would be an opportunity worth exploring. Mumbi began working on his brand of films after observing that people were willing to spend money on cheaply, mostly pirated Nollywood films on DVDs and VCDs. Mumbi notes that these videos were a preferred alternative to cinema because they were cheaper. He realised he could use video to "provide these stories and at a small fee and people could watch them in their homes" (Mumbi, personal interview, 2019 April 4).

Mumbi invested in a Sony Hi8 Camera and returned some of the acting talent from his theatre group to act and work as crew members with the basic training he would give them. In 2006, Mumbi and company released their first video film production, *Sansamukeni Comedy, 3 in 1* (2006). *Sansamukeni,* which means *"be happy"* in the Bemba language*,* consisted of three short comedy films on various subjects, each running for about 40 minutes. The DVD was very popular in the townships and markets in Kitwe, where it was produced. Initially, sales were made door to door and market stall to market stall, but as the demand grew and more producers emerged, a complex distribution network extending to other towns emerged (Mumbi, personal interview, 2019 April 4). The distributors ensured copies were available in every town on the Copperbelt and beyond. Following the success of *Sansamukeni*, Mumbi went on to produce over 12 other titles using the same production and distribution model.

Many filmmakers in the shadow video economy adopted the Nollywood production approach to keep costs low and focus less on technical quality. Production companies or groups were often organised around one individual, such as Mumbi, who would sometimes be the producer, director, editor, camera operator and, where possible, a cast member. The films are primarily set in low to medium-density residential areas, telling local stories that appeal to the lower to lower-middle-class or low-income, blue-collar groups, much like the Muvi TV target audience.

Most of these video film stories are told in local languages, depending on the town where their producer's primary market was. In the Copperbelt Province, video filmmaking flourished in

Ndola and Kitwe, the provincial administrative and commercial capitals. Several filmmakers were also active in the other mining towns of Chingola and Luanshya. The Copperbelt films mostly use Bemba language and occasionally Lamba, which is the indigenous language of the area. Using Bemba proved to be advantageous because it guaranteed that the producers could distribute their films to several towns where the language was predominantly used. According to Debra Spitulnik (1998), Bemba, a central Bantu language spoken by the Bemba people, became a *lingua franca* for the migrant workers in the copper-rich towns of the Copperbelt province and has been one of the seven official languages since independence. It is mainly spoken in 5 out of 10 provinces in Zambia.[15] The term "Bemba-speaking region" refers to the regions where the Bemba language is predominantly used. It does not necessarily refer to the Bemba people (a tribal group from Zambia's Northern and Muchinga Provinces).

The demand for the films steadily increased between 2007 and 2011. Distribution networks ensured that the films reached towns, such as, Nakonde, on the northern tip of the country bordering Tanzania. At the height of the DVD/VCD trade, the distributors saw that the films were sold wherever there was a market in Zambia, whether it was a Bemba-speaking region or not (Mumbi, 2019; Mwape, 2018).

Storytelling techniques in underground video films also resemble those in Nollywood films but have maintained a strong influence from theatre, with extended dialogue scenes and limited action sequences. Nollywood influences could be observed in depicting success or wealth, especially in films that interrogate the change of lifestyles following the acquisition of wealth (often by crooked or mystical means). Chinese (Hong Kong) films influenced the fight sequences in which they were present. Nevertheless, despite the different influences, the films formed their own local identity that made them unique.

To this day, the stories often focus on real-life issues affecting society, including marital problems, premarital relationships, fraud in employment and business, gossip, greed, theft, and many others. Christian principles often influence storytelling even though they were not meant to proselytise. The films can be likened to the 'drasofi' or drama-soap-film genre that Oswelled Ureke (2018) describes as a genre of convenience observable in Zimbabwean filmmaking.

[15] Zambia had 9 provinces until 2012 when the Michale Sata administration of the Patriotic Front (PF) split the Northern Province into two with the creation of Muchinga Province. The Luapula Province is also considered a Bemba speaking region. Bemba is also a major language in Central and Lusaka provinces.

However, unlike the *drasofi* films, many of the Zambian films had a strong leaning towards comedic depictions of the said themes yet maintaining the social or moral messaging. These themes are explored by characters often appearing in a series or anthology of films. For instance, Mumbi created and played the character of Njonginjo, a notorious man who was often up to mischief in the community. Njonginjo was developed to resemble the Nollywood characters such as John Ikechukwu Okafor's Mr. Ibu or Nkem Owoh's Osuofia, who appeared in several films and were known for their outrageous antics and hilarious perspectives on different matters. Njonginjo is often used to show what happens when someone abandons societal and Christian values.

Some of Mumbi's contemporaries in video film production on the Copperbelt, including Patrick Musonda, who developed the long-running comedy film series *Chintelelwe*, and Marlon Changa Kalumba, who developed the *Spoiler* series of films, also used the same model. Told over several videos, *Chintelelwe* follows the life of the eponymous, clamorous and fast-talking character, played by Gift Lwelele, and his mischievous deeds within his family and village. Chintelelwe is sent away to live with his uncle in town, and his escapades begin afresh even in this new setting. In *Spoiler*, the roguish Spoiler is often up to something naughty, using deception and charm to get his way around any situation at home and in the community.

Selling the DVDs was a crucial part of the business because it ensured that production was financed. With the revenue from the sales, producers were also able to invest in better equipment such as cameras and lights, which helped improve the film's production values (Mumbi, 2018). Most importantly, producers were able to pay their actors and even grow their acting and production teams. Titles such as *Chintelelwe* and *Spoiler* were distributed on long distance buses. The comedy films would be part of the on-board entertainment for travellers on the buses. Sometimes, travellers were given an opportunity to buy copies of the DVDs when they were available. This significantly contributed to the popularity of these film series (Mumbi, 2018; Phiri 2018).

The packaging of the films followed that of the established video film markets on the continent such as Nollywood. The DVDs/VCDs were packaged in plastic cases. Where the plastic cases were not available, inlays sleeves were printed on coloured gloss or bond paper. The paper inlays, which were much cheaper to produce, often had the title of the film overlaid on colourful still pictures from different scenes in the film on the front, and selected credits at the back (see Fig, 6.1).

Figure 4: DVD cover design for Chintelelwe Back to the City 8 (Sunshine Entertainment)

There was a marked decline in the DVD/VCD trade beginning in 2011. Some filmmakers attribute this descent to the increased levels of piracy. Piracy for audiovisual content became uncontrollable, and it went unchecked. In their respective interviews, filmmakers such as Mumbi, Sakala and Mwape argued that efforts to curb piracy were affected by the poor enforcement of anti-piracy laws and a lack of interest in copyright protection by those charged to enforce it. Piracy and its impact on filmmaking is further discussed in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

While video films have mostly remained a side-stream, they remain essential to Zambian screen media production. The informal elements have persisted as some producers operate outside the limited formal structures. It is still difficult to determine the economic value of video trade in Zambia as is the case in many African countries (Lobato, 2010, 2012). Despite being informal, the video film production model is still driven by an economic imperative for the producers. While DVD sales revenue may not be as good as it was, keeping the business going is a matter of survival, and it is necessary to sustain the livelihoods of those involved. Unlike Nigeria and other African film cultures, where video filmmaking found its place in national economic data, video filmmaking and the DVD trade in Zambia has remained an informal economic activity, mostly catering to specific audiences in the communities and staying outside of the radar of any state institutions.

Though not backed by statistical evidence, the examples highlighted in this chapter have given evidence of how video technologies have significantly contributed to Zambia's screen media industries. However, filmmakers linked to the formal strand of cinematic arts have often been

critical of their untrained and underground counterparts. For example, Lawrence Thompson, who founded the Filmmakers Guild of Zambia, has emphasised the need for training and standardisation in the film sector if it is to develop. According to Thompson, this has not bode very well with creators in the informal strand of the filmmaking community, who have labelled such calls as exclusionary and unnecessary for small filmmaking nations like Zambia (personal interview, 2018 July 11).

Despite the differences in approach, both types of filmmakers have found a way to co-exist. Some of the informal sector video filmmakers and their productions have been assimilated into the formal and more established structure. For example, in 2019 *Spoiler* and *Chintelelwe* were licenced to MultiChoice for broadcast on Zambezi Magic, a channel available to their DSTv and GOtv subscribers in Southern African. While the shows maintained their comedic narratives and use of local languages, an aesthetic gentrification[16] in the productions was observed.

By aesthetic gentrification, I refer to how a film or production's overall visual elements or look undergoes an overhaul as the production gets more funding to improve on them. In this case, the look of the informal video films underwent a visual 'facelift' thanks to their assimilation into the formal and well financed system established by Multichoice. The characters and storylines mostly remained the same, but the overall look of the productions was significantly improved to a standard expected for the DStv pay television service. Additionally, the shows' production values and storytelling quality were improved as they were now tailored to a regional audience. Subtitling, credits, legal permits and sensitivity in the use of copyrighted material are some of the other elements that constituted this process. Multichoice also invested in training filmmakers by way of masterclasses and workshops as these productions made the transition to the regional channels. The impact of MultiChoice on Zambian screen production is discussed further in Chapter 9.

[16] The application of gentrification to the study of a medium has previously been employed by Ezinne Michaelia Ezepue (Ezepue, E.M., 2020. Gentrification in media spaces: Nollywood in Perspective. Cogent Arts & Humanities, 7(1)). Ezepue applies it to refer to the "transformations reshaping the industry such as class struggle, changes in quality, aesthetics and standard of production, and most importantly displacement in places of production and consumption." My application of the term relates to the aesthetic and visual changes of in television series as they transition to a wealthier owners or financiers.

6.5 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter outlined the development of film and filmmaking in Zambia, focusing mostly on activities in the second half of the 20-year MMD rule between 2001 and 2011. The chapter has established how commercial filmmaking took off in Zambia. This period, I posit, is directly linked to the political economic reform that Zambia underwent following the turn to liberalisation and free-market policies in 1991 when the MMD government and President Chiluba took office.

We can argue then that the rise of Zambian filmmaking is directly related to the entry of private capital in the creative, cultural and media sectors and the creation of an enabling environment that allowed for private enterprise to exist. This was the vision of the MMD and its pursuit of reform (Chiluba, 1995; Sardanis, 2014). For example, the reforms in the broadcast policy and regulatory framework in the early 1990s paved the way for the growth that was seen in the sector much later in this epoch. These reforms were antecedent to the private investment observed in the sector, starting with MultiChoice and, later, Muvi TV. Although it would take several years for the investment in cinematic arts to be realised, it is cogent to argue that political economic liberalisation and its concomitant reform laid the foundation for a revival of film production in Zambia. The chapter has shown how investments such as Muvi TV contributed significantly to the development of local production, local approaches to storytelling, and both off-screen and on-screen talent development. On a smaller scale, the rise and success of the shadow video film economy was also a consequence of liberalization and the free market that allowed ordinary creators to participate in filmmaking as an economic activity. Additionally, foreign corporations such as MultiChoice and Ster Kinekor participated in the distribution or exhibition of Zambian productions, albeit disputedly so for the latter. Later, MultiChoice would shift from mere distribution via licensing for channels in its network to commissioning content for Zambezi Magic, a dedicated channel for its DSTV subscribers in Southern Africa. MultiChoice's specific contributions are further discussed in Chapter 9 of this thesis.

The chapter also illustrates how the cinematic arts in the country largely grew out of television. Some early television productions on ZNBC, the state broadcaster, and Muvi TV, a private local television station, were discussed. These include *Kabanana, Bupilo, Loose Ends*, *Difikoti, and Bikiloni*. The chapter argued that ZNBC's dominance over screen media in Zambia gave

the broadcaster an upper hand in negotiation and broadcast arrangements. ZNBC had significant economic power over independent and upcoming producers, many of whom were grappling with the effects of the various political economic challenges that gripped Zambia in the MMD years. There was a need for a shift in this power arrangement.

This chapter, furthermore, provided insight into how Muvi TV became a popular name in screen media production in Zambia. Through its various television series and films, Muvi TV influenced Zambian storytelling by encouraging the use of local languages and focusing on relatable stories. The chapter shows a similarity between the Muvi TV approach to storytelling and production and that of video film filmmakers such as Douglas Mumbi. They also target the same population class – usually the low-income, blue-collar groups in medium to high population density areas.

Despite the context of production at Muvi TV, the station's early productions were essential in creating and sustaining public interest in local stories when local television depended on foreign entertainment content. By the time Muvi TV began to produce feature films, the station had already built a reputation for itself for being able to produce content that was engaging and relevant to local audiences. Story selection was vital for the Muvi producers. In addition to the storytelling, the selection of stories at Muvi factors in how the story's visual elements will be best shown. Most Muvi TV productions were not only original stories but endeavoured to respect the physical context of these stories. The use of relatable and suitable locations became a significant attraction for the station's majority of viewers, especially those set in high-density residential areas. Television series such as *Mwine Mushi* and *Banja: Mudzi wa Mfumu Chidano* maintained traditional settings, staying as accurate as possible to Zambian village life. Both were shot in actual villages in rural parts of Lusaka.

Lastly, this chapter shows that Zambian filmmaking emerged outside any formally organised film industry or structure. Except for producers making content for television, many of the emerging filmmakers were making films as enthusiasts of the art form or simply because they saw video production as a way to make a living. Because of the informality and the lack of structure, there exists no public record of some of the filmmaking activities or products that researchers can rely on to develop a chronology or a better understanding of filmmaking in this

period. The implication here is that several other filmmaking activities around the country were probably taking place in this period beyond what this chapter captured.

This chapter has demonstrated how Zambian filmmaking re-emerged as a fragmented activity that took place in different local contexts and often detached from each other. Despite this and the lack of resources, the second half of the MMD rule saw increased activity in independent filmmaking, giving evidence of a take-off for the cinematic arts in Zambia. It was a sign of things to come. In the next chapter, I shall discuss and analyse one of the prominent films produced in this period, Musola Catherine Kaseketi's *Suwi: Faith Beyond Limits* (2009).

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSING MUSOLA CATHRINE KASEKETI'S *SUWI - FAITH BEYOND LIMIT* (2009): REPRESENTATION, MESSAGE AND CONTEXT OF PRODUCTION

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter established the context in which Zambian filmmaking re-emerged in the second decade since the country's liberal economic turn in 1991. One of the initial films made during this take-off period is Musola Catherine Keseketi's award-winning *Suwi: Faith Beyond Limit* (2009). In this chapter, I provide a reading of the film that considers its narrative and style. I also illustrate how Suwi is a didactic film that foregrounds the subject of disability. The analysis also considers how disability is represented and how various stylistic elements, such as cinematography and editing, are used to complement its representation. Additionally, the chapter also considers the various contextual elements that surround the production of the film. The aim here is to buttress our understanding of what filmmaking looked like in this period and to appreciate the general influences (social, political, economic or cultural) around filmmaking during this take-off stage.

Suwi has primarily been selected for analysis to provide an understanding of filmmaking in the later half of the second epoch this thesis examines. Being one of the pioneering productions when contemporary Zambian filmmaking began to emerge, *Suwi* provides some interesting and valuable insights into what it took to produce a film in that period of Zambian screen production history. Additionally, *Suwi* can easily be described as the first transnational film (as will be shown) and exploring some of its transnational production arrangements is an appropriate pursuit aligned with the overall goals of this thesis. Further, this discussion also centres Kaseketi as a key figure in Zambian filmmaking, situating her as an important producer of message films that tackle subjects such as disability, women empowerment, girl-child development and other societal issues.

7.2 Story and context of production

Suwi follows the life of a young woman named Suwilanji 'Suwi' Alinaswe (Catherine Soko), an intelligent university graduate whose life is turned upside down after a traffic accident kills her fiancé, Kizito (Malcolm Kamutumwa), and she is left permanently handicapped. Suwilanji

endeavours to lead a normal life but quickly discovers that being disabled may always stand in the way of normalcy. She catches the eye of a doctor, Chabu Chimba (Owas Ray Mwape), who is also grappling with the recent disappearance of a girl, Bupe (Chantel Mwabi), who was left in his care after her father, Chimba's house help, died from AIDS. Chimba, a prince in his village, falls in love with disabled Suwijani and their relationship is tested by several trials, including the stigma she contends with because of her disability.

Kaseketi's approach to *Suwi* is that of giving audiences an intimate look at the lives of the characters whose stories the film follows. The film's opening sequences immediately establish the underlying conflicts that will later intersect in their lives. This introduction is inventively done in different ways for the three main characters, Bupe, Suwilanji and Chimba, who are introduced in the film's first three sequences.

We are first introduced to Bupe, a young girl aged between 7 and 10, as she is taking a walk with her father. The camera captures her sad facial demeanour in close-ups that reveal her distress about something. We soon learn that she has been taking care of her ailing father, and this has deprived her of the joys of childhood. We are then introduced to Suwilanji, the lead character. In a montage sequence, we glimpse Suwilanji's life, from her graduation from university to the moment she loses her fiancée in the car crash that leaves her disabled. She is hospitalised, and when she gains consciousness, she is informed that she will have to use a wheelchair or crutches for the rest of her life. The story shifts to Chimba, whom we first meet at a village ceremony where he is affirmed as heir to the chiefdom. As the festivities go on, the subject of Chimba's marriage comes up after his father, the chief, suggests that he marry a woman they have chosen for him. Chimba appears to be embarrassed about the subject. It becomes an area of contention for Chimba as he wonders whether his parents would accept a wife he finds on his own. Later in the film, Chimba's parents candidly oppose his decision to marry Suwilanji because, according to them, she is incomplete and will bear him disabled children.

These sequences are foundational to understanding how the characters' internal and external struggles all lead to their paths intersecting. Bupe's sick father, we learn, works for Chimba, but he dies the day Chimba returns from the village. After the funeral, Bupe's relatives in the village refuse to take care of her because they fear she is accustomed to life in the city. They abandon her at the hospital where Chimba works, where where Suwilanji is admitted. By this

time, Chimba has already met Suwilanju and taken an interest in her. To Suwilanji, Chimba is just one of the other doctors at the hospital. Chimba takes Bupe to an orphan drop-in centre, hoping she will be better cared for there. However, Bupe runs away from the centre and lives in the streets. The rest of the film follows through these story threads until Suwi and Chimba fall in love, rescue Bupe and get engaged. The couple gets married and adopts Bupe, whom they raise as their own.

Suwi was adapted from Kaseketi's play *Rejection of Reality, which was* written in 1989. The play was inspired by a talented and self-sufficient disabled man she had met several years earlier. According to Kaseketi, the man had no hands and was denied the opportunity to perform at a theatre club in the Copperbelt town of Chingola because of his physical disability. Keseketi, herself a disabled woman, was then moved to learn more about the experiences of other disabled individuals. Kaseketi notes:

> *[A]fter he narrated his story, I started to do my own research on disability issues. I didn't know much because I was treated like any other person from my family. Then I remembered all the times I had been treated differently because of things people thought I couldn't do. That inspired me to write the story as a script* (Keseketi, personal interview, 2018 July 13).

The idea to transform the play into a film first came after a producer from ZNBC who had seen the play suggested it could be produced into a teleplay for the channel. As a result, *Rejection of Reality* was recorded and broadcast as a two-episode production on *Play for Today* in 1990.

By 2000, Kaseketi had already established her career in television and film. After working on various productions in South Africa, she returned to Zambia to join Picture Perfect Productions (PPP), where she was employed as a production manager and later a director for *Kabanana* for about a year. She became the first female Zambian director for a non-teleplay scripted screen drama. After *Kabanana*, Kaseketi established Vilole Images Production, a platform she used to train filmmakers and produce mostly commissioned films. In 2004, she also directed the short documentary film *Harvest of my Sweat* (2004). In the same year, the first version of the film *Suwi* was completed. However, the final cut of that version of the film had various technical problems, including poor sound and lighting. As a result, Kaseketi decided not to release it. Kaseketi continued to invest in improving the film while pursuing other projects. Under Vilole Pictures, she founded the International Film Festival of Zambia in 2006, showcasing foreign films and the few local productions made by participants of the training

workshops Vilole had held throughout a given year. The festival was also used to provide training to emerging filmmakers.

While producing the first version of *Suwi*, Kaseketi realized that transforming the stage play version into a viable screenplay involved changing various elements, including specific events and characters, as well as the pacing. When she had the opportunity to improve on the film later, she was determined to address these and other issues from the first version, besides the sound and lighting. While on a training programme on Human Rights and Cinema in Italy, she incorporated elements of human rights in her storytelling, a critical element in the final screenplay. Kaseketi leveraged several new partnerships overseas to get the new *Suwi* project off the ground. Paivi Takala-Gould, a Finnish producer, joined the project as a co-producer.

Kaseketi and Takala-Gould raised the required funds to begin production, primarily through the Finish Film Foundation. Marton Jelinko, another Finish national, was brought onto the project as the director of photography (DOP). Owas Ray Mwape, an actor and rising Zambian filmmaker at the time, was the production manager, while several of Kaseketi's trainees at Vilole were assigned various responsibilities. During production, the Zambian crew members shadowed the Finnish experts to ensure practical knowledge transfer, especially for functions unfamiliar to Zambians. The film thus served as a welcome training ground for several aspiring filmmakers. Kasekti (2018) notes that "most people graduated from it and started their own projects."

Production was completed by 2008, and further funding for postproduction was secured from the Finnish Film Foundation, with the caveat that the funds were spent in Finland. Kaseketi and her logger, Jessie Chisi, travelled to Finland to begin editing the film, enlisting another Finish expert, Okku Nuutilainen. The editing process was rigorous and lengthy. Closed film screenings were made in Finland and Zambia to ensure that the final product was excellent, both in terms of the story and the technical quality. *Suwi* finally premiered on April 23, 2009, in Lusaka and was received with excitement and positive reviews (Kaseketi, 2018). The film was also immediately taken to various international festivals, where it performed very well, bringing Zambian filmmaking to the attention of world cinema critics and pundits, in most cases, for the very first time.

7.3 *Suwi* as a transnational film

From the context of production discussed in the previous section, it becomes possible to argue that *Suwi* is a transnational film. However, before such a conclusion is made, the concept of transnational film or cinema must be examined, and the specific ways that *Suwi* can be situated as an example of transnational filmmaking should be elaborated on.

Scholars have discussed transnational cinema from different perspectives and experiences (Ezra & Rowden, 2006; Berry, 2010; Higbee & Lim, 2010; Shaw, 2013; Hayward, 2017; Lim, 2019), with reasonable similarity and agreement. Common among them is a general agreement with the idea that transnationalism in film or cinema is often evidenced by a departure of nationally focussed descriptions or associations to those that are more global in focus in relation to production, distribution and reception. Susan Hayward (2017) observes that the concept has emerged as a way of analysing film that acknowledges the input of different economies and nationals regarding financing, personnel and cross-cultural influences. According to Ezra and Rowden (2006: 1-2), transnationalism emerges out of the recognition of the decline in the nation (Higson, 2000) as the only regulator or determinant in a time of global coexistence. As a result, it has become increasingly impossible to assign national identity to cinematic production, influenced by increased globalisation, the spread of capitalism, and the proliferation of new media technologies, among other reasons. For Ezra and Rowden (2006), the transnational includes both globalisation (which is characterised by the dominance of Hollywood's film markets) and the response of filmmakers in former colonial countries and the Third world. It is an acknowledgement of the changing dynamics in the way cinema operates in the global system.

While transnationalism cannot be ignored, it must not be a mere blanket term that heralds the era of global capitalism and maintains Hollywood's hegemony over global cinema. One of the key criticisms of the shift to a transnational conception of cinema is that it overshadows the contribution of the already marginalised cinemas of mostly the global South, placing the Hollywood superstructure as the foremost one that all others must embody for them to succeed in the global film industry (Hayward, 2017). Such a scenario, I would argue, is problematic because it only works to alienate and undermine the role of local film cultures. Taken in the proper context, the transnational approach challenges and helps redefine national cinema and takes cinema as a practice and product that easily blurs national identities and is instead more global. In this perspective, transnational cinema analysis must not seek to negate the national

as “an imagined community” (Benedict Anderson, 2020) but rather help us rethink what the national is and acknowledge the distinctness of different cinemas worldwide.

In the case of *Suwi,* the transnational elements, such as the use of Finish financing to rework the production and complete postproduction or the incorporation of Finish film professionals at different stages, all worked to improve the quality of the film and provide it with access to circuits that would never have been available to local filmmakers. Having had access to foreign financing and technical expertise that other local filmmakers did not have, Kaseketi put together a film whose visual elements were significantly far improved than what was possible in Zambia at the time. For instance, compared to *The Lawyer* (2008), the Muvi TV production released a year before, *Suwi* was produced with the support of highly skilled crew members from Finland, which was made possible by financing from the same country. In contrast, Muvi TV productions depended on local resources and crew members with limited or no experience in larger scale productions.

Another vital aspect is how *Suwi* had a limited cinematic run in Zambia and was mainly shown at international film festivals. Part of the access the film enjoyed is attributable to its transnational characteristics. This factor corresponds to the notion that African cinema is not meant for African viewers (Dovey, 2015; Larkin, 2019). However, Kaseketi (2018) is categorical about it being targeted at African societies such as Zambia where disability has often been stigmatized and hardly represented on screen. *Suwi’s* festival run was merely an advantage that the film enjoyed, and it could have still done so had it been made entirely with Zambian resources.

In reality, *Suwi* is as much a Zambian film as a transnational one. The film’s transnationality corresponds to the changing practice in contemporary global filmmaking that sees the coming together of input from different countries (Howard, 2017). However, the film is very much a Zambian story that embraces ‘Zambianess’ in setting, characterization, appeal, and identity. Taking this complementarian view, we can observe that attributing national or transnational identities to cinema is not mutually exclusive and oppositional but highly contextual.

7.4 Narrative, Style, and Representation in *Suwi*

Kaseketi's overall aim in *Suwi* is to show that disability is not the end of the world, and that society must move past the long-held stigma and prejudice about disability. Kaseketi successfully ensures these key messages are consistently carried and emphasized throughout the film's narration. She also inventively weaves this with themes of love, family, and the clash between traditional beliefs and modernity. The juxtaposition of disability with these themes forms the oppositions that drive the narrative forward. A conflict of *what should be* versus *what exists or is believed* is thus set up. The main protagonist, Suwilanji, encounters these clashes, beginning with her father, then her potential employers, and later, with Chimba and his family.

We see an example of the conflict when Suwilanji is discharged from the hospital. She resolves to get her life back to normal and seeks employment. This does not sit well with her father, Mr. Alinaswe, who feels she needs protection from the world and the potential disappointment she would face because of her condition. He struggles to come to terms with the possibility of her being rejected. Just as he expected, the job hunt goes terribly wrong. Suwilanji encounters stigma, rejection, and humiliation in the process. In one incident, she is mistaken for a beggar by her potential employer. When she narrates this experience, her father echoes his fears again in a bitter exchange. Mr. Alinaswe only gets a change of heart after having a conversation about the situation with a relative, and he finally agrees to support Suwilanji's decision to find a job. This marks a turning point in Suwilanji's life, ending that conflict.

Exploring these conflicts in the world of the film is important in highlighting the various ways society responds to disability. It demonstrates how families, employers and society at large still maintain negative attitudes, perceptions and beliefs about the place of disabled people. For Kaseketi (2018), exploring these encounters is important because it effectively educates viewers on the impact that attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs have on how persons living with disabilities are treated.

Another conflict explored in *Suwi* concerns the economic struggles that some of the main characters have to contend with. The film subtly highlights the economic milieu within which it is told, which is the world it establishes for the story. *Suwi* exists within the simultaneity of the economic boom that Zambia began to enjoy following years of austerity (between 2002 and 2005), and the lack of a trickle-down from the boom that left out many more in the population. The latter ensured the maintenance of unemployment and economic desperation as

the status quo (Siachiwena, 2020; Resnick, 2012). On the one hand, the film depicts a significant amount of economic comfort, as seen with the fancy dinners, the in-style motor vehicles, access to leisure activities and more than decent housing, and on the other hand, it underscores some of the economic issues in its time.

For example, Suwilanji's insistence on finding a job is not merely a personal goal. It is necessary for her livelihood and that of her family. Even though her father argues that he will be able to take care of her, he is also concerned about how to do it because he is a retiree who does not have the money. Both of Suwilanji's parents are elderly, and there is no mention of any economic activity they engage in. This situation implies that Suwilanji getting a job would be a lifeline for the family. Another indication of how economically challenging the times are is observed when Bupe is left with Chimba. Bupe's grandparents state in a note that their reason for abandoning her with Chimba is that she is used to the city. However, we can also deduce from the subtext that the decision is economic. They cannot afford to care for Bupe, so they send her away to the wealthy doctor for whom her father worked.

Beyond this, Kaseketi is also interested in showing how persons with disabilities see themselves affects how they relate to people around them. This gives the viewer a sense of what it means to be disabled. In *Suwi*, we see Suwilanji struggle with the idea of finding love or being accepted for who she is. For instance, when Chimba asks Suwilanji out on a date, she is quite hesitant before eventually accepting the offer. After what looks like several dates, Chimba expresses his interest and love for Suwilanji. Her reaction shocks him as she tells him not to be hasty. He tries to explain what he sees in her and asks if they could spend even more time together. Instead, Suwilanji responds in a way that aptly conveys her frame of mind. In response, she says:

> *"My life changed tremendously after the accident. I don't know how to live any anymore. Besides, I am still healing. Doctor, I thought we were friends. I didn't know that you had an agenda. You know what Doctor, I do not want you to feel anything, guilt or whatever you can call it."*

She then holds her crutches and adds, "These will come between us." These words encapsulate how Suwi feels about herself and what she thinks people see in her. She takes Chimba's proposal as a mockery because she believes he could not genuinely be interested in her. In her mind, Chimba is merely feeling sorry for her because of

her disability. His confession of love sparks conflict in the relationship, and her disability is at the centre of it.

Another important issue that Kaseketi addresses in *Suwi* is how to effectively depict disability on screen after years of nonrepresentation and misrepresentation. This question is further problematized when gender is added as an intersectional element in this representation. Within Zambian television and film, these considerations had been persistently absent. Kaseketi notes it was important for the film to address some of the issues about disability that had been long ignored, under-represented or misrepresented (personal interview, 2018 July 13). This was necessary because disability cuts across any societal taxonomies, such as gender itself, class, ethnicity, race, age, and others.

According to Allison Wilde (2020) media images of disability are considered a key factor in the construction and maintenance of "discriminatory beliefs throughout most contemporary societies." Wilde notes that film and television, which are some of the few places where disabled people obtain identification, are also responsible for shaping attitudes of stigma that people have. This means that for a film such as *Suwi*, whose goal is to deliver a well-rounded representation of disability and carry a firm social message, it was essential to consider how it could break free from the problematic constructions that have been persistent in screen media.

One of the very first things that Kaseketi achieves is to normalise disability. The idea here is to show that disability is not an out-of-this-world reality but a common feature in society and must be treated as such. Thus, it is crucial that any skewed perceptions are dealt with and that its portrayal reinforces the point of view that disability is not uncommon (Wilde, 2020). One way this is achieved is by making Suwilanji the main protagonist. This normalises disability in the sense that audiences get to follow the story much like they would for a character who was not disabled.

Further, the film also challenges the idea that a disabled person always longs to feel wanted and loved. In its representation of disability, *Suwi* runs away from some of the 'old stereotypes', as Sutherland (1981) describes them, such as dependency and incompetence. Instead, Kaseketi subverts this stereotype and shows that it is Chembe that pursues Suwilanji while she seems to be focused on getting her life on track. Suwilanji is not a vulnerable, overly emotional character that settles in victimhood. She is confident, bold, determined, and is not entirely interested in Chembe's advances.

While disability is at the heart of the story, Kaseketi ensures that it is not turned into a spectacle by over-emphasis and over-dramatic performance. Instead, it is presented as being a normal experience that anyone can find themselves in. However, this portrayal is not at all simplistic. Suwilanji is such a layered character that her disability is not the only thing audiences would be intrigued about her. Viewers are also interested in her relationships, her willingness to live her reality as best as she can, and her ability to move forward. This is not to say that the film glosses over the injustices faced by people with disabilities such as employment discrimination and social stigma. *Suwi* does not just rely on long dialogue scenes to express these issues and move the story forward. Instead, the film also utilizes continuity editing and sound mixing to create effective montage sequences that engage with the viewer at a more emotional level as the injustices are encountered on screen.

For instance, when Chimba takes Suwilanji to his village to meet his parents, one montage sequence focuses on how Suwilanji is forced to endure being in a place where she is rejected because of her disability. In all this, she still must perform various chores, such as sweeping the grounds or fetching water at the community well, to gain the approval of Chimba's family. The editor carefully puts together shots of Suwilanji in these scenes to show how hard she has it in the village and utilizes the various close-ups and medium shots composed to capture her emotions in those times. This is all juxtaposed with sentimental music that elicits an emotional response in the viewer.

Additionally, Kaseketi and her team are careful not to let the stage theatre origins of the story permeate through to its construction. Rather than long conversational scenes or soliloquies associated with plays, the film employs various techniques to move the story forward faster and more effectively. According to Bordwell, Thompson and Smith (2017: 252), a "filmmaker who employs the continuity style uses cinematic time primarily to advance the narrative." This means that the editing cuts are made in a way that seeks to move the story forward to help the viewer logically follow what is happening in the story without affecting the desired runtime. In *Suwi*, montage is employed several times to ensure that the story is less dependent on dialogue. This works very well for a film whose pacing at times gives the impression that it will be a long film. Similarly, the film's cinematography and editing complement the narrative and gives the audience visual tools that help them understand, make logical connections and move along with the story quite easily.

The producers use cinematography and editing to draw the viewer into Suwilanji's new reality. For instance, close-ups and extreme close-ups of her facial expressions as she reacts to the way she is treated are often used. As Dancyger (2019) notes, close-ups are effective in capturing reaction shots. It is essential to demonstrate the challenges she faces because of the disability. The editor cuts between the close-ups and establishment shots. The establishment shots are meant to allow the viewer to see her movements with the crutches. Visuals of her crutches are used as a motif, to constantly remind the viewer that her disability is at the core of the story. In one scene that illustrates this, Suwilanji, at a family meeting called to discuss Chimba's intention to marry her, is asked whether she indeed wants to marry him too. She responds in the affirmative but to demonstrate her willingness, she is asked to uncover the contents of a covered plate that was presented by Chimba's family and placed on the table. In several Zambian ethnolinguistic groups, the covered plate contains money that is given as a token to the family of the woman to be wedded. As Suwilanji gets up from the floor where she is seated, the camera focuses on how she uses the crutch. The process of her getting up, then using the clutch to take the first step towards the table and eventually leaning on it as she uncovers the plate, is the focus of the composition. We can contend that the focus on the crutch is meant to show just how much they are a part of her life and how they will also be part of this marriage. A similar focus on the crutch is repeated in the next sequence of shots that capture a traditional marriage preparatory ceremony called *ichilanga mulilo* in Bemba. At the ceremony characterised by singing and dancing, Suwilanji is expected to participate in the preparation of food that will be presented to Chimba's family as a demonstration of what to expect from her and her family. Here again, the crutches are a focal point in yet another montage sequence that uses the singing at the ceremony as diegetic sound.

Throughout the film, cinematography and editing are also used in concert to convey the mood in the film. For instance, in the scene where Mr. Alinaswe decides to support Suwilanji's wish to go out and seek a job in her disabled state, the editor, Okku Nuutilainen, uses a mix of shots and cuts that elevate our awareness of the tension in the moment. Suwilanji and her sister Ndina are shown in profile as they face the kitchen sink and window. Their father walks in and the camera switches to a bust shot that positions him slightly off centre but facing the camera, as if he his speaking into it as he intensely says "Now, listen to me and listen very carefully."

This is followed by a two shot of the young women, who are now facing their much taller father intently. The framing here ensures that we see the height difference, and this is useful in showing that despite them being grown up, they still look up to him. He is still their father, and they respect him and have a sense of fear for him.

Mr. Alinaswe: "They can only be one head of this family and that is me. So when I set up the rules, I expect them to be followed closely."

The girls look at each other wondering what the issue is. Suwilanji looks like she is ready to have a fight with him. The camera cut's back to Mr Alinaswe as he continues speaking

Mr. Alinaswe: "How many times have I spoken against leaving work for Suwi? She is still recovering…"

Rather than a back and forth between the two shot and the close-up, the cinematographer uses an over the shoulder shot of the exchange from the perspective of Mrs. Alinaswe, who has joined them at this point. This creates an effective three-plane shot that places the daughters (from behind) in the first, Mr. Alinaswe in the second, and Mrs Alinaswe, in the third plane as she looks on from the door into the kitchen. In this one shot, the family discussion is captured in a way that represents the three positions in the house: Suwilanji who is determined to defy the odds and find work, her father who does not want her to find work in her condition, and her mother, who must be a mediator between the two positions.

At that point, Suwilanji tries to interrupt but her father yells "I'm still talking!" There is a short silence that adds to the tension in the room. The camera captures the facial expressions in the moment as Mr. Alinaswe looks sternly at Suwilanji and as her face exudes frustration. In the same forceful tone, he continues, "I don't want you to be overworking when you find your new job" and he walks out of the room. The camera captures the moment when her frustrated look turns into a smile. In his own way, Suwilanji's father finally agrees to support her. This is a great moment in the story that is elevated by the camera movements and editorial construction.

Further, working with colourist Mattias Boettge and the lighting team led by Salla Sorri, Kaseketi ensures that the colouring and lighting match with the mood that each scene is meant to communicate. The effective use of colour and lighting also adds to how the viewer will interpret and appreciate the scene. Lighting is more than just a source of illumination in film but is used to enhance the mood of the scene, unveil feeling and character, as well as to

communicate meaning and direct the viewers' attention to something on the screen (Barsam & Monahan, 2019). Colour has been used symbolically to convey emotion and describe (as adjectives) the mood in the world of a film (Gianetti, 2017).

For example, scenes showing Bupe's time as a street kid are often shot in the night or with black, grey or dark blue tones. This is done to express the gloom and darkness that Bupe feels as an orphaned and rejected child who is alone in the world. With the darker colour tones, audiences are brought into Bupe's mind where we get a sense of how she sees the world. The colour and lighting changes the moment Bupe is rescued. This evokes a feeling of liberation from dullness to brightness.

Similarly, when Suwilanji is grappling with the reality of her disability and the constant rejection that comes with it, she is often shown alone in poorly lit rooms. This again expresses the darkness and anguish she feels about her condition and the grief she still feels over the loss of Kizito. A vivid variation in the colouring is observed when her disposition changes following her father's decision to support her quest to find employment. Suwilanji is seen in more vibrant tones that correspond with her happier and hopeful demeanor. Once again, the change in the colour compliments the change in the mood in the world of the characters (Gianetti, 2017).

7.5 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter's analysis of *Suwi: Faith Beyond Limits* has highlighted some of the narrative, contextual and stylistic elements of the film. The discussion has also expounded on Musola Catherine Kaseketi's experience in getting her film completed and has established the production as an example of transnational filmmaking in Zambia.

Having examined the various aspects of the film and its production, it is worth noting how different *Suwi* stood out from some of the other productions at the time, particularly and almost entirely those from Muvi TV. Suwi departs from what we have established as the Muvi TV approach to production (Chapter 6). For example, even though it incorporates similar visual elements, *Suwi* is neither dependent on local language use nor is it solely focused on appealing to audiences from low-income communities. Further, the setting for many scenes are often well-scouted locations rather than high-density areas that do not require much scouting and permits. The film also boasts exceptional visuals made possible by the equipment that its producers were able to obtain through foreign funding and support. The Finish support and the extra funding that Kaseketi obtained from different sources were sufficient for her to invest in

improving the film's production values and editing quality. This element speaks to the differences between transnational and solely local productions, with the former often benefitting from capital and resources that foreign collaborators can bring to a production (Ezra & Rowden, 2006; Higbee & Lim, 2010; Hayward, 2017).

The film analysis has revealed that stylistic elements such as close-ups, montages and colouring, among others, were used to add to the overall quality and appreciation of *Suwi*. Further, *Suwi's* attempt at representing disability on screen is believable and compelling. It is not forced, and neither does it turn into a spectacle for the sake of making a point. Instead, disability is inventively normalised, as it exists naturally within the film's world and is seamlessly woven into the storylines and characters in the film. As a result, *Suwi* does not always read like a message film. The film still succeeds in achieving its didactic objectives by highlighting the experience of disabled women in a culture characterized by stigma and ignorance on matters to do with disability and the intersectional elements of gender and inequality. The film also effectively represents Zambian life in this period under review. This is mostly seen in depicting the socio-economic situation in the world of the characters. Unemployment, street kids, HIV and AIDS are just some of the realities of Zambian life during this period.

Overall, *Suwi* is an important film text that rightfully highlights several aspects of disability as it is experienced in Zambian society. While the film's message is central, *Suwi* is ingeniously told in a way that is not excessively preachy or so message-focused that the artistic elements are negated. Kaseketi and her partners put together a compelling story whose use of various narrative, cinematographic and stylistic elements effectively work together to draw audiences into the world of the film in a satisfying and enriching way.

Suwi is an eminent film in the history of Zambian cinematic arts and must be celebrated for what it achieved. At a time when commercial filmmaking was only beginning and investing in filmmaking was not seen as a lucrative venture, Kaseketi demonstrated that it was possible to produce an impactful message film that could be enjoyed both locally and abroad. The production of *Suwi* exemplifies the tenacity, will and courage that filmmakers in the take-off stage of Zambian filmmaking possessed.

CHAPTER 8

FILM AND FILMMAKING UNDER THE PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT (2011 – 2020): GROWTH TOWARD AN INDUSTRY

"There is a new wind I think growing in the film sector. For me it is about harnessing that wind and see how I can use the momentum." - Mulenga Kapwepwe

8.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of two that examines the development of filmmaking in Zambia under the Patriotic Front (PF) government from 2011 to 2021. This examination highlights the significant developments, trends, and challenges in Zambian cinematic arts in this period. The Patriotic Front, which was highly critical of the pro-market policies of the MMD, came into office with a populist social democratic and pro-poor agenda.

In this chapter, I examine the observable developments and challenges in Zambia's burgeoning film sector, focusing on the political and economic context of the country during these 10 years. Aligned with the chosen analytical framework, I discuss Zambia's political and economic situation under the Patriotic Front (PF) government. I then highlight the policy decisions and institutional parameters relating to the cinematic arts in Zambia as implemented by the PF government.

I deliberate on the development (and non-implementation) of the National Film Policy and other government interventions affecting screen production. Subsequently, I outline some persistent challenges affecting filmmaking in this epoch, identified through in-depth interviews and document analysis conducted for the study. I also detail potential solutions or actions to counter these challenges and highlight other emerging trends and debates observable during this period. Finally, I provide a summary discussion of the chapter's findings and a conclusion.

This chapter takes a present-era look at the various issues that typify present-day filmmaking in Zambia, highlighting some contemporary challenges and prospects obtained from the in-depth interviews.

I show that more than any other administration before it, the PF government had the best opportunity to push Zambian filmmaking forward with acceptable policies and interventions. Unfortunately, very little was achieved, and the historical political and economic challenges

that plagued filmmaking persisted alongside what should have been a 'take-off' for Zambia film. The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate a dichotomy of both missed opportunities by those in or with power and the remarkable resilience of filmmakers to get past the many challenges.

8.2 Zambia's Political and Economic Context in the PF Years

The Patriotic Front (PF) was founded in 2001 by Michael Chilufya Sata, a veteran politician and former civil servant who, until the launch of his party, served as a high-ranking cabinet minister in President Frederick Chiluba's MMD administration. Various scholars have described Sata's brand of politics as a turn towards populism in Zambia (Hamusokwe, 2021; Fraser, 2017; Cheeseman, Ford and Simutanyi, 2014; Helle and Rakner, 2012; Resnick, 2010). Many saw his appropriation of music to appeal to the people in the arts and cultural space as a glimpse of what the PF government's approach to arts and cultural production would look like (Mambwe, 2019; Fraiser, 2017).

Sata's presidency abruptly ended when he died in October 2014 after just three years in office. A presidential by-election was held in January 2015, and the PF's candidate, Edgar Chagwa Lungu, was elected as head of state after a tightly contested race with Hakainde Hichilema, the president of the opposition party, the United Party for National Development (UPND). A year later, in the scheduled 2016 general elections, Lungu secured a new mandate.

Zambia's economy declined significantly under the PF. The mining and manufacturing sectors were affected by severe electricity shortages, and drought or flooding often threatened agricultural production. The cash-strapped government looked to debt to finance its activities. This reversed the gains made after the completion of the HIPC initiative in 2005 (discussed in Chapter 6). The PF merged populist rhetoric with clientelism to maintain influence (Harland, 2014; Bwalya, 2017; Siachiwena, 2020). For example, Lungu introduced the Presidential Empowerment Initiative Fund (PEIF) in 2015 to provide interest-free financing to informal sector workers such as marketers. Several other 'empowerment' programmes were introduced, including one for the arts. Other challenges were indebtedness, a declining local currency, chronic power shortages, an unstable mining regime, and incessant corruption allegations. Between 2016 and 2021, efforts to get an IMF-sponsored new recovery plan were unsuccessful. The economy became a central issue in the 2021 Elections. After almost seven years in office, Lungu was voted out, and Hichilema of the UPND became Zambia's 7th president.

8.3 Policy and Regulation Affecting the Filmmaking under the PF

8.3.1 Mainstreaming the Arts and Creative Sectors

One of the PF government's earliest interventions in the arts and creative industries in Zambia was the creation of the Ministry of Tourism and Arts on 10 July 2012. The Ministry of Tourism and Arts was mandated in Government Gazette Notice No 836 of 2016 to, among other things, administer the country's arts policy, culture industries and policy, and research in the arts (GRZ, 2016). National Arts Council (NAC) was now housed under the new ministry.

Many in the arts fraternity and creative sectors, including filmmakers, had advocated for the creation of an arts ministry for several years (Mwansa, 2019). It was always envisioned that the arts would be better prioritized if they had their own line ministry. However, even with the creation of the ministry, arts were still bundled with the tourism sector, which received more attention in the government's development agenda as laid out in the PF Party Manifesto and the National Development Plans the government developed.

Many of the PF government's policy directions in the creative and cultural sector were initially pursued in the framework of the Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP) for 2011 to 2016. The SNDP, whose theme was "sustained economic growth and poverty reduction", was developed within Zambia's larger long-term national plan, Vision 2030 of 2006, whose main thrust is to see Zambia becoming "a prosperous middle-income nation by 2030" (GRZ, 2006). The SNDP stated that arts and culture, categorised under tourism, were priority sectors in the country's development. The SNDP disclosed that the government would "focus on the provision of requisite infrastructure and skills for the promotion of creative industries for socio-economic development and preservation of Zambia's cultural heritage" (GRZ, 2011: 126). Further, the government committed to developing a comprehensive policy framework on arts and culture in addition to reviewing the 2002 National Cultural Policy to have it include "copyright and intellectual property rights, film and cinematography, the folk culture and creative industries in order to support a holistic strategy for the development of the sector" (GRZ, 2011: 128). As a strategy, the plan stated that the government would facilitate "access to training, and business development resources and services" in order to develop the creative industries (GRZ, 2011: 129).

The PF administration, keen on meeting their own party manifesto objectives, called for a revision of the SNDP that was developed under the MMD. The revision aligned the plan to the PF Manifesto's agenda. The PF's 2011 to 2016 Manifesto was critical of the MMD's approach to developing many sectors of the country, including arts and culture. For example, the PF argued that the MMD has reduced arts and culture to celebrating traditional ceremonies at the expense of other forms of expression (PF, 2011). It noted, among other problems, that the MMD had also failed to establish a long-awaited national arts and cultural centre. The party promised that in addition to establishing a national arts and cultural centre, it would establish provincial and district arts and cultural centres, promote research in the fields of arts and culture, and encourage public and private investment in the development of arts and culture infrastructure in cities, towns and villages (PF, 2011). The party also pledged to support visual and performing artists by incorporating them into government programmes. Further, it pledged to promote intellectual property protection and introduce legislation promoting the creators.

The government began realigning the SNDP with the PF Manifesto and the Revised Sixth National Development Plan (R-SNDP) for 2013 to 2016, was finally launched in 2014. However, unlike the PF manifesto, the R-SNDP only discussed filmmaking as a strategic focus under the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) Sector. The "lack of content development facilities such as film production studios and incubation centres for ICTs" were identified as a challenge in the sector (GRZ, 2014: 56). To address this, the government committed itself to constructing provincial television stations. Unlike the PF Manifesto that promised the development of arts and culture infrastructure in every province, the R-SNP indicated that the arts and culture infrastructure would only be implemented in Western Province (GRZ, 2014: 42).

The successor of the R-SNDP, the 7th National Development Plan 2017 - 2021 (7NDP), also listed arts and cultural infrastructure development and arts festival development promotion as programmes to be pursued under tourism development. However, it did not state what the focus for film development would be.

Despite what the NDPs were meant to achieve, they did not adequately address the many issues concerning the filmmaking fraternity. However, the lack of overt expression in these plans should not be taken to imply that the PF government was not interested in the film or screen industry. The push to develop a film policy is evidence of this.

8.3.2 National Film Policy

Even more than the creation of the new Arts Ministry, the PF government's push for the formulation of a film policy is arguably one of the most important legacies of the party as far as the cinematic arts in Zambia are concerned. Discussions on the development of a guiding document for the development of filmmaking in Zambia had existed since the Kaunda years. However, efforts to develop a dedicated policy often went unfulfilled. The National Cultural Policy of 2003 attempted to include various issues of interest to the film sector. However, the Cultural Policy seemed more like a piecemeal assemblage of different ideas on culture and the arts that did not adequately address the intricacies of developing a film industry.

In the years around the release of Zambia's first feature films (2007 to 2010), pioneering filmmakers such as Angel Phiri, Lawrence Thompson, Catherine Kaseketi and others called on the government of the day to formally support the filmmakers as a matter of policy. Calls to develop a policy gained momentum when the PF came into office in 2011. Many in the filmmaking community felt it was opportune to lobby the new government to have a film policy developed and implemented. Filmmakers and other arts sector stakeholders organised under the auspices of the National Arts Council (NAC) and the National Association of Media Arts (NAMA), with the sanction of the government, began to have a series of meetings and workshops to curve out what would constitute a policy as early as 2012 (Owas Ray Mwape, personal interview, 2018 August 10). However, the process was painstakingly slow.

President Lungu publicly called for expediting the process in 2015 and 2017 (National Assembly of Zambia, 2017; Nkole, 2017). As a result, the various stakeholders involved, including the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services (MIBS), the Ministry of Tourism and Arts, NAC, NAMA, and filmmakers and art sector experts, continued with increased urgency. The National Film Policy was finally completed, presented to the Zambian Cabinet and approved by President Lungu in 2018. Despite its completion, the policy was not launched.

The 2018 policy situated the Zambian film sector within the changing technological and broadcasting environment, acknowledging its potential (GRZ, 2018).[17]

[17] I was granted access to the approved National Film Policy and given permission to review it for this thesis by then Director of Planning and Information at MIBS, Mr. Bitone Kaluba with approval of the ministry's Permanent Secretary at the time Mr. Isaac Chipampe.

The policy addressed challenges in Zambia's film sector, including poor training, lack of funding, and inadequate national policies. It aimed to promote quality local film production, facilitate distribution, encourage international collaboration, review laws, and strengthen skills. The policy outlined institutional arrangements, legal frameworks, resource mobilization, and monitoring mechanisms. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services (MIBS) was responsible for coordination, accreditation, and standards development. The Ministry of Tourism and Arts promoted creative industries and marketed Zambia as a filming location. Other institutions, including government departments, media organizations, and collecting societies, were assigned specific roles in implementation.

For the legal framework, the policy was developed to function within the provisions of existing legislation. These include the Theatre and Cinematography Act No. 54 of 1929, the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation Act of 2002 (with its amendments), the Zambia Mass Communications Act of 1996, and the National Arts Council of Zambia Act of 1994. Others are the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act of 2002 with its amendments, the Information Communication Technology Act of 2005, and the Copyright and Performance Related Act. However, the policy acknowledged the need to review these acts to align them with the prevailing context within which contemporary filmmaking occurred. For example, the colonial 1929 Theatre and Cinematography Act No. 54 is outdated and needs review, and the 1994 National Arts Council Act is devoid of a clear mandate for the development of the film industry.

In 2020, two years after the Cabinet approved the National Film Policy, the government announced that the policy would be reviewed before being made public. According to then-permanent secretary in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, Amos Malupenga, the film policy was being revised "to bring it in tandem with current technological developments and ensure sustainable growth of the sector" (Jere, 2020). The film policy had not been launched by the end of the PF's rule in August 2021. Despite the failure to launch and implement it, the National Film Policy demonstrated how the Zambian government was willing to dedicate time and resources to develop the film industry in the country. It also sparked conversations that brought together filmmakers, government officials, cultural leaders, and other stakeholders, and in so doing, laying the ground for future policy considerations. Furthermore, public discourse about the policy, mainly through new media, drew particular attention to Zambian filmmaking's challenges and opportunities.

8.4 Filmmaking in the PF Years: Challenges and Solutions

The PF years saw a marked increase in commercial filmmaking activities. In this section, I elaborate on some of the key issues that shaped the cinematic arts in this epoch, focusing on the challenges and the identified solutions to those challenges.

8.4.1 Training and skills development

The lack of training and skills development remained one of the main challenges that characterised the cinematic arts in Zambia in this epoch. It is essential to state that there was a significant improvement from the poor levels of training observed in the First and Second Republics when there were no training facilities in the country and the government had to sponsor personnel for training abroad (as highlighted in Chapter 4). However, several gaps in training and skills development remained persistent.

My enquiry into the level of training among practising filmmakers revealed a varied picture. Generally, most filmmakers stated they depended on short training workshops or courses provided by different organisations at events such as film festivals. For instance, Fred Phiri of Media 365 Productions and Elixir Integrated Media obtained his training in television production at Deutsche Welle Television Training centre in Germany and further training at the Community Video Education Trust in Cape Town, South Africa. Jessie Chisi, who directed the documentary film, *Between Rings, The Esther Phiri Story* (2014), received her training at the Outline Studios OY in Finland in 2009, and at the Durban Talent Campus in 2009, in addition to the Berlinale Talent Campus in 2010. She previously obtained a qualification in television production from ZAMCOM in 2008. As for Lawrence Thompson, previous broadcast journalism training helped him transition into filmmaking after working with various international documentary and television producers who hired him as a cameraman and photographer. Thompson has worked with production teams from large international media corporations such as CNN, National Geographic, and Al Jazeera.

Given the training gaps, some Zambian filmmakers have resorted to training and hiring crew members for all their productions. For instance, Kasaketi stated that she works with some of her trainees at Vilole Pictures (personal interview, 2018 July 13). Similarly, Jessie Chisi revealed that she often collaborates with attendees of the training workshops she conducts during the Zambia Short Film Festival she host (personal interview, 2018 June 19). At Media

365, the production company behind television drama productions such as *Love Games* (2013-2015) and *Club Risky Business* (2009) and several reality and lifestyle programmes, crew members were often trained in-house, and occasionally by foreign collaborators of the production company (C. Phiri, personal interview, 2018 June 28).

An emerging development meant to counter the training and skills deficit has been establishing private film training schools and introducing film programmes at higher learning institutions. The Kilimanjaro Film Academy in Lusaka is an example of an emerging film training school. Kilimanjaro was established by veteran playwright, artist and arts administrator Mulenga Kapwepwe, as a collaborative project with the Kilimanjaro Film Institute of Tanzania, with funding from the European Union (EU). According to Mary Manzole, the academy director, Kilimanjaro targets youth from vulnerable backgrounds and those interested in filmmaking and storytelling, even if they did not have O-Level (Grade 12) qualifications (personal interview, 2018 July 12).

The National Film School, launched in 2018, is another example of a recent training project. The school is a joint venture between the Sotambe Film Institute (SFI) and the Zambia Institute of Mass communication (ZAMCOM). The school offers a 10-month Certificate in Filmmaking course delivered at ZAMCOM premises in Lusaka and at the SFI premises in Ndola. By the time of publishing, this was still the only programme the collaborative school offered. SFI also regularly conducts masterclasses and bootcamps on various aspects of filmmaking.

In 2018, MultiChoice Africa established the MultiChoice Talent Factory (MTF) Academy for the Southern African Region in Lusaka. The MTF in Zambia is one of four on the African continent. The others are in Kenya and Nigeria, for the East and West African regions, respectively, and the fourth is in South Africa, to serve South African nationals exclusively. The MTF Southern Africa's first Director, Berry Lwaando, stated that the MTF initiative was mooted to help address the training and skills challenges that characterize screen media production in Africa by providing a year-long education programme that covers both theoretical and practical training in cinematography, editing, audio production and storytelling (B. Lwando, personal interview, 2018 July 12). The MTF also conducts various masterclasses targeting practising filmmakers and hosts a networking database for creatives in the region called MTF Portal. The programmes are provided in partnership with the University of Zambia (UNZA), which moderates and accredits the course offerings. In 2019, the inaugural MTF class completed two new films – *The Painting* (2019) and *Savannah Skies* (2019). The films first

aired on Zambezi Magic Channel in October that year. Subsequent cohorts of students also produced their own films.

In 2020, the University of Zambia began developing two film-related degree programmes. One programme will be housed in the Department of Media and Communication Studies, and the other, in the Department of Literature and Languages, which also houses the university's Drama programme. In the same year, South African-based Open Windows Institute, which specializes in creative arts programmes, established the Open Windows University in Zambia. Open Windows provides qualifications in programmes such as film and graphics design. It is unclear how these university programmes will differ or complement each other, but they are primed to help address the training gap significantly.

8.4.2 Lack of Funding

The lack of funding was perhaps the biggest challenge faced by Zambian filmmakers in this epoch. The filmmakers interviewed noted that funding affected the way their films were made, the stories that were told and how these stories were consumed. For instance, Henry Joe Sakala observed that funding was essential to the growth of film in the country because making a film in Zambia was very expensive (Sakala, personal interview, 2018 June 8).

Some of the filmmakers stated that they self-financed their productions but wished they had access to funding opportunities. In several cases, such film productions caused significant personal financial loses for the filmmakers. For instance, Jessie Chisi admitted to making a loss on her short film *Imagination* (2016), which, unlike her previous film, *Between Rings: The Esther Phiri Story* (2014), was entirely financed with personal resources (personal interview, 2018 June 19). According to Chisi, *Imagination* was a story she wanted to tell using local resources and talent. However, even after financing it herself, she could not find a distributor for the short film. *Though a financial loss, imagination* won the Best Short Film at the ZAFTA in 2016.

The filmmakers also argued that lack of film funding affected the type of films that could be produced. For instance, Kaseketi noted that some filmmakers could only afford to budget for production, leaving out other processes such as preproduction or development. According to her, this was why some films were of lower quality (personal interview, 2018 July 13). Further, Lwando from the MTF observed that the lack of funding extended to training to the extent that some creators saw training as a cost that could be avoided. As a result, Lwando argues that

there has been an inclination to rush to produce even without training because “the attraction is more on getting into the industry than training” (personal interview, 2018 July 12).

By this epoch, video systems had already replaced the old film technologies at ZANIS for several years. ZANIS was not able to support traditional filmmaking as it did in the First and Second Republics. According to Mwalye Nosiku Muyawa, a recording specialist at ZANIS, statutory support for production operations with video and later digital technologies was sustained for the most part (personal interview, 2018 July 16). However, the funding needed to support efforts to digitize several old film reels was unavailable (Muyawa, 2018). The old reels remained in various storage spaces at ZANIS as the institution sought a solution to fund the digitization project.

Figure 5: Dusty film reels and an old projector at ZANIS in 2018. Taken 16 July 2018

Figure 6: Old film reels in storage at ZANIS in 2018

To get around the funding challenges, different filmmakers adopted a range of strategies. For instance, Cathy Phiri noted that her firm, Media 365, depended on commissioned work that guaranteed financing from the commissioning organisation. Media 365 has become one of the most successful production companies with experience in producing different types of content including, dramas, reality shows and talk programmes, all mostly for television. Phiri observes:

> For the most part, all of our projects have been fully financed by the client. So, we have been commissioned to develop a product, a film or series, whatever it might be and that's how we finance it. Because we are a for profit business, we make a profit from it (personal interview, 2018 June 26).

Several Media365 productions were commissioned by M-Net, the content division of MultiChoice, and placed on various channels on the conglomerate's DSTv subscription television service. Generally, this financing model enabled other filmmakers, such Fred Phiri (Elixur Integrated Media), Frank Sibbuku (A-List Films), and Yoweli Chungu (Yoweli Chungu Filimu), to reinvest in their production businesses and support other productions. However, other filmmakers preferred to license their already completed self-financed productions to M-Net. Where possible, licensing enabled content creators to earn income on older productions. This was the case for Owas Ray Mwape, who licenced his films *Chenda* (2015) and *Strictly by Invitation* (2016) to M-Net. According to Mwape, filmmakers were turning to licensing to

increase the long-term return on investment on their productions (personal interview, 2018 June 26)

Others such as Kaseketi and Chisi took advantage of film festivals to pitch their ideas to possible funders. Kaseketi observed that funding was difficult for many Zambian filmmakers because "they haven't been trained or exposed to people or organisations who can fund films" (personal interview, 2018 July 13). Kaseketi believed that more Zambians needed to look beyond the borders because she believed "there was a lot of funding outside the country".

DVD sales were also a primary source of income to fund production for other filmmakers such as Douglas Mumbi and Patrick Musonda, despite the threat of piracy (as established in Chapter 6). To support production, other creators linked their filmmaking to other businesses they ran. For example, Mwape indicated that he operated a marketing business that also helped distribute his films and generate income to fund his productions.

The Zambian government's approach to financially supporting filmmaking mainly remained ineffective. Further, establishing a film commission or funding body as proposed in the National Film Policy was not achieved by the end of this epoch. Adrian Chipindi of the National Arts Council (NAC) acknowledged that even though the government, through NAC, was committed to supporting the film sector financially, it had not provided any actual production financing. According to Chipindi, the only times NAC had supported filmmakers was through training, distribution support and the awarding of travel grants for filmmakers attending international festivals or training opportunities (personal interview, 2018 May 14).

In June 2020, President Edgar Lungu announced the creation of the Presidential Arts Empowerment Scheme, which, according to Chipindi, was the country's first ever arts fund. The programme implemented by NAC and the Ministry of Tourism and Arts was meant to provide funding to artists' businesses as a 'Government Stimulus Package' in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on local businesses. The fund was also meant to boost employment creation opportunities for the youths in the arts, a sector often not eligible to obtain financing from regular financial institutions such as Banks. The ZMK 30 million loan fund (2021 equivalent of ZAR 30 million, USD 150,000) was to cater for various arts disciplines, such as dance, theatre, fashion, film, music and others, for the purchase of equipment and other assets at a low interest rate (Njobvu, 2020). According to NAC (2020), 1316 applications were received, and only 152 applicants were selected. Of the 152, only 24 were awarded for video and film-related projects.

It is still unknown what impact the fund will have on Zambian filmmaking and arts. Though welcomed by many from the filmmaking community, there was a feeling from different sections of society that the fund was a political manoeuvre by President Lungu and the PF government meant to attract votes from the arts fraternity in the scheduled General election in 2021. At the time, governance activist and recording artist Fumba 'Pilato' Chama called the fund a "presidential bribe" not meant to address the real economic challenges in the arts sector and the country (2020). The main opposition party at the time, the UPND, argued that an empowerment fund was not the correct way to boost the creative industry because it did not address structural challenges, but it was merely an incentive to have artists vote for the PF (Sakala, 2020).

While the fund was expected to be revolving, a call for applications for 2021 had not been made by the end of the PF rule in August of that year. This further adds to the suspicion that the fund was created for political reasons and can be added to the list of politically driven 'empowerment funds' associated with the PF government (Bwalya, 2017; Siachiwena, 2020).

8.4.3 Distribution: Poor access to local cinemas

The lack of or limited distribution options has been a persistent challenge faced by African filmmakers for a long time. In Zambia, distribution challenges continued to affect the sector differently in this epoch. Filmmakers such as Owas Ray Mwape are concerned about the limited and highly competitive distribution opportunities. Mwape argues that the struggle to find distribution opportunities affected the creative processes because filmmakers were forced to also worry about how they would distribute their films. He notes:

> As filmmakers, our job should only be to sit down and create as well as the aspects of post-production. Marketing and distribution needs to be taken up by other people. If I am to enter marketing and distribution, then I will not have enough time to apply my creativity to the production *(personal interview, 2018 August 10).*

From the interviews, the distribution challenges were explicated in two main ways: the lack of access to local cinema or television markets and the dearth of information about distributors and distribution opportunities outside the country.

Cinematic distribution remained elusive for most Zambian filmmakers for several reasons. According to David Mwaka, who was the head of Ster Kinekor in Zambia, the cinema chain

often turned down Zambian films due to the poor quality of production and the failure by filmmakers to understand how cinema distribution worked (Mwaka, personal interview, 2018 June 12). Mwaka argued that his company's policy was to hold all local and international films to the same standard. This was done with the belief that the more local films met this standard, the more they were likely to compete internationally.

Since opening its Zambia operation in 2003, Ster-Kinekor Theatres Limited, a South African theatre giant, enjoyed a comfortable monopoly in the commercial film exhibition market for several years. At the time of launch, the Ster Kinerkor multiplex in Lusaka was conveniently located in an upmarket business and entertainment area, and it boasted five screens, each showing the latest Hollywood releases. Plaza 3, the only locally owned cinema in operation at the time, had been struggling to consistently provide the latest releases and maintain its facilities in Lusaka's central business district. Other local theatres had ebbed away completely or had morphed into other businesses. For example, Metro 1 in Lusaka's Avondale residential area became a church, while 21st Century Cinema was occupied by a hardware and automotive parts shop, with the cinema hall being used for storage. Capitol Theatre in Livingstone was regularly hired out to a church but would show films in extremely rare instances. Ster-Kinekor's dominance was strengthened when it obtained exclusive first-run exhibition privileges for most international releases in Zambia (Sakala, personal interview, 2018 June 8). This enormously affected Plaza 3's ability to compete. This contributed to the closing down of the cinema eventually.

Even though Ster-Kinekor had stated that it was keen on supporting the emerging local film industry, it still charged local producers very high exhibition fees. The company justified the high fees as being necessary to cover the potential loss it would incur for not showing a popular Hollywood title at a given time on one of its screens (Mwaka, personal interview, 2018 June 12). Emerging film production companies or producers often had no choice but to comply despite efforts to lobby the theatre company.

To its credit, Ster Kinekor Zambia did try to screen more Zambian films. However, many local films failed to meet the requirements established by the theatre company. To address this, the theatre company engaged filmmakers to help them improve their quality and meet the standards. According to Mwaka:

> We [Ster-Kinekor] have allowed the local producers to come and learn what theoretical standard means by either doing batches, or trials with

> their content in the cinema by also understanding the technical aspect of converting a movie we have shot into DCP which is the acceptable compatible format in cinema. You cannot show the movie in the format that you shot it, it has to be converted, and I think that I am proud to say that we are the only company in Africa that has collaborated with local industries to show them how its converted *(personal interview, 2018 June 12).*

Muvi TV founder Stephen Nyirenda opened his own cinema franchise, Freshview Cinemas, in 2011 to counter the exhibition problems local producers face (Phiri, A, personal interview, 2018 June 27). Freshview Cinemas had a total capacity of 939 seats across six cinemas located at a high-end shopping mall close to the Ster Kinekor location. The new multiplex had the country's first digital and three-dimensional (3D) screens. In 2012, a second location was opened at another mall in central Lusaka, giving Freshview a lead in screens over its rival Ster-Kinekor in the Zambian cinema market. The second Freshview location developed a niche for showing Bollywood films, catering to a previously underserved Indian community in Zambia. This site was also used for local film premiere events.

Freshview endured stiff competition from Ster-Kinekor until the Zambian company closed down its operations at the malls in Lusaka, where it struggled with rising costs and reduced revenue. Interestingly, Ster Kinekor moved its cinemas to what used to be the primary Freshview location. Freshview resorted to establishing smaller cinema halls, which they called Freshview Mo, and were opened in other towns such as Ndola. In 2019, Nu Metro Cinemas, another South African theatre chain, began operating in Zambia, taking over the old Ster-Kinekor location that consisted of five screens. The following year, Nu Metro premiered its first Zambian film, *Black Dollar* (2020), a gangster film by Daniel Kazadi of Kazadi Films. *Black Dollar* was only shown for one weekend at the request of the film's producers who had already licensed the film to different distributors (Kalemba, 2020).

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Freshview shut down and remained closed by the end of August 2021. The local cinema company is still saluted by many in the local filmmaking community for going up against a large cinema franchise and giving local filmmakers opportunities to exhibit their productions.

Even more than the challenges with local distribution, access to foreign distributors remained even more elusive. Filmmaker Douglas Mumbi argued that it was only for a privileged few that

had “connections” (personal interview, personal interview, 2019 (personal interview, 2019 April 4). Mumbi stated that some of those with access to foreign distributors were often unwilling to share their contacts. Another filmmaker, Maynard Muchangwe, who directed *Guilt* (2014), argued that even though foreign distribution was important, it was not always a straightforward process because distributors often came with their own demands that were disadvantageous for local filmmakers (Muchangwe, personal interview, 2018 June 11). Faced with many challenges and the need to earn some return on investment, many producers ended up in very bad distribution agreements.

8.4.4 Piracy

A section of the filmmaking community in Zambia depended on DVD sales to sustain themselves and their production companies between 2004 and 2010. However, from 2011 and thereafter, this form of distribution began to decline due to increased and unmitigated levels of piracy significantly. According to Owas Ray Mwape, filmmakers were increasingly afraid of using DVDs to distribute their productions because the medium made it possible for pirates to illegally sell copies and distribute films in soft copy files on memory sticks (personal interview, 2018 August 10). Mwape argued:

> Most filmmakers including myself where very scared to release our films in DVDS because of the issue of piracy if you want to put out quality DVDS it would far more expensive than the pirated copy so you can put out a DVD and sell it at [K]120, the pirate will buy that film and duplicate and sell it at [K]20 which would kill your business we are still trying to find out how would kill the piracy *(personal interview, 2018 August 10).*

For others such as Douglas Mumbi (*Sansamukeni Comedy* film series) or Patrick Musonda (*Chintelelwe* film series), whose entire business model was organised around DVD sales, the impact of piracy significantly affected their ability to generate income and, consequently, their capacity to finance the production of more films (Mumbi, personal interview, 2019 April 9).

To address the piracy problem, the Zambian government introduced a three-dimensional hologram for all audio and video products in 2013. The hologram project was implemented by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Zambia Music Copyright Protection Society (Zamcorps) and the Intellectual Property Unit of the Zambia Police Service following the passing of Statutory Instrument No. 100 of 2013 on Copyright and Performance Rights -

Hologram regulation. However, many filmmakers felt that the hologram effort fell short of the desired outcomes. For instance, Mumbi observed the following:

> The government' hologram project did not serve us. It has not worked for us. There was lot of sensitisation and we all adhered to it to make sure that our DVDs were protected. As time went on, we noticed that there was no enforcement. The authorities continued to allow the pirated DVDs to come without a hologram. People went back to piracy, and it has now gone out of control. Because of piracy, even the people who were buying DVDs in bulk for resale have stopped because they are not able to make profits due to piracy *(personal interview, 2019* (personal interview, 2019 April 4).

To probe the extent of the piracy problem, I visited two large markets in Zambia: Chisonkone Market in Kitwe (Copperbelt Province), and Town Centre Market in Lusaka. In Kitwe, I interacted with Victor Ikalo, a DVD trader who acknowledged that sales for the local films had reduced due to the high levels of piracy. However, Ikalo also acknowledged that the demand for local films was still very high despite the piracy (personal interview, 2019 April 9).

In Lusaka, I observed how the illegal sale of digital files of films stored on computers was a thriving business that local law enforcement bodies overlooked. Both local films copied from DVDs and illegally downloaded international titles were available to anyone with their own memory stick. The price of the films ranged between 5 to 15 Zambian Kwacha (an equivalent US$ 0.25 to US$ 0.75 at the 2021 rates). The most sought-after films were the latest Hollywood films, followed by the older volumes of local comedy productions such as *Spoiler* and *Chintelewe*.

Despite the hologram project and an IP Unit within the Zambia Police Service, piracy remained a significant challenge that remained largely unattended. No meaningful steps had been taken to address piracy by the end of the PF's time in office in August 2021.

8.4.5 Failures in Government regulation and arts administration

Several respondents identified the Zambian government's failure to adequately address the various challenges that plagued filmmaking through policy and regulation as a major challenge to the development of filmmaking. Various areas requiring government intervention regarding regulation, policy or administration were identified in this regard. For instance, Owas Mwape argued that there was a need for the Zambian government to regulate the amount of foreign content that is imported for sale in Zambia. According to Mwape, the lack of control on

imported film and television content created competition that always gave foreign content an advantage.

Fred Phiri argued for regulation, including a policy on foreign film crews that came to shoot in Zambia. Phiri also suggested that all state-owned institutions or enterprises must be compelled by law not to outsource production to foreign companies but instead use local ones. Additionally, where foreign production companies were in the country for any form of production, Phiri argued that there should be a regulation that compelled the foreign producers to have Zambian nationals attached to their projects so as to ensure some form of knowledge transfer.

Even though the Zambian government moved to develop the National Film Policy, the failure to launch it and implement it exemplifies some of the concerns that were raised about the government. For many, the absence of government policy exacerbated many of the identified challenges. Mulenga Kapwepwe explained:

> It is up to the government to get it right. The government's role is very important" and that once there was action from the government towards the creastion of an enabling environment in terms of legislation, incentives and other policy measures, the private sector would respond accordingly *(personal interview, 2018 August 10).*

Similarly, Kaseketi argued that it was imperative that the government started investing in film because film would guarantee a return on investment for the country. Kaseketi noted:

> For example, just to do a 5-minute film you can bring in the fashion industry, you can bring in furniture, you bring in transport, and catering and you bring in everything else. So, if only the Zambian government can realize what a rich industry the film industry is and invest in it *(personal interview, 2018 July 13).*

8.4.7 The lack of support from the national broadcaster

Another challenge that filmmakers identified is the failure of the national broadcaster, ZNBC, to support local films and series production and airing. The filmmakers stated that they felt that ZNBC has not supported them as much despite having the capacity to do so. Douglas Mumbi argued that it was essential for ZNBC to provide a platform for viewing Zambian productions because the economic conditions in the country could not sustain a thriving movie-going culture. Mumbi argued that "the only way we can get people to watch our productions is by

putting them on TV, starting with ZNBC, and then other stations" (personal interview, 2019 April 4).

From my interaction with the different respondents, what constituted the 'lack of support' from ZNBC can be reduced to three main areas. These are: the national broadcaster's inability to acquire local content at prices satisfactory to independent producers; ZNBC's failure to consistently commission film and television shows; and the failure by the broadcaster to offer its platforms for home grown stories and productions. To exemplify these factors, Fred Phiri highlighted the low amount of money ZNBC offered independent producers when the broadcaster attempted to commission some drama series. According to Phiri, the station's per-episode average would not even suffice to pay the salary for a production manager (personal interview, 2018 June 28). Phiri argued that it was more profitable for some to sell their productions on DVDs than to offer the content to ZNBC.

Douglas Mumbi's experience with ZNBC further illustrates these concerns (personal interview, 2019 April 4). Mumbi, developed a widely successful series called *Jobo 13:13*. The series was premised on a biblical reference from the book of Job, Chapter 13 and verse 13, which says, "Keep silent and let me speak; then let come to me what may." Mumbi took *Jobo* to ZNBC for a potential licensing agreement. The broadcaster was open to having the show on its channels and offered Mumbi a licencing contract. However, Mumbi rejected the offer due to the low amount of K1,400.00 per episode (approximately equal to US$ 220 at the time) ZNBC was proposing to pay him, arguing that it could not even match the cost of production per episode. Efforts to renegotiate the terms were unsuccessful. Following a prolonged impasse, Mumbi decided to pull *Jobo* from ZNBC and continued to produce the series on DVD for direct sales.

In addressing these concerns, ZNBC created the Department of Media and Creative Services, responsible for leading the broadcaster towards developing and procuring local creative content. According to Mampi Musewo (personal interview, 2018 July 10), ZNBC had by 2018 begun engaging local filmmakers to find a way of working together on different types of productions. Since the department's introduction, ZNBC has seen an increase in local productions on its channels, TV1 and TV2. For instance, ZNBC developed its original drama series, *Fate* in 20200 using in-house resources. The broadcaster also commissioned two other shows, The *Will* (2020 -) and *Butuku* (2021 -) for TV1 and *Twists and Lies* (2018) for TV2.

Despite these efforts, the national broadcaster's rates are still not attractive for many creators (Sakala, 2019).

7.4.8 Getting Zambians to Watch Local Films

Another challenge that was identified was how very few Zambians were watching Zambian productions or knew how to access them. This was either because the cinemas did not make it easy for Zambian producers to show their productions on their screens or because some creators often licensed their films to foreign distributors where they expected to earn more. To counter this, Lawrence Thompson argued for the establishment of more new cinema halls in the country to allow more Zambian producers to feature their films at a lower cost, thus increasing access. Thompson posits that:

> Zambians can actually distribute films in the country if we have enough film theatres, you can imagine if we had a 100 theatres in Zambia and people are paying to watch even if it's a small token they are paying to watch. One film can make sufficient funds to be able to do another production *(personal interview, 2018 July 11).*

Other respondents argued that the poor marketing of local films contributed to their low patronage. David Mwaka of Ster Kinerkor Zambia observed that Zambian filmmakers had not done very well to promote their films and convince fellow Zambians to watch them, resulting in few people getting to see the films *(*personal interview, 2018 June 12). Similarly, Berry Lwando argued that there was needed to support the creation of more platforms on which Zambian stories could be told (personal interview, 2018 July 12). Lwando argued that this would help increase the number of Zambians consuming local films

Beyond marketing and promotion, others such as Chipindi and Sakala believed that enforcing content quotas on television stations would ensure that stations produced or procured more local content and thus ensure that more Zambians access local filmic content. According to Chipindi, such a step would help ensure that Zambians produce more content for local consumption and export. Selling more creative products abroad was essential because the country was already importing so much more than it was exporting.

By the time of publication, The IBA broadcasting regulations demanded that local television stations meet a 30 per cent local content quota, which according to Eustace Nkandu, Director of Standards, Licensing & Compliance at the regulator, almost none of the stations was able to meet (personal interview, 2021 November 16).

8.5 Filmmaking in the PF Years: Other Developments

In this section, I elaborate on other important developments that characterised or occurred in Zambia's film sector from 2011 to 2021. This section aims to highlight emerging trends and other observations about filmmaking in this epoch as they relate to the study's objectives. Here, I highlight four major developments: international collaborations, film festivals, over-the-top distribution, and increased participation in production.

8.5.1 International Collaborations

There was an observable increase in international collaborations and transnational interaction in film production beginning 2011. The collaborations took different forms, some leading to co-productions and others more about talent exchange. According to filmmaker Jessie Chisi, international collaborations are important because they allow local filmmakers to expand their stories' reach (personal interview, 2018 July 19). For Chisi, such collaborations also help local filmmakers rise above some of the challenges they could face on their own, such as the lack of funding and distribution opportunities.

In 2014, Chisi released *Between Rings: The Esther Phiri Story*, a documentary she co-directed with Danish filmmaker Salla Sorri. The film tells the story of Zambia's first female boxing world champion and national hero, Esther Phiri, who, after her rise from immense hardship growing up, must now make a choice between her career in professional boxing and marriage. Shot over three years, it also documents Esther's private struggle with her insecurities, a failed engagement, and the weight of public and family criticism and expectations. *Between Rings* also gives a glimpse of the economic divergences in Zambia during the period it was shot. Through Esther and her family's background, audiences see examples of poverty and dejection that characterize life in Lusaka's densely populated poor townships. Conversely, the affluence and grandiosity of those with economic power is also shown.

The documentary was produced by Tahir Alyvev of Helmi Films in Finland and co-produced by Victoria Adeola Thomas from the UK. It debuted at the 27th Helsinki International Film Festival in Finland in September 2014. It was also a selection at the Goteborg Film Festival in Sweden, the CPH:Dox, and the Copenhagen International Documentary Film Festival (Kachingwe, 2016).

The documentary film, *e18hteam* (2015), is another example of an international collaboration. The Spanish and Zambian co-production brought together Zambian producer Ngosa Chungu,

and the Spanish director, Juan Rodriguez-Briso. *e18hteam* tells the story of Zambia's national football team, the *Chipolopolo*, and their triumph at the 2012 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON). The documentary explores Zambian football's journey to the 2012 victory, including the 1993 aeroplane crash that saw most of the team members at the time perish 18 years prior to the 2012 victory. The number 18, from which the film title is borrowed, is an important motif in the documentary. In addition to the 18 years between 1993 and 2012, it also represents the 18 members of the Zambian team that died in the crush and the 18 penalty kicks taken by the Zambian team at the 2012 tournament. *e18team* had an impressive festival run that included wining the Panenka Audience Award at the Offside Festival in Spain in 2014, and winning the Best Documentary Feature Film at the Silicon Valley African Film Festival. The film was also screened at Cannes Cinema in France in 2015.

Zambian-born Welsh director Rungano Nyoni's *I am Not a Witch* (2017) is another collaboration of note. The film was highly praised when it premiered at the 2017 Cannes Festival. Even though it is described as a Zambian film, Nyoni has called it "essentially a British-produced film" (Obenson, 2018). *I am Not a Witch* is another example of the growing transnationalism of screen production in Zambia and beyond.

In *I am Not a Witch*, an odd eight-year-old girl who turns up in a rural Zambian village by herself is immediately suspected to be a witch. After her arrival, a mysterious incident occurs, and the girl finds herself in a trial where she's found guilty and is sentenced to life imprisonment at a state-run witch camp. In the camp, the girl must decide whether to accept her present fate or pursue a path to secure her freedom. The film explores African mysticism from a modern lens. It considers how far a society will go to maintain its belief systems despite modernity or the harm their beliefs may cause.

I am Not a Witch was shot in Zambia over a six-week period in 2016. Nyoni's team engaged several first-time actors, including Maggie Mulubwa, who plays the eight-year-old lead Shula. The film was Nyoni's second collaboration with Zambian creatives. In 2011, she released *Mwana the Great*, a short film that brought together Zambia acting talent, with French producer Gabriel Gauchet and polish Cinematographer Andrzej Król.

International collaborations also continue to be observed with the donor-supported message films, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 7. While many of them are not made for the commercial market, such films have been instrumental in giving local producers an opportunity to work

with foreign technical or financial support. An example of such collaboration was observed in the production of *Hidden Truth* (2011), produced by a non-profit called Samfya Women Filmmakers and financed by the aid organisation Campaign for Female Education (Camfed) to advocate for anti-domestic violence legislation in Zambia. *Hidden Truth* would go on to win the Best Documentary prize at the Zanzibar International Film Festival in June 2011. The Samfya Women Filmmakers empowers Zambian women in rural areas to use film as a tool for social change. Their story was famously featured in another Camfed-funded documentary film, *Where Water Meets the Sky* (2008), co-directed by David Eberts and Helen Cotton and narrated by Hollywood actor and producer, Morgan Freeman.

8.5.2 Film Festivals

Another observable development in this ten-year period has been the growth of the festival tradition in Zambia and the rise in the number of home-grown national and international film festivals. Zambia, like rest of the continent and its film cultures, has also been drawn into what Lindiwe Dovey (2015: 131) calls the "[t]he global phenomenon of festivalization", which is characterised by the proliferation of new cultural festivals of all kinds, including international film festivals. Film festivals have grown in significance in postcolonial African cinema (Bakari, 2017). According to Dovey (2015: 25, 26), part of the motivation for African film festivals has been the possibility of not being limited by the "structural and institutional barriers" that come with certain type of international films.

One of the leading Zambian film festivals in this period has been the Sotambe International Film and Arts Festival. The festival was co-founded by Martina Mwanza and Daniel Mwale in 2013 and is organised annually by their Sotambe Film Institute (SFI). It has become the largest film festival in Zambia and attracts several films from Southern Africa and beyond. Along with the festival, SFI has established SOTAMBE National Film Fund to help filmmakers access production and distribution financing.

Another example of a thriving film festival is the Shungu Namutitima International Film Festival of Zambia (SHUNAFFoZ). Established in 2006 when it was called the International Film Festival of Zambia (IFFoZ), the Shungu Namutitma festival is held in the Zambia's tourist capital, Livingstone. *Shungu Namutitima* is a local name for the Victoria Falls and it means 'smoke that thunders'. The festival is a project of Musola Catherine Kaseketi's Vilole Images Productions (VIP) and it was established to contribute to efforts meant to develop the local film

industry and encourage the use of film as a means of promoting human rights and social change (Kaseketi, personal interview, 2018 July 13).

Another festival, the Zambia Short Film Festival (ZSFF), is an annual event that showcases national and international filmmaking, emphasising emerging African filmmakers. It was founded by Jessie Chisi. According to Chisi, one of the key elements of the festival are the parallel training programmes conducted to grow the capacity of rising and aspiring filmmakers.

Veteran arts administrator and director, Mulenga Kapwepwe argues that film festivals have become important in Zambia because they allow filmmakers to meet people and organisations that could be interested in their films, including potential financiers and collaborators (personal interview, 2018 August 8). The festivals have also contributed to generating interest about Zambian filmmaking and Zambia films themselves.

8.5.3 More Productions, More Styles

In addition to the productions already highlighted in the chapter, other notable productions and filmmakers in this epoch demonstrated an elevation in Zambian filmmaking. Adrian Chipindi of the National Arts Council (NAC) argues that while it is currently not possible to provide quantifiable data, "there has been a lot of growth on the ground…with some films trying to make an impact on the global market" (personal interview, 2018 May 14). Chipindi described this period as the "popcorn popping up" stage, in reference to the unexpected film developments and practices emerging in different parts of the country.

For instance, this epoch saw a lot more exploration with different genres and styles. This demonstrated a shift from primarily comedic and drama films to more daring and challenging productions from the previous decade. Further, there was a change in how didacticism and social messaging is achieved. African cinema scholar Imruh Bakari (2018) argues that the 'development' strategies and ideologies that motivated African filmmaking contributed to its being constrained in the global market. This shift is, therefore, opportune for Zambian screen production as it grows into its own. For Orlando (2017: 97), this change in how the developmental and social imperatives in films is achieved is itself a characteristic of African filmmaking in the 21st Century. In this century, there has been a more "intersectional" approach that responds to shifting funding sources, embraces local cultures while being cosmopolitan and global, and is cognisant of the technological innovations breaking national and cultural barriers, and affecting production, distribution and consumption.

For example 2014, Nasho Mapulanga, an advertising executive and director, directed and released Chimfya (2014), Zambia's first animated feature film. *Chimfya* (the Bemba language word for 'overcome') is a coming-of-age story of a group of young dancers who refuse to give up on dancing because they believe it will help them overcome their challenges. The two feature documentaries discussed earlier, *Between Rings: The Esther Phiri Story* (2014) and *e18hteam* (2015), can also be included in this shift in genre or style.

In 2016, Peter Langmead, who runs Langmead and Baker Communications, a public relations and communications company based in Lusaka, produced Zambia's first musical drama, *Damyna: The Musical* (2016). In the film, a young woman called Damyna, who was abandoned as a child and raised as a daughter in Ms Bwalaya's household, falls in love with Por, her 'brother' in her adoptive family. While Damyna and Ms Bwalya know that Damyna is unrelated to the family, Por is oblivious to this past and believes they are siblings. This creates an emotional and controversial conflict affecting the entire village as other people's underlying interests and sinister schemes are also brought into the open.

Damyna was adapted for the screen from Langmead's 2014 opera of the same title. According to Langmead (2017), *Damyna* explores various themes, including orphanhood and identity, as well as "the inherent dualities of wealth and poverty, rural and urban spaces, multiculturalism and the educated and uneducated, along with concepts of racism, feminism, inequality, sexism and colonialism."

Langmead's second feature film, *The Borderline* (2020) was another stylistic feat for Zambia. Shot on location in Lusaka, Chisamba (Central Province), and the Lower Zambezi National Park, with British cinematographer Denis Borrow and a local cast, *The Borderline* delivers a compelling localised take on the film noir tradition. Written by Langmead, *The Borderline* tells the story of three riverside village brothers seeking the truth about the childhood trauma that changed their lives. The brothers search for the truth, and learn that the truth has serious consequences for them and the entire village (Langmead, 2018).

It is important to note that despite the expansion in genre and style, many of the fiction films have maintained a didactic approach to storytelling with messages or lessons to learn, in less overt ways. The messaging in the films was often informed by either Christianity, Zambia's constitutionally recognised national religion, or the highly espoused traditional cultural values.

For example, Producer Nasho Mapulanga's highly acclaimed second film, *Mufaya* (2016), directed by Felix Muyembi, was a message film that hoped to contribute to efforts to abate drug and alcohol abuse in the country. *Mufaya* follows the story of the eponymous character, a young man who struggles to find redemption in a world of alcohol and drug abuse. Part of the proceeds from the film's theatrical run in Lusaka and Kitwe were donated to Chainama Hills Hospital, which runs a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre (Mwale, 2017). *Mufaya* won the Best Film Award at the Zambia Film, Television and Radio Awards (ZAFTA) in 2017. The movie also earned Mapulanga national recognition when President Lungu awarded him the President's Insignia of Recognition during Zambia's 53rd Independence Day celebrations in the same year.

Similarly, Owas Ray Mwape, produced several films in this epoch with a strong focus on social commentary. Mwape notes that it was important that every film he made included "a social aspect" that looked at "the actual things that most people go through" in society (Mwape, personal interview, 2018 August 10). This approach to storytelling can be seen in Mwape's films, such as *Chenda* (2015), *Secrets Untold* (2015), *Look in the Mirror* (2016), and others.

For instance, one of Mwape's biggest films, *Strictly by Invitation* (2016), tackled the subject of gender-based violence, marital killings and satanism. In *Strictly by Invitation*, Michael and Catherine Lungu, a couple whose marriage is assumed to be perfect, are separated by death when Catherine is found dead in their home. Michael is arrested for what is assumed to be a crime of passion, but investigators sense that there is more to the case when they discover evidence suggesting Catherine's involvement in Satanism and witchcraft could have played a part in her murder. As the mystery unfolds, *Strictly by Invitation* creatively conjures conversations about contemporary Zambian society's challenges. Of significance is how the subject of gender-based violence is highlighted. At the same time, satanism and witchcraft as encountered in an African setting and a marriage, are also addressed in *Strictly by Invitation*.

8.6 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the development of filmmaking in Zambia under the Patriotic Front (PF) government from 2011 to 2021. It examined the developments and challenges in Zambia's burgeoning film sector, mainly concerning the political economic context of the country in these ten years. The examination began with an exposition of Zambia's political and economic disposition under the PF. It was established that under the PF government, Zambia veered

towards an economic downturn characterised by indebtedness, high inflation, a declining currency, and elevated levels of unemployment.

Despite this, more than any other government, the PF administration provided the most promise towards developing Zambian filmmaking and other creative sectors. The chapter highlights how the administration introduced the Ministry of Tourism and Arts to help streamline arts in the country and ensure that the arts are still considered in development planning. The government also saw that the first-ever National Film Policy was developed. The ill-timed Presidential Arts Empowerment Scheme was also the first of its kind for which the film sector would benefit. However, the hopes of many in the filmmaking community remained unfulfilled by the government by the PF's rule. Much of what was promised remained unfulfilled, including the pledges to protect intellectual property and build infrastructure for the creative industries. The National Film Policy, though completed, never saw the light of day in this epoch, much to the exasperation of the filmmaking community.

The PF government introduced policies and interventions to sustain the take-off and establish an industry. However, not much was achieved, and many historical political economic challenges that plagued Zambian filmmaking were also sustained in this epoch. While there was an observable "take-off", the state failed to follow through with plans and policies.

The chapter also discussed some of the challenges that affected the growth of screen production in Zambia during this period. These include the lack of training and skills development opportunities, lack of funding, access to local and international distribution opportunities, and unmitigated levels of piracy. Other challenges highlighted were the lack of support from the national broadcaster, failures in government policy, regulation, and arts administration, and the low levels of consumption of local productions by Zambians. For each of these challenges, the chapter highlighted some interventions that have been made to counter them.

The chapter also discussed some emerging trends and developments in this epoch. For example, the increase in international collaborations was highlighted as a welcome development in this period, as was the growing festival culture in Zambia.

Even with these progressive developments, it is important to stress that all stakeholders in the sector need to do more. There is a need to scale-up training and skills development, increase production funding, and create more distribution opportunities. Even with the success observed with the locally organised film festivals, there is a need for a national buy-in and public support

to ensure that these events' potential in promoting Zambian filmmaking is achieved. Further, the potential for international collaborations can be seized by making it easier for Zambians to work with filmmakers worldwide as they aspire to tell Zambian stories. This will help promote both Zambian filmmaking and Zambia as a destination for film production.

The government's decision to withdraw the film policy for further review should be seen as an opportunity to improve it significantly. It needs to be solutions-oriented and focused on evidence-based approaches to industry growth. For instance, it should set the foundation for a functional national commissioning agency or film financing entity that ensures equitable support for different classes of creators, much like is expected of the National Film & Video Foundation of South Africa (discussed in Chapter 2). Overall, the government needs to create an environment that will promote the industry's growth. As Sanongo (2015: 141, 144) observes, the state's role in film sectors is shifting from being removed since the collapse of state-led filmmaking in the 1980s to being "an enabler."

Zambian filmmaking and screen industries are on an upward trajectory. The country's film sector has come a long way from its collapse in the 1980s. Despite the challenges, more has been and continues to be achieved. The many issues covered in this chapter demonstrate a dichotomy of both missed opportunities by those in power and a remarkable resilience by filmmakers and other stakeholders to get past the many challenges by employing various strategies and initiatives.

It is worth noting that many of the observable successes and initiatives have been driven by private capital. This suggests a shift in the power to drive the sector from those with political power (the government) to those with economic means (foreign or local enterprises and individual investments). This observation is noteworthy as it demonstrates how prevailing political economic conditions at a given time can influence a film industry's direction. The diminishing role of the state and accentuation of private economic activity in the film industry are the consequences of the liberalisation that began at Zambia's democratic turn in 1991. This does not mean the state must be absent. Instead, the government (representing the political sphere) can foster progressive development in the film sector when focused on creating an enabling environment.

Much of the discussion in this chapter points to the role that the state has in formulating policies that can spur the development of the film industry. It is incumbent upon those with political power to find ways of ensuring that they work towards achieving this. On the one hand, what

is clear is that government involvement in the development of filmmaking in small cinema nations is inevitable for the stimulation, protection and sustainability of a 'take-off' in the industry. On the other hand, private capital and investment, coupled with talent and resilience, are still critical and perhaps more effective in ensuring positive and sustainable outcomes for the film industry. This balance is paramount, and Zambia has yet to realise it.

CHAPTER 9

FILM AND FILMAKING UNDER THE PATRIOTIC FRONT GOVERNMENT (2011 – 2021): CONTRIBUTIONS FROM TELEVISION

9.1 Introduction

This chapter continues the examination of the development of screen production during the Patriotic Front (PF) years, but with a focus on the activities located within the television industry. While the impact of television on Zambian filmmaking has already been discussed in the thesis so far, my focus in this chapter is to highlight two key areas where this link between film and television was observed in this period in Zambia's political history. These two are: (a) the growth and impact of emerging (broadcast) technologies on screen production, and (b), the contribution that Zambezi Magic, the Southern Africa regional television channel operated by the MultiChoice Group, has made towards the growth of Zambian filmmaking.

The discussion on the growth and impact of emerging technologies will focus on the opportunities brought by digital technologies, the country's migration to digital broadcasting and the coming of over-the-top (OTT) distribution formats. This analysis is meant to highlight some of the emerging issues in television that have a bearing on film production and consumption. Zambezi Magic and its impact on Zambian screen production will be examined with a focus on the opportunities the channel has presented and some of the emerging concerns on MultiChoice's involvement in the sector. The chapter will also give a reading of Frank Sibbuku's television drama series, *Mpali* (2018 -), which is one of the productions that exemplify the growing influence of the multinational media giant and its regional channel on Zambian screens. Apart from the narrative and stylistic elements, the discussion also considers the contextual arrangements surrounding *Mpali*'s production to underscore MultiChoice's overall impact on Zambian cinematic arts.

9.2 New Technologies, New Opportunities: Digital Migration and OTT Distribution

9.2.1 Digital Equipment and Tools

The rise of digital technologies has brought about significant changes to screen industries across Africa, including Zambia (Mwaura et al., 2023). In the early part of the country's digital

era, beginning in the late 1990s and continuing into the new century's first decade, Zambian film production relied on camcorders and electronic news gathering/electronic field production (ENG/EFP) cameras. However, by 2011, there was a shift to Digital Single-Lens Reflex cameras (DSLRs) and, in a few cases, digital cinema cameras, which helped spark an upswing in film and television production. Researchers such as Lancaster (2018: xiii–xxii) have described this shift as the "DSLR revolution," highlighting how DSLR technology impacted film and television production since they introduced video capture in 2008 (Nuska, 2018). According to Owas Ray Mwape, the shifts in digital production helped grow digital filmmaking in Zambia, thanks to the availability of the easy-to-adopt DSLR cameras (personal interview, 2018 August 10). This technology made the craft accessible to a wider group at relatively lower prices and with user-friendly form factors and usability. Practical examples of this shift were visible in the industry. For instance, Canon 5D Mark IV DSLR cameras were used to shoot many sequences of *Mpali*, a Zambezi Magic telenovela, discussed later in the chapter. Similarly, my interview with Owas Mwape was conducted at his production studio, equipped with Macintosh computers and a few DSLRs, among other equipment.

The advantages of digital technology in film production are extensive. For example, digital cameras eliminated the need for expensive film stock and processing, while expanded internet usage enabled more people to access the used camera market in the United States and United Kingdom. Video editing processes improved with the introduction of software such as Adobe Audition, which replaced outdated manual serialized editing systems. The software programmes provide very useful tools at a fraction of the cost of traditional methods, allowing for instant playback, non-linear movement, and advanced editing and special effects to produce digital formats, allowing more accessible storage and distribution.

Despite the proliferation of digital cameras (and other digital equipment), many filmmakers still lament the cost of purchasing and importing digital equipment. Mwape noted that the cost of filmmaking equipment was reason enough to pursue a film policy that would provide for incentives to filmmakers for them to access equipment at lower prices (personal interview, 2018 August 10). These concerns highlight a real challenge in this epoch.

9.2.2 Digital Migration

Digital migration refers to the switch-over (migration) of broadcasting systems and services from analogue to digital technologies (Abikanlu, 2021; Murunga & Diang'a, 2021). According

to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (ITU, 2014), digital migration was necessitated by the need for a more efficient digital broadcast system that would free up the radio frequency spectrum to accommodate the growing global demand and use for wireless mobile broadband services. Migration to digital broadcasting would come with added benefits such as higher audio and video quality, reduced cost of transmission to broadcasters, and the potential to heighten the demand for local content (MIBS, 2014). ITU member states resolved in the Geneva 2006 Agreement (GE06) at the Regional Radio Communication Conference of 2006, that all signatory countries, including Zambia, would migrate their broadcasting from the long-running analogue systems to digitalised broadcasting by 17 June 2015.

The Zambian government first began by developing the 2014 Digital Migration Policy, which established the guidelines for Zambia's migration. The policy established a new broadcasting regime that created two types of licenses in television broadcasting: signal distributors and content service providers. Broadcast networks or stations, now called content service providers, would be required to sign distribution agreements and pay user fees to the signal distributors, who would provide the infrastructure for content distribution. A key policy measure that is of consequence to this study was the requirement for content service providers to allocate at least 30 per cent of their programming to local content (MIBS, 2014). This provision was seen as an opportunity for broadcast stations to invest in producing or sourcing local films (Phiri, 2018).

The migration process was slow and Zambia missed the June 15, 2015 ITU deadline, and only officially implemented the migration for public television on October 1, 2017 (Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zambia Chapter, 2017). Top Star Zambia Limited, a joint venture company between ZNBC and Star Times of China, became the public signal distributor for Zambia. At the time, Muvi TV and MultiChoice had already implemented their digital broadcasting projects. Muvi had launched a satellite service which included new Muvi channels, and DStv launched a low-cost digital terrestrial television (DTT) service called GOtv.

The migration to digital broadcasting has led to increased participation in the television broadcast sector. While there has been an observable increase in locally produced content on the over 40 local channels on Top Star, none of this content includes locally produced feature films. According to Mr. Eustace Nkandu, the Director for Standards, Licensing and Compliance at the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), the regulator has not been able

to enforce the 30 percent requirement for local content because of the various financial and capacity challenges the local stations face (personal interview, 2021 November 16). Instead, many of the channels mostly televise local news, current affairs, and music to cover the local content requirement. Only a few stations such as Zed Entertainment Television, Prime Television and Diamond Television have attempted to produce drama series using the low-cost approach used by Muvi TV years earlier (see Chapter 6).

According to Nkandu, part of the challenge lies in the fact that the majority of the local stations on Top Star are still not generating enough income to finance production. In contrast, 1Zed, a channel created by MultiChoice for its GOtv subscribers, has aired several local drama and comedy series that MultiChoice has commissioned and licensed. Some of 1Zed's original shows include: *Bogade*, a comedy series about unruly siblings who are left to take care of the house after their parents go overseas; *Mu8tee*n, a drama series about aspiring footballers who work hard to make it out of their poor neighborhood; and *Calamit*y, a drama about the consequences a well to do family must face after their selfish actions devastate their community.

9.2.3 Over-the-Top Distribution

A more recent and essential development in the political economy of Zambian filmmaking has been the rising adoption of over-the-top (OTT) technologies to distribute and access Zambian films. Over-the-top (OTT) platforms are online video providers delivering video streaming content to consumers using the internet and transcending the limits of national borders and traditional broadcast regulations (Erman et al., 2011; Sujata et al., 2015).

The rise of OTT consumption in Africa has been influenced by factors such as increased smart mobile phone penetration and the provision of affordable and faster internet connections mostly through mobile service operators. Smartphones have enabled consumers the capacity to access different types of content and content consumption habits are changing to be reflective of these features (Shon, Lee and Kim, 2021).

The rise of global OTT platforms such as Netflix or YouTube has also given impetus for developing country-specific or regional OTT platforms. Shon, Lee and Kim (2021: 3) argue that the global OTT platforms "allows domestic OTT platforms to grow through imitation and provide opportunities for growth of video content companies, which are the main resources driving OTT platforms." As Chibesakunda (2020) observes, it is not surprising that more

production and broadcasting companies in Zambia are looking to online distribution. For instance, in 2014, the film *Maliposa* (2013) was picked up by iROKO TV, becoming the first Zambian production to be available on a streaming platform. iROKO is a multimedia company that licenses, distributes via streaming and makes Nollywood content available on the company's subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) service iROKO.tv and an Android app service (Dovey, 2018). Directed by Richard Msimuko of Gardner Media, *Maliposa* follows the twists and turns in a family trying to rise above the challenges caused by gender discrimination and abuse. Mingeli Palata produced *Maliposa* as a project of the Ministry of Gender and Child Development with production funding from the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID).

In 2015, Multichoice Africa launched its own OTT platform called Showmax. The streaming service, available in about 46 African countries at the time of publishing, is Multichoice response to Netflix's growing penetration on the continent and around the world. Showmax was also available in 32 countries worldwide by the same period, including the UK, France and Australia.[18] Using the subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) model, Showmax features various content including several Showmax originals, originals from sister company M-Net, and other syndicated Western drama, reality, documentary and comedy series, and movies (Dovey, 2018; Mohammed, 2021). Zambian-produced M-Net drama and comedy series such as *Mpali* (2018-), *Zuba* (2017-), *Amooye* (2020 -), *Ubuntu* (2019-), and a few others are currently available on Showmax, as is David Kazadi's film, *Black Dollar* (2020).

Streaming giant Netflix became available in Zambia for the first time in 2016. While subscription data is not available, a increase in Netflix subscriptions in the country attracted the Zambian government's attention. The PF administration proposed a tax on the streaming giant and several other foreign internet companies such as Facebook and Google. The government argued that Netflix and the other big technology companies were generating revenue from Zambians but were not contributing to the nation's revenue through tax. According to Daniel Mumbere (2019), the Zambian government argued that Netflix did not abide by regulations that require television stations to also broadcast content that promoted Zambian culture. By the time of publishing, the modalities and specifics of this tax had not yet been concluded. In 2019 Netflix commissioned its first series or production when it picked up

[18] Number of countries ShowMax is accessible in is available in the FAQs section of the ShowMax website. https://faq.showmax.com/eng/help/global/introduction/8

Zambian writer Malenga Mulendema's *Mama K's Team 4* (Fredericks, 2019). The animation series would be developed by South African company, Triggerfish Animation Studios. Mama K follows four teenage girls from a futuristic Lusaka who team up and follow a retired secret agent to save the world.

Figure 7: Mama K's Team 4 promotional artwork (Source: Triggerfish)

This epoch also saw various efforts made to launch local OTT platforms. One of first ones, MPTV, was launched in 2017 by Mingeli Palata, a Zambian filmmaker, who directed the film *A Beautiful Lie* (2014) among others. MPTV is a Zambian and Tanzanian registered mobile and internet platform that enables users to watch entertainment content online. The platform provides movies and series accessible to users with accounts by way of a free downloadable mobile application and a subscription fee that begins from about US$ 2.99 per month. The Zambian film *Hang* (2018), directed by Owas Ray Mwape, was one of the first uploads on MPTV.

Another example of a Zambia platform is Mingletainment. Mingletainment provided various entertainment, social networking and lifestyle services for subscribers. The application which was owned by the Hot Media House Group, had radio and video channels, in addition to a social platform for audience engagement, by way of a downloadable free application or the

website. In 2021, Mingletainment and the Sotambe Film Institute signed a distribution agreement that would see Mingletainment stream films provided by the institute to subscribers at a fee (Sotambe Film Institute, 2021). Two other streaming platforms were launched later: Zizwa+, another Hot Media House project more suited for video content unlike Mingletainment, and DESAC, created by a Copperbelt-based media company, Dynasty Empire - Sounds and Creations. How all these local OTT platforms will perform in the years to come remains to be seen.

9.3 Zambezi Magic

Zambezi Magic was launched on 1 July 2015 by MultiChoice. The channel was created to cater for the media giant's DStv viewers in southern Africa, excluding South Africa, as part of a push by Multichoice to promote homegrown content and a diversity of stories from within the southern African region. According to the Zambezi Magic Commissioning Brief (MultiChoice Africa, 2015), the channel primarily targets the 18 to 48 age group, as well as what the corporation calls the "Upgrade generation", which is described as a group of ambitious and aspirational people from different social economic backgrounds who are trying to achieve economic success and therefore see global exposure as an essential element to broadening their views (Mambwe, 2023b).

Using the guidelines established by M-Net, the channel accepts solicited and unsolicited proposals, and follows three financing models, namely: co-productions in which both MultiChoice and the producer jointly fund the production; broadcaster-funded production in which MultiChoice commissions and funds the production; and producer-funded productions in which the producer funds the production but enters into a copyright licensing agreement with MultiChoice .

Zambezi Magic's investment in Zambia's screen sector is part of MultiChoice's strategy in the country. A 2019 report on MultiChoice's Economic Value in Zambia estimated the company's contribution to Zambia's economy between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2019 to be over US$244.8m (Accenture, 2019). The report (2019: 32) estimates that about US$ 6.5 million was spent on licensing and commissioning content between 2015 and 2019. According to the report, Multichoice makes 90% of all commissions in Zambia, making it one the most financially attractive firm for filmmakers.

For Zambian film and television producers, the coming of Zambezi Magic helped address the lack of funding for production that has historically plagued Zambian cinematic arts. To illustrate the gravity of the funding challenges experienced by filmmakers, Lawrence Thompson recalled that prior to Zambezi Magic, he had decided to quit filmmaking because of the lack of financing and the financial losses he had incurred (personal interview, 2018 July 11). According to Thompson, his return to film was fuelled by the investment the new channel was willing to make in the sector. Between 2019 and 2021, Thompson provided two drama series to Zambezi Magic, namely, *Turn* of *Fortune* (2019), a licensed production, and *Makofi* (2021 -) which was a commissioned series.

Frank Sibbuku, who created one of the channel's flagship productions, *Mpali* (2018 -) argues that the available financing from Zambezi Magic has helped local producers develop their craft and improve the quality of their productions. Sibbuku noted how his production company, A-List Films, has been able to consistently improve the quality of *Mpali* because MultiChoice continues to invest in the show. He observes:

> "We are able to pay actors well, find good locations, finance expenses and invest in equipment because of this investment. Our team at A-list has grown, meaning we are even able to employ more people to ensure the smooth running of the productions." (personal interview, 2019 June 25).

Zambezi Magic also helped mitigate the distribution challenges faced by local filmmakers (as described in Chapter 8). The channel was seen as a key avenue through which filmmakers could access the market (albeit television) to recoup their production investment. Owas Ray Mwape (2018) observed that filmmakers, weary of piracy in the local DVD market and raw deals from international distributors, were looking to international broadcasters such as MultiChoice because they made it easier and faster to earn money. Mwape argued that broadcasting deals are worthwhile because regional and international cinematic distribution is still elusive for most filmmakers (as argued by (Lobato, 2010). Between 2015 and 2019, Mwape licensed two of his films, *Chenda* (2015) and *Strictly by Invitation* (2016), to Zambezi Magic for undisclosed amounts, which according to him, were sufficient in respect of the limited distribution options. Mwape has also been enlisted as a director for, *Zuba (2017 -),* a popular Zambezi Magic original soap opera.

Beyond financing and distribution, Zambezi Magic became a platform through which local storytelling has been promoted, and local on and off-screen talent have thrived. Various

creators have been able to tell their stories in ways that were previously challenging or impossible to a larger audience. For instance, the former Muvi TV creatives, Frank Sibbuku and Henry Joe Sakala, have successfully collaborated on productions licensed to or commissioned by Zambezi Magic including *Njila: The Phase* (2016 – 2019), *Mfuti* (2019*), Mpali* (2018 - *),* and the Zambezi Magic original film, *Zed Man* (2018).

Attendant to the establishment of Zambezi Magic was MultiChoice's support for local screen media development and empowerment programmes such as the Sotambe Film Festival and the Zambia Film and Television Awards (ZAFTAS) (Accenture, 2019: 52). MultiChoice's investment in Zambian content creation also contributed to other sectors of the economy such as advertising (promotion of local content), transport (car rentals), designers (for sets), booked locations and other service industries such as cleaning rental equipment and others (Accenture, 2019). These contributions are important because they helped establish and support an emerging film services industry (Goldsmith & O'Regan, 2005), the success of which will be crucial to the future of Zambian screen production.

While Zambezi Magic has seemingly had a positive impact on Zambian cinematic arts as highlighted above, a more critical and nuanced analysis of the channel's impact that considers various concerns is needed. For instance, there seems to be a 'gold rush' among local producers to have 'a share' of the Zambezi Magic money because they know they will not find it elsewhere in the local market. As a result, MultiChoice has more leverage and power over local producers who seem desperate for income. This scenario presents different challenges. Firstly, as African film scholar Moradewun Adejunmobi (2011) notes, corporations such as MultiChoice can co-opt local producers who in turn, lose their autonomy as they aim to please the 'noble' corporation. Adejunmobi's argument is based on her examination of Nollywood, where the corporation's African Magic channels became critical to increasing the spread of Nollywood films across the continent. However, she argues that through Africa Magic, Multichoice exploitatively took over "important portions of the Nigerian film industry" (2011: 76) as more creators began to depend on the channels.

This level of dependency could also be observed in Zambia. Filmmaker Henry Joe Sakala acknowledged this challenge, noting how some local producers had solely set their target on getting their productions on Zambezi Magic in a scramble that was not good for the industry (Sakala, personal interview, 2018 June 8). Similarly, Angel Phiri (personal interview, 2018

June 27) argued that the potential to earn more with Zambezi Magic was causing desperation that gave MultiChoice a greater say in respective licensing or commissioning agreements.

During the study, I did not find any actual evidence of MultiChoice coercing filmmakers even though it was brought up in some of the interviews. However, the fact that this concern was a recurring one among some of the filmmakers interviewed makes it an important observation to make. Further, it was clear that none of the filmmakers were permitted to talk about some of the terms in their individual contractual agreements. This was fortified by the confidentiality clauses in these agreements.

Another area of concern had to do with the lack of knowledge and experience in the business side of film among Zambian filmmakers. The fear, as expressed by Zambian scholar, playwright and director, Dickson Mwansa, was that local filmmakers were not likely to safeguard themselves from potentially exploitative contracts if they were not empowered to do so (personal interview, 2019 November 20). Mwansa argued that while MultiChoice's interventions in the Zambian film industry are welcome, there was need for heightened business acumen among local producers through which they would be conversant with aspects such as contracting or intellectual property and avoid exploitative or lopsided deals with corporations or distributers such as MultiChoice (Mambwe, 2023b).

A further matter of concern that emerged with Zambezi Magic was how the channel had influenced a upsurge in the cost of local film production. According to Angel Phiri, Zambezi Magic created lofty expectations among creatives on what they could earn by participating in local productions (personal interview, 2018 June 27). Similarly, it had also become difficult for local stations to attract independently produced content, which was being pegged at prices that only MultiChoice could afford. Phiri further contended that local stations such as Muvi were struggling to meet the labour expectations that Zambezi Magic productions have established. This led to a situation where some on-screen and off-screen talent were only interested in working on or with production companies linked to Zambezi Magic projects.

Stylistically, there was an expectation for the content developed by other producers or other stations to begin looking like the more polished and well-resourced Zambezi Magic productions. This, according to Phiri (2018), added pressure for local stations to follow suit, abandoning the long-held model of low budget productions for the high-aesthetic value and regionally appealing production style that Zambezi became known for. This meant additional investment in equipment and processes that many of the local stations could simply not afford.

By August 2021, there was no publicly disclosed formal engagement with MultiChoice from the filmmaking or screen production community on some of these concerns noted above. Despite the fears and concerns, the overall impact of Zambezi Magic on local screens remained mostly positive. The channel helped boost local screen production in an unprecedented way and gave an opportunity for local stories to be brought to the screen at a scale that had not been seen before. The success and widespread appeal of productions such as *Zuba*, *Makofi*, and *Mpali* (discussed in the next section) are all examples of this.

9.4 Reading *Mpali*

In this section, I will discuss the Zambezi Magic drama series, *Mpali* (2018 -), created and principally directed by Frank Sibbuku. My reading of the production focuses on the series's various discursive elements, including its production context, style, and genre. *Mpali* is one of the channel's flagship productions. It best encapsulates MultiChoice's impact on local screen production in terms of the scope of production, the scale of financial investment, talent development, and the approach to production and storytelling.

9.4.1 Plot, characters and development

Mpali follows the story of a wealthy farmer and polygamist named Shadrack Nguzu (Monde Mutale), and his wives. In several Zambian languages, the word 'Nepali' refers to a marriage with more than one spouse, therefore the central theme of the series is polygamy. Specifically, *Mpali* focuses on the often-feuding wives, their children, and the various conflicts related to interpersonal and romantic relationships, the Nguzu estate and business, and the community.

The first season (96 episodes) introduces all the major characters and sets up their respective arcs. In the first episode, Nguzu decides to marry a much younger and divisive sixth wife, Tamara (Shakainah Phiri), much to the annoyance of his other wives. Besides marital drama, Nguzu contends with the machinations of rivals, including his brother, who wants to usurp the farm from him. We are also introduced to other key characters, including Jairos (Joel Sakala), a slick farm manager, and Logick (Cosmas Ngandwe), a pretentious, loud-talking farm hand who is the brother of one of Nguzu's wives, Shupiwe (Monde Daka).

By the end of the first season, Mwiza (Anita Munamonga), Nguzu's second wife, presents divorce papers to him as she chooses her workmate Zondani (Henry Joe Sakala) over him. Nguzu, despite the threat of divorce, has his eyes on Nancy (Vanessa Tolino), a white

veterinarian he hires to take care of his animals. In the season finale's cliffhanger, he announces to his wives that he has married Nancy, making her his seventh wife.

The second season (170 episodes) explores the fallout from the new marriage to Nancy and the consequences of the characters' various actions in the first season. Nancy's whiteness is often used to underscore various cultural differences, but race is never fully explored. We also see more character development this season, especially with the Nguzu children. The season highlights an obsession the wives have with giving Nguzu an heir. The season dramatically ends with another cliffhanger when Nguzu is hospitalised after mysteriously collapsing.

Season three (210 episodes) focuses on Nguzu's health. When he miraculously recovers, Nguzu sets into motion his plan to step down from managing the family business. This further ignites an inheritance frenzy among the wives and their children. The season also introduces new characters, including Frank (Hicks Yamba), who marries Nguzu's daughter Mwanida (Clara Kanyembo), while secretly scheming to grab a part of the family's business. Nguzu's oldest and notoriously troublesome son, Hambe (Shazzy Phiri), marries his former tutor Chibale (Natasha Chipepo) despite fathering a child with Chola (Hellena Mizinga), setting up a fierce rivalry between the two women. At the end of season three, we learn that neither Hambe, Mwanida, nor their younger sibling, Cephas (Jefter Phiri), are Nguzu's biological children. Nguzu reveals that Jairos, his farm manager, is his only son.

In the fourth season (210 episodes), *Mpali* focuses on the consequences of the previous season's big revelations. Jairos now runs the farm with Hambe, as Nguzu finally steps back. Mwanida forges a relationship with her newly found biological father, while Hambe struggles at home as the conflict between Chibale and Chola escalates further. Old and new conflicts among the wives also dominate the season. By the time of publishing, the show had entered its fifth season.

Polygamy has long been a subject of interest in African film and television. Its representation in various contexts demonstrates how widespread it is on the continent. Alexie Tcheuyap (2010) observes that, rather than a focus on how multiple wives may provide more sexual pleasure for men, filmic representations of polygamous marriages often focused on how men were turned into manipulated puppets enslaved by their desires in chaotic marriages that led to their downfall. Depictions in early postcolonial films such as Ousmane Sembene's *Xala* (1974), Ben Diogaye Beye's *Sey Seyeti* (*One Man, Several Women*, 1980) or Souleymane Cisse's *Finye* (*The Wind*, 1983), are emblematic of this. The films often sought to underscore the

contradictions and failures of polygamy, which at the time was culturally seen as a social elevation in some societies (Diawara, 1988; Mbiti, 1990; Vrancken, 2020).

According to Mwila (2021), media (television and film) have helped sustain interest in modern day polygamy. Recent Nollywood films such as Caz Chidiebere's *Polygamous Battle* (2022), or Piccolo Chidozie Obi's *Another Wife* (2022), and South African reality television shows such as Mzanzi Magic's *Uthando Nes'thembu* (*Love and Polygamy*, 2018 -), do not only give insights on how its experienced in different parts of Africa (Mwila 2021), but demonstrate how audiences are interested in lifestyles and stories that explore the dynamics of this cultural practice. In Zambia, *Mpali* explores the subject in a way that highlights how such a marriage works and the challenges it comes with. This exploration is made through the lens of the Tonga speaking people, one of the tribes in southern Zambia where polygamy is practiced. Within the Nguzu family, polygamy is deep-rooted. Nguzu, a Tonga man, is the first son of his polygamist father, often referred to in the series as Nguzu Senior. Juunza (Wanga Phiri), Nguzu's first wife who is also Tonga, is the only child of her polygamist father.

Sibbuku drew inspiration for Mpali from a Tonga man with three wives in Siavonga. Fascinated by the family dynamics, he developed a drama series focused on polygamy, increasing the wives to six for dramatic effect (personal interview, 2019 June 25). He set the story in a city, aligning with his previous work at Muvi TV that featured urban settings. While reminiscent of his earlier productions, Mpali represents a significant enhancement.

Mpali initially aired four days a week from Monday to Thursday, but Friday was included later. Episodes have an average run-time of 50 minutes. According to Mwiza Nzila, a spokesperson for MultiChoice Zambia at the time, the show became one of the most watched programmes on Zambezi Magic with a consistent audience (personal interview, 2020 March 3). Nzila contended that part of the show's appeal was in how relatable it was to audiences across the countries in the region where Zambezi Magic broadcasts. Nzala further argued that *Mpali*'s take on polygamy and family life has made the series widely popular even though a lot of the dialogue is in Zambian languages.

While polygamy, love and marriage are central to the story, *Mpali* also creatively conjures up various arcs that depict everyday life among the wealthy, the blue-collar working class, and the poor in society. *Mpali* also spotlights the multifariousness of the Zambian life among both the urban rich and poor. The series explores themes of wealth and poverty, greed, jealousy and

betrayal, among others, as they are experienced in people's lives, all the while using Nguzu's family dynamic as the anchor for the various subplots.

9.4.2 Telenovela, soap, or what?

In promoting the new drama series, Multichoice described *Mpali* as a telenovela (as they did with *Zuba*, another channel flagship series). Promotional adverts on TV, radio and billboards called both shows Zambia's first telenovelas. However, this did not sit very well with producers at Muvi TV who argued that some of the shows they had produced much earlier where also classified as telenovelas. According to Angel Phiri (personal interview, 2018 June 27), Multichoice ignored previous Zambian productions that used the telenovela format, including Muvi's previous offerings such as *Survivors* or *Brothers*. Sibbuku also notes how *Mpali's* classification as a telenovela caused further debate among audiences when the show begun to air because it did not "feel and look" like a telenovela.

Jonathan Bignell (2013) defines a telenovela as "a fictional continuing melodrama on television that lasts for a specific number of episodes." The term telenovela often refers to Latin American melodramatic narratives that focus on love relationships, as well as other stereotypical complex and passionate emotional interactions in a televised serial form (Dorcé, 2015). Telenovelas originated from Latin America but have been appropriated in different broadcast markets such as India and the Philippines. In each context, the genre has demonstrated elevated levels of social relevance and has attracted scholarly interest because of "its articulation with wider economic, cultural and political processes in the history of various national contexts" (Dorcé, 2015: 246, 247).

It is difficult to solely designate *Mpali* as a telenovela. As has been highlighted, *Mpali* adheres to several soap opera conventions including not having narrative closure. This has been one of the most persistent arguments made against *Mpali* as it entered its fourth season in 2021. Zambian media scholar, Basil Hamusokwe suggests that a different term should be used to describe the show because the telenovela tag does not seem sufficient (personal interview, 2021 November 20).

Notwithstanding the above perspectives, the term 'telenovela' fits *Mpali* given Zambia's colonial history, which is similar to that of Latin America. Dorcé (2015) argues that telenovelas portray human tragedy in societies that are facing contradictory modernisation processes. While MultiChoice's use of 'telenovela' may be for marketing purposes, it remains apt

considering the 'tragedy' of the postcolonial Zambian society that is hamstrung by persistent economic malaise and subjugation, poverty and inequality in a fast modernising and globalising world. Mpali explores these themes through a polygamist family, examining roles in this context. *Mpali* is thus a hybrid drama blending telenovela, soap opera, and everyday drama elements. Its success lies in authentically capturing the Zambian (and African) experience, making it both locally genuine and regionally relevant.

9.4.2 Genre, production and the South African influence

Mpali employs various telenovela and soap opera codes and visual elements to evoke a "realist illusion" that makes it seem closer to real life (Gibson, 2018). Episodes are loaded with themes that according to Christine Gledhill (1997), are typical of soap operas including "[f]allings out between family and community members; jealousies, infidelities, dirty dealings, hidden secrets and their exposure, social problems, e.g. illegitimacy, abortion, sometimes work problems, e.g. redundancy." Further, using Tamar Liebes and Sonia Livingstone's (1998) classification typology, *Mpali* can be classified as dynastic soap. According to this classification, the focus of a series is on a powerful family, often led either by a godfather, mafioso figure involved in illegal activities, or an honourable patriarch whose responsibility is to care for the family and provide a more "realistic representation" (Liebes and Livingstone, 1998). This family or patriarch (or matriarch) is often surrounded by other periphery characters which it or he (or she) connects with in different circumstances such as marriage, rivalry, partnership, and so on. In *Mpali*, Nguzu is the patriarch, and his wives, depending on the narrative arc at any time, are often matriarchal. As co-leads, they all interact with other characters in their community indistinct ways, including romantic interests, business partnerships or rivalries, employees and extended familial relations.

Conflict among the Nguzu wives often drives the story and it is the lens through which we see the common soap opera tropes such as rivalry, power relations, greed, chicanery and duplicity. The stylistic consequence of this female focused storytelling, according to Gledhill (2003: 371) is the use of the close-up two shot that captures the many personal interactions and altercations that are common soap operas. In *Mpali*, we see this close-up two shot and medium shot framed in a lot of the dialogue scenes. The various arguments between or among the wives, the workers and Nguzu, are shot in this way.

Mpali also often finds itself veering towards stereotypical representations of gender. Soap operas have long been criticised for their proclivity for gender stereotypes. For instance,

Gledhill (2003: 346) and Rogers (1995) argue that soaps have not only perpetuated problematic ways of representing women but even their efforts to remedy the debatable portrayals fall flat. For instance, while polygamy may not necessarily be concerning for audiences, it is how the women in the show are portrayed that may ignite debate. In the first and second seasons, only one wife, Mwiza, is educated and has a teaching job. The rest depend on Nguzu, who has put them on the farm's payroll and expects them to work in the plantations. Mwiza's devotion to her work is often ridiculed by her fellow wives, who feel she should also work at the farm like them.

Further, we learn that Juunza partially owns the farm because her family previously owned a large section of the property. According to Kambidima Wotela (2008), women in Tonga culture have no land ownership rights, but they have right of use to the land. Though matrilineal in kinship, Tonga society is patrilineal regarding inheritance and property ownership (Colson, 1960). Historian Flexon Mizinga (2000) contends that the belief among the Tonga was that women (daughters) could not be entrusted with family property by their matrikins because they were not permanent members of their natal household and were expected to leave after marriage. Therefore, Juunza, who was also the first and only child, could not inherit any land from her father. Similarly, Nguzu's sister Beenzu, a first born in his family, could not inherit their father's land. We learn that Juunza's marriage to Nguzu was partly orchestrated by her father because of this. As son-in-law, Nguzu would inherit the land that was entitled to Juunza, in addition to the land that he inherited from his own family. However, as part of their marriage agreement, the couple would be equal partners in the business operations of the plantations on the land (Mwila, 2021).

Despite her position in the family, Juunza's status as a co-owner of the farming estate is often relegated and only becomes a central theme in an arch in later seasons. From Season 3, we begin to see the wives take on more empowered roles outside the farm. For instance, Shupiwe opens a bar, while Monde opens a boutique and partners with Tamara in running it, even though this partnership is short lived. In Season 4, Tamara even enrolls for a degree programme at a university in the city.

Interestingly, *Mpali* also departs from soap opera conventions in a few ways. One such way relates to time. Whereas most soap operas are produced to create a real time existence with what is happening in the country where the soap is produced (Marx, 2008a), *Mpali* does not

align to a local or regional calendar for its episodes, though attempts to do so have been made. However, this is not to say that the show is not interested in verisimilitude.

Verisimilitude refers to the idea that soap operas seek to resemble what is "generally accepted as credible, suitable, proper" in a culture (Gledhill 2003: 360). The aim of the soap is to reflect to the viewer that the characters can exist in the viewers' world and function in way that is credible in real life (Hobson, 2003). *Mpali's* attempts at achieving verisimilitude are subtly achieved in setting and dialogue. For instance, the series creators tried to depict the presence of the Coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) in an episode in the third season during Frank and Mwanida's wedding. Family members and guests are seen wearing face masks which were part of the preventative measures for the global outbreak. The episode, which aired on 24th September 2020, was shot early in the same year when Zambia, like the rest of the world, was reeling from the effects of the first wave of infections. The use of masks was reflective of reality in a way that demonstrates to the viewer that the characters exist in the same world.

Mpali also uses the settings such as Lusaka streets, townships, and social spaces, most of them recognizable, to give the characters real world credibility that the audience members will relate to. The scriptwriters also try to incorporate present day references such as trendy colloquialisms or events in the dialogue, though this is done to a minimum because the episodes are aired several weeks later.

In the examination of *Mpali*, it becomes quite apparent how many parallels can be drawn with South African soap operas. This similarity can be attributed to both the cultural and socio-political histories that the countries share, and to the influence that MultiChoice has on how the series is produced. Scholarship on South African soap operas has pointed to how the genre in South Africa has developed its peculiar identity over the years (Teer-Tomaselli, 2005; Marx, 2008a,b; Gibson, 2018; Gibson, Dyll & Teer-Tomaselli, 2019).

Ruth Teer-Tomaselli (2011) has described the soap opera genre in South Africa as being "a daily record of the concerns, obsessions, ethos, and values of the society that produces it." Elsewhere she argues that the popularity of the soaps is equated with their cultural proximity and the "ease with which audiences are able to identify with the characters, contexts and situations portrayed" (Teer-Tomaselli, 2005: 568).

Hannelie Marx (2008a: 99) identifies the several ways that the South African soap opera inflects the "more glamourised, less realistic and less contentious narratives" Western ones.

Many of the characteristics that Marx (2008a) pinpoints of South African soap operas are visible not only in *Mpali* but in the other M-Net productions on Zambezi Magic such as *Zuba* and *Amooye*. For instance, Marx argues that South African soap operas often depict characters from all the social economic classes and that they use multiple languages to make them accessible to more people. These elements are also present in *Mpali* where the well-off Nguzu family interacts and lives together with members of the community that often assume a lower social economic status than the protagonist family. Occasionally, characters wealthier than the Nguzus are introduced to this dynamic.

Mpali also makes use of various local languages that are mixed in with English. Most characters at the farm mostly use Nyanja, which is justifiably reflective of Lusaka, where the farm is located. Often, the language designation of a character is related to their role in the overall narrative. For instance, Nguzu and his first wife, Juunza are every so often visited by their relatives are who are usually Tonga speakers, while one of the Nguzus main rivals are a Bemba speaking family. When Haambe marries Chibale, he does not know she is from this rival family with a claim on the land. Their marriage sets up one of the more interesting story arcs that highlights cultural differences and the tag of war between tradition and modernity.

Another important characteristic *Mpali* adopts is that of being a production that is not merely made for its entertainment value. The show reflects a desire to forge a problem solving, public service and educative obligation. According to Albert Moran (1996) a show with this public service imperative is developed to also "tackle social issues and problems". Here again, we observe a version of the didactic tendency that has characterised Zambian filmmaking over the years. However, Sibbuku and his writers often try not to be too overt about the social and educative obligation. *Mpali* does not adopt an entertainment-education approach (Singhal & Rogers, 2002) to handling these social themes with a single clear message and call to action. Instead, the writers try to facilitate and encourage conversations around the characters' experiences by extending storylines for a reasonable amount of time so that outcomes of choices and actions made by the characters are seen through. According to Sibbuku, the point of this approach is to allow the viewer to make their own conclusion about a particular subject (personal interview, 2019 June 25).

Lastly, the South African narrative influence can be seen in how *Mpali*, despite being primarily targeted at female audiences, has strong appeal to male viewers. The regular focus on Nguzu, his sons, and his male farm workers gives *Mpali* a formidable male appeal. Again, just as Marx

(2008) observes about South African soaps, the male characters in *Mpali* are also "continually involved in intricate and emotive discourses centred on the goings-on in the relevant community." As a result, *Mpali* finds itself at the nexus of being narratively feminine, but purposefully appealing to masculine viewers.

The South African influence on *Mpali* is not only related to the show's narrative. It extends to how the series is produced. According to Sibbuku, M-Net's hand in the development and production of the show has added to how well the show is put together. For instance, M-Net has contracted a team of independent editors whose role is to work with A-List Films' editors to ensure that the production is consistent with the M-Net brand and that the show does not fall behind. Sibbuku contends:

> M-Net has stressed various production elements that we never really paid attention to previously. For instance, we have to ensure that subtitling is captured correctly as per script and that it is included on time for each episode. If there is any change when shooting, that has to be immediately captured so that it is not missed in post-production. Again, this is something that M-Net insists we cannot miss because the channel is a regional channel (personal interview, 2019 June 25).

As an M-Net original, *Mpali*'s production is required to retain a high standard that would make the series watchable on any other M-Net channel the entertainment network would place it. Sibbuku argues that a lot of the processes that his team and other production houses have been introduced to have helped improved the quality of production and increased the level of professionalism in the process.

To help manage these aspects, a South African producer, Pauline Somo, was hired to be the lead producer on the series. Somo has had experience in working in the South African television industry which includes stints at organisations such as Endemol Entertainment, where she was a House Production Manager for *Big Brother Africa*, and SABC, where she was production manager for the second season of the entertainment show, *Fanbase*. Somo has also produced for Mzanzi Magic (another M-Net Channel) and BET Africa. According to Sibbuku, Somo's experience in South Africa has proved to be invaluable for the Zambian production that has had to work its way up to becoming Zambezi Magic's most watched programme.

The biggest influence that MultiChoice brings to *Mpali* and its other Zambian productions is the emphasis on cultural proximity. The idea of cultural proximity, which led to the growth of the South American telenovelas (Straubhaar, 2007), presupposes that audiences are more

accepting of local or regional productions that they can relate to because of the cultural similarities. This is not a new idea to Zambian television. In Chapter 6, I highlighted how *Loose Ends* won the hearts of audiences more so than the 'bigger' budget production *Kabanana* because of its narrative proximity to most viewers. Similarly, Muvi TV's popularity in its early years could be attributed to this factor. At regional level, cultural proximity has in the past made it easy for South African soap operas such as *Generations* (SABC 1), *Isidingo* (SABC 3) and the English versions of *Egoli* (M-Net), as well as other drama or comedy productions to find a home on the schedules of national broadcasters in neighbouring countries.

The Zambian soaps on Zambezi Magic have thus been developed with a focus on the region and ensuring that the cultural elements, whether traditional or modern, are maintained in the various narratives even though they are Zambian stories. It is not surprising that themes or sub-themes such as polygamy, land ownership, family wealth and succession, spiritualism, religion, ethnolinguistic and cultural integration, relationships between classes, the conflict between tradition and modernity, and many others common in both long-running and newer South African soaps, are present in *Mpali.* Other Zambezi Magic dramas such as *Zuba, Fever, Amooye* and *Ubuntu* are also replete with such themes. For Multichoice, this makes these cultural products narratively consumable and financially viable in the region that shares a vastly similar historical and cultural background. Further, as Marx (2008) argues, local soaps are even more attractive to local viewers because of their ability to engage in subjects that are not only relevant but with which they can form emotional connections because of their lived experiences.

9.5 Discussion and Conclusion

Notwithstanding the various debates, the recent shifts in Zambian television are welcome developments that can spur growth in Zambian screen media. This chapter has considered two important developments: the impact of emerging (broadcast) technologies on the cinematic arts, and the contributions of MultiChoice's Zambezi Magic to Zambian filmmaking. Here, I have highlighted how these developments are indeed opportunities for Zambian filmmaking and discussed the areas which may require caution as they are embraced or adopted.

With respect to their impact on filmmaking, there is still a lot to observe for both digital migration and OTT technologies in Zambia. These technological transformations have altered the landscape and they present interesting possibilities that are now only beginning to emerge for content creators. It will be interesting to see where all this leads to in the coming years.

However, there are significant bottlenecks that still must be considered. For instance, even with the presence of various DTT channels or OTT platforms, the lack of film financing still stands in the way for many filmmakers. The capacity to fund production is still a challenge for most filmmakers. This may be the reason there are still no feature films being sponsored by these channels. Several are simply not at the level where they can finance feature film production.

As for Zambezi Magic, the channel has positively contributed to Zambian filmmaking in the various ways discussed in the chapter. We can argue that MultiChoice's influence on African screen media is a welcome counterflow to the historical dominance of Western cultural products on local screens (Thussu, 2009; Ndlovu, 2011). More Zambians, and indeed Africans, are consuming local content because of channels such as Zambezi Magic or other similarly branded M-Net channels across the continent. While *Mpali* is an example of a text rooted in the early Muvi TV-inspired storytelling style, it has significantly benefitted from M-Net's influence and approach that emphasizes regional appeal and cultural proximity in storytelling. MultiChoice is also greatly invested in production processes to maintain high production values and production consistency.

However, all these investments are directly linked to the corporation's goal of increasing the number of subscriptions for its commercial platforms. The economic power that Multichoice possesses places it in a position to support such efforts. Zambezi Magic must never be assumed to be the ultimate solution for the challenges in Zambia's screen media industries. The channel is but a commercial product of a global corporation's strategy to maximize profits for its shareholders. It is not a charity. Seen in this context, it becomes even more critical that homegrown solutions to the challenges that the channel responds to are encouraged and supported (Adejunmobi, 2011).

Governments in countries such as Zambia must find ways of supporting local producers (including those in television stations) to increase their capacity to compete with the economic might that the regional corporations possess, and to counter the hegemony of the West over cultural products. In Zambia, such support will also help address the growing and concerning levels of dependency that have been highlighted in this chapter.

A key observation from this chapter (and the previous one) is how private capital is influencing the growth of local screen industries. We have seen in this epoch that private capital, with the right amount of government regulations and progressive policy direction, can spur the growth of screen production. However, there is need for oversight that is intended to protect those

players who rest at the lower end of the sector and can easily be exploited by corporations. Policies that enable several types of business and growth models in the film and television industry must be encouraged.

This chapter has discussed the development of screen production during the Patriotic Front (PF) years with an emphasis on activities located within television. It focused on the growth and impact of emerging technologies such as digital migration and over-the-top (OTT) platforms on the cinematic arts, and the contribution of MultiChoice's Zambezi Magic to Zambian filmmaking. This discussion on the development of filmmaking in the context of television is important because it acknowledges the role that television has played in the growth of Zambia and African screen industries. Most importantly, it provides evidence to an argument dotted throughout this thesis that television is an inseparable part of Zambia's experience with filmmaking and remains the main medium through which the most filmic content is consumed. Television will continue to influence Zambian filmmaking in diverse ways and many of these will be shaped by policies, economics, and emerging technologies. For now, we can only wait and see where all these developments lead to.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

10.1 Introduction

This thesis examined the development and state of filmmaking in Zambia from 1964 to 2021 utilizing the Political Economy of Film (Wasko, 2005) and the Small Nation Cinema approach (Hjort and Petrie, 2007) as the theoretical and analytical lenses. Through a descriptive qualitative study, the thesis has examined and highlighted various issues in the development of filmmaking in Zambia over the stated period and the present-day state of the country's film sector. This chapter summarises and concludes the study.

I begin the chapter by giving an overview of the study in which I recapitulate its aim and objectives and other preliminary contemplations that guided the examination. I then proceed to summarise the findings as reflected in the results chapters of the thesis, after which I highlight and discuss the study's overall findings in relation to the research questions. I will then highlight the study's contributions to scholarship and suggest areas that may require further research. In the last two sections, I discuss the study's limitations and provide a summative conclusion to wrap up the thesis.

10.2 Overview of Study

This study aimed to examine the development and the state of filmmaking in Zambia's political, socioeconomic, and cultural transformation in the various political administrations from 1964 to 2021. The study set out to answer four specific questions, which are:

1. Considering the processes, political, economic and cultural structures, as well as the people involved, what has been the context of film production and distribution in post-colonial Zambia?
2. What specific challenges, internal and external, have impacted filmmaking in Zambia?
3. How have the country's sociocultural, political, and economic policies over the years influenced filmmaking?

4. What textual strategies and tendencies can be observed in Zambian screen productions to enrich our understanding of Zambian filmmaking over the years?

My study examined the development and state of filmmaking in Zambia in two layers. The first layer of the study analysed film sector or industry-related elements as they have been experienced in post-colonial Zambia, while the second layer of the study involved a reading of selected Zambian film texts. The first layer focused on three of the study's objectives, which were: (a) to examine the context of film production and distribution in post-colonial Zambia; (b) to identify the challenges, internal and external, that have influenced filmmaking in Zambia; and (c) to determine the influence of sociocultural, political, and economic policies on Zambian filmmaking. The second layer addressed a fourth and final objective: (d) to identify the textual strategies and observable tendencies in Zambian screen productions over the years to enrich our understanding of Zambian filmmaking.

This thesis has shed new light on the ways that filmmaking has evolved during three key dispensations or epochs in Zambian political economic history - the UNIP years (1964 – 1991); (b) the MMD years (1991 – 2011); and the PF years (2011 – 2021) - using the Political Economy of Film theoretical lens. This was done with the assumption that a country's political and economic positionality can significantly affect the development of its film sector or industry because it establishes the context in which filmmaking, a cultural, economic and meaning-making activity, occurs (Wasko, 2003; McQuail & Deuze, 2020). In applying the theory, I appropriated the Small Nation Cinema approach (Hjort and Petrie, 2007), which I argued was a suitable analytical frame that could be used to examine the cinema of countries at the margins of film scholarship and the global film industry order. The qualitative study employed various data collection methods, including key informant (in-depth) interviews, observation and the analysis of selected Zambian productions.

A foundational question for the study was why Zambia did not develop a recognisable film sector in Africa despite its long history with filmmaking that dates to its colonial past. Further, a review of existing African film or cinema scholarship revealed that Zambia was absent from regional, continental, academic, and other published discourse on the subject. I argued that the paucity of literature or academic discourse on filmmaking in Zambia alone and the general lack of a well-researched collection on the subject has helped create and advance the impression

that the country has had no filmmaking activity. These factors served as the *terminus a quo* for the exposition of Zambia filmmaking, which has been the subject of this thesis.

10.3 Summary and Discussion of Key Findings

The study's findings, outlined in the Chapters 4 to 9, reflect the developments in the three epochs. In Chapter 4, the study focused on filmmaking in the UNIP years, a 27-year period under President Kenneth Kaunda that includes Zambia's First (1964-1972) and Second (1972-1990) Republics. The chapter established how filmmaking was co-opted within the government's agenda of nation-building, and its role was to provide education and information to the 'last Zambian' (Kasoma, 1990; Kerr, 1998). As a result, early Zambian films maintained the didactic tendency observed in colonial films before independence, with the additional elements of Kaunda's Zambian Humanism ideology. Kaunda merged Christian and humanistic values in this ideology, placing man at the centre. The government's goals for film were fulfilled by the Zambia Information Services (ZIS), which operated a film unit that produced and distributed these didactic documentary films to various parts of the country and sometimes to Zambian embassies abroad.

Chapter 4 also detailed some of the challenges that affected filmmaking in this epoch. These include the rising cost of film processing as the country's economic situation deteriorated, the lack of an adequately trained workforce and training facilities, the dominance of foreign films on the local cinema circuit, and the UNIP government's growing support for television broadcasting to the extent that more resources were channelled to broadcast infrastructure than the development of filmmaking. Further, the government's policy to only produce didactic documentary films prevented the growth of narrative fiction filmmaking. Efforts to ignite commercial film were made when the government facilitated the making of two foreign films - *A Touch of the Sun* (1979) and *Killing Heat* (1981) - in Zambia. However, these efforts did not materialise into anything apart from allowing the local on-and-offscreen talent to interact with producers and crew members from the West. In this epoch, independent filmmaking was either assimilated into the state system, as seen with Malachite Films, or it fizzled out due to a lack of policy or incentives to enable it to thrive, as observed with the Film and Television Corporative (FITECO).

The state-funded approach to film began to crumble as Zambia's economy rapidly declined following the oil crisis and the global decline in copper prices in the 1970s. Despite the

economic challenges, filmmaking was maintained in the collapsing state system that did not allow commercial Zambian cinema development. For as long as filmmaking was state-funded, there was no imperative to develop the sector beyond what existed or what the authorities determined. Overall, the dreary state of film and filmmaking by the end of the UNIP years directly reflected the political and economic context within which the medium and art form existed. Beyond the context of production, filmmaking also collapsed because of a failure by those with the power and means to fully recognise its economic potential beyond its ideologically influenced educative value.

The development of film in the 20-year MMD rule was discussed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. From these chapters, it emerged that Zambian filmmaking transitioned from a lull in the early 1990s to a take-off in the latter part of the epoch with the advent of commercial filmmaking. This take-off, I posit, was linked to the political and economic transition in 1991 and the reforms that came with liberalisation. However, these reforms were painstakingly slow, and most had little or no direct link with the development of filmmaking. Nonetheless, and perhaps most importantly, this epoch saw the introduction of private capital in the creative, cultural, and media sectors, driven by the pro-market MMD government's policy to create an enabling environment that allowed private enterprises to exist. The take-off emerged in this context.

Beginning with the work of NGO-produced documentary films and creative projects initiated by advertising agencies, to the arrival of the early TV drama productions on both ZNBC and Muvi TV, the study demonstrated how private individuals and entities took the lead in reviving and keeping the cinematic arts afloat. The thesis also highlighted the existence of a parallel video filmmaking side-stream that emerged and thrived in the second half of the epoch. All these filmmaking activities did not come easy as various challenges still characterised the context of production. These include the lack of financing, increased competition from foreign content, lack of training and skills development opportunities, and the lack of a film policy.

The release of the early cinematic feature films such as *The Lawyer* (2008) and *Suwi: Faith Beyond Doubt* (2009) resulted from the various efforts, initiatives and investments from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Generally, filmmaking re-emerged as a fragmented economic and cultural activity from different creators with varying levels of training, experience and access to resources, embracing a multiplicity of production traditions and techniques, often amid significant economic challenges.

In Chapters 8 and 9, the thesis examined the development of filmmaking in the ten years when Zambia was under the social democratic, left-leaning rule of the Patriotic Front (PF) from 2011 to 2021. The findings show that the PF government had numerous opportunities to propel Zambian filmmaking forward. The government demonstrated a willingness to develop policies and incorporate film in national development planning. However, many of these efforts did not lead to the envisaged progress, and many of the historical political economic challenges persisted, together with new ones, such as the elevated levels of piracy and the failure of the state to follow through on promises.

The examination of filmmaking in this epoch revealed a constellation of challenges affecting contemporary filmmaking and the many ways that these challenges were being addressed. Additionally, further observations about new developments in Zambian cinematic arts in this epoch were made. These include increased international collaborations, a growing film festival culture, the rise of over-the-top (OTT) distribution platforms, and the move towards more diversity in the production styles and genres. The epoch also saw the increasing impact of MultiChoice on Zambian cinematic arts, which includes the launch of the regional channel Zambezi Magic. The discussion on Zambezi Magic addressed various positive and negative perspectives on the channel's impact on Zambian screen production. It also included a reading of the series *Mpali* (2018 -), a Zambezi Magic production, to highlight MultiChoice's influence on Zambian screen media.

The results from the study of filmmaking in the PF years are essential and opportune because they can best give a sense of the more recent condition or state of the film sector in Zambia. Further, I posit that these findings divulge the existence of a dichotomy in Zambian cinematic arts that has the state, with its dissonant policy assertions and missed opportunities on the one hand, and local filmmakers, supported by private capital and somehow efficaciously working through the various challenges, on the other hand. At the core of the latter's accomplishments has been the shifting balance of power from the state system to the private (individual or corporate) sector, where access to capital and other resources is critical.

From these findings outlined in the chapters and in response to the study's fundamental questions, this thesis makes the following important conclusions about the development and state of filmmaking in Zambia:

a. Context of production is determined by access to resources.

Filmmaking has been essential to postcolonial Zambian society and remains an important cultural and economic activity. However, the context of film production in Zambia has been influenced by the prevailing socio-political and economic conditions and these conditions have determined what resources are available for production and distribution.

Over the decades, production has been birthed from different conditions but access to resources has been vital to the sustainability of production. In the UNIP years, the production of films existed within a well-organized and structured system implemented by the ZIS Film Unit. Producers enjoyed significant resource support from the government which also determined the role film would play. The economic downturn from the 1970s through to the late 1980s saw a decline in this backing to the extent that resources such as cinema vans, production equipment, and activities such as film processing ground to a halt. Celluloid film as a medium was abandoned in favour of video technologies and television broadcasting.

In the second and third epochs, films were produced in varying contexts. Since celluloid filmmaking had collapsed entirely, ZIS produced documentaries for television with reduced budgets and resources and using video technologies. Furthermore, when non-state video filmmaking started, it included filmmakers such as those backed by foreign financing (e.g., Catherine Kaseketi or Jessie Chisi), those attached to television stations or productions (such as the various Muvi TV producers), the media agency producers working with NGOs or corporate sponsors (such as Cathy and Fred Phiri), or the amateur video enthusiasts mostly from poorer communities appropriating cheaper video technologies. The latter group of producers were behind the local video film side-stream or shadow economy (Lobato, 2012; Ebrahim, 2020) that appeared after the turn of the century. It was characterised by films produced in local languages with very meagre resources, often packaged on DVDs and VCDs and distributed through informal networks that made them widely accessible to target audiences. Production for these films was often challenging due to the lack of adequate equipment, lack of trained personnel and the lack of financing for production. Producers of these video films often took on multiple duties including acting, editing, marketing and distribution, to save money. In both the MMD and PF years, access to resources determined how and what type of films would be produced.

b. Filmmaking and the emerging screen industries continue to be plagued by old and new challenges.

While the thesis uncovered various challenges over the three epochs analysed, five of them elaborated in the results chapters stand out. These challenges are highlighted below, with an elaboration on some of the ways they are being addressed.

i. The lack of funding or film financing is the foremost challenge affecting the development of filmmaking. Since the collapse of state-funded filmmaking, Zambia has not had any film financing mechanism. The thesis has shown that financing in the second and third epochs examined was only available through NGOs, private broadcasters, advertising revenue, sale of video films on DVD and VCD, and from personal funds, where possible. Film financing is important for the growth of the film industry. Financing affects not only the quality of production but also other processes such as casting, access to locations and props, distribution, and marketing. For example, the study has shown how the self-financed side-stream video films were often cheaply made, often aesthetically poor, and compromised production values. Further, the producers of these films had to depend on innovative and informal distribution channels. This is unlike the productions with some form of financing, such as the film *Suwi* or the television series *Mpali.*

As various scholars and studies show, film financing is still a significant challenge in film industries worldwide, especially in developing countries (Tuomi, 2006; Falicov, 2010; Tomaselli, 2013). Strategies to counter these funding challenges must be implemented. Different filmmakers in Zambia employ different strategies to finance their films, as discussed in the thesis. However, there are still calls for a government-driven production financing structure that can equitably support both film and television productions. Filmmakers and stakeholders envision an agency similar to the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) in South Africa, which they use as a regional benchmark due to the various support mechanisms it established for the South African film industry (Balseiro & Masilela, 2003; Maingard, 2007; Botha, 2013).

ii. The lack of education and skills training in various aspects of film has been a significant obstacle to the growth of filmmaking in Zambia. For the first epoch, the challenge of education and training was also a legacy of colonialism when

only a few Africans were trained in filmmaking, and only a few people had been to universities or colleges by independence in 1964. As a result, Kaunda's UNIP government would send ZIS staff for training overseas, but even this was not enough. Local training institutions such as the University of Zambia or the Evelyn Horne College did not offer filmmaking programmes. In the second epoch of the study, the lack of training and skills development opportunities in film continued to be a significant challenge. Training only occurred at a few filmmaking workshops or seminars.

To address the training challenge, several filmmakers have often used their production projects to train members of their production crews. Producers and directors collaborating with international filmmakers have engaged the usually more experienced expatriates to help train some local crew members. Fortuitously, there has been a spike in the number of training activities taking place under film festivals, training workshops, and training academies such as the MultiChoice Talent Factory. There are also new academic programmes at colleges and universities. It will remain critical for educators and interested stakeholders to find ways of firmly helping improve the skills of the filmmakers going forward because investing in the right training and skills has been shown to boost the film industry (Petrie, 2012; UNESCO, 2021)

iii. Distribution has been a bottleneck at various stages of the development of filmmaking in Zambia. Previously, distribution was supported by the state through ZIS. However, this was not sustained. Furthermore, while film production was markedly increased in the MMD and PF years, distribution opportunities remained elusive. Very few filmmakers can have their films shown at the cinema without them making a loss.

Moreover, cinemas are also concerned about losing revenue when featuring a local film over a Hollywood title. Zambian filmmakers have also had to contend with international distributors who often exploit them with shifting targets and rules regarding payment. As a result, distribution continues to plague filmmaking in Zambia, just as in various African countries (Tomaselli, 2013; Dovey, 2015).

This thesis has shown how online digital channels, particularly streaming platforms, have become an attractive avenue through which users can distribute and access screen productions on demand. Beyond global streaming platforms such as Netflix or Amazon, the emergence of local platforms such as MPTV or Zizwa+ is one of the most prominent and promising opportunities for Zambian filmmakers today. Broadcast stations are also still essential distribution channels available for local productions. In any distribution scenario – broadcast, streaming or international cinema circuits - filmmakers or producers must benefit from the licensing, commissioning or distribution agreements without the threat of exploitation observed in the past.

iv. Related to the lack of funding is the overall dearth of government policy and support necessary to develop filmmaking. We can acknowledge a change in attitude towards film from the three epochs. However, none of the different approaches have yielded desirable and lasting outcomes. For instance, despite having existed under larger overarching government agendas or national ideologies such as Humanism, or economic liberalisation, film has never had a specific policy in place over the three different eras examined. In the UNIP days, film was often used in the context of education and propaganda. In the MMD years, film was mainly on the periphery of policy and was a mere economic activity that people could engage in for survival. Under the PF, we saw more promise and effort to move filmmaking into the mainstream agenda. However, not much was achieved, and even the much-talked-about National Film Policy was withdrawn to facilitate further review.

Policy plays a vital role in guiding how an industry develops. The expectation is that the state, through policy, would create an enabling environment for filmmaking to thrive. While it is true that filmmaking can go ahead of policy, as observed with Nollywood (Adejunmobi, 2015; Haynes, 2016), there is also sufficient evidence to support a policy-led approach, as seen with the South African film industry (Botha, 2003). It remains to be seen just how well the

policy efforts will go in helping address the various challenges affecting Zambian screen production.

v. Another key challenge the study unearthed was the low appreciation and consumption of local films. The question of how to get Zambians to watch local films is critical and this study has highlighted some of the issues relating to this problem. In the first epoch analysed, it became clear that audiences did not like the ZIS documentaries despite their wider distribution. According to interviews and a review of literature (Mytton, 1974, 1983; Kerr, 1998), audiences were often critical of how these documentaries were uninteresting compared to Hollywood films. Viewers also became more sceptical of the films as the content became more propagandist than educational. In the second and third epochs, the public's inability to access Zambian productions further added to the lack of patronage. Producers have thus struggled to market their films due to the poor appreciation of local films and often make losses because people just do not show up.

Over the years, cinema culture in Zambia has been under the husk of foreign productions and this dominance is not likely to change anytime soon. On the one hand, the absence of a local film sector helped cement the dominance and guaranteed the success of mostly Hollywood films on local screens, big or small. On the other hand, Zambians have sometimes appropriated productions from neighbouring countries as their own. For the Zambian consumer, productions from these film cultures have acted as proxies for local cinematic arts. This phenomenon is exemplified by the popularity and consumption of selected seasons of South African soaps such as *Isidingo* (1998-2020), *Generations* (1994-2014) and the English version of *Egoli: Place of Gold* (1993-2010), or popular Zimbabwean films such as *Neria* (1993), *More Time* (1993), *Everyone's Child* (1996), and *Yellow Card* (2000), on Zambian screens in the 1990s and a few years into the 2000s. In this sense, what may have looked like an absence of local productions may not have been a concern for consumers because the South African or Zimbabwean content was considered 'local' enough.

There exists a historical precedence for this. The Bantu Education Kinema Experiment (BEKE) and the Central African Film Unit (CAFU) (discussed in Chapter 1) both produced films that were appropriated beyond territorial borders.

For instance, the CAFU made it possible for films produced in one of the three territories in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland to be consumed in the other two and beyond the Federation borders, where possible. A similar structure existed with the BEKE before it.

With this historical understanding, it becomes plausible to suggest that the lack of a nationally generated cinema culture was cushioned by the presence of productions from the region that told relatable and culturally proximate stories that assumed the place of local productions. We can also argue that Zambian audiences, as part of their film consumption culture, have already 'filled the gap' with productions from other countries that are appealing and close enough to their context. Whether this is the case or not, the implication for Zambian filmmakers is that they should work even harder to inject their films into an already existing film culture that easily assimilates regional content. Their productions must attract audiences much like the Hollywood titles or the proxy 'local cinemas' from the region or continent.

One of the ways Zambian audiences are being drawn to locally produced films is through homegrown (local and international) film festivals. The proliferation of local festivals is a testament to a growing desire for more Zambians to engage with local productions. The success witnessed on television has to extend to local cinema. Further, there is a need for campaigns and projects that encourage the patronage and consumption of local films. It may just be that audiences do not know about Zambian films, especially as they become more oriented towards international audiences and festivals rather than local cinema (Dovey, 2015; Orlando, 2017).

c. Socio-political and economic policies have and continue to impact filmmaking in Zambia

Zambian filmmaking has been significantly influenced by the prevailing political and economic conditions and ideology at a given period. The study has shown that film and filmmaking have served specific functions in society as determined by the dominant political and economic thrust, from UNIP's socialist/humanist ideology to the MMD's liberal democratic turn and, later, the PF's social democratic stance. In all three epochs examined, the place of filmmaking

was knowingly or otherwise determined by those in power or with power. This observation is important because it proves why film scholars should not be sceptical of political economic approaches to film studies. Instead, it highlights how political or economic powers, such as the government or corporations such as MultiChoice, can determine the role and growth (or lack thereof) of a medium such as film. This has been a key argument by proponents of political economy and its application to film studies (Wasko, 2005; Mosco, 2009; McQuail & Deuze, 2020)

For instance, after independence in 1964, the new Zambian government purposed to use film to educate the population. Guided by President Kaunda's Humanism socio-political philosophy (Molteno, 1973, 1974), film was used to reach people with new ideas or ways of doing things, reinforce government policies and inform people about the various developments in the country. For this reason, the state vigorously supported filmmaking activities. The thesis has shown how the state provided for equipment, logistical resources, and training opportunities and how the government reaffirmed this support after transitioning to a one-party state.

In the case of the second epoch examined, filmmaking was influenced by the country's shift from a one-party state to participatory politics and economic liberalisation. Under the MMD, no official policy or statement on film was made, but the overall policy reforms towards liberalisation were enough to give filmmaking a new thrust. Liberalisation and its support for private participation in economic activities influenced how films would be produced. The thesis has shown how some filmmakers could access cheaper video production equipment and invest in private enterprises such as advertising agencies and video production companies. Liberalisation also paved the way for private investment in broadcasting. As a result, there was a varied approach to production. In the PF years, film was identified as an area that could contribute to the national economy and social development and it included in development planning. The National Film Policy was also developed, and it spelt out how film would be integrated into the economy and national agenda. Even though the attempts to mainstream film ended up being more promissory in reality, there was a clear understanding of what role film would play in this epoch.

d. Television remains key to the context and development of filmmaking, but this does not always serve the film industry well.

The thesis has established how intricately linked television production has been to Zambian filmmaking. This finding exemplifies what scholars such as Dovey (2018) and Thompson (2013) posit about how television and film in the African context are tied together by how they were integrated into past development agendas and consumed. In the Zambian case, this link appeared as support for state-funded filmmaking declined in favour of investment in broadcasting infrastructure and content development in the 1970s and 80s. The decision by the state's filmmaking unit at ZIS to send its documentary films for broadcast on ZBS reflected the collapse of the film distribution system it operated. Even the earliest local fictional narratives were aired on television (in the *Play for Today* anthology series). All this firmly established television as the primary medium for Zambian audiovisual storytelling. By the early 2000s, the various storytellers had realised that television productions often benefitted from regular income flows from advertising and sponsorships. This income made it possible for production to continue, and as revenue increased, there was a concomitant rise in the quality of television productions. Ultimately, the producers behind several television shows also became influential figures in the development of commercial filmmaking.

The downside of this relationship with television is that television has taken the place of cinema and stakeholders in Zambian film have not done much to create a delineation between the two. In this sense, having television thrive has been detrimental to the growth of cinema and feature filmmaking. Without a clear distinction between television and film, filmmakers will continue to depend on television, which guarantees a consistent revenue stream for a while, unlike in cinema, where the earning potential is unpredictable. This dependence on television, particularly MultiChoice's Zambezi Magic as highlighted, is worrisome and must be addressed. Part of the challenge emanates from the poor funding available to filmmaking intended for cinema and the dire lack of infrastructure to support such productions, both of which broadcasters often tend to have. The migration to digital broadcasting, it seems, will only exacerbate this status quo. For there to be a film industry to talk about, there has to be actual investment in the making of movies.

e. Digitalisation is driving new optimism and opportunities.

A more recent opportunity has been the proliferation of digital technologies in distributing audiovisual content. This study has shown how technological shifts as the migration to digital broadcasting and the rise of over-the-top (OTT) platforms, have risen as opportunities for

Zambian filmmakers. Though the impact of these technologies is yet to be fully realised, the study has shown how they are attractive to filmmakers who have not benefited from traditional distribution systems. The technologies have helped increase the demand for local content and thus increased opportunities for creators to meet this demand. However, it is essential to think critically about questions on the cost of access to the consumer in relation to the digital divide (Straubhaar et al., 2019). While these technologies have a democratisation quality, the economic capacity of audiences to access these technologies does have a bearing on whether the content would be accessible or not.

f. Didacticism and social value storytelling still characterise many Zambian films, but this tendency is beginning to change.

Regarding the textual tendencies employed in Zambian filmmaking over the years, there has been a strong and enduring penchant to produce films with a didactic or social value imperative. The thesis has shown how this tendency is rooted in several factors, including Africa's pre-colonial oral history, where storytelling was for the benefit of the traditional society; the colonial experience, where the colonialists used film to educate and modernise Africans; and the development, unifying and educational agendas set for film by the African government after independence (Diang′a, 2016). Another reason for this tendency, I argue, is the strong Christian ethos that is propagated in Zambian society. This ethos is a pre-colonial and colonial legacy (e.g., The BEKE films) that was also incorporated into President Kaunda's brand of Humanism in the First and Second Republics, and later, integrated into in the national constitution by President Chiluba when he declared Zambia as a Christian nation in the Third Republic (Phiri, 2003).

The study has shown that in the first epoch, this tendency was the mainstay in the ZIS-produced documentary films distributed across the country via cinema vans and to the few towns with cinema halls. In the second epoch, this tendency was observed in the various NGO or donor-funded films and later in some of the fictional narratives that emerged in its second half, such as *Suwi* (2009).

The thesis has shown how the tendency to produce narrative films with a social value imperative or didactic message was maintained in the third epoch by filmmakers such as Owas Ray Mwape, Henry Joe Sakala, Frank Sibbuku and others. However, their approach to message films was less overt, more artistic and significantly outward-looking in terms of audiences.

This corresponds to Valerie Orlando's (2017) observation about a shift in African cinema in the 21st century towards filmmaking that is more auteurist and less focused on national issues and audiences. Films such as Phiri's *Mushala* (2019), Kazadi's *Black Dollar* (2020) and drama series such as Sibbuku's *Mpali* (2018 -) all exemplify this approach.

Further, filmmakers are also exploring new genres and new forms of expression as seen with Langmead's *Damyna* (2017) - a musical feature, and *Borderline* (2019) - a neo-noir film, or Mapulanga's animated film, *Chimfya* (2016). Themes such as love, marriage, relationships, family life, poverty and wealth, city hardships, greed, mysticism, success, gangs and violence, politics, modernity and tradition, and others are among some of the most common ones in these productions. At the same time, the low-cost comedy and drama films in the video side stream are still popular in their target demographics despite declining revenues due to piracy and the rising popularity of television content in recent years.[19]

The enduring didactic tendency may also help explain why documentary filmmaking is still prominent in Zambia and most of Africa. According to Crosta, Niang & Tcheuyap (2017), documentary remains one of African film's more important and thriving forms. The current study has shown how Zambian documentary films have found both acclaim and commercial success in recent years. A question that emerges is: why is the documentary form still attractive when fiction filmmaking seems more popular? This can be the subject of further investigation.

The thesis has shown how comedy shows and soap opera/telenovela hybrids are popular genres within television. These shows maintain the codes common to the genres, but producers often also include social messaging and commentary, as observed with the feature films. As this thesis did not fully engage with television genres, it may be important for future studies also to consider why local content creators are drawn to these genres and why they are popular with audiences, if at all they are.

Overall, the findings on the textual tendencies and practices are important because they provide a much-needed picture of the patterns in production and storytelling in Zambia cinematic arts. The findings on the tendencies and genres could also help explain why the consumption of

[19] Television consumption has significantly increased because of digital migration, with the low cost DTT platforms provided by TopStar (operated by StarTimes of China and the Zambian Government through ZNBC) and GoTV (operated by Multichoice).

local content has remained low. Could the local productions in their current formats be not what people want to see in films? Going by the success of more recent productions that depart from the message film tendency, such an assumption would not be farfetched.

10.4 Significance of the Study and its Contribution to Scholarship

This thesis elaborates on Zambia's experience in the development of film and filmmaking. The study significantly contributes to African film or cinema scholarship by documenting the Zambian experience. In doing this, it does not claim to provide an ultimate and irrefutable account of the development of filmmaking in the country. However, the study does become the first such detailed examination entirely focused on the development of filmmaking, cinematic arts, or film culture in Zambia, making it seminal and initiatory. The study departs from a tendency in African film or screen scholarship to focus on only a handful of countries. It challenges how mainstream African cinema scholarship sometimes homogenises the experiences of different countries within the corpus of the field. With this, it is hoped that the generalised assumptions about the African experience with film can be less frequent and more cognisant of the peculiarity of contexts, no matter the size or how similar they may be.

This thesis elaborates on Zambia's experience in the development of film and filmmaking. The study significantly contributes to African film or cinema scholarship by documenting the Zambian experience. It does not claim to provide an ultimate and irrefutable account of the development of filmmaking in the country. However, the study is the first detailed examination of the development of Zambia's filmmaking, cinematic arts, or film culture, making it seminal and initiatory. The study departs from the African film or screen scholarship tendency to focus only on a handful of countries. It challenges how mainstream African cinema scholarship sometimes homogenizes the experiences of different countries. Hopefully, this will reduce the tendency among (mostly Western) scholars to make generalized assumptions about the African experience with film and be more cognizant of the peculiarity of each context, regardless of size or similarity.

Theoretically, this research demonstrates how Political Economy can be applied using the Small Nation Cinema Approach as an analytical framework. The study suggests and employs the novelty of combining these two theoretical and analytical approaches. Additionally, integrating Political Economy with the Small Nation Cinema approach is important because it addresses the criticism that Political Economic Theory cannot easily be applied or used in

African contexts. This study shows how the Political Economy (of film) can be applied in an African context and how dynamic the approach can be. The theory's incorporation of sociocultural, economic, and political analysis and a historical examination is crucial and should not be dismissed simply because of its Western origins. Throughout the study, filmmaking was positioned within the country's larger social, economic, and political context at different periods (Wasko, 2005). We can conclude that the Political Economy of Film approach is useful in highlighting and examining the political and ideological implications of existing economic arrangements within which a film sector operates (Golding and Murdock, 1991; Mosco, 1996; Wasko, 2005). Furthermore, the merging of these approaches can be applied to study the development of filmmaking in countries that are on the margin of film scholarship and may share contextual arrangements similar to Zambia.

Additionally, in its application of the Small Nation Cinema approach, this thesis has shed light on what embodies Zambia as a small nation cinema. Having situated Zambia as a small nation, the study has expounded on how this 'smallness' has affected the development of filmmaking in the country. For instance, Zambia's small and unstable economy, characterized by a lower GDP and a dependence on Western aid and its conditionalities, has, over the years, influenced the extent to which the state can support film. Further, state support for film declined due to economic challenges. The implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) only focused on sectors traditionally considered to be of more economic value than cinema or other cultural industries. This aspect demonstrates a subjugation, albeit economic, that is also part of the appropriated definition of smallness. Further, the dominance of foreign cultural products on the local market has made local products struggle to find their footing in their own country. This is emblematic of the global power relations that have made cultural imperialism persistent. As a former colony, the subjugation of local cultural products is still present and thriving. Though now emerging, Zambian filmmaking must find its place in the global cinema order that Hollywood and (more recently) Silicon Valley corporations govern.

The study vitally highlights Zambian filmmaking and positions it as an activity of historical, cultural, and, more recently, economic significance. It offers clear examples of filmic texts, textual practices, and filmmakers, information that is all but essential to the appreciation of Zambian filmmaking. Beyond the academy, this knowledge is critical in informing present-day policymakers as they endeavour to incorporate film into the country's economic agenda. The study also contributes to emerging national discourses on developing creative industries or the creative economy. As highlighted in the thesis, the move towards assimilating creative and

cultural sectors into the economy is a critical element of recent development planning in Zambia. The study results are a timely contribution to an emerging terrain where well-documented information and research are still largely unavailable.

10.5 Limitations of the Study

One of the main challenges faced in this study was tracing and interviewing former employees of the ZIS Film Unit who worked in the First and Second Republics. These interviews were intended to provide insight into filmmaking during the first epoch examined in the study. While I could trace four potential sources, only two were available for interviews. Many other ZIS sources had passed away, or their whereabouts were unknown to their former colleagues or current ZIS staff. During the study, one of the identified interviewees, who was in his 70s, unfortunately, fell ill and passed away in 2018. Furthermore, the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) in 2020 further complicated my ability to secure additional interviews.

Additionally, I encountered the challenge of limited published documentation or literature on filmmaking in Zambia. Moreover, at the National Archives and the ZIS Library, certain documents I had anticipated would be crucial for my study were either missing or unusable (not legible). This challenge also extended to locating older films essential to the study, particularly for the first epoch. Consequently, I had to rely heavily on the knowledge of a few individuals and the limited literature available to synthesise much of the data concerning the early years of Zambian filmmaking. Additionally, I had to depend on the few digitised film clips I could access and first-hand accounts from individuals who had worked on or been involved with these films.

Another limitation of this study is the lack of economic data capturing film's contribution to the Zambian economy. Unfortunately, such data was unavailable during the study, and its inclusion would have greatly enriched the research.

Another limitation was the inability to access some Zambian films. Some filmmakers could not grant me access to their films because they had either licensed them to distributors or were uncomfortable with having their work examined. Access to more of the films mentioned in the chapters would have enriched the study and provided an opportunity to learn more about

Zambian films and their production. As a result, I had to change my selection of films multiple times. Musola C. Kaseketi was the only filmmaker who provided me with a copy of her film, *Suwi: Faith Beyond Limit* (2009). The documentary *Zambia: Birthplace of the Struggle* (2005) was accessed through the University of Cape Town's African Studies Library. Although Fank Sibbuku, the creator of the series, permitted me to analyse episodes of *Mpali* (2018 -), MultiChoice did not allow it due to concerns about piracy. I could only access the episodes much later in the study period after subscribing and streaming *Mpali* on MultiChoice's Showmax platform.

10.6 Future Research

Several areas of this study require further investigation or present opportunities for future inquiry. For instance, there is a need for a more detailed examination of the films produced in Zambia over the years. I acknowledge that the analysis in this thesis is just a starting point for Zambian film research. The increase in the number of productions in recent years offers researchers a chance to delve deeper into filmmakers' storytelling practices and stylistic elements. While this study has discussed a few Zambian productions from different perspectives, there is ample room for a more thorough examination of local films through various lenses, such as gender, class, identity, power, representation, and reception. This would contribute to a heightened understanding and appreciation of Zambian filmmaking.

As the film industry in Zambia emerges and establishes itself as part of the cultural economy, examining the actual economic data that can enhance the status of a legitimate film industry becomes imperative. This would involve studies to determine what constitutes a local box office and the financial value of the industry's input and output. The absence or insufficiency of such data has been a limitation of this study, which future research should address.

An emerging phenomenon observed in the study is the rise of local, regional, and global over-the-top (OTT) internet-based platforms as alternative means of content distribution. Further studies should engage with this growing arena, as it will likely impact how filmmakers tell and share their stories. Such studies would examine the economic implications of OTT, conduct cost-benefit analyses of OTT distribution for local content, explore trends in the access, consumption, and reception of Zambian content on OTT platforms, and consider the overall implications of OTT on the emerging film industry in Zambia, among other topics.

Lastly, future studies must include comparative analyses of the various film cultures in the region, the continent, and the world. Such studies often provide new perspectives for policymakers regarding how different issues are addressed in other countries. They also create opportunities to positively influence change and foster collaboration in policy implementation and actual production.

10.7 Wrap Up

This thesis has examined the development and state of filmmaking in Zambia. It has given a detailed account of the development of Zambian filmmaking from 1964 to 2021 from a Political Economic theoretical lens that appropriates the Small Nation Cinema approach as an analytical framework. The findings show that Zambian filmmaking has been significantly influenced by the various socio-political and economic changes the country has undergone since its independence in 1964. Film has been a part of Zambian society through all these shifts, notwithstanding the various intricacies that have determined its function and place in each era. Zambian filmmaking, to borrow from Mbye Cham "has been a mixed bag of promises, hopes, achievements, and continued struggle and frustration" as it contends "with the same set of issues and challenges that have always confronted filmmakers throughout the continent" (Cham, 1998). This study has highlighted various spheres of Zambian screen production, including the contemporary challenges and opportunities. There remains much to learn about film in Zambia. However, even more than learning, a lot more positive action needs to be taken by the various stakeholders involved in the burgeoning film industry, especially those with economic and political power. Until then, Zambian filmmaking shall continue to play catch-up.

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A Hidden Truth. 2011. dir. Mwelwa Kamanda. Samfya: Samfya Women Filmmakers/CAMFED

African Legacy. 1971. dir . Vladimír Skalský. Chingola: Malachite Films

After the Music Stops. 2009. dir. Chris Puta. Lusaka: Zambia Centre for Communication Programmes (ZCCP) and Soul City Institute

Battle for Kavalamanja: In Defence of the Nation. 2008. dir. Abdon Yezi. Lusaka: Yezi Arts

Black Dollar. 2020. dir. Daniel Kazadi. Lusaka: Kazadi Films

Behind Closed Door. 2005. dir. Chala Tumelo. Ndola: Studio BGM/BGM Media

Chenda. 2015. dir. Owas Ray Mwape. Lusaka: Owas Crystal Films/Oram Films

Chipondo (2011) Joakim Sakala. Lusaka: JoelHood Pictures

Copper Airlift. 1969. dir. John Roulet. Luanshya/Ndola: Roan Selection Trust Film Unit

Damyna: The Musical. 2016. dir. Peter Langmead. Lusaka: Langmead & Baker

Flight to Adventure. 1965. Lusaka: Zambia Information Services (ZIS)

Guilt. 2014. dir. Maynard Muchangwe. Lusaka. Maynarj Films

Guns and Rings. 2009. dir. Henry Joe Sakala. Lusaka: JoelHood Pictures// Henry Joe Sakala Films

*Hang. 2*018. dir. Owas Ray Mwape. Lusaka: Owas Crystal Films/Oram Films

Harvest of my Sweat (2004). dir. M*usola Catherine Keseketi.* Lusaka: Vilole Image Productions

Imagination. 2016. dir. Jessie Chisi and Vatice Mushauko. Lusaka: Inzy Media/Zambia Talent Factory.

*Jailed. 2*010. dir. Joakim Sakala. Lusaka: JoelHood Pictures

Kansanshe. 1972. dir. Vladimír Skalský. Chingola: Malachite Films

Kavalamanja Remembered, 2020. dir. Abdon Yezi. Lusaka: Yezi Arts

Land of the Four Rivers. 1964. Luanshya/Ndola: Roan Selection Trust Film Unit

Look in the Mirror. 2016. dir. dir. Owas Ray Mwape. Lusaka: Owas Crystal Films/Oram Films

LSK Heroes. 2014. dir. Henry J. Sakala. Lusaka: Muvi Television Limited

Luapula Journey. 1967. Dir. John Roulet. Luanshya/Ndola: Roan Selection Trust Film Unit

Milestones at Mindolo (1968). Chingola/Kitwe: Malachite Films/ Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation,

Mining Copper. 1965. dir. John Roulet. Luanshya/Ndola: Roan Selection Trust Film Unit

Mufaya. 2016. dir. Felix C. Muyembi. Lusaka: Every Moment Connections

Mushala. 2019. dir. Angel Phiri. Lusaka; Muvi Television Limited

My Brother, My Sister. 2006. dir. Chala Tumelo. Ndola: Studio BGM/BGM Media

NaMusonda. 2012. dir. Joakim Sakala. Lusaka: JoelHood Pictures

Norman Carr: The man, the legend. 1997. dir. Errol Hickey. Lusaka: Hickey Studios Productions

Over My Dead Body. 2006. dir. Chala Tumelo. Ndola: Studio BGM/BGM Media
Sansamukeni Comedy, 3 in 1. 2006. dir. Douglas Muma Mumbi. Kitwe:
Savannah Skies. 2019. dir. Joshua Kafumukache. Lusaka: MNet/MTF
Secrets Untold. 2015. dir. Owas Ray Mwape. Lusaka: Owas Crystal Films/Oram Films
Silent Voice. 2005. dir. Henry Joe Sakala. Lusaka: JoelHood Pictures/ Henry Joe Sakala Films
Strictly by Invitation. 2016. dir. Owas Ray Mwape. Lusaka: Owas Crystal Films/Oram Films
Soldier Watch Out. 2007. dir. Dickson Mwansa. Lusaka: Project Concern International
Suwi: Faith Beyond Limit. 2009. dir. M*usola Catherine Keseketi.* Lusaka: Vilole Image Productions
The Borderline. 2018/2019. dir. Peter Langmead. Lusaka: Langmead & Baker
The Gold that Grows. 1997. dir. Errol Hickey. Lusaka: Hickey Studios Productions
The Jewel of Africa 1997. dir. Errol Hickey. Lusaka: Hickey Studios Productions
The Lawyer. 2008. dir. Dominic Chisembele. Lusaka: Muvi Television Limited
The Little Boy and the Big Boy. 1964. Lusaka: Zambia Information Services (ZIS)
The Painting. 2019. dir. Emanuel Goncalves. Lusaka: MNET/MTF
The Red Bag. 2014. dir. Frank N. Sibbuku. Lusaka: Muvi Television Limited
The Vanguards. 2010. dir. Frank N. Sibbuku. Lusaka: Muvi Television Limited
This is Zambia. 1965. Lusaka: Zambia Information Services (ZIS)
To Walk, to Play, to Work and to Live. 1970. Chingola: Malachite Films
Twenty-four Hours. 1966. dir. John Roulet. Luanshya/Ndola: Roan Selection Trust Film Unit
Ulendo Wa Rose. 2008. dir. Chris Puta. Lusaka: Zambia Centre for Communication Programmes (ZCCP) and Soul City Institute
Victors of the Party. 2004. dir. Chala Tumelo. Ndola: Studio BGM/BGM Media
When the Curtain Falls. 2009.dir. Henry Joe Sakala. Lusaka: Muvi Television Limited
Zambia 64. 1964. Lusaka: Zambia Information Services (ZIS)
Zambia: Birthplace of the Struggle. 1997. dir. Chola Chifukushi and Patrick Lungu. Lusaka: Zambia Information Services (ZIS)
Zambian Heritage 1968. dir. John Roulet. Luanshya/Ndola: Roan Selection Trust Film Unit
Zed Man. 2018. dir. Frank N. Sibbuku. Lusaka: Muvi Television Limited

Transnational Zambian Films Referred

Between Rings: The Esther Phiri Story. 2014. dir. Jessie Chisi and Salla Sorri. Finland/Zambia: Helmi Films and Outline Pictures
Imiti Ikula. 2001. dir. Sampa Kangwa-Wilkie and Simon Wilkie. Namibia/Zambia/Denmark: Mubasen Film and Video and Day Zero Film & Video
e18hteam. 2015. dir. Juan Rodriguez-Briso. Spain/Zambia: OmniCorp Estudio

I am Not a Witch. 2017. Dir. Rungano Nyoni. United Kingdom/France/Germany/Zambia: Arte Prize, BFI Film Fund, and Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC)

Liluwa Lufwira. 1996. dir. Chris Aylward: Canada: Zamura Films

Mwansa the Great. 2011. Dir. Rungano Nyoni. United Kingdom/Zambia: Icreatefilms

Choka! Get Lost! 2001. dir. Tanvir Naomi Bush and Kasper Bisgaard

Other Films Reffered

Cry Freedom. 1987. dir. Richard Attenbrough.

Everyone's Child. 1996. dir. Tsitsi Dangarembga.

Friday. 1995. dir. F. Gray Gray.

In AIDS: Live and Let Die (1999), Director Jonathan Miller

Killing Heat. 1981. dir. Michael Raeburn

More Time. 1993. dir. Isaac Mabhikwa

Neria. 1991. dir. Golden Mawuru.

The Carrier. 2010. dir. Maggie Betts.

The Lazarus Effect. 2010. dir. Lance Bangs .

This Virus That Has No Cure. Mark Newman.

Touch of the Sun. 1969. dir. Peter Curran.

Tsotsi. 2006. dir. Gavin Hood.

Xala. 1974. dir. Ousmane Sembene.

Yeelen. 1987. dir. Souleymane Cissé.

Where Water Meets the Sky. 2008. dir. Helen Cotton and David Eberts.

Selected Zambian Television Series Referred

At Least a Smile. 2004. ZNBC. [Production: Audio Video Studios (AVS)]

Banja: Mudzi wa Mfumu Chidano. 2007. Muvi Television [Production: Muvi Television]

Bupilo. 2005 – 2007. ZNBC [Production: Lusaka Systems Studios]

Butuku. 2021 – 2022. ZNBC. [Production: H.J. Sakala Media Production]

Chintelelwe. 2019 - . Zambezi Magic [Production: Sunrise Entertainment]

Club Risky Business. 2009. ZNBC. [Production: Media 365]

Fate. 2020 - present. ZNBC.

Difikoti and Bikiloni. 2004 – 2009. Muvi Television [Production: Muvi Television]

Kabanana. 2001 - 2002, 2004. ZNBC. [Production: Picture Perfect Productions, Savannah Media]

Kapotwe: n.d. Muvi Television [Production: Muvi Television]

Loose Ends. 2002 - 2012. ZNBC. [Production: Studio BMG]

Love Games. 2013 - 2015. ZNBC. [Production: Media 365]

Makofi. 2021 - present. Zambezi Magic [Production: Centripetal Media]

Mfuti. 2019. Zambezi Magic. [Production: A-List Films]

Mpali. 2018 - present. Zambezi Magic. [Production: A-List Films]

Mwine Mushi. n.d. Muvi Television [Production: Muvi Television]

Njila: The Phase. 2016 - 2019. Zambezi Magic. [Production: A-List Films]

Play For Today/Play Circle. n.d. ZNBC. [Production: ZNBC, ZANASE, ZANTAA]

Spoiler. 2019 - . Zambezi Magic. [Production: Moonlight Pictures Productions]

The Will. 2020. ZNBC.

Turn of *Fortune*. 2019. Zambezi Magic [Production: Centripetal Media]

Twists and Lies. 2018. ZNBC.

Zuba. 2017 - present. Zambezi Magic. [Production: A-List Films]

Other Series Referred

Armstrong Circle Theatre. 1950 - 1957. NBC. United States of America.

Armstrong Circle Theatre. 1957 - 1963. CBS. United States of America.

Egoli: Place of Gold. 1992 - 2010. M-Net. South Africa.

Generations. 1994 - 2014. SABC. South Africa.

Going Up. 1998 - 2002. SABC. South Africa.

Isidingo: The Need. 1998 - 2020. SABC. South Africa.

Mama K's Team 4. 2023. Netflix. South Africa/US.

No One But You (Tú o nadie). 1985. Televisa. Mexico.

Play for Today. 1970 – 1984. BBC. United Kingdom.

Suburban Bliss. 1996. SABC. South Africa.

Soul City. 1993 – 2015. SABC. South Africa.

Wednesday Play. 1964 - 1970. ITV. United Kingdom.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I – INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

CENTRE FOR FILM AND MEDIA STUDIES

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project:	Playing catch up: A critical examination of filmmaking and the film sector in Zambia
Principal Researcher:	Elastus Mambwe
Department Address:	Centre for Film and Media Studies, University of Cape Town (UCT), Private Bag, Rondebosch, 7700.
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1.0 INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction:

My name is Elastus Mambwe, a PhD candidate in the Centre for Film and Media Studies at the University of Cape Town. I invite you to participate in my research project, titled "Playing catch up: A critical examination of filmmaking and the film sector in Zambia." Provided here is a summary of the project for your information. You are free to ask any questions you may have. You participation is voluntary.

Project Summary:

This study seeks to examine the development and state of filmmaking in Zambia. This examination occurs in two layers. The first layer of the study considers film sector related aspects as they have been experienced in post-colonial Zambia. This part of the study attempts to meet the following objectives: (a) to examine what the context of film production and distribution has been in post-colonial Zambia; (b) to identify the factors, internal and external, that have contributed on the state of filmmaking in Zambia; (c) to determine the influence of social, political and economic policies on Zambian filmmaking; and (d) to determine the relationship between the state of the film sector and the development of television in Zambia. The second layer of the study involves a reading of selected Zambian film texts. The objective of this reading is to identifying the textual strategies employed in Zambian films over the years and how these strategies

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reflect or deflect with existing theoretical approaches to African cinema.

Research Methods:

This is a qualitative research that employs different data collection methods to meet study's objectives and to draw conclusions that can best explain the state of the film sector. Primary data collection will include in-depth interviews, observation and the textual analysis of Zambian films. The in-depth interviews will be conducted to obtain a wealth of detail from the selected respondents who will constitute stakeholders from the film industry in Zambia representing different areas of interest.

Interview Information:

The in-depth interviews are an important component of the study. Interviewees have been invited to participate in this research because of their work, expertise or contribution to the film sector. The interviews will be conducted in private, at a place and time that is convenient with the interviewee. No one else but the interviewer will be present unless they would like someone else to be there. Interviews will be recorded and are expected to last between 30 and 50 minutes. The interviewee has the right to stop the interview during that time.

Analysis:

Different of methods of analysis will be used for the different types of data to be collected for the entire research project. The interviews will be transcribed and qualitatively analysed. The interviews will used together with other data to provide an understanding of the film sector that the study proposes.

Confidentiality and Consent:

A form has been prepared that will allow the interview to provide the necessary permissions and consent relating to the data they provide, their identity and their participation. All confidential information provided in the interviews will be treated with the uttermost privacy required. All the information obtained which may reveal the identity of a participant, will be treated as confidential unless the participant agrees to it being public. The information to be obtained from the interviews (recordings, notes, and data) will also be kept and preserved in a confidential manner. The research results will not be used for any other purpose than what was originally agreed by participants without obtaining their prior consent.

Contact Details:

For updates and further information please contact the researcher:

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Mobile Number: 097 736 5590, 095 536 5590, +27 62 989 7744
Email: elastus@gmail.com, mmbela001@myuct.ac.za

Thank you for your participation and support of this study.

2.0 CONSENT FORM

Name of Participant: Lottie Siame

Nature of the Research: Qualitative Research Interviews

What is involved: The interview will take between 30 to 50 minutes, in which I will ask several questions around the topic.

Risks: There are no foreseeable risks. If you feel uncomfortable talking about some topics or answering some questions, feel free to let me know.

Benefits: There will be no direct benefit to you. Your participation will however contribute to the better understanding of the film sector in Zambia. No payment or incentive will be made for your participation.

Costs: There are no costs involved for you. Only your time is required.

1. I agree to be interviewed for the purposes of the research named above.
2. The purpose and nature of the interview has been explained to me, and I have read the information sheet as provided by the student.
3. I agree that the interview may be electronically recorded.
4. Any questions that I had about the purpose and nature of the interview and research project have been answered to my satisfaction.
5. I have read this consent form and the information it contains and had the opportunity to ask questions about it.
6. I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project and that I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage
7. I agree to my responses being used for education and research on the condition that my privacy is respected subject to the following (please tick the appropriate box):

☑ I understand that my personal details may be included in academic writing about the research. (The term 'personal details' refers to full name and professional association).

☐ I would prefer to remain anonymous. (Please note that your professional association may still be referred to but your name will not be disclosed).

Interviewee:

Name of Participant: Lottie Sims Siame

Signature of Participant: Date: 22/05/2019

Researcher:

1. I have explained the purpose of the research project and the implications of being interviewed to the interviewee.
2. I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.
3. I shall to adhere to the confidentiality and consent agreements with the interviewee.

Name of Researcher: Elastus Mambwe

Signature of Researcher: Date: 22/05/2019

APPENDIX II – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/SCHEDULES

Interview Questions for Filmmakers

Section A: Introduction and Background

1. Kindly introduce yourself and provide a summary of your background in film.
2. How many films have you made in your career?

Section B: Textual Strategies

3. What are the key themes in your films? Why these themes?
4. How do you decide on the subject of your films? How do audiences relate to these subjects?
5. What was the inspiration behind _____ (name of film/s)?
6. What elements of this film relating to the cinematography, the narrative, the editing, sound or mise-en-scene stand out?
7. How would you compare this film with other films you have made?
8. How would you compare your films with those made by other Zambian filmmakers?
9. How would you compare your films and Zambian films with those from other African Countries such as Nigeria, South Africa or Kenya?
10. How do you address the issue of language your films?
11. You have witnessed the change from celluloid film to digital film. What has been the impact of this change on film making?
12. What are your thoughts on direct to DVD sales or distribution? Do you prefer it?
13. How did you distribute _____ (name of film/s) and what was your experience?
14. Does Zambia have a unique auteur style to make our films recognisable Zambian?

Section B: Context of Production and Factors Affecting Filmmaking

15. How are your films funded? How was _____ (name of film/s) funded?
16. Does funding affect the types or quality of films produced? How?
17. How do you recover the funds invested?
18. How are your films distributed? What issues relating to film distribution do you face?
19. What processes do you go though in identifying crew and cast members?
20. Do you have a production company? Who are your main collaborators?
21. Describe your typical working process when you are working on a film? How long does it all take?
22. What role do skills and training have on filmmaking? Do we have a deficit in that area?
23. What sort of training have you received and from where?
24. How would you describe the film industry in Zambia and you satisfied with its current state?
25. What do you think are the major issues affecting filmmaking in Zambia today?
26. What can be done to address these issues?
27. What are your thoughts on the current policy and legal framework in which the film sector operates?

28. Has the absence of a dedicated film policy has affected the growth of the industry? How?
29. What do you think is the role of the government in the film sector?
30. What specific things do think the government should do to improve the state of filmmaking?

Section D: Ideology and Consumption

31. Does ideology affect your films?
32. How has Zambia's social, political and economic ideological standing in any given era affected your films?
33. What are your thoughts on the dominance of Hollywood products on the film market?
34. What do you think can be done to increase the number of Zambians watching local films?
35. What makes films sale? Do your films have that?
36. What do you think is role of broadcasters in the film sector? How have they fared?
37. Do you think international collaborations are beneficial to Zambia? What has been your experience?

Section E: Conclusion

38. Overall, what should be done to improve the state of filmmaking and the film industry in Zambia?
39. Do you have any other thoughts or comments that you would like to share state of filmmaking and the film sector in Zambia

Interview Questions for National Arts Council or Arts Ministry Officials

Section A: Introduction and Background

1. Kindly introduce yourself and provide about what you do professionally?
2. What is the role your organization?

Section B: Context of Production and Factors Affecting Filmmaking

3. Does your organization fund filmmaking or offer any support to filmmakers?
4. What sort of support does your organization provide to filmmakers?
5. Do you think funding affects the types or quality of films produced? How?
6. What role do skills and training have on filmmaking? Where do we stand in that area?
7. Does your organization offer any form of training?
8. How would you describe the state of the film industry in Zambia and you satisfied with its current state?
9. What do you think are the major issues affecting filmmaking in Zambia today?
10. Why didn't the film industry of filmmaking in Zambia take off for a long time?
11. What can be done to address these issues?
12. What are your thoughts on the current policy and legal framework in which the film sector operates?
13. Has the absence of a dedicated film policy has affected the growth of the industry? How?
14. What specific programmes does your organization have in place to further enhance the filmmaking and the film industry in Zambia?
15. What do you think is the role of the government in the film sector?
16. What specific things do think the government should do to improve the state of filmmaking?

Section C: Ideology and Consumption

17. Do you think Zambia's social, political and economic ideological standing in any given era affected the films produced? How?
18. What are your thoughts on the dominance of Hollywood/Western products on the film market?
19. What do you think can be done to increase the number of Zambians watching local films?
20. What makes films sale? Do your films have that?
21. How would you compare Zambian films with those from other African Countries such as Nigeria, South Africa or Kenya?
22. Do you think international collaborations are beneficial to Zambia?

Section D: Conclusion

23. Overall, what should be done to improve the state of filmmaking and the film industry in Zambia?
24. Do you have any other thoughts or comments that you would like to share state of filmmaking and the film sector in Zambia.

Interview Questions for Filmmaking trainers

Section A: Introduction and Background

1. Kindly introduce yourself and what you do.
2. Tell us about your institution.

Section B: Training and Factors Affecting Filmmaking

3. How would you describe the state of the film industry in Zambia?
4. What do you think are the major issues affecting filmmaking in Zambia today?
5. What role do skills and training have on filmmaking?
6. What specific training programmes do you offer?
7. Do you have any courses related to understanding the business of film?
8. What is the profile of your students?
9. What sort of response or feedback do you have form your graduates about your pregammes?
10. What are the most urgent or serious training needs in the film sector?
11. How does your organization step in to meet the training needs?
12. Who are some of your partners and what sort of partnerships are these?
13. Do you think funding affects the types or quality of films produced? How?
14. Do think there should be funding available for training?
15. What do you think is the role of the government in the film sector?
16. What specific things do think the government should do to improve the state of filmmaking?

Section C: Consumption

17. What are your thoughts on the dominance of Hollywood/Western products on the film market?
18. What do you think can be done to increase the number of Zambians watching local films?
19. What makes films sale? Do our films have that?
20. We have witnessed the change from celluloid film to digital film. What has been the impact of this change on film making?
21. What are your thoughts on direct to DVD sales or distribution? Do you prefer it?
22. Does Zambia have a unique auteur style to make our films recognisable Zambian?
23. Do you think international collaborations are beneficial to Zambia?

Section D: Conclusion

24. Overall, what should be done to improve the state of filmmaking and the film industry in Zambia?
25. Do you have any other thoughts or comments that you would like to share state of filmmaking and the film sector in Zambia?

Interview Questions for former ZIS film unit staff

Section A: Introduction and Background

1. Kindly introduce yourself and briefly share your professional background.
2. How did you get into filmmaking? How long have you been in film?
3. What films did you make or produce?

Section B: Filmmaking in the past

4. Can you describe how it was like making films in that period of time?
5. How was the film unit or the film sector as a whole structured?
6. Describe some the processes that were involved in the making of these films?
7. To what extent was the government involved in your processes?
8. How did you access funding to produce the films?
9. Who did the production team comprise of?
10. How would compare the films made today and those that you made in your time?

11. Section B: Training and Factors Affecting Filmmaking
12. How would you describe the state of the film industry in Zambia today?
13. What do you think are the major issues affecting filmmaking in Zambia today?
14. What role do skills and training have on filmmaking?
15. Do you think funding affects the types or quality of films produced? How?
16. Why didn't the film industry of filmmaking in Zambia take off for a long time?
17. Has the absence of a dedicated film policy has affected the growth of the industry? How?
18. What do you think is the role of the government in the film sector?
19. What specific things do think the government should do to improve the state of filmmaking?

Section C: Consumption

20. How did ideology influence the type of films you produced?
21. How did you deal with ideological influences in your productions?
22. What do you think can be done to increase the number of Zambians watching local films?
23. How were your films received by audiences and how would you know what the reception was?
24. You have witnessed the change from celluloid film to digital film. What has been the impact of this change on film making?
25. What are your thoughts on direct to DVD sales or distribution? Do you prefer it?
26. Does Zambia have a unique auteur style to make our films recognisable Zambian?

Section D: Conclusion

27. Overall, what should be done to improve the state of filmmaking and the film industry in Zambia?
28. Do you have any other thoughts or comments that you would like to share state of filmmaking and the film sector in Zambia?

Interview Questions for Current ZIS (ZANIS) film unit staff

Section A: Introduction and Background

1. Kindly introduce yourself and your professional background.
2. How did you get into filmmaking?

Section B: Filmmaking in ZANIS

3. Can you describe what it means to be a filmmaker for ZANIS? How does it differ?
4. How is the film unit structured?
5. Describe some the processes that are involved in the making of these films?
6. To what extent is the government involved in your processes?
7. How do you access funding to produce the films?
8. Who does the production team comprise of?
9. How would compare the films made today and those that were made before 1991?

Section B: Training and Factors Affecting Filmmaking

10. How would you describe the state of the film industry in Zambia today?
11. What do you think are the major issues affecting filmmaking in Zambia today?
12. What role do skills and training have on filmmaking?
13. Do you think funding affects the types or quality of films produced? How?
14. Why didn't the film industry of filmmaking in Zambia take off for a long time?
15. Has the absence of a dedicated film policy has affected the growth of the industry? How?
16. What do you think is the role of the government in the film sector?
17. What specific things do think the government should do to improve the state of filmmaking?

Section C: Consumption

18. How does ideology influence the type of films you produce?
19. How do you deal with ideological influences in your productions?
20. What do you think can be done to increase the number of Zambians watching local films?
21. How are your films received by audiences and how would you know what the reception is?
22. You have witnessed the change from celluloid film to digital film. What has been the impact of this change on film making?
23. What are your thoughts on direct to DVD sales or distribution? Do you prefer it?
24. Does Zambia have a unique auteur style to make our films recognisable Zambian?

Section D: Conclusion

25. Overall, what should be done to improve the state of filmmaking and the film industry in Zambia?
26. Do you have any other thoughts or comments that you would like to share state of filmmaking and the film sector in Zambia?

Interview Questions for Cinema house owners or managers.

Section A: Introduction and Background

1. Kindly introduce yourself and what you do.
2. What is the role your organization?

Section B: Consumption

3. How do select the films that are shown at your cinemas?
4. How many Zambian films have you shown? How did you select or pick them?
5. What has been the response for these local films? How long do they stay scheduled?
6. What makes films sale? Do Zambian films have that?
7. What are your thoughts on direct to DVD sales or distribution
8. What do you think about current film distribution models? How can they be improved?
9. What are your thoughts on the dominance of Hollywood/Western products on the film market?
10. What initiatives do you have to support Zambian films?
11. What do you think can be done to increase the number of Zambian watching local films?
12. How would you compare Zambian films with those from other African Countries such as Nigeria, South Africa or Kenya?

Section C: Context of Production and Factors Affecting Filmmaking

13. How would you describe the state of the film industry in Zambia and you satisfied with its current state?
14. What do you think are the major issues affecting filmmaking in Zambia today?
15. What can be done to address these issues?
16. What are your thoughts on the current policy and legal framework in which the film sector operates?
17. Has the absence of a dedicated film policy has affected the growth of the industry? How?
18. What do you think is the role of the government in the film sector?
19. What specific things do think the government should do to improve the state of filmmaking?

Section D: Conclusion

20. Overall, what should be done to improve the state of filmmaking and the film industry in Zambia?
21. Do you have any other thoughts or comments that you would like to share state of filmmaking and the film sector in Zambia?

APPENDIX III – INTRODUCTORY LETTERS

Dr Litheko Modisane

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DATE: 15/06/2018

The Director General,
Independent Broadcasting Authority,
Mass Media Complex,
P.O. Box 32475,
Lusaka,
ZAMBIA.

Dear Sir/Madam,

INTRODUCTORY LETTER: ELASTUS MAMBWE

I hereby write to introduce Mr Elastus Mambwe, a doctoral candidate in the Centre for Film and Media Studies, University of Cape Town and research fellow of the University of Zambia. I am Mr Mambwe's supervisor. He is undertaking research on the film industry in Zambia. Mr Mambwe's research is for academic purposes only and the ethics committee at the university has vetted his research proposal.

For his research, Mr Mambwe needs access to any resources that may help him in accomplishing his research goals. A large part of his research methodology involves interviewing government officials, filmmakers and people involved in the production and consumption of film in Zambia. Your kind assistance of Mr Mambwe will be highly appreciated.

Should you need any further information, kindly feel free to contact me on the email address and or phone number provided.

Kind Regards,

Dr Litheko Modisane

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

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P.O. BOX 32379
LUSAKA 10101
ZAMBIA

17th October 2019

The Director,
The National Archives of Zambia,
Government Road,
Lusaka

RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER - ELASTUS MAMBWE

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to introduce Mr. Elastus Mambwe, a member of staff in the Department of Media and Communication Studies at the University of Zambia and request that he is assisted in any way possible with access to the National Archives to facilitate his research.

Mr. Mambwe teaches in our journalism, media and communication programmes and is also a researcher in the same fields. He is currently conducting research for his PhD for which he is registered at the University of Cape Town, in South Africa. His is researching the development of filmmaking in Zambia between 1964 and the present. Part of his work requires that he accesses any archived resources that can enable him to develop his research project. I therefore kindly request that you assist him with access and any other way possible.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me using any of the details provided above. Your assistance is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Basil Hamusokwe, PhD
Head - Department of Media and Communication Studies