



Addis Ababa University  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**Portrayal of Fraud and the Youth  
In the Amharic Film – *Made in China*  
(Socio-Economic Implications)**

Netsanet K/Mariam

**A Thesis Submitted to  
School of Journalism and Communication**

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication

Addis Ababa  
December, 2014



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**School of Graduate Studies**

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Netsanet K/Mariam, entitled: *portrayal of Fraud and the youth in the Amharic film- Made in China: (socio-economic implications)* and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## Abstract

Portrayal of fraud and the youth in the Amharic film – *Made in China*: Socio-economic implications

Netsanet K/Mariam

Addis Ababa University, 2014

This study is an inquiry into the portrayal of fraud and the youth in local films. The study is intended at understanding the socio-economic outlooks of the youth on economic gains. Thus, the researcher collected a number of Amharic films issuing fraud, and picked one for in depth analysis. The researcher employed semiotic analysis to analyze the film. The analysis has involved a range of variables which can help extract socio-economic outlooks from the selected film.

In the interpretation, the study has tried to examine the analyzed data for underlying meanings in their socio-economic contexts. It approached the issue from certain theoretical frame works but from different angles putting the multi-dimensional nature of the issue into consideration. In doing so, the study has tried to address the social critics on the present economic conditions of the country, local and global economic influences that drive the youth into acts of fraud and society's role in tackling it.

As a result, the study has come up with some perceived realities of local and global economic effects which initiate young people to look for the shortest but dishonest path to escape poverty. Moreover, the study was able to explore the ethical dilemma people encounter in a society which is in dynamic economic reform. It reveals that the poor young people are in a constant clash with societal values. The researcher believes that these findings to add to the understanding of the way contemporary local films portray socio-economic realities.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the study

*Hirut Abatwa Man New* is the first Ethiopian film which was made in 35 mm format in black and white in 1965. It is a love story which re-branches from a recurring curiosity of people about the identity of the father of Hirut's daughter (Fekadu 2014). It is a melancholic love story which ends up in the couple's reunion. It hammers on bondage of love recalled from their toddling child and the curiosity of a conservative society about a single parent.

In the following years (from 1974- 1989), some six Amharic films were able to reach Ethiopian cinema hall screens. *Guma* and *Aster* are among the prominent ones. But soon after, the dissolution of Ethiopian Film Corporation in 1998 denounced the short lived glimmer of local movies on sliver screens (Ibid). That black out persisted (while a few video films were produced for home purpose) until the local film industry ended its lengthy hibernation and the digital film making takes center stage during the eve of the Ethiopian new millennium.

Half a century later from the first hit of *Hirut Abatwa Man New* on screens, we get an Amharic movie of the digital age by the name *Made in China*. Unlike *Hirut Abatwa Man New*, *Made in China* is a satire comedy of the young and the jobless. It satirically exposes conflict of values and traditions- globalization at work, array of acts involving fraud ... shortest paths to access money and more.

The boom of local films in Addis Ababa is one of the most remarkable phenomena in the media industry which accompanied the socio-economic transformation of the country for a decade now. The long sleep which is followed by the big leap in the production of home grown films has a

power to initiate media researchers to conduct studies in a couple of issues in Ethiopian cinema. One can explore what these media have captured and reflected social, economic and political issues; transforming social classes, urbanization and its challenges; Jobs and skyrocketing cost of living; trails of money and love; crime and justice and the like.

This time, among the most frequently addressed issues in Amharic films is fraud. There are a number of films telling about individuals trying to get rich through fraud; plots advancing now and again by ambitious people some playing charlatan some others swindling to get a big sum of money. The young, the unemployed, the vagrant and the hooligan are frequent associations to the acts of fraud to get easy money. Many of these films touch upon social and economic issues and pose some critical questions which need to be studied by a media researcher.

In this regard, there is a wide gap of knowledge vivid for a media researcher. So far, the socio-economic implication of local films built up on stories of fraud was hardly researched. Furthermore, using local feature films as windows to observe the attitudes of social groups towards socio-economic conditions is underexplored by Ethiopian media researchers. However, within a relatively scant budget of time and money, but with strong and meticulous research endeavors; such a study would result in the better understanding of the values and assumptions behind deviant behaviors and how the dominant social group tries to curb them.

When one thinks of fraud and its depiction in movies, a range of criminology theories, film philosophies and semiotics surround one's thoughts. The three sets of thoughts are essential tools to analyze and understand the portrayal of fraud in films. Thus, the study tries to take a glance at criminology and film philosophies; yet it largely concentrates on semiotics which suits most to its purpose.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The researcher observes that the issue of money to dominate conversations in many home grown films. In some comedies and romantic comedies, talks about money go extreme and cynical. They sometimes trigger a laughter which is bitter- for the essence is pertinent to our knowledge of socio-economic reality out there.

In observing the frequency and presentation of these Amharic films issuing fraud, the researcher assumes that there is a strong relation between the issues raised in these films and the present global and local socio-economic conditions. It seems that there is some prevailing perception among the youth about how people are getting richer. The films seem to bring this perception to the front.

Ideological theories stress that all communication and all meanings have a socio-political dimension, and that they cannot be understood outside their social context (Fiske 1990, 176). This is to say that the power and hierarchical relations among individuals and groups are reflected in the communication among them. Therefore, the study of communication is often accompanied by the study of social contexts. Similarly, scholars of discourse analysis assert that underlying ideological positions, perceptions of power relations and producers' level of interest and authority can be determined from the textual structure of media content (Gunter 2000, 88). In this regards, values and beliefs of characters which can be traced from the dialogues are used to identify ideologies reflected in media content. Likewise, in analyzing media content, dominating and dominated social groups and the relation among them are clarified.

If so, contemporary Amharic movies that issue fraud can be fertile grounds to understand the critical outlooks of the society on the present socio-economic condition of the country. In closely studying these films, we can elicit the perception of the society (especially of the lower and the middle classes) about the present economic phenomena. Moreover these films conceive the stereotypes and deviating tendencies of disadvantaged people in the local and global economic turmoil. Thus, in semiotically analyzing the variables and going deeper into the underlying meaning, it will be possible to understand the social and economic implications of fraud from certain angles.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

This study is aimed at identifying and analyzing the selected film for the portrayal of social and economic outlooks of the youth and the society on economic gains; specifically through fraud.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

This study is determined to:

- a) Look into how the selected film produce, maintain, repair or transform the contemporary social and economic realities of the country.
- b) Find out whether this film is pro-social or critical.
- c) Analyze how the film presents the struggle of antagonistic social values and society's influence on deviant behavior.

- d) Look at perceived realities of local and global economic effects which initiate young people to look for the shortest but dishonest path to escape poverty.

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

This study has three fold advantages in understanding the way socio-economic issues are conveyed in contemporary Amharic films. First, apart from the function of harmless escapism, we understand how the films frame the concept of getting rich and ritualize certain beliefs and moral. Second, we understand the ethical dilemma a person encounters in a society which is in dynamic economic reform. Lastly, we understand the social perception of economic transition across classes.

#### **1.5. Research Questions**

- a. What are the different social outlooks reflected in this film on acts of fraud and how are they portrayed?
- b. What are the social critics on the present economic condition of the country?
- c. What are the local and global economic influences reflected in the film which drive the youth into acts of fraud?
- d. What are the society's influences reflected in these film to curb acts of fraud?

#### **1.6. Delimitation of the Study**

This study was conducted on the Amharic films – *Made in China*, which is released on CD and DVD in 2012. This is a pinch from the total number of Amharic films so far produced (around 500 in number). However, the researcher believes that the analysis and the findings to add to the understanding of the way contemporary local films portray socio-economic realities.

### **1.7. Limitations of the Study**

Apart from selecting the right theoretical framework, determining applicable perspectives was a difficulty. But, by the end, it was possible to stick to a few perspectives which are supposed to shade light on certain socio-economic dimensions of fraud. Similarly, the task of marking and extracting variables relevant to the study was tedious. Since many of the variables were extracted from the dialogue of characters, the task required meticulous attention and analysis; this had to be won. Lastly, all the limitations turned into some lessons which are helpful for further studies. Especially, a good lesson was drawn on how to extract variables from media contents and analyzing them.

### **1.8. Organization of the paper**

This thesis is structured into five chapters the first of which introduces the subject and the units to be explored. The second chapter reviews relevant literature which would light the foot path that leads to the heart of the issues to be dealt with. Theories from the fields of criminology and semiotics together with practices and philosophies from the film industries are glanced at. This is followed by the third chapter that reveals the selected research methodology.

In the fourth chapter, the findings of the study are presented. Here, the film is analyzed from certain theoretical frame works but with a range of different angles to understand the multi-dimensional feature of the issue. Then, it is followed by interpretation of the findings that are entertained in the analysis.

Chapter five presents the summary and conclusions of the study. In doing so, it recalls to the hypothesis made at the beginning of the research and compares and contrasts with the life conditions in the real world. This chapter wraps up the discussion by forwarding recommendations.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Related Literature

In the attempt of analyzing the portrayal of fraud in selected Amharic film, The study tried to approach the issue from three directions; each of which are believed to complement each other so as to give the full dimension of the issue under investigation. First, there arises the need to know what fraud is and where it lies among society. Then, it is compelling to take a glance at the popular media (in our case movies) and on what grounds they deal with real life issues. Lastly, the most indispensable review on how images are perceived and meaning is cultivated will be discussed.

Therefore, the discussion of related literature bounces from theories of criminology and deflects on facades of film basics and dives into the wide pool of semiotics.

#### 2.1. Fraud and Society

Fraud is a legal term; a form of deception which is referred to us with synonyms that range from the informal – “swindle” up to the slang – ‘scam’. Fraud is also used to refer to someone who is swindler, sham, fake, hoaxer or charlatan (Roleff 1999).

*“Fraud, in law is a general term for any instance in which one party deceives or takes unfair advantage of another.” (Ibid, 34)*

Some of the crimes involving fraud are art of forgery, collusion, counterfeiting, larceny, perjury, quo warrant and playing charlatan. For instance, charlatans are individuals who make fraudulent claims to knowledge or skills. Charlatans are also known as frauds, humbugs, mountebanks, and

quacks. Similarly, we get White-Collar Crimes which are, illegal acts committed by middle- or upper-class persons in conjunction with their ordinary occupational pursuits. The term, which has no legal significance, was first popularized by the American criminologist Edwin H. Sutherland. He argued that important sociological differences exist between conventional crimes such as burglary and murder, which are defined without reference to the social status or occupation of the perpetrator, and white-collar crimes such as fraud, embezzlement, price-fixing, antitrust violations, income-tax evasion, misuse of public funds, and abuse of political and legal powers. (Livingston 1996, here and there)

In the course of this discussion thus, our minds consequently slip into contemplating individual frauds and the society, criminal groups and the orderly. The acts and the doers of fraud are not in the open; it seems this feature what attracts people to watch crimes in action. Crimes such as fraud have long been popular plots for motion pictures. Cinematographers hook their cameras inside closed doors, under the table acts... and display the underworld secrets wide open onto cinema screens. People enjoy these films which transport them in a mind trek from the known to the unknown.

Media students though, tend to figure out the gap between the social reality and the portrayal of crimes in pop cultures and analyze how meaning goes into images. Here, however, it is wise to look at why and how crimes occur in real life situations before analyzing how they are portrayed in cinemas. Thence, it pre-requisites to be introduced to scientists called – criminologists who in turn introduce us to different scientific views on crimes.

Criminologists are people who study issues revolving around crimes. They build theories that explain why crimes occur. They keenly study behaviors of criminals to test their theories.

According to criminologists, crimes root in an individual's life from biological, psychological or environmental factors. (Ibid)

Try to recall some of the physical attributes of villain characters in Hollywood films. There seems some stereotyping in the physical portrayal of criminals in those films. However, there are theories that affirm some attributes of such cliché portrayal. For instance, the founder of modern scientific criminology from Italian school, Lombroso, asserted that criminals are a distinct physical and biological type. He believed that the true criminal could be identified by observing certain physical traits, including a long lower jaw, asymmetric cranium, and other detectable conditions. (Ibid)

*“These traits, according to Lombroso, did not cause criminal behavior, but they revealed an inherent propensity (inclination) to crime. Lombroso taught that the propensity toward crime was the result of atavism, a reversion to a more primitive state of human development.”* (Cited in Livingston, op.cit, 51)

Beyond such theories which conform to the long practiced portrayals of criminals in popular movies though, there are other overweighing reasons for crimes to occur. One of Lombroso's students, Enrico Ferri, considers social factors such as population trends, religion, and the nature of the family to lead people into criminal acts (Ibid). This Italian school 'framed' the nature-versus-nurture debate which stood fast throughout the development of modern criminology.

French sociologist Gabriel Tarde, from nurture side of the debate, founded his theory on laws of imitation. He believed that new criminals emerge by imitating criminal activities they are

exposed to. In the other hand, a compatriot of Tarde, Emile Durkheim, relates crimes to social instability. Durkheim used the term *anomie* to describe the feelings of alienation and confusion associated with the breakdown of social bonds. According to him, individuals in the modern era tend to feel less connected to a community than did their ancestors, and thus their conduct is less influenced by group norms (Cited in Livingston, op.cit).

This is vividly seen in blooming cities like Addis Ababa where many young and unmarried people start to live away from their old parents much earlier than their elders have exercised it. The thriving Information communication technology and urbanization seem to barrier the influence of social norms on an individual. Thus, as media students, we pay attention to how the films depict the way this modern era challenges communities' norms.

Sociological theories of crime can be divided into two major schools of thought: the social-structural school and the sub-cultural school.

*“Social-structural theorists assert that crime is an adaptation to the limitations that social position places on individual behavior. The principal goal of these theories is to explain why poorer people engage in crime more frequently than wealthy individuals.”*

American sociologist Robert Merton is the proponent of this social strain theory (Roleff, op.cit, 92).

Besides, sub-cultural theories assume that certain groups have values quite distinct from those of the rest of society. They believe that the differences are enduring. Members of these groups will be disproportionately involved in crime because they acquire and follow the values of their

group. Furthermore, some sub-cultural theorists focus on a so-called lower-class culture that emphasizes toughness, excitement, fate, and autonomy (Roleff, op.cit).

On the far extreme, we get macro-social theories or Marxist theories. They associate crime rates to the development of surplus labor (greater numbers of available workers than jobs) in the capitalist economic system. Marxists believe that capitalist societies generate surplus labor as a means of limiting the demands of workers for higher wages and other benefits. They assume that this surplus labor takes crime as a last resort (Livingston, op. cit). These macro-social theories blame capitalist economic systems for the proliferation of crimes; in other words, they believe that crimes are results of unhealthy power and economic relations between the rulers and the ruled, and between the haves and the have-nots.

## **2.2. Fraud and Films**

When it comes to motion pictures, fraud makes many popular films in Hollywood from funny comedies; such as: *Black Diamond* up to serious ones like the Academy winner: *Chinatown*. Fraud is used as a chief plot across the popular genre of feature films such as comedy, action, western, gangster, Romans, thriller and, detective.

Motion picture, sometimes referred to us time-based media among other kinds of art, depicts reality based on philosophies of the film makers and the determined function they set. In one end, we get pragmatists who assign certain duties to art. They advocate that art should do something that has consequences. Art should teach or indoctrinate something. Marxists adhere to this view. In the other end, we get proponents of “art for art’s sake” – a popular view which originated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It tries to free art from assumed duties and redefine the concept of beauty (Graham 2000).

Between these extremes though, art had been serving a variety of purposes throughout history. It has served to honor the dead, to recall the appearance of rulers or relatives, to give visual form to gods, to create sacred places, to display wealth, to teach, and to give pleasure (Rosenstand 2002). The purpose of art thus, can be summarized as follows: recording appearance, making the invisible visible, indoctrinating or/and delighting (Gerald & Kawin 2002).

These purposes of art entail different philosophical points of view that curb the perspective film makers look at social realities. For the realist; life should be presented in its crude, ugly and humble image without beatification. But, the modernist purifies it, the naturalist improvises it; the idealist beatifies it; the surrealist adds visions to it and the postmodernist redefines it. Thus, what we watch on white cinema hall screens is what cinematographers screened out of the reality out there.

So far it was tried to discuss different scientific outlooks on the specific social reality in one window; and the underpinning concepts of art which make such social realities their subjects in the other. The study takes those theoretical assumptions on origins of crime together with philosophical basis of film making as stepping stones for the discussion of the main theoretical framework to dictate the analysis. It is called semiotics. It is an approach which guides the way on how works of art (in our case films) need to be analyzed. It will be a deeper discussion.

### **2.3. Semiotic Analysis**

Semiotics or semiology is the science of signs. It was founded by the American philosopher C. S. Peirce and the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in the early 1990's. Semiotics is concerned with the relationship between form and meaning, with particular emphasis on language. Apart

from its close relatives, linguistics and semantics, semiotics goes beyond codes of language and studies signs in all communication media. There are forms of signs outside the enclosure of language studied by semiotics. For instance objects and artifacts such as material culture, signifiers like activities, performance, music and sound effects are studied by communication scholars (Baran, & Davis 2012).

Peirce believed that semiology was the foundation of logic itself. He describes logic as “the science of the general necessary laws of signs.” In semiotics a sign is composed of two parts, the signifier and the signified. The signifier is a sound or image, for example, the aural or written word of something. The signified, is the concept or idea of that same object. Together, the signifier and the signified constitute the sign. Much of Peirce’s work involves an attempt to classify signs according to the nature of the relationships between and among signifier, signified, and object. Peirce made two important contributions to semiotics. First, he showed that a sign can never contain a definite meaning. Second, he identified various types of signs, including the symbolic sign, which is arbitrarily related to its referent. Linguistic signs are symbolic and therefore arbitrary, except for ideographic (as those used in Chinese) or onomatopoeic signs (Fiske 1990).

In the other hand, Ferdinand de Saussure’s work is primarily concerned with the linguistic sign, and his classificatory system involves distinguishing between different aspects of language. Saussure is generally considered to be the founder of structural linguistics. Saussure’s semiotic analyses tend to be conducted in terms of opposite pairs. First, linguistic studies may be diachronic (historical) or synchronic (at one particular time). Second, language may be

considered as *langue* or *parole*, that is, either as the general set of semantic and syntactic rules of a particular language or in its individual utterances. Third, the sign comprises a signifier and a signified, the relationship between which is arbitrary, and which both depend on a vast network of differences (Ibid).

In literary criticism, semiotics considers the complete system of a text and what is required to understand it, including genre and other conventions. These theories concerning the relationship between form and meaning have influenced not only linguistics and literary theory (such as the work of Roland Barthes), but also anthropology (Claude Lévi-Strauss) and psychoanalysis (Jacques Lacan) (Baran & Davis, op. cit).

Semiotics has aspects which are literary analysis techniques such as narrative analysis, discourse analysis and rhetorical analysis. Narrative analysis focuses on formal structure of a story, but from the perspective of narrative. Discourse analysis is an aspect of semiotics that can be seen as a form of critical linguistics. Discourse has been used to refer to written text, but it has also been used in connection with audiovisual media. Its application to the media grew out of semiotic studies attempting to assess the meaning of language in terms of its implicit ideological assumptions, and discourse analysis pays specific attention to the linguistic component of language use in the media. Rhetorical analysis focuses on how the message is presented visually or textually. It is broadly a kind of stylistic analysis - the organization as well as the presentation of a message and the choices the communicator has made are at the core of this type of analysis. It focuses on distinctive features such as composition, form, use of metaphors and structure of argumentation or reasoning (Gunter 2000).

A prominent quote from Saussure explains the very nature of semiotics outlooks on meaning of texts. *“It’s not ‘content’ that determines meaning, but “relations” in some kind of system. The most precise characteristics of these concepts is in being what the others are not”* (Gunter, op.cit, 7). Gunter hammers on the vitality of opposition in meaning making in the following statement. *“Finding meaning without discerning polar oppositions is like listening to the sound of one hand clapping.”* (Gunter, op.cit, p.25)

Here, both Saussure and Gunter are referring to the basic keys of semiotics which help unlock meaning in analytical process: one is the syntagmatic analysis; the other is the paradigmatic analysis. In syntagmatic analysis text is analyzed as a sequence of events. The Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp, chooses syntagmatic approach to his text based analysis. For Propp, meaning is diachronic; which is succession, evolutionary and historic relation of events in time. Syntagmatic meaning is literal, obvious, realm of existence (Ibid). Here we are referring to the signifier.

Syntagmatic analysis roots from a text-based critical method known as formalism which was developed by Victor Shklovsky, Vladimir Propp, and other Russian critics early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It involved detailed inquiry into plot structure, narrative perspective, symbolic imagery, and other literary techniques. When Vladimir Propp studies folk tale he defined narrative units as a “function” for syntagmatic analysis. A function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action. Some of Propp’s functions are: initial situation, absentation, violation, delivery, trickery, complicity, lack, meditation, counteraction, departure and hero’s reaction (which he assumes as common among many stories). He also developed a scheme to categorize dramatis personae. In Propp’s scheme the

dramatis personae are: villain, donor, helper, princess, dispatcher, hero, false hero (op.cit, here and there).

However, after the mid-1930s, leaders of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and its subsequent satellites in Eastern Europe demanded that literature and criticism directly serve their political objectives. Political leaders in those countries suppressed formalist criticism, calling it reactionary. Even such internationally influential opponents of extreme formalism as the Russian Mikhail Bakhtin and the Hungarian Georg Lukács would often find themselves under attack (Dominik & Wimmer 2006).

In the other hand, the French anthropologist- Lévi-Strauss focuses on the paradigmatic analysis. For him, meaning is synchronic, simultaneous, static and instant time relation in a system. Paradigmatic analysis is a search for hidden patterns of opposition; in other words it is a search for what the scholars say “text’s latent meaning”. Paradigmatic meaning is connotative, figurative, realm of truth. It refers to the signified (one of the components of a sign). (Fiske, op. cit)

Paradigmatic analysis is influenced by thoughts of pragmatists. Pragmatists do not believe that a single absolute idea of goodness or justice exists, but rather that these concepts are changeable and depend on the context in which they are being discussed. The pragmatists’ denial of absolutes challenged the foundations of religion, government, and schools of thought. As a result, pragmatism influenced developments in psychology, sociology, education, semiotics and scientific method, as well as philosophy, cultural criticism, and social reform movements (Griffin 2012).

But fundamentally and historically, paradigmatic analysis was founded on French structuralism. Beginning in the late 1940s anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, critic Roland Barthes, and other mid-century thinkers and scholars initiated French structuralism by applying linguistically inspired formal methods to literature and related phenomena (Ibid). Structuralism attempted to investigate the “structure” of a culture as a whole by “decoding,” or interpreting, its interactive systems of signs. These systems included literary texts and genres as well as other cultural formations, such as advertising, fashion, and taboos on certain forms of behavior (Berger 2005).

Due to these and other reasons, semiotic structuralism outstretches the scope of meaning making wider than formalism. Gunter says, “A word’s connotations involve the symbolic, historic and emotional matters attached to it.” Structuralist-semiotic analysis is concerned with the deeper meaning of the message. The method is concerned, not with manifest content, but with structural relationships of representation in texts. Because, 'It's not "content" that determines meaning but "relations" in some kind of system' (Berger, op. cit, 7). The referential nature and symbolic meaning of the message is explicitly taken to be the subject matter of the analysis. The production of meaning is grounded in conventions, codes and cultural agreement. Semiotics is a form of structuralism, for it argues that we cannot know the world on its own terms, but only through the conceptual and linguistic structures of our culture (Ibid).

Thus, paradigmatic analysis goes deeper into codes and values that dictate relations among words and images. (Gunter, op. cit)

### 2.3.1. Codes and Values

In paradigmatic analysis we analyze codes. Codes are conventions or agreements that connect a sign with its meaning. They are governing systems of signs. There are different kinds of codes such as cultural codes, ideological codes, representational codes, language codes and so on. Semiotic analysis is mainly descriptive. So, sign systems, signification, representation and signifying practices are identified and subsequently interpreted, for example as ideological complexes. (Ibid) Codes manifest personality; they reflect social roles, ideologies, rituals and the like.

For instance, Gunter categorizes dialects of language across social classes between “elaborated” and “restricted” codes. Elaborated codes are that of the higher class, grammatically complex, logical and their users are aware of the code. In contrary, restricted codes are that of the lower class, grammatically simple, emotional and their users are unaware of the code. Studying those elaborated and restricted codes, one can surf behind subjects of the text and analyze values and customs. Sociologists theorize that our identities are shaped by “significant other” – our parents, siblings, teachers and friends who give us feedback on who we are and what we are like. The feedback is connected to cultures and subcultures in which we are raised. As we grow up, we internalize the dominant values of our society. (Griffin, op. cit) When it comes to popular culture, codes appear to be formulas as in spy stories, detective stories, horror, sitcoms and others. (Fiske, op. cit) In all cases of text study is therefore, understanding the code precedes digging for meaning.

Semiotics acknowledges that individuals' knowledge of the codes of representation may differ, and also other codes of meaning (associated with a person's class, gender or ethnic group, for example) influence the understanding of media messages. Varying interpretations of the same media content can therefore occur across members of an audience. Hall (1980)(cited in Gunter, op. cit), identifies three broad categories of reception: 'preferred', where receivers accept the interpretation of events offered in the content; 'negotiated', where receivers accept some of the preferred interpretations but reject others; and 'oppositional', where receivers fully reject the interpretation of events presented.

There are a range of variables to be investigated in the paradigmatic analysis of a given text. Constituencies like words and images; metaphors and metonymy; Intertextuality, myths and connotations; binary oppositions and categorization; ideology and hegemony are among the major ones. Hereafter, we are going to briefly discuss some of these variables.

### **2.3.2. Other Variables of Semiotic Analysis**

It's well known that words and images preoccupy the human communication. Especially in the mass media they shout louder and fill public spaces and audiences' minds. Words and images have long been targets of investigation among researchers. They supplement or complement each other in different media. In newspapers, in TV, in motion pictures, in advertisements and visual arts; words and images mingle to convey messages.

Barthes uses the term *anchorage* to describe the function of words used as captions for photographs. Visual images, he argues, are polysemous: 'they imply, underlying their signifiers, a floating chain of signifieds and the reader is able to choose some and ignore others'. Words help *fix* the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain

signs””. Here Barthes’s interest is to show how words (in this stance captions) tend to use as a buffer against more connotative meaning. Elsewhere Barthes calls the caption a ‘parasitic message designed to connote the image, to quicken it with one or more second-order signifieds’. He recognizes that connotation gives the reader a greater range of possible meanings than does denotation, and that words can be used to narrow this range or to close off parts of it (Fiske, op cit, 110). Paradigmatic analysis however, crosses the buffer set by the captions and look for deeper meaning, polar oppositions and the like.

Paradigmatic analysis also looks into metaphors and metonymy to elicit meaning in texts. Metaphor is a kind of figurative speech that expresses an idea or object in place of another word or phrase for the purpose of suggesting a likeness between the two. For instance; as in the book of psalms: “Your law is... a lamp to my path.” Metonymy is also a kind of figurative speech that uses a word or phrase for another to which it bears an important relation, as the effect for the cause, the abstract for the concrete, and similar constructions. For instance, someone might say: “The hostess kept a good table,” when good food is implied. (Graham, op. cit) In both cases, it shows that languages use different ways of references to signify subjects and objects which interests paradigmatic analysts.

Intertextuality is another variable that is useful to be analyzed in media studies. Intertextuality refers to the use of text (consciously or not) of material from other previously created texts (films, books...) (Fiske, op. cit, 123). This study can be helpful in identifying film formulas running identically across local and international works of art. In this case, interdependence of themes, cliché patterns and other traits can contribute something to cross-cultural studies.

The other important analysis is done on myths and connotations. They are sometimes called second-order syntagma. Syntagma is a linguistic unit made up of sets of phonemes, words, or phrases that are arranged sequentially. In contrast, paradigm is a set of all forms of word giving all of the possible inflections of a word (Fiske, op. cit). To make paradigmatic structure clearer, John Fiske brings a title of a poem to analysis. The title reads *A Grief Ago*. It was written by Dylan Thomas. G.N.Leech. 'A Grief Ago' is a deviant use of language in that syntagm. It is normal to say "a day ago; an hour ago..." But it is out of the norm to say "a grief ago..." Yet it is possible. Furthermore, it is possible to replace the noun in that same syntagmatic arrangement by other nouns. As Fiske put it, a Hollywood star might say 'three wives ago'. This is paradigmatic possibility which leads to proliferation of connotative meaning. In the last instance, we understand that married life in Hollywood is very short when compared to 'the normal'.

In such paradigmatic possibilities therefore, second-order syntagm like connotation and myth emerge. For Fiske, the distinction between the first and second orders is unreal. Because, he says that "the signifieds slide imperceptibly into the second order myths." (Ibid)

Structuralism is aimed at identifying the myth underlying the narrative or story of the message. Myths are considered to be deep structures that represent the essence of human nature and society. In studying myth, Levi-Strauss gives attention to the social functions of myth (Ibid). Here also in this study, analyzing myths in the context of their social function would result in the better understanding of the portrayal of fraud in the selected film. Because the study assumes that there are some social narratives that lead individuals into or away from such crimes. In this case, Gunter suggests that, narrative analysis to be the initial phase of structural analysis because of the related concerns with chronological and logical structure and morphology of the narrative.

The main difference consists of the subsequent decoding of symbolic systems in terms of characters, positions and oppositions relative to each other (Gunter, op. cit).

Structuralists make certain assumptions about the nature of the world and people's perception of it. There are three key aspects to this: (1) the perceived world can be structured into binary oppositions of the form A /not-A; (2) there are deep and universal rules that underlie individually occurring incidents or events; and (3) these rules and relationships among elements can be studied as a closed whole (Ibid).

For Lévi-Strauss, a myth is a story that is specific and local transformation of a deep structure of binarily opposed concepts that are important to the culture within which the myth circulates. The most powerful and significant myths act as anxiety reducers in that they deal with the contradictions inherent in any structure of binary oppositions.

Although they do not resolve them (for such contradictions are often finally irreconcilable), they do provide an imaginative way of living with them, and coping with them so that they do not become too disruptive and do not produce too much cultural anxiety (Fiske, op. cit).

The tale of why the mule became sterile, the legends about queen of Sheba, and the tale of Sinzro are popular myths in Ethiopia. Similarly we get myths In the Ethiopian Orthodox narratives which solve the difficult question of how king Lalibela could build the rock hewn churches in the absence of modern tools. The legend answers that angles helped the king build.

However, when we look at in the macroscopic level, we get Barthes's central definition of myth in capitalist societies. He asserts that, with very few exceptions, myths promote and serve the interests of the dominant classes. *"In most ways Barthes's and Lévi-Strauss's theories of myth*

*are diametrically opposed*”, says Gunter. For Lévi-Strauss myth is a narrative that is recognized as a myth even if its meanings are not consciously negotiated by the people using it. For Barthes myth is an associated chain of concepts: people may well be conscious of the meanings of this chain, but not of its mythic character. Myth, for Barthes, disguises its very operation and presents its meanings as being natural; for Lévi-Strauss, its operation is open, its meanings are what is hidden.

At this stage, the legend of queen of Sheba forces us rather go with Barthes’s idea of myth’s disguised operation but naturally exposed meaning to ordinary people. Traditionally, many Christian Ethiopians seem comfortable with the idea that relates Menilik, the first of king of Ethiopia, to king Solomon of Israel in bloodline through queen Sheba. Because they know what it means. But, when it comes to features of the story: how and why it came to being remains the concern of a few. Yet, it is interesting to identify certain myths in the selected movies which match Levi-Strauss’s description because certain myths may differ in their operations in the society.

For Barthes, myth is class-based: its meanings are constructed by and for the socially dominant, but they are accepted by the subordinate, even if they go against their interests, because they have been ‘naturalized’. Lévi-Strauss sees myth as dealing with anxieties and problems shared by the whole society, and, ultimately, by the human race. His neglect of class difference may well be explained by his material, which is the myths of tribal societies, whereas Barthes is concerned with those of late twentieth- century capitalist ones. Barthes is clear that the normal function of myths is to serve the interests of the dominant classes (Fiske, op.cit, 132).

The other core variables in our semiotic analysis will be categories and oppositions. In a media context, semiotics is concerned with how meanings are generated in media texts, such as films or television programs. Semiotics examines signs and the relations between them. In doing so, it separates content from form and concentrates on the system of signs that make up the text. In determining the meanings conveyed by signs, de Saussure introduced another critical notion, and that is that relations among signs tend to be oppositional in nature (Gunter, op.cit).

*If something is described as 'hot', its real meaning can only be established by making comparisons with things deemed to be 'cold'. There can be no understanding of happiness unless there is also a concept of what it means to be sad (Gunter, op.cit, 84).*

Lévi-Strauss on his part emphasizes the paradigmatic dimension of language; that is its system of categories. Making conceptual categories within a system was, for him, the essence of sense-making, and at the heart of this process was the structure that he called a *binary opposition*. A binary opposition is a system of two related categories that, in its purest form, comprises the universe. In the perfect binary opposition, everything is either in category A or category B, and by imposing such categories upon the world we are starting to make sense of it. So category A cannot exist on its own, as an essential category, but only in a structured relationship with category B: category A makes sense only because it is not category B. Without category B there could be no boundary to category A and thus no category A (Fiske, op.cit, 116).

But Fiske says that nature is not a sum of neat categories; rather it's a series of analogic continua. In nature there is no dividing line between light and dark but a continual process of lightening and darkening; there is not even a clear line between land and water. Beaches, quicksand and

and are all categories that resist neat binary oppositions. Lévi-Strauss calls these entities *anomalous categories* (Ibid, loc.cit).

*An anomalous category is one that does not fit the categories of the binary opposition, but straddles them, dirtying the clarity of their boundaries. Anomalous categories draw their characteristics from both of the binarily opposed ones....typically by being designated 'the sacred' or 'the taboo'. (Ibid)*

Similarly, between farm and wild animals lies an anomalous category occupied by foxes for example. They are wild, but they hang around farms and houses and have some characteristics of domestic animals, particularly dogs. The human equivalent is 'criminals', who are a mixture of characteristics of 'our tribe' and of 'the others/aliens'. It is noted that how typical it is for foxes, coyotes, and dingoes to be given criminal roles and attributes in folk stories: they are typically thieves and confidence tricksters (Ibid).

Thus, structural anthropologists argue that the vital importance of boundaries between categories has produced in all societies a series of boundary rituals designed to ease the transition between them. In general, the bigger the categories that are being transgressed, the more elaborate and important the ritual will be.

Lastly, the discussion touches upon ideology and hegemony that are terms structuralists deal with in semiotic analysis. There are a number of definitions of ideology. Different writers use the term differently, and it is not easy to be sure about its use in any one context. Raymond Williams (cited in Fiske 1990) identifies three main definitions which imply its uses. For psychologists, ideology is a system of beliefs of a particular class or group. For politicians, ideology is a system

of illusory beliefs—false ideas or false consciousness—which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge. And for semioticians, it is the general process of the production of meanings and ideas.

The third one refers to how Barthes uses it when he speaks of the connotators; that is the signifiers of connotation, as ‘the rhetoric of ideology’. Ideology, used in this way, is the source of the second-order meanings. Myths and connoted values are what they are because of the ideology of which they are the usable manifestations. The connotators and myths are, in Barthes’s phrase, ‘the rhetoric of my ideology’. (Ibid, 171)

John Fiske (1990) puts his summary of understanding of ideology as follows:

*The reader and the text together produce the preferred meaning, and in this collaboration the reader is constituted as someone with a particular set of relationships to the dominant value system and to the rest of society. This is ideology at work.*

Ideology is not confined only to those definitions stated above. We get a term called hegemony. This term was introduced by the so-called second-generation Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. Hegemony can be understood as ideology in struggle. Briefly, hegemony involves the constant winning and re-winning of the consent of the majority to the system that subordinates them. The two elements that Gramsci emphasizes more than Marx or Althusser are resistance and instability (Berger op.cit).

Gramsci and other scholars (cited in Berger op.cit), believe that Hegemony is necessary, and has to work so hard. This is because the social experience of subordinated groups (whether by class, gender, race, age, or any other factor) constantly contradicts the picture that the dominant

ideology paints for them of themselves and their social relations. In other words, the dominant ideology constantly meets resistances that it has to overcome in order to win people's consent to the social order that it is promoting. These resistances may be overcome, but they are never eliminated. So any hegemonic victory, any consent that it wins, is necessarily unstable; it can never be taken for granted, so it has to be constantly re-won and struggled over (Fiske op.cit, 164).

It is believed that one of the key hegemonic strategies is the construction of 'common sense'. If the ideas of the ruling class can be accepted as *common* (i.e. not class-based) sense, then their ideological object is achieved and their ideological work is disguised. It is, for example, 'common sense' in western society that criminals are wicked or deficient individuals who need punishment or correction. Such common sense disguises the fact that lawbreakers are disproportionately men from disadvantaged or disempowered social groups—they are of the 'wrong' race, class, or age. Common sense thus rules out the possible sense that the causes of criminality are social rather than individual.

In general, ideological theories stress that all communication and all meanings have a socio-political dimension, and that they cannot be understood outside their social context. This ideological work always favors the status quo, for the classes with power dominate the production and distribution not only of goods but also of ideas and meanings (Fiske op.cit, 176).

#### **2.4. Recapture**

In the discussion of different literature, the paper so far touched upon subjects that thread out from crime, arts and meaning. Thus, we have seen that crime has different social, economic and

political dimensions. It was tried to identify some philosophical assumptions that influence the way reality is portrayed in arts.

Lastly and most importantly, it was attempted to explore essential knowledge on the constituencies of meaning. In this regard, the study identified that signs are found at the core of meaning. They bind the signifiers and the signified. Understanding signs though, pre-requisites understanding codes in which they are organized. However, this will not be enough unless we are able to see other dimensions of meaning such as connotations, myths, ideology and the common sense. In general, the review clarifies that semiotic analysis is not confined to language; nor to analysis of narratives and discourse. But it diverges into fields of logic, sociology and political philosophy. Because, signs are the logic which connect symbols and objects. Signs are social currencies in communication. And in their powerful sides, signs are building units to ideology and hegemony.

Therefore, equipped with the knowledge and the theoretical insights, this study will look into the portrayal of fraud in the selected film from a range dimensions discussed in the literature review. And many of the variables discussed in this chapter will be the focus areas of the study.

## **Chapter three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study uses qualitative methodology. We have seen the governing enquiry posed at the beginning of the first chapter: How is fraud portrayed in relation to the youth in the Amharic film- *Made in China*? The research questions have rooted from this governing enquiry. Thus, all the four research questions demand an investigation to the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of the issue under study. They look for data that can be rendered into better understanding of the portrayal. Ultimately, these questions are addressed by collecting qualitative data via qualitative research.

The scientific tradition of social sciences proves that qualitative research is a naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with understanding the meanings which people attach to phenomena (actions, decisions, beliefs, values ...) (Lewis & Ritchie 2003). Qualitative research has distinctive character as opposed to quantitative research. It is directed at providing an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world. It searches for knowledge by studying participants’ social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories.

In regard to epistemology, qualitative researchers are existential (nondeterministic) and constructivist. These two views, as Silverman puts it, “are correlated with an expectation that phenomena are intricately related to many coincidental actions and that understanding them requires a wide sweep of contexts: temporal and spatial, historical, political, economic, cultural, social, personal” (Silverman 2000, 31). It is an assertion that the study of texts heavily depends on the study of contexts. This is the dividing line where naturalism ends and interpretivism begins.

This methodology can cast a wide angle beam of light on the portrayal of fraud so as to mark its contexts and constituencies which make up this 'signified' vivid. Thus, outlooks of sub-social groups, social critics, economic and social influences can effectively be traced from the selected film.

Qualitative research feeds the human intellectual faculty with a range of new and developed insights about different issues. But its function can be divided into four major categories: contextual, explanatory, evaluative and generative (ibid, 38). Contextually, qualitative research describes the form of nature of what exists. In its explanatory role it examines the reasons for, or associations between, what exists. In its evaluative nature it appraises the effectiveness of what exists. Lastly, and most importantly, it provides its generative contribution by aiding the development of theories, strategies or actions.

It therefore "offers the opportunity to 'unpack' issues, to see what they are about or what lies inside, and to explore how they are understood by those connected with them" (Jensen 1982, 41).

In this instance, such evidence can be used to:

- Explore the different social outlooks reflected in these films on acts of fraud and how they are portrayed.
- Identify and analyze the social critics on the present economic condition of the country.

Qualitative research has moved social research away from an emphasis on cause-and-effect explanation and toward personal interpretation. Qualitative inquiry is distinguished by its emphasis on holistic treatment of phenomena (Silverman op. cit.). Here also, it is not a search for mere cause and effect relations. The search goes beyond that. This study is not merely intended

to find out what causes fraud. Rather it is opted to understand how the causes for fraud are presented; how fraud itself is portrayed. Because, in its analysis, the study should be able to depict how meaning goes into image. Moreover, as a typical qualitative research, its interpretations should give emphasis to human values and experiences.

### **3.2. Theoretical Framework**

This study takes grounded theory (GT) as a governing theoretical framework to extract, to analyze and interpret data from the selected film. This theoretical framework is akin to such qualitative research which its main focus is not to test hypothesis rather to understand the nature of the issue.

Grounded theory is a systematic methodology in the social sciences involving the construction of theory through the analysis of data. *“Grounded theory method is a research method which operates almost in a reverse fashion from traditional social science research.”* (Glaser 1992, 22) In this regard, the study starts with data collection rather than beginning with a hypothesis. From the data collected, the key points are marked with a series of codes, which are extracted from the text. The codes are grouped into similar concepts in order to make the data more workable. From these concepts, categories are formed, which are the basis for the creation of a theory; that sometimes called *“a reverse engineered hypothesis”*. (Ibid)

In other terms, grounded theory method is regarded as a systematic generation of theory from data that contains both inductive and deductive thinking. One goal is to formulate hypotheses based on conceptual ideas. Others may try to verify the hypotheses that are generated by constantly comparing conceptualized data on different levels of abstraction, and these comparisons contain deductive steps. (Bryant & Charmaz 2007, here and there)

The grounded theory method was developed by two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss who were conducting research on dying hospital patients. From its beginnings in health, the grounded theory method has come to prominence in fields as diverse as drama, management, manufacturing and education. Grounded theory has four stages of analysis which focus on forming codes, concepts, categories and finally theory. (Oktay, 2012)

Important concepts of grounded theory method are categories, codes and codings. The research principle behind grounded theory method is neither inductive nor deductive, but combines both in a way of abductive reasoning (coming from the works of Charles Sanders Peirce). This leads to a research practice where data sampling, data analysis and theory development are not seen as distinct and disjunctive, but as different steps to be repeated until one can describe and explain the phenomenon that is to be researched. This stopping point is reached when new data does not change the emerging theory anymore. (Bryant & Charmaz, op.cit)

In the coding system, Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) propose axial coding and which is defined as *“a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories.”* The *“coding paradigm”* involves *“conditions, context, action/ interactional strategies and consequences.”* (op.cit, p. 98)

Broadly speaking grounded theory has three basic elements which make the approach complete in its own terms; these three elements are: theoretical sensitive coding, theoretical sampling and the need to compare. Theoretical sensitive coding refers to generating theoretically strong concepts from the data to explain the phenomenon researched; theoretical sampling refers to deciding what to observe next according to the state of theory generation, and that implies starting data analysis with the first interview, and writing down memos and hypotheses early.

And lastly comes, the need to compare between phenomena and contexts to make the theory strong. (Oktay, op.cit)

There is also a stage called *memoing* or *theoretical memoing* which is sometimes called “*the core stage of grounded theory methodology*”. “*Memos are the theorizing write-up of ideas about substantive codes and their theoretically coded relationships as they emerge during coding, collecting and analyzing data and during memoing*”. This step is followed by *sorting* when memos are sorted, which is the key to formulate the theory for presentation to others. Sorting puts fractured data back together. During sorting lots of new ideas emerge, which in turn are recorded in new memos giving the memo-on-memos phenomenon. Sorting memos generates theory that explains the main action in the studied area. (Glaser, op.cit)

When it comes to validity, traditionally GT does not take it as an issue. Instead, it is argued that a study should be judged by fit, relevance, workability, and modifiability. In this case the term fit refers to how closely concepts fit with the incidents they are representing, and this is related to how thorough the constant comparison of incidents to concepts was done while relevance refers to real concern of participants and evokes (captures the attention) and is not only of academic interest. In the other hand, workability is the potential of the theory to explain how the problem is being solved with much variation. Lastly, modifiability is the other attribute for the theory that can be altered when new relevant data is compared to existing data. “*A GT is never right or wrong, it just has more or less fit, relevance, workability and modifiability*”. (Ibid)

However this study follows the later version of GT theory which is known as *constructivist grounded theory*. This theory was rooted in pragmatism and relativist epistemology which assumes that “*neither data nor theories are discovered, but are constructed by the researcher as*

*a result of his or her interactions with the field and its participants.*” This position takes a middle ground between the realist and postmodernist positions by assuming an “*obdurate reality*” at the same time as it assumes multiple realities and multiple perspectives on these realities. (Clarke, 2005, 113)

### **3.3. Sampling, Data Gathering and Analysis**

The sampling of units is mainly dictated by the research methodology. Qualitative research is not a search for magnitude of certain phenomena; but of in-depth investigation. Likewise, this study is not a quantitative content analysis which searches for frequency of certain elements in a text; but it is a search for meaning embedded in these elements. Therefore, this study used non-probability sampling to select the sampling units. This sampling method is typical to qualitative research done on naturally occurring data like media products.

In a non-probability sample, units are deliberately selected to reflect particular features of or groups within the sampled population. The sample is not intended to be statistically representative: the chances of selection for each element are unknown but, instead, the characteristics of the population are used as the basis of selection. It is this feature that makes them well suited to small-scale and in-depth studies (Patton 2002).

Among probability sampling methods, this study used purposive sampling. In this method, members of a sample are chosen with a 'purpose' to represent a location or type in relation to a key criterion. There are two principal aims known among scholars.

*The first is to ensure that all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter are covered. The second is to ensure that, within each of the key criteria, some diversity is included so that the impact of the characteristic concerned can be explored (Ibid.).*

These two requirements, for symbolic representation and diversity, mean that 'sampling units (people, events, organizations etc.) have to meet prescribed criteria in order to be selected for the sample. In addition, because qualitative samples are usually small in size, these criteria have to be applied with optimum efficiency. In general, in this method, samples are small in scale and purposively selected on the basis of salient criteria. In addition, data collection methods usually involve close contact between the researcher and the research participants, which are interactive and developmental and allow for emergent issues to be explored. Lastly, the data are very detailed, information rich and extensive. (Ibid)

In this case, the Amharic film – *Made in China* was selected for the study. The film was picked from the total number of Amharic films so far produced (around 500 in number). The film was selected on the criteria pertinent to the purpose of the study. In order to pass the sampling test each film had to be an Amharic film issuing fraud and released on CD.

However, before the sampling test, the researcher collected 48 monthly brochures from Alem Cinema (Addis Ababa) which come out with lists of Amharic films scheduled for screen in 2012 and 1213. Each brochure consist a synopsis of 12 new Amharic films. These synopses were the initial stepping stones to the search of Amharic films issuing fraud and the youth. The search was then condensed into films of the mentioned issue but released and available on CD in the market.

Lastly, eight potential films were listed out and purchased from vendors. Those eight Amharic films are: *Bermuda*, *Made in China*, *Sugar Mamie*, *Vacation from America*, *Yekush Midir*, *Birr*,

*Berari liboch and Fikrna Genzeb.* Watching them helped to grasp the plot formulas of such films; especially in regard to the local context. Moreover, some patterns and international clichés of the genre could be traced so that the experience helps to easily detect the crucial variables from the later selected film.

After the viewing, the film that fulfills the criteria and best suit the purpose of the study (fraud and the youth) was purposely picked. It is the Amharic film- *Made in China*. It is a comedy which profiles the young and the jobless who wander among a range of fraud activities. In addition, the film takes a real incident and contexts as a source to build its story. It also involves a foreigner and injects new blood to the issue. And lastly it proved to be the most popular of the rest by winning an award in ‘Best Popular Film’ category from Guma Film Awards in 2013.

In gathering the essential data from the film, the researcher used a method which is typical to the nature of the research design. The qualitative research tradition is known by its basic data gathering features which differs it from the quantitative one. In one hand, it adopts a flexible research strategy. In the other, it conducts naturalistic inquiry in real-world rather than experimental or manipulated settings (though methods vary in the extent to which they capture naturally occurring or generated data) (Lewis & Ritchie 2003).

The task of gathering data from the film is a tedious job. It requires a number of times to watch the same film and simultaneously engage in rigorous note taking. The data gathered from the film are variables which were discussed in the second chapter within relevant theories. These variables were traced and elaborately listed in sheets of paper in a way that notes of analysis and interpretation can be put adjacent to them.

This study applied semiotic analysis which is pertinent to analysis of media products. As a qualitative method, it analyzes and explains in complex, detail and context- aware manner of data processing. As a tradition, it involves tracing emergent categories and theories from the data rather than imposing a priori categories and ideas (Ibid). Thus, the groups of data gathered might be regrouped or other new groups emerge in the process of analysis.

The other crucial idea to be considered is that, qualitative data analysis technique gives due respect to the uniqueness of each case (Ibid). Experienced researchers testify that qualitative analysis is not only accommodating emergent categories but also it is open to emergent concepts and ideas which potentially produce detailed description and classification, identify patterns of association, or develop typologies and explanations.

This study is dominantly descriptive. It describes the way easy money is portrayed, characters' behavior is choreographed, discourses are upheld and attitudes are reflected. Thus, it may be found extensive in its analysis to meet this goal.

The variables gathered from the film are analyzed into three categories listed below.

1. Codes: four kinds of codes gathered from the film are analyzed here. They are: analogous codes, cultural codes, language codes and ideological codes. Only units of these codes which are related to acts, influences, motivations or restrictions of fraud are analyzed. Some of the units are: metaphors, metonymy and other figurative speech.
2. Images: Here, images that accompany the scenes in focus are extracted from the foreground and the background so as to analyze the socio economic environment of fraud.

3. Categories: Binary oppositions and anomalous categories of characters, ideas, actions, reactions and living conditions are gathered in categories and analyzed. Moreover, boundary rituals for anomalous categories are detected and analyzed.

### **3.4. Interpretation (Discussion)**

The interpretation was made to fulfill the general objective and the research questions. The general objective of the study focuses on the portrayal of social and economic outlooks of the youth and the society on economic gains; specifically through fraud. Thus, the discussion on the way social and economic outlooks on fraud are presented, occupies the interpretation section. Results found from the analysis are interpreted in relation to myths, connotations and ideologies in the given in socio-economic contexts.

In qualitative research, social life is viewed in terms of processes rather than in static terms. Thus, it would be wise to render the dynamism of fraud from different perspectives. Moreover, qualitative research is akin to “Developing explanations at the level of meaning rather than cause” (ibid) thus, when rendering the descriptions of variables; the interpretation would focus on signs and cues. In the macro level though, clashes of values, roles of myths, influences of hegemony and the like are discussed. The interpretation is directed from four points which root out from the research questions.

- a. The portrayal of social outlooks on acts of fraud :
- b. Social critics on the present economic condition of the country
- c. Local and global economic conditions; the young and fraud
- d. Society against fraud

The interpretation perches on the analyzed data containing elaborated description of codes, images and categories. Here, meaning is churned out of the images. The search for underlying meanings also continues in further interpretation of the codes and categories.

Capitalizing on the analyzed data, the interpretation is made in to two major routes.

1. Myths & Connotations: Here, the study goes beyond the actual words and actions in search of second order syntagm. Likewise, a search is conducted for myths in dialogues and actions. Myths about money, about getting rich, about honesty, trust, mistrust and the like can be found embedded in those dialogues and actions.
2. Ideology & Hegemony: The binary oppositions and anomalous categories gathered in the initial stage are analyzed so as to identify social structures, economic classes and the relations that exist among them. In the compositions of words and actions, paradigmatic possibilities are tried in order to yield more meaning. Then the ideologies that bind the structures are explored. Analyzed codes are skimmed for traditional or anti-traditional values which influence or restrict fraud. Values can be skimmed from words and actions of characters. Words and actions of characters tunnel the interpretation into the socio-economic background of the characters. In such a way, the values of protagonist and antagonist characters are clarified. In addition, the influence of common sense reflected in the characters' actions and words are interpreted.

In general, in the process of doing the interpretation the study strives to address the research questions.

## Chapter Four

### Analysis and Discussion

This chapter ushers the analysis and discussion made on the film considerably focusing on socio-economic issues linked to fraud. The analysis is segmented among three sections that can illustrate how meaning goes in to the images. The sections are: codes, Images and categories. The discussion mainly involves interpretation of the analyzed data so as to answer the research questions. It conducts a search for myths and connotations in one hand and tries to draw dominant ideologies and hegemony in the other. But for the purpose of getting the general theme and story line, the chapter starts with the synopsis of the film, an introduction to the main characters and its plot.

#### About the Film

Title: Made in China

Written and Directed by: Mesfin G/Eyesus & Tewodros Seyoum

Running time: 1hr. and 28min.

#### Synopsis

Made in China is a comedy about two dejected young men who were cheated by a company which promised to take them to South Africa World Cup event. The situation where *Made in China* springs from is a true story. The incident was ones a shocking news which crowded out other news stories from the front pages of many local newspapers. It is marked by street demonstration of more than a thousand people who were cheated in the organized fraud. John

and Tilahun are created to be two of the victims who remain sad in their village while the kick off heralds the beginning of the event in Johannesburg.

One morning, in their neighborhood, they encounter a Chinese pauper sitting where they shamefully used to linger. When they start to know each other, they find out that three of them are in the same boat: penniless grieving people and desperately in need of a job. But when they brain storm on how to lead their lives, fraud ways of getting money overshadow their conversations. Soon after, they invent a series of fraud jobs in a group of trio. We watch them playing charlatan in different professions.

In parallel, we watch a genuine development effort by an old man who toils to organize the community for a public road construction. We often see him frustrated by the community's reluctance. The film reaches climax when the two (the genuine and the fraud efforts) meet at a cross road.

### **Main Characters**

John: leader of the trio; appears bold and dominant

Tilahun: subordinate of John: coward and grouchy

Chi Chi Talo: A Chinese man nick named Abule; a former inmate whose presence

decisively helps to cover up fraud activities of the trio.

Ato Mekonen: Old man who toils to organize the neighborhood for road construction. He

is Beti's grandfather.

Bald man: A former kebele Administration worker; often suspected of corrupt behavior.

He is always seen well-groomed. He ends up accomplice in the trio fraud drama.

Beti: Ato Mekonen's granddaughter. She is also Abule's girl friend but unaware of his real identity.

## 4.1. Analysis

### 4.1.1. Plot

Before starting the discussion, the major twists of the story are presented in the table below. From there, the paper presents the major interactions, counteractions, moods, celebrations and anguishes related to fraud.

Actions	Reasons
- John enters college	- To fulfill his dream
- Drops out	- Poor education system
- John and Tilahun try to go abroad	- In search of short path to wealthy life
- End up victims of fraud	- Organized fraud at work
- John and Tilahun encounter a pauper Chinese Who has nowhere to go.	- Coincidence
- The three look for a job	- They're desperately in need of job
- The search is fruitless and disappointing	- Job scarcity, arbitrary employing systems
- They join hands for 'ventures' ; fraud	- A gap in the value of respect given to compatriots as opposed to foreigners

- It works well	- The presence of Chinese among them
- They victimize others	- It is typical that fraud victimizes others
- Victims chase them down	- Lately, people find out that they were cheated
- Eventually, they surrender But they are not put to justice; They cleanse themselves.	- They are cornered and could not escape.

The crew starts its fraud activities by working in physiotherapy and massage clinic. The owner of the therapeutic clinic overlooked the need to examine the identity of the crew since her impression was overshadowed by the presence of a foreigner (the Chinese).

There, they try to give therapy to a patient with a sprained hand. In the process, their fake therapy puts them into jeopardy. But, accidental success redeems them from the outraged people waiting outside.

The next days they are seen giving massage service to patients; all of them are ladies. The majority of them express their pleasure with the service.

Activities of fraud are suddenly exposed due to unexpected external conditions but sometimes the charlatans themselves become arrogant and try daredevil tricks after building ungrounded confidence on their claims. One day, while they are on 'duty', the village's famous bully (Asnaqe) arrives at the clinic with a wrenched neck.

He had chased John and Tilahun (and even the Chinese man) some days ago but they ran away in the maze of the slum and vanished from his sight. Asnaqe follows the wrong route. Eventually,

he comes across a Chinese man wearing a jacket similar to Abule. He tries to hang the man from behind. However, the stranger is skilled enough to reverse the attack and throw his enemy down to the ground with brisk movement.

When recovered from his coma, Asnaqe gets himself lain on a street unable to turn his head either ways. He is now in a clinic where he unfortunately enters in the hands of his 'enemies'. This coincidence is a cinema cliché which is both advantageous in converging scenes into suspense and economical enough to reduce the number of characters across plots.

Anyways, John takes the leadership to avenge Asnaqe in the name of therapy. Soon, the agonizing patient rises up from the bed and identifies the faces of his enemies. They run out of the clinic being chased by Asnaqe – the die hard.

The next fraud ('venture') takes them to public road construction. They access the people by the help of the broker and the corrupt bald man. Despite the stinging words of the suspicious old man, they collect some money from the people. Eventually, the amount of money collected will be far from enough to take them to China to trade. So, they disappear with the public money.

Here, lie is portrayed as contagious. Abule is used to resist fraud even in the brain storming stage. However, he introduces himself to his new girl friend as a master of martial arts; this inspires John to ferment the following possible fraud in their quest for easy money.

They go to the Kebele administration to get a hall for teaching martial arts. The chairman lets the public hall to the fake masters without screening their authenticity. It only cost them entering the room led by the Chinese Abule; talk with calm voices, high brow language and tell that Mr. Young (Abule) is grand master. The chairman would definitely express his pleasure to receive

such 'a generous guest who crosses thousands of kilometers to help young people grow healthy and strong.'

By the next morning, the three fake masters take shallow training guided by a book. In the next days they had to bare kicks, punches, twists and stabbing directed from the trainees which can only be spared by well trained defense. In the aftermath, John and Tilahun both wrapping bandages on wounds here and there on their bodies, sit in front of their students for discussion. John starts his hypocritical lecture to cover up their skill defects. "... *Your former master used to teach you by beating you up; now we teach you by being beaten. You can never ever get masters like us who let themselves defenseless targets for their students. This is the real teaching to your benefit!*"

However, from this attempt on wards, their tricks can't stay on the upper hand for long. They are searched by the community from which they escaped with its money. By the end, these fugitives take initiative to surrender to the community and come up with organized labor for the real job of road construction. This is the resolution by which they reconcile with the community.

#### **4.1.2. CODES**

There are a variety of meaning-governing codes that can be detected from this film. For the convenience of our approach and scope though, a few of them are presented hereafter: These are analogue codes, representational codes, presentational codes and ideological codes.

##### **a. Analogue codes:**

Among the analogue codes, certain pieces of music stand out at the beginning of the movie. The jubilant South African World Cup songs: *Waving flag* and *Waka Waka* pump great hope into the

travelers' hearts. (Track Timeline: 03:55) The songs are heard in the fare well party emanating spirit of rejuvenation to the young and the ambitious ones. However, that spirit doesn't stay long; it is washed away by a flood of outrageous public demonstration. It means that the journey was fraud.

We see that the movie was inspired by the TV news about street demonstration. It is the background which was used to post the resulting behaviors on a firm ground. The journalist casts his voice over the scene. *"1200 angry people are demonstrating in Addis Ababa. They were cheated by a company that escaped with their money upon a promise to take them to world cup event in South Africa."* (Track Timeline: 04:03)

He continues injecting his remark, *"It is a grand fraud which damaged the livelihood of thousands"* He concludes by a promising statement, *"Police has arrested four suspects and continued investigation"*

This is a real broadcast taken from ETV archive. The poor image signals a real scene footage inserted for its genuineness. The main acts of the film start here after.

John and Tilahun, who scrape out their parents' earnings to pay for the fake journey, are now forced to lie under the village's morning sun; as usual. Here again, they hear Waka Waka song coming closer to their ears from somewhere. But, this time, it is a source of remorse and anguish; because, the village children pass by singing the song so as to tease these two losers. (Track Timeline: 05:02)

We hear another song by Teddy Afro entitled *Eyanebu Eskista* in the tela bet (similar to shebeen). (Track Timeline: 20:00) This is where John and Tilahun invite the Chinese young man (Abule) for the first time. John asks the owner (an old woman) to play them the song from a tape recorder. He picks the song to express their common grieving feelings (theirs and the China man). *Eyanebu Eskista* expresses the behavior of crying at the same time dancing.

A similar song by Natnael Haile entitled *Beqqa* plays in a night club where the trio advances the drinking spree by one level. (Track Timeline: 22:04) *Beqqa* is equivalent to *enough*. It says ‘enough’ to anguish and worry: ‘Just live for today!’

#### b. Language (Representational) codes

Here, we are going to discuss some figures of speech and discourse extracted from the film. Some of the verbatim criticize the social and economic conditions of the society.

At the start of the film, we get Tilahun pleading blessings from his mom. He had to convince her that his journey is invincible. He says, “**ሌት ተቀን እደክማለሁ፡፡ ሕይወታችን ግን ሁሉ ያውነው ከጅ ወደ አፍ፡፡**” (Track Timeline: A, 01:11) “*Working day and night, we couldn’t win our daily bread.*” However, we are not able to know how hard this young fellow has been working. But we do know that he is idle or redundant by now. It seems that he is commenting on the fruitless toil of the lower class on the whole. Above all, he is living with his poor old mother; and we deduce that his father has passed away recently. The only money in the safe Tilahun expects is what his mom was paid upon his father’s death. He is determined to receive this money together with parental blessings and go to South Africa ‘for a better life’.

On the contrary, in the other corner of the town, we get Ato Mekonen who continues toiling for progress in the middle of reluctant community. When passing by unclear and bushy road, he sees a woman slip off and fall on the uneven ground. Helping her stand up, he expresses his anger with the community: “ሁሉም እንደዚህ እየተነሳ ፍርጥ ቢል ኖሮ ይገባው ነበር፡፡” (Track Timeline: A, 09:58) “*Everyone would take the issue to the heart if each one slipped and fell down hard on the ground.*” It implies that this old man has continually urged the community to contribute to a public road construction; but with no avail.

In the early days of aguish, John and Tilahun desperately try to force people to accept their illegal porting service. It is this time; Abule (the Chinese man) enters their village with his luggage loaded on the top a taxi. He refuses John and Tilahun to help him unload his properties. There arises a dispute. Abule says, “*Go away!*”

John becomes furious, “*How dare a Chinese man say ‘go away’ to us in our own village!*” (Track Timeline: A, 08:20)

John takes it as if their territory was invaded: his country’s sovereignty. It seems that he is engaged in funny rhetoric phrases to merely match his illegal porting service to national pride. But, when closely looked into, it ignites a series of questions about the diffusion of Chinese into many aspects of our lives. This is an issue that needs to be looked deep into.

In the introduction, Abule tells John and Tialhun his background. “*I have had a wife... but you know as the saying goes... no money – no fun! She has given up on me.*” (Track Timeline: A, 18:26) John nods his head not only with sadness but also with the additional knowledge he captures: the curse of poverty is everywhere.

On another scene, we get a scavenger talking to the Amharic speaking Chinese man. Abule has summoned the scavenger (locally known as *Korkoro yalew*) to sell his worn out shoes. The scavenger examines the Chinese sneakers with lack of interest.

He says, “የናንተን ጫማ አርኅኮ መቃጠል ነው። የሚጥሚጣ ወፍጮ በለው።” (Track Timeline: A, 27:20) “*You know, Chinese shoes are mills of chili pepper*” (To mean that; when worn in sunny days, they burn your feet and your toes.)

Abule doesn't seem annoyed by the statement; nor does he try to deny the assertion. Rather, he continues the bargain. The general discourse elsewhere in the town is that Chinese products are of inferior quality. But the fact is that the products are increasing their domination in the market. Of all these obvious facts though, what interested the scavenger most seems getting a defenseless target in the uptown who is forced to sell his 'fake' shoes out of poverty.

In the following scene but in that same act, we get Abule mocking at the living conditions of the village. John and Tilahun arrive at the scene and dissolve the bargain by scolding the scavenger. Then they want to go to down town in search of a job.

John speaks to Abule: “*We are going to look for a job. Lock the door and let's go.*” (Track Timeline: A, 28:19)

“*Why do I lock the door? There is nothing valuable to lock up*” says Abule leaving the dilapidated door open and walking away. We may understand Abule's wonder at why people in slums erect squashy iron walls around their 'houses' for he thinks that they have no property worth of protecting against thieves. So he doesn't want to lock the door. And he may mean that the compound has no bolt that can lock the gateway. In any ways, the question why people all

around the city erect from squashy up to strong concrete walls having electric fences on top persists in our thoughts.

Similarly, we get Abule's remark on the leaving conditions of the slums. In the tela bet, the old widow (the owner of the shebeen) doesn't like the visit of this Amharic speaking Chinese man. On the conversation, she says, “መንገድ ማፍረስ ልብቃ ብሎት ቤቱ ሊያፈርስ ነው የመጣው፡፡” (Track Timeline: A, 19:41) “why did he come here... to bulldoze my house?”

Abule smiles at her assertion, “Why do we mother? ... Look! It has already fallen apart.” John and Tilahun burst in laughter.

She becomes angry, “Don't call me mother!” She goes back into her larder. This shabby shelter might be a source of joke and fun to people like Abule, but for this old widow, it is her only valuable property to call it home. But her fear itches our thoughts.

In the other Kebele, Ato Mekonen continues knocking doors of his neighborhood one after the other. However, some of the pretexts he receives from the dwellers are heart breaking; at the same time cleverly illustrate how constructive social values have reached the risk of extinction.

One man ridicules Ato Mekonen's plead, “መንገድ መስራት እንደዚህ ቀልድ ሆነ እንዴ?” (Track Timeline: A, 34:15) “Do you think road construction is as easy as telling jokes?” The other throws an awkward argument, “I go out at dawn and return in the night ... I do not use this road like you do. So, I need not contribute.”

Similarly a young man replies saying, “I will not contribute because I am using the other road by my backyard exit.” And yet the fourth one replies irresponsibly, “I am going to rent out my house and go abroad soon. So, this road is not my concern.”

The worst comment comes from an old man who appears to know the real problem of the community. He forwards an Amharic proverb, “ለመንገድ፡ ... የምትበላው የላት መንገድ አማራት፡፡”

“How come a man who have no bread to eat, wishes to build a road?”

Ato Mekonen stands sad at the gateways while the boycotters slam their doors on him. It is unwise to take those typical sometimes awkward responses at their face values. They make is contemplate on the underlying meanings.

Ato Mekonen is always faced with heart breaking situations in his labor for development endeavors. One morning (while digging to clear the ditch), he sees a man urinating into the ditch upstream. The man doesn't seem to consider the poor old man's hard work downstream. Rather he finishes his peeing with exaggerated ease and comes shamelessly for a hand shake. Ato Mekonen furiously declines the shake. Rather, he threatens to smash him with the spade. The man freaks away. Ato Mekonen laments saying “*Why should I toil all alone!*” He throws his spade and sighs. Of course it is seen that he is sweating all alone. (Track Timeline: A, 11:07)

Such situations force an audience like me to raise a rhetoric question as follows: “Why are good deeds chocked by thorns of ill behavior? Or Are good deeds naturally grow among thorns of ill behavior but eventually stand out for success?”

The notion of “*Why should I...*” entails withdrawal or even goes to the extreme: retaliation. But, the study intends to look into the issue from the macroscopic level and think about what this man is standing for in chapter five..

In the dialogues of characters we also come across some interesting verbatim which depict outlooks of characters on certain subjects related to fraud. For instance, we hear the broker saying: “እኔኮ ነኝ ሰውዬው ጌታው! አገር እናሸጣለን።” “*You know? ... I am the man! ... I can even broker a country to an auction.*” (Track Timeline: A, 33:03)

This man is telling his excellence in his profession. But again he is telling that he has the gut to commit crimes if the deal is worthy enough. This definitely makes any patriot sick. As scholars though, we rather focus on the character and the social outlook upheld in the discourse separately. Thus certain questions come to our minds:

What does this statement tell us about this man in particular and brokers in general? What is the race for money standing against? How deeply is the cupidity planted in the business sector? In our attempt to get answers to these questions we would explore some contemporary social outlooks on money and business in chapter five.

In the Climax of the story, we watch Ato Mekonen coming to the scene growing taller. Following the disappearance of the three charlatans with the public money, Ato Mekonen and three others arrive at the gate of the corrupt organizer (the bald man) to ask the whereabouts of the ‘engineers’. He tells them that he has no clue. They discuss to take the organizer to the police.

But suddenly Ato Mekonen changes his mind and jumps and claps in rejoice in front of ‘the conspirator’. የዚህ ሰፊር ሰው እንኳን ተባለ! እሰይ እሰይ!

“*Hooray! ... Hooray! This neighborhood lost.*” His emotion goes out of control and he shouts joyfully to each of the compounds at the either sides of the street. He takes the situation as if God

avenged his sorrow caused by the people who ridicule his efforts but submit to the charlatans.

(Track Timeline: B, 16:20)

Ato Mekonen's excitement; his shouting, clapping ... jubilation ... witness the depth of his sorrow and remorse for the villagers turned deaf ear to his plead. It is not expected of him to bless the conspiracy. Were it not for his deep grudge on the community, how could we accept his jubilation upon the escape of the charlatans? But we witness that the villagers have let him down. So this time, he appears to avenge them by jubilating on their losses.

It is common to see a finger count Mekonens in any community who work hard but are overridden by false experts who cry nicer. Here, the film conveys one of its principal messages that we are going to deal with in chapter five.

#### Restricted and elaborated codes

If you are a frequent user of minibus taxis in Addis, you must have read this quotation in some of the taxis. “ከሀብታም ቤት ጥብስ

ከድሀ ቤት ጥቅስ አይጠፋም::”

It says, “*It is typical to get roasted meat in rich man's mansion and posted quote in poor man's hut.*” This is also true in *Made in China* film: we see a posted quote in the tela bet. A quote in the shabby tavern runs like this: “ማግኘትና ማጣት ይፈራረቃሉ

በከሰዎ በያዙት እየጠጡ ይሳቁ::”

“*Poverty and affluence follow each other; how little money you have, buy a drink and have fun any way!*”

The verse does not sound rhyming. It implicates a lower class rhetoric application which begins by popular myth but ends with a statement constructed within a restricted code. The last line is poor in wording skill (vocabulary) but direct in addressing the message. Here, it is observed that the lower class is keen at copying elaborated codes; but when trying to improvise proverbs it often switches into restricted codes. Since restricted codes are closer to oral language, we see the verses lacking literary skills. At the same time, the lower class's posted quotations, like the one we see above, use proverbs as premises to reach to improvised conclusions. However, the two lines are often seen in mismatch of tone, literary beauty, compactness and intention.

The quote in the tela bet is telling us that tela (the cheap drink) is the last main stay a poor man can have. Consequently, the verse lulls the grievéd to spend all what they have today promising affluence definitely to await them tomorrow. In Chapter five, we will go deeper looking for the socio economic implications by involving the underlying roles of myths in this film.

In another conversation, we hear John and Tilahun aggressively dealing with porting dispute. After threatening the stranger (Abule) for physical offense, John puts the stone down and walks away. *"We surrender only for the sake of Ethio-China friendship!"*

In this verbatim, it seems that John grafted elaborated code into restricted code so as to mock at the former. But, after the dispute ends and John and Tilahun live the scene, we keep contemplating on the issue in the macroscopic level: the Ethio-China Friendship. (Track Timeline: A, 09:06)

On the other act, we vividly see a collision of elaborated code and restricted code head on. In one morning, while Ato Mekonen was clearing some garbage off the ditch, a well dressed bald man passes by. Suddenly, he shouts at Ato Mekonen for splashing mud on his suit.

Ato Mekonen responds in strong words, *“If you want to avoid the splashes, why don’t you cooperate with us to build the road?”* (Track Timeline: A, 23:23)

The passer by starts talking using elaborated code. He speaks with calm and low voice using long sentences. It is seen that he intentionally tries to sophisticate the issue with his wording skill. *“As an individual opinion, it sounds good. However, as per the strategy of the Kebele and Woreda administration...”*

Ato Mekonene interrupts him, *“I don’t understand your high brow language. ... Boil it down to the neighborhood and say ... according to Gashe Metferia, according to Etye Birqe... and our close neighbors...”* (Gashe and Etye are informal Amharic titles which are equivalent to Mr. and Mrs. Respectively.)

The man tries to ridicule Ato Mekonen’s argument by engaging political jargons. And finally he asserts on the improbability of constructing a road with a united hand in a village level in the absence of ‘fat’ budget of money. At this point, Ato Mekonen rebukes him for his corrupt and reactionary motives. The bald man responds with anger. Ato Mekonen fires his furious assertion, *“You are fraud! Your cupidity is the reason why you can’t stay in one office.”* (Track Timeline: A, 24:06) When the man’s verbal aggression increases Ato Mekonen raises his spade to smash him. (Physical aggression: a typical association to restricted code)

Similarly, a kebele chairman receives the Chinese (Abule) and his crew to address their request to rent a public hall. A resident local martial art teacher sits opposite to the crew to defend his site from the new comers. However, being deceived by the presence of the China man, the chairman sacrifices the local teacher's right for priority. In his speech, he systematically dismisses the teacher's argument by speaking in elaborated code adapted from political meetings.

For instance, he says, "*As a procedure your idea is right; but as a principle it is against our ideals to turn down the efforts of our genuine allies who cross thousand kilometers to benefit our youth.*" It is seen that those abstracts; '*principle*', '*ideals*', '*genuine allies*' and '*thousand kilometers*' are used not only to down size justice but also baffle any scrutiny to conduct on professional claims of foreigners. (Track Timeline: B, 12:10)

In another instance, we see how and why John uses the following expression. In the dialogue John tries convince his father why he should quit college.

*"I wanted to study engineering but I was assigned to study theatrical art. As you might know, the salary for an artist is applause; if it is merely for the applause then, I can make a crowd to cheer me up by paying them."* (Track Timeline: A, 00:52)

In this speech we observe that John wants his father to see his problems in a much learned way by using a sentence construction that reflects his wit. In plain terms, he is mocking at the life of an artist. Next, we feel that he is criticizing the education system. Why is he opting for engineering and why does the system dump him to the department of theatrical arts? Both the

questions seem to have obvious answers. But John takes his third chance (going abroad) which later turns out to be hopeless and fake.

While playing the charlatan, Abule (the Chinese) appears as if he can't listen and speak Amharic language. Therefore, in the physiotherapy room John plays a redundant interpreter to the patients. In the meeting hall however, John pretends to interpret the words of the '*chief engineer*' (Abule). But in real terms he diverts what Abule wants to say. This is far from '*some meaning lost in translation*'.

For instance, Abule whispers to John in Amharic, "You are indulging me in this grave criminal act!" John interprets this to the public saying, "the engineer says that he feels proud to help this poor village construct a standard road in few days time." (Track Timeline: B, 03:17)

The people had to clap at the channel's (John's) words; while the sender (Abule) gradually sinks into fear by the upcoming heavy load he has never promised to carry.

### c. Presentational codes (Cultural codes)

Ato Mekonen is often seen wearing gabi (toga like wrap) over his jacket. Gabi is a traditional cloth worn by the elderly; typically in rural areas. In cities, it is sometimes worn in the mornings, cold weather or while going to church. When we see Ato Mekonen digging the ditch wearing his gabi, we realize how early he gets up from his bed for the hard work. Besides, the costume characterizes Ato Mekonen as conservative fellow to his traditions. The dressing goes well to his patriotic feeling, to his national identity and culture.

Though western civilization is its root (likely to emphasize modernity and gentleness), wearing suit (in this film) entails other attributes. Persons like the bald man and the one who pees into the ditch are seen well dressed in suit. But, they don't care about the welfare of environment and public properties. Rather, the old and the poorly dressed do the real job to benefit the community. Similarly, John and his crew also wear suit when meeting the kebele chairman (also in suit) in his office and the people in the hall.

Sometimes, we get presentational codes to tell us about the background of the characters. For instance, when we look at John's gold tooth, we think in retrospect about his experience of physical violence while he was refugee in a foreign land (Sudan). In contrast, the bare gum of the old lady (the tela bet's owner) implicates that she is too poor to afford dentures.

Above all presentational codes though, skin color remains the biggest attribute behind most behaviors in the film. At a gate of a company Abule is not searched at the check point (he is a 'white man'). But John and Tilahun are searched; John being angry with the guard. In other acts, the presence of the Chinese man (white man) in the trio covers up the real identity of the crew in the physiotherapy center, in the Kebele hall and among the road construction partners.

#### **d. Ideological codes**

In the beginning of the film, the unusual and sudden appearance of the Chinese in 'their place' irritates John. John shouts at Tilahun: "*Don't you have Ethiopian gut?!... you just sit idle while you county's border is trespassed!*" (Track Timeline: A, 12:25) In the metonymy, John seems to refer to his lordship over his village's mazes. But the involvement of a stranger (white man), brings the history of Italian (European) aggression to his mind in retrospect. Here, patriotism is

emphasized. But, we are forced to question why John and Tilahun are irritated to see a stranger in their village while they themselves are determined to go to the land of strangers.

In the same token, John sees the Chinese man by suspicion. Certain myths cross his mind, *“There must be a quarry of gold or else crude oil underneath this area; he can’t sit here without a purpose. He is Chinese after all.”* (Track Timeline: A, 14:19) Tilahun nods his head in agreement.

In the tela bet, John asks Abule why he was in prison. *“... or...was it because you gave away some pieces steel from the ring road project?”*

Abule says, *“no way! ... I was suspected being accomplice in corruption.”*

John sighs, *“ግድ የለም ዝረፋኝ!”* *“Oh! ... We can’t help it! ... Let you rob us!”* (Track Timeline: A, 18:44) We can take this as a joke. But, we feel some threshold of seriousness in his tone.

John also has something to say about his own people. Having the meeting been dismissed, John, Tilahun and Abule enter their flat. John counts the money so far collected from the people by the name of road construction. After the counting, John reprimands Tilahun and Abule for spoiling the game by playing it short, *“We could have collected much more money. I know our society: what it thinks and what it speaks are always in mismatch.”* (Track Timeline: B, 08:54)

Tilahun doesn’t like Abule to have an affair with Betty for he is not ‘their type’. He is also angry at Ethiopian girls in general. He starts his comment when Abule leaves the room to speak to Betty on the phone, *“Oh! Ladies of these days! She must have thought Abule was rich for he is ‘white’. Woman chases after a man with a fat wallet; whatever it is! Be it a foreigner ... even a dog!”* (Track Timeline: B, 10:00)

On another argument, one persistently upheld social belief (rather prejudice) comes to light.

Tilahun declines Abule's invitation to go to his country - China for trade.

Tilahun says, *"I would prefer going and fighting in Afghanistan to being sent to China."*

John wages war to crash the old belief, *"You foolish layman! You don't know who steers world's economy these days; it is China."* (Track Timeline: A, 24:50)

It was common for Merkato business people to go to Dubai to trade. China had remained far in the East on the map and in the hearts of Ethiopian merchants for long. In this case John is on the realm of the new movement heading to the Far East. Here, we see the new positive image of China casting its pegs in the minds of some Ethiopians.

In contrary, the association of China to fake commodities and fake commodities to China persists on a number of conversations. For instance, we recall the scavenger's talk with Abule: *"You must have known that Chinese shoes are not preferred here...You better sell me another item...Don't you have any rods of steel hijacked from the ring road project?"* (Track Timeline: A, 27:12)

Fortunately, John and Tilahun reach the scene and intervene to stop the bargain and chase the scavenger. But for the scavenger, they appear to be similar to the indigenous army fought against their brothers in the Ethio-Italian war. That long existed hatred to allegiance to the white man slips of the tongue of this frustrated scavenger:

*“አሽቃባጭ ባንዳ!”* *"You boot licking, mercenaries!"* (Track Timeline: A, 28:00)

In this traditional community where adult men as old as thirty years live together with their parents, rumors and back bites hurt much more than the faults themselves. Here, family-pride takes center stage. John puts shame and suicide in either sides of his balance in the following speech. *“What a relief if I had hanged myself like emperor Theodros before the news spread!”*

*“But the emperor didn’t hang himself; he shot himself with a pistol.”* says Tilahun.

*“I know; everybody uses what is available.”* responds John. (Track Timeline: A, 05:42)

This argument systematically tries to convince us that John is fair to take any choice better than committing suicide; possibly fraud.

Similarly, we witness a range of social prejudice which forces John and his friend to commit fraud. John says he is not only aware of it, *“This society has no respect to its own persons. Thus, we take this as a corner stone to our endeavor of job creativity.”* (Track Timeline: A, 31:13)

The biggest turn of the plot is here. John forwards an idea that their ‘entrepreneurship’ and marketing’ to be fortified behind the notion of ‘*Made in China*’. Because they have got a China man who has nowhere to go.

Tilahun concretizes the idea, *“Look for instance, kindergartens ... they lure parents by dramatizing their advertisements by involving a white person in a classroom.”* (Track Timeline: A, 32:22)

In the early minutes of the film Tilahun puts all his trust on migration. He says to his mom, *“It only takes leaving this country; it is then possible to improve your life and mine.”* (Track Timeline: A, 01:28)

Similarly, John says to his friends in a farewell party in a tavern, *"I'm not going to South Africa to watch the world cup; rather to work as belt selling vendor and earn money"* (Track Timeline: A, 03:30)

Even if Tilahun wants his mother's blessing to migration, his mom puts her trust on the mother of Jesus Christ. She can't stand on his way to stop him against taking chances; by implication she is found to be a helpless stance that sees a faint glimmer of hope in his journey.

People like Tilahun's mother who are too poor for a daily bread might desperately try to send their old children abroad by selling their properties. They gamble with chances and even with lives. But why do people be reluctant against a contribution to social development endeavors; especially the haves and the well to do? Paradoxically, these same people start pulling their wallets for the same plan in other times. Ato Mekonene catches the large community red handed in hypocrisy.

He says, *"You refused to contribute as little as ten or twenty birr while I knocked your doors. This time you are pledging to pay two thousand, three thousand birr... even dollars. Why? ... It is only because you saw a white man. You are shameless! ... Any ways, I will pay my due also in here. And, submit what I have so far collected. But, you should examine where these people have come from."* (Track Timeline: A, 06:10)The crowd shouts to interrupt his speech.

One the romantic scene, the new lovers, Abule and Betty talk about evil and good. Betty quotes from Anne Frank's dairies saying, *"People are not inherently evil. They tend to be evil if they are assigned to duties they are not born to."* It seems that an angel has told her that he is doing something evil behind.

When getting home, Betty gets her grand pa, (Ato mekonen) sitting in the living room preoccupied with the situation which annoys him: *“Oh this generation; idolizing the white man ... considered us toys!”*

Betty tries to comfort him. But he goes even more furious,

*“You do not know what national pride is all about! If we do nothing, they dare sell a country. I would rather die than see my country is sold off! Oh, what fools we’ve been to the Chinese!”* (Track Timeline: B, 20:16)

When Beti sees a wanted poster (identification order) of the fugitives on the table in the living room, she is stunned. The image of her lover appears in the poster with photos of the two accomplices.

Her grandpa vows saying, “ለጓደኞቻችሁ ሁሉ ንገራ። እነዚህን ወንጀለኞች ላስያዘ ቤቴንም ሽጬ ቢሆን ወረታውን እከፍላለሁ!”

*“Tell all your friends. I will reward anyone who helps us arrest these criminals. I will pay, at worst, selling my house!”* (Track Timeline: B, 23:12)

On the other side of the scene, Tilahun laments while looking at his image on the poster.

“አዋረድኩሽ እናቴ!”

*“Oh! Mom, I disgraced you!”* (Track Timeline: B, 26:47)

### 4.1.3. Images

The images flashing in the foreground and background of the scenes of the film illustrate the dynamics of the city and its people. They depict the birth of the middle class, the transforming lower class and the stagnant ones under the threat of extinction.

The long awaited Anbessa city bus reaches its stop for the lower class. John and his friends take it for a trip to down town. Booths (stooge shops) leaning against old walls await wide open for customers. These shops are also known as Arkebe shops. Mr. Arkebe Uqubai was a famous mayor of Addis a decade ago. He helped street vendors be organized legally and have fixed places. Thus, those blue shops are named after him. In such chains of shops it is typical to see innovative entrepreneurs, young women giving secretarial service and a few brokers.

The scenes also bring condominium houses to sight. These newly emerging villages are not only signs of rejuvenation but also indexes to the flourishing middle class life style. But, inside their flats, as the film implicates, they may harbor criminals. One night, Abule pulls someone's sheet from a line and enters his flat wearing it. Soon after, some ladies are overheard complaining about a lost sheet of bed. Theft of clothes is a frequent phenomenon in condominium houses.

John and his group take refuge in a flat on the third floor. They have found the room by 'virtue' of the broker. It implies that brokers are the newly emerging lords over the traffic of tenants entering or leaving condominium houses. They have keys of vacant rooms in their pockets. They sometimes appear to be the only proxies to owners (beneficiaries).

In one scene, the grand interchange road of Gotera comes into sight. It is one of the mega projects that imply the beginning of Addis Ababa's bold steps towards being one of the leading

cities in the continent. Being fugitives of fraud, John and his friends take some rest in one of the pockets of this road. Here, John forwards his remark on their persecutors.

*"Here we are safe. Only vehicles pass by; no pedestrians. And as you know, the whistle blower is the pedestrian."* (Track Timeline: B, 28:29)

If we rewind the film, we return to where John and Tilahun test negative to fraud; yet broke and hopeless. Until John and his group set for the first fraud activities, we witness some typical associations of the jobless stuck in the neighborhood. The first is bully: pestering passersby. They tend to provide forced petty porting service. The idle hours are made a bit shorter by going to tella bet: paying the least and sitting the longest when contrasted to cafes and bars. Tella bets are often situated in slums. These slums are haven to the people crawling under the poverty line. Yet, they seem to be at the verge of extinction. The rise of condominium houses and the stretch of roads, even the visit of Chinese make them tremble.

The icon of St. Mary is there for the poor and the helpless in many films the same as here at the back of Tilahun's mother. The icons forces us think life is too illusive to control and needs divine intervention. Later in the aftermath of fraud, Tilahun cries for his lord to take him out of the mess. John scolds him saying, *"Have you ever consulted God to do this before?"* (Track Timeline: B, 30:57)

The film begins its stereotypical illustration about Chinese on the first time when Abule is seen seated on the village's road side rock wearing a Chinese jacket. In the following scene, Asnaqe wrongly seizes another Chinese who was wearing a jacket similar to Abule's. In this regard, the film seems to persuade us that Chinese are so identical in appearance and wearing styles that it

would be difficult to differentiate one from the other. The stereotypical view widens even further in the following dialogues where John and Tilahun explain that they can't distinguish the differences that exist among Chinese, Japans and Koreans.

The other stereotypical illustration continues. In two incidents, Abule stands in martial art poses closing his eyes pretending to combat his opponents physically. He tries to play a stereotypical character which some people like John take for granted to the idea that *all Chinese have skills of martial arts to defend oneself*. Meanwhile, he peeps with a slight opening of his one eye to watch whether his trick works well or else find out his failure in advance so that he can run away immediately. Here, we feel that his 'fake' behavior to add to the overall portion of the discourse about Chinese and 'their fake products' in one hand and the group's fraud activities. This is also reflected when John and Tilahun meet him for the first time. John picks a big stone to threaten Abule. However, it is well understood that if young men pick such big rocks, they most probably dare not throw it.

Then we are gradually introduced to the setting. Asnaqe chases after John and his friends following the maze of a poor old village. Rusted and dilapidated corrugated iron walls, wet clothes on lines running above the passages and paddles of overflowed sewage accompany the scene. Meanwhile, John and his friends get themselves taking refuge in a shanty compound where tella is sold. This specific village is called Kirkos. In retrospect, cinema goers in Addis would remember another famous film by the name 'Shefu'- shot in this same area. Here we see that shanty towns like this are becoming settings for situational comedies where many popular jokes seem to spring from. However, in addition to the laughter triggered by situations of the poor life conditions, this film tries to illustrate the threat posed on such slums and their residents.

Here, tella is served with recycled butter cans. There are other tiny nickel cups alongside by which the guests use them as extra containers. But the butter cans seem to be more convenient for the trader to reuse them as traditionally accepted measurements to sell tella. Shanty pockets of Addis Ababa are villages where many use and throw items are reused. From utensils up to iron fences and corrugated iron roofs; used items compliment the structures of those villages. In most cases, the only obtrusive mark that advertises these houses as a shop is the playing of louder music. The lady owns a tape recorder that is too outdated for 2012, yet it is the only electronic property she has got to entertain her guests.

On the road, the collapsed man (Asnaqe) is seen surrounded by young men. They kindle match sticks to wake him up. This is the traditional way equivalent to electric shock to awaken an epileptic person. In this scene a mixture of modern and traditional beliefs and practices are observed. This is one of the situations young people are dwelling in.

In the physiotherapy treatment, five out of six customers we see are females (bearing in mind that the owner of the clinic is also female): and four of them were easily cheated by the 'fake' therapy. At the end, Asneqe reaches there with a wrenched neck (late in the morning). The last customers waiting outside are also two women. Here women are disproportionately portrayed as characters who cannot easily detect fraud.

When we see in general terms, we observe that the film follows comparative transition which switches between showing the two opposing endeavors advancing in parallel. Ato Mekonen: facing challenges to organize the village for road construction and the trio facing challenges to exploit weaknesses of the society. What makes the two routes similar is however, the two routes of life are revolving around the middle and the low income class of the society. Yet, they involve

a wide scope of age and persona. From small boys to aged ones; from scavengers up to company managers, the film has tried to shade light on a variety of characters. In almost all scenes apparent conflicts of values, interests and beliefs among the characters has been entertained. Thus, the film was successful in illustrating a wide range of actions and reactions of those varied characters.

#### 4.1.4. Categories

Here, we are going to condense the whole issues and ideas into certain variables which can be grouped in different categories. As we have read through the literature review, one way of extracting meaning from such texts is by categorizing the entities into groups. This helps to reduce the floating ideas into comprehensible variables and to increase the meaning production potential of the text. Thus we hereafter, group our variables across binary oppositions, anomalous categories and try to figure out what kind of boundary rituals they might require.

##### a. Binary oppositions

Below are the most possible binary oppositions we can deduce from our text. However it doesn't mean that this is the only way and these are the only variables we can extract. But, I hope that they are wide enough to embrace the major issues and entities and focused enough to our scope.

#### Binary oppositions In *Made in China* film

Entrepreneurship	fraud
Compatriot	foreigner
International	local

National pride	Inferiority
Skepticism	Trust
Made in Ethiopia	Made in China
Made in China	Made in the west
Stewardship	aggression
Communalism	individualism

In the movie, entrepreneurship and fraud are the two routes laid ahead for the dejected young people. Despite the moral values that set them wide apart, they mingle in young ambitious minds like John. Or, it appears that the intention of the one results in the occurrence of the other. Both ways require creativity, ambitious motives and an intuition to sniff for holes in the market. Both lead to financial gains. These seem to blur the point where they out stretch wide apart. That's why the trio starts with notion of benefiting oneself but ends with harming others.

The other opposition is manifested due to the presence of the Chinese man. The film entertains distinction between a foreigner and a compatriot by involving stereotypes and prejudice that prevail among the society. It touches upon the clash of social values and beliefs. People lean on national pride for defense when the foreigners (especially the Chinese and Indians) appear to diffuse their men and commodities into the market. On the contrary, when it comes to trust and leadership, foreigners are considered worthier than the compatriot. This is the very reason that John and his crew exploit to craft fraud in the veil of foreign skin. In the process; national pride versus inferiority, international versus local and skepticism versus trust compete and clash.

We also observe the opposition that exists in the notions of 'made in Ethiopia' versus 'made in China' and 'Made in China' versus 'made in the west'. In the public prejudice, respect appears to dwindle when we move across the groups to the left. In contrary, the presence of the China man among the group challenges the stereotypical labels posted on China and Chinese. However, some stereotypes seem to be unaffected by paradigm shifts.

Lastly, we observe the struggle between communalism and individualism. The struggle is there among the trio; it is there in the neighborhood and it is there in the public at large. The pretexts individuals provide in order to evade from their contributions, the talents young people engage to illegally escape poverty and the rhetoric decision makers devise to suppress the common good; witness that individualism is one of the great challenges the society facing.

### b. Anomalous categories

Below is a list of anomalous groups which are indicated in bold. The groups at either side of the anomalous groups are their respective binary oppositions.

Actors	←	<b>CHARLATANS</b>	→	criminals
Houses	←	<b>SLUMS</b>	→	occupied lands
Students	←	<b>JOBLESS</b>	→	workers
Business people	←	<b>BROKERS</b>	→	accomplice
Buyers	←	<b>BORROWERS</b>	→	thieves

Anomalous groups are temporary and can switch to either of the opposing group. In our instance, charlatans, slums, jobless people, brokers and borrowers are not only problematic for

categorization but also are headache to societies and governments. Charlatans hold attributes of actors (which are pro-social) and criminals (which are anti social). Until they are arrested and convicted, they appear to be law abiding citizens. This is also true with slums. But slums stay longer in the scene; yet their chance of recognition as legal houses is at the mercy of government plans.

Then we get brokers; often unregistered middlemen, so they do not pay taxes. In this instance, they can even help criminals the way in and out. Thus, we get it difficult to group them at either side.

### **Boundary rituals**

In the list below, the most possible boundary rituals which can potentially transform those problematic anomalous groups into either of the opposing side are presented. Some of the ideas proposed are extracted from characters' conversations and intentions.

<b>AMENDMENT</b>	←	charlatans	→	<b>ARREST</b>
<b>RECOGNITION</b>	←	slums	→	<b>BULLDOZING</b>
<b>SCHOLARSHIP</b>	←	jobless	→	<b>ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b>
<b>REGISTRATION</b>	←	brokers	→	<b>ARREST</b>
<b>PAYMENT</b>	←	borrowers	→	<b>BREAK PROMISE</b>

For instance, the film proposes self amendment as a remedy to cure the young offenders as opposed to arrest and trial. It means that, the charlatans regret their deeds and compensate the community they harmed so far.

In case of borrowers; we get people as poor as Tilahun who borrow for daily bread. And the 'rich' borrow from banks. They are challenges to sellers but opportunities to lenders. But, both are necessary evils that can't be avoided. Thus, they usually rove in the cycle of paying or breaking promises.

At this end, the analysis can be concluded by recapturing important points from the main sections. The analysis has gone through the analysis of codes, Images and categories. These were three pillars recommended from the literature review to assist semiotic analysis of texts.

In the beginning, the study tried to make extensive analysis on codes which govern language use, behaviorism and ideologies of characters. In doing so, it was possible to sift some critics pointed at certain socio-economic conditions of the country. Thus, in this analysis, clashes between restricted and elaborated codes have been identified. Among the presentational codes, it was found out that color of the skin seems to dominate not only the behaviorism and conversations but also the plot of the film. This was created by the presence of the Chinese man. The analysis has also tried to unearth the ideological frameworks that govern the beliefs and values reflected in the conversations.

In dealing with the images, the study has tried to analyze the socio-economic background of the characters. This helped draw the environment young offenders dwell in and explore what socio-economic constituencies that environment embraces.

Lastly, it was made possible to make categorization of variables based on certain attributes to help us see the clearer picture of the main ideas and entities standing out against each other. This

was done by involving binary oppositions, anomalous categories and their possible boundary rituals.

In the following chapter, we are going to step to the second order syntagm and make interpretations based on the crude ideas sifted out in the analysis.

## **4.2. Discussion**

Here, the study goes beyond the actual words and actions in search of second order syntagm. In one hand, it conducts a search for myths and connotations in the crude ideas so far grasped from the analysis. In the other, the study tries to draw dominant ideologies and hegemony reflected in the film. This involves the applications of paradigmatic possibilities on the compositions of words and actions so as to yield more meaning. This makes the occurrence of emergent meanings possible.

In digging for myths and connotations, the study tries to answer two of the research questions of the study. These are: the critics on socio-economic conditions and the major reasons for the acts of fraud.

Likewise, in the process of identifying the governing ideologies and hegemony, the study tries to address the rest two research questions. They are: the social outlooks on subjects related to fraud and the role of the society against fraud.

### **4.2.1. Myths and Connotations**

In the previous chapter, it was tried to analyze some ideas extracted from conversations in the film. Here, the study digs into the roots of these concepts in search for the underlying myths.

And again, it tries to show what these ideas connote. Some of these myths and connotations clarify the critics targeted at the socio- economic conditions.

So, the study tries to deal with some myths about poverty, integrity, elites, foreigners, compatriots and the like embedded in those dialogues and actions. In parallel, it tries to infer connotations from dialogues and actions revolving around fraud.

#### **A. Critics on Social and Economic Conditions**

When one tries to recapture the portrayal of poverty in this film, the society's prospect seems gloomy. As Tilahun puts it, life for the lower class is a fruitless toil. Poor fathers put their trust on their children's education. But colleges have only a few choices to satisfy the needs of these young men. Drop outs are high; jobs are scarce. Poor young people age on the beds they were born. Desperately, helpless poor widows pay their last drops to send their old children to faraway lands. In doing so, the children and the parents are virtually fleeing the country.

However, the poor has myths to sooth its misery; like the one mentioned in the verse in the tavern. In this verse, poverty is portrayed not as manmade occurrence; rather as an unstable natural phenomenon. Therefore, at its best, the notion of the verse deflects the grudge the poor man would have on his adversary. At the worst, it appears true that poverty is temporary and needs no fighting hard against; so it maintains the status quo to remain harsh on the poor.

When it comes to the social issues, a number of conversations raise some vices of the society; among them is lack of integrity. The majority of the community was seen to boycott the contribution in one time and over contribute on the other. The study explored hypocrisy in the organizers, the Kebele chairman, even on the gate keepers who pretend to have high standard principles. The whole notion of the film conveys that what our people speak and actually think

are often in mismatch. Doors which are sealed for compatriots are made wide open for the foreigners (whites). The film depicts that our people tend to be proud of its history but at the same time, it is awaiting the whites with reserved colonies in mind.

Likewise, according to the film, the curse of individualism is corroding communal life. People are failing to raise united hands even on common properties like roads. Ironically speaking, it seems that there is an exaggerated race among the growing middle class to own cars at same the time 'private roads'- if they existed at all. Because, as the film conveys, 'everyone is too senseless to feel someone's pain until he himself touches the hot plate bare feet.'

The film also has something to say about elites and their 'elaborately coded languages. To begin with the myth, the film reminds us the popular myth about Kebele chairmen. The myth is that Kebele chairmen are hypocritical figures who stay on the chair for merely personal gains. They are often portrayed as imitating elaborately coded languages borrowed from higher officials. Here, the chairman appears to be false elite who cannot detect false claims. Most probably, he was blinded by personal benefits he forecasts to gain. Elaborately coded language, according to the film, is not only an attribute to a higher social status. But, it is also a device to ridicule genuine ideas, to veil real intentions and at worst to boost white collar crimes like fraud.

In regard to the public view towards foreigners, the film has extensively entertained the issues about Chinese. It has cast its anchor at its very beginning from the title: *Made in China*. One morning, a poor Chinese appears from nowhere in one of Addis Ababa's slums. This incident is the pivot for the upcoming comments, attitudes, myths, stereotypes and prejudice that revolve around. John sees the Chinese man by suspicion. Certain myths cross his mind. He says, "*There must be a quarry of gold or else crude oil underneath this area; he can't sit here without a*

*purpose. He is Chinese after all.*” Stereotypically, people believe that there is hardly an idle Chinese. Then the myth goes like this: If there is an idle Chinese found at all, he must be on a secret mission.

Similarly, this lack of trust is there on the trade. The phrase ‘*Made in China*’ connotes fake products. Elsewhere in local markets of imported goods, the antonym for the word *China* has become *Original*. When one thinks of China he is forced to recall the confusion he experienced in markets of electronic gadgets. The chaos of brands and the name China come together in one’s mind. So people hate Chinese products; but they cannot escape from using them. This stereotype has remained diehard despite the fact that the Chinese have many reputable and genuine products. These days, Chinese are tremendously diffusing into our lives. In infrastructure, gadgets, costumes, education, medication, culture and even in our domestic crimes we sense their hands.

On the contrary, the public could not guess this Chinese man to be jobless, pauper and criminal. Rather, as a foreigner (white) the society is prone to accept to any professional status he claims. As a ‘white man’, he is considered a helper not beneficiary. Thus, this myth baffles scrutiny on foreign professional claims and missions. We also infer from the film that, the Chinese and the Indians are competing for the grab of economic landmass in poor countries like ours and in the globe at large. It is also a fact that unaccredited foreign professionals are employed in some institutions with salaries that dwarf the benefits of equivalent local professionals. This skewed view about foreigners is wide spread among many managers, decision makers and business people.

Going down to the lower class, the visit of a Chinese man to a shebeen in a slum is not welcome. The poor old widow who owns the shabby shelter sniffs danger. This is her only valuable property to call it home. For her, the coming of Chinese is an index for the coming of bulldozers.

However, the people understand that the Chinese army of construction workers is a key ally to the Ethiopian government to up root poverty. But, they remain uncertain in dealing with the changes; especially those poor at the same time old. In some cases, people seem to be afraid of walking out of deteriorated lives they are accustomed to.

In the middle of characters of this film we have a broker: a being with gentle manner but portrayed as a middle man for social ills. As in the famous stereotypes, this broker tells clever lies, helps someone sell almost anything. He represents people who promote fraud and corruption; people who lure young compatriots pay their money for dangerous journeys abroad; people who lead criminals in and out of crime scenes safely. What matters for them most is money. This people don't dare commit crimes themselves. They are there by the side of fraud. Sometimes they are fraud themselves. Because, they lie in order to connect the mismatch and inflict harm to either side.

### **B. Reasons Influencing Acts of fraud**

These young offenders have a number of entities to blame for their later conducts; one of them being lack of provision in educational opportunity as per students' choices. John complains that he was dumped to the field of theatrical arts while he had chosen to study engineering. It is well known that the assignment of students in government university fields of study is done in accordance with their academic scores. However, the issue of boosting the capacity of fields of study which have high market demands was addressed lately in the procedure known to us a ratio

of 70/30 (science as compared to social science fields.) Unfortunately, by the time the fixture arrived, students like John had already dropped out. As a result, we could see John neither as an actor nor as an engineer. He tried to flee the country three times. Three of them failed. However, we observe that the last failure gives him the link between engineering and theatrical art. Thus, he ends up a charlatan so that he can act as engineer.

One of the major areas charlatans target seem professionalism. Their prevalence encourages the rise of forgery craftsmen who smuggle educational records, fabricate credentials, grade reports and even inauthentic term papers.

Similarly, unemployment is the other factor that encourages young people to criminal acts like fraud. The apathy to their societal values is worsened when they look for jobs. Doors are closed on them due to institutional and individual malpractices. However, as we have explored in the literature review, people learn or be initiated by criminal behaviors from other criminal activities that prevail in their environment. So, where do these criminal intents begin to grow into copy cat crimes?

To begin with, the social outlook reflected in *Made in China* at the beginning of the film can be put like this. *'The ideals of life are tied around money. And that money is made easy abroad.'* And again, there is a popular myth that says 'you go to South Africa, be a vendor selling belts; get rich sooner.' This myth has a number of versions across the ages. 'Go to Jeddah ... Go to Dubai ... Go to USA ... where money is made easily!' That's why, they had to turn their pockets inside out, appear rich and join the trip.

But soon, we hear a public outcry; outcry of promised passengers to the prestigious event who finally knew they were cheated. The cheater escaped to Germany. Justice was unable to hold him back. This man is an instance to many frauds that vanished from the scene scot-free. Such incidents have a power to create myths of false heroes who 'successfully' escaped from poverty and at the same time from justice. However, the striking thing about this incident is not only the journey to be fraud, but also the passengers like Tilahun and John were fake spectators. They were on desperate escape from poverty.

These young men try to transform their social status so as to escape the dying community. At the same time, the wave of change and development is not coming without some social ills. In the rush to board the train of prosperity, fraud is stretching its roots in the society. This is what the film is trying to tell us. There are some irregularities in the transformation of economic classes. Young people, watch fellow young people skyrocketed to apex of wealthy life in a few years time. Sometimes, that height cannot be measured in terms of hard work. Thus, young people like John and Tilahun keep on thinking of any short cuts to the spot.

There are two more things remaining for criminal intents to be transformed into actions. There needs to be a loophole either in the law or in the societal values. And there should be an opportunity to test it. Here comes the Chinese man who ended up a slum dog foreigner in a land of strangers. Yet, all the odds didn't wash away his appearance. His face remains a threat and/ or an opportunity to his survival.

The presence of this poor Chinese in the group proved to the young fellows that people trust foreigners more than they trust their compatriots. The matter seems all about color of the skin; no searches and no scrutiny on professional identity. These loopholes in the societal values are

potentially the grooves to trespass public and individual scrutiny. Therefore, these young people who are frustrated by the social prejudice later exploited the loopholes for acts of frauds. Therefore, the total sum of the message can be put follows: fraud gives birth to fraud and social prejudices are the midwives.

Throughout the film, these young charlatans blame the society for their ill conducts. Almost all the contexts, which at times can be taken as pretexts, seem to be made in order to lift social responsibilities from the offenders' shoulders. Thus, we are systematically made to sympathize with the young men when they are dejected and smile at inflicted harms while they are playing charlatans. The message is that people are not inherently bad; even charlatans. Anne Frank is quoted here. She is well known for her famous words: "In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart." The film capitalizes on this on this idea and developed an argument that says, 'criminals need to be sympathized with since they could also be victims of crimes in their former lives.' As a comedy film, this belief seems to be carried on to the resolution where by the offenders were spared only by regret and get neutralized.

But paradoxically, the contexts display that there are other young people who chose entrepreneurship against fraud as the only shortest way to escape poverty. In a flash of moments, one can see self-employed young people in the row of blue stooge shops some innovative, some competitive in their professions. There are also a few brokers who trimmed their wings short and rent offices so as to submit to the legal business commitments.

#### **4.2.2. Ideology and Hegemony**

This section deals with some common beliefs and societal values. These are the frameworks by which certain social groups give meaning to different subjects and issues. Here, a paradigmatic

shit of these common beliefs and societal values in different contexts and times is observed. This dynamics reflected in the discourses reveal the society's outlooks on subjects related to fraud. Likewise, it is possible to capture the portrayal of society against fraud in the film by identifying the dominant values and beliefs entertained. So, the interpretation begins with the help of some paradigmatic dimensions.

### **Paradigmatic Dimensions**

In the previous sections, the film was discussed on some attitudes of the society towards the Chinese. Here, some of the beliefs are listed down.

'Chinese came to construct our roads.'

'Chinese and Indians are scrambling our country.'

'Chinese came to rob us.'

'Chinese came to bulldoze our houses...'

The belief goes negative down the column; yet the first one is a fact, the second two overgeneralizations and the last wrong association.

The next paradigmatic sets of ideas show that China is seen as a rising star for Ethiopian importers.

'Better go to Dubai to trade'

'Better go to Sudan to trade'

'Better go to China to trade'

The following paradigmatic dimensions reveal the route that lures young and ambitious people to crime.

'Entrepreneurship is a short path to wealth.'

'Fraud is a short path to wealth.'

'Crime is a short path to wealth.'

John and his friends sat to brain storm for innovative ideas. False claims appeared to be a strategy to entrepreneurship. When applied and caused harm on others, they found themselves way ahead of the borders of crime. Thus, we see John to transform the group from innocent but grieving companions into charlatans through a ritual that is confused to entrepreneurship.

The last sets are situations by which we test our beliefs.

'Jobless African in a developed country'

'Chinese worker in a developing country'

'Jobless Chinese in a developing country'

'Criminal Chinese in a developing country'

In the first instance, people consider it common and sympathize with the migrant. In the second, people take it for granted. In the third, people get it difficult to believe and become suspicious. In the last situation, people feel offended but later on, they cling to the generalization saying 'Oh yes we know! Chinese come to rob us.'

### **A. Social Outlooks on Subjects Related to Fraud**

In this movie, we see two extreme views of the society about money. In one end, we get the broker who virtually sells a country. We see him brokering people to cheaters for the sake of money. He is there to represent white collar criminals who prostitute their professions for illegal and immoral financial gains. For these people it is money all that matters.

In the other end, we get the old man who believes that cupidity is the source of social vices. However, he has no audience to listen to. Thus, we feel that the majority are under the influence of money in deferent degrees on the continuum.

The other variable is trust. The film pinpoints crude realities from the world we live in to help us see some skewed attitudes of the society. Foreigners are trusted more than compatriots. The rich are trusted more than the poor. Despite their potential power to deceive people, the elaborate codes are more trusted than the restricted ones. The well dressed are more trusted than the poorly dressed. In this film, wearing suits has frequently been associated with people having covert intentions. It is picked as the best outfit to disguise malicious identities. In many instances, it has become an index for white collar crimes. All the above favored attributes were applied by the charlatans in the film. Here, caution needs to be taken that all the above attributes are portrayed by this film and dominantly viewed from the angle of the lower economic class.

In the discourses so far entertained, it is observed that the trends of xenophobic feelings among the society being gradually engulfed by the trend of idolizing the white man. However, some stereotypes seem to be unaffected by paradigm shifts. Therefore, in the macroscopic level, the film leaves us with some questions on Ethio-China friendship. Consequently, we keep on contemplating on a series of questions specifically; on mutual trust, fraud, economic benefits and

job creation. There we get the worst belief that damages the image of Chinese upheld in the conversations. It asserts that Chinese are not only manufacturers of inferior quality commodities but also they are corrupt. Thus, in the background, the bigger question remains floating in the public opinion: are Chinese genuine allies?

By the same token, we observe the paradox in the fact that John and Tilahun become irritated to see a stranger in their village while they themselves are determined to go to the land of strangers. In this regard, the film connotes that the lower class that often leads life in congested and old villages has a higher degree of attachment to its neighborhood. It is accustomed to the stagnant living conditions. This makes it more resistant to changes than the middle class. It appears that it considers changes and strangers as threats. This is the trait that John and Tilahun inherited. But at the same time, they are the young ones who are trying to escape the 'dying class', thus they tend to mingle with strangers and strange ideas.

Next comes, the view the offenders have on criminal activities. The Chinese man who is an incarcerated offender released recently, is not as fearful of crimes as Tilahun. He knows the prison cells in Addis and knows what awaits him there. But he is fed up with his involvement in any criminal activities. He is just an easy going person who can be dragged into crimes out of poverty and carelessness. Such people have no gut to resist peer influences even if they are picked to leading the criminal act. And often, there is another guy who takes the biggest share in driving them to his benefit.

That other guy is John. What bothers him most is not committing crimes, but how 'modest' and undetectable the actions are. He is the mastermind who often develops his own principles. He is skilled enough to analyze and evaluate his individual problems in contrast to the society's


problems. Virtually, he feels as if he is in combat with social vices. He considers himself an entrepreneur doing a modest business by exploiting the society's problems. This is the meaning he gives to the crime we call it fraud.

### **B. Society against Fraud**

This film portrays families to be the initial cultivators of deterrence to crimes in the minds of their kids. Especially, in the lower economic classes where communal life is indispensable, children are seen as indexes to the conducts of their families. Despite the fact that Tilahun grew up under single parent guardianship, he is proud to represent his mother among the society. So, he averts crime primarily in order not let his mom down in front of the society. Were he not in poverty, he would not dare to insult a passerby; let alone committing a crime. In these villages, children will never be too old to leave their poor mothers. In their thirties and forties, they live in one room houses with their parents tranquilizing all the odds of adulthood. Thus, it seems self evident in such communities that there are too many young people but too little felony.

Fraud is one of the dramatic crime activities that fill the slot of crime news stories in police programs in our country. From fake item dealers to fake lottery winners; from fake helpers to fake saviors; we have been hearing news of charlatans that were arrested by police. In many cases, the police tell us that the offenders are upper handed by the help of the public; mainly by the victims. Similarly, in this situation, the public demonstration against fraud at the beginning of the movie has resulted in the arrest of the fraud people. The offender was brought back to Addis Ababa from Germany by international cooperation.

However, there are a finger count people who have a keen sense of smell before crimes occur. These watch dogs are there to stand for the security of their community. But, as the film



illustrates, individuals like Ato Mekonen are often misunderstood. They are suppressed by the hegemonic power of the crowd. In this way, the sound of one just man is swallowed in the mist of public prejudice.

In spite of such humiliations, we see the tenacity and the persistence on good deeds in this old man throughout the story. Lately, the people knew that they were cheated. Thus, the message from the film goes like this: *'Even though the community deprives support to such individuals, they remain tall in the scene to witness the ultimate failure of public prejudice.'*

In the row of resistance to fraud, we also have curious people like the martial art students, the old martial art teacher, Betty and some people in the clinic who tried to challenge the fake practitioners.

On the contrary, the owner of the clinic, the kebele chairman, the corrupt organizer, the crowd in the hall and the broker took their shares in paving the ways in and out to fraud activities. This makes it clear that, fraud claims assisted by foreign arms can easily trample on the greedy and the hypocrite so as to break into private and public Properties. Those hypocrites tend to identify themselves with the rich, the powerful, the successful and the foreigners. They are there to ratify the ranks; titles and qualifications charlatans come up with. Such abstracts are seen here and there in the real life situation which charlatans are coated with. Recently, the exposition of Addis Ababa's famous charlatan, 'the fake doctor engineer' Samuel Zemichael testifies this. It is clear now that, there is an abundance of blind decision makers who equip abstract shields to those charlatans.

Lastly, we reach on the comment John gave about the pedestrians versus drivers. Inside the interchange road where they sit, a thought flashes in his mind. He says they are safe here because the place is out of reach of pedestrians. He adds that pedestrians are the whistle blowers. We understand that the interchange road brackets the pedestrian off the race on the altitude. Consequently, John is able to make a distinction of classes on the attitude they have towards the fight against fraud. In his view, the poor are watch dogs against malpractices; but, how about the rich? Those who own cars? Does he mean that they are too busy or over occupied by personal issues? Or, does he mean that they are pro malpractices? It seems he has left the issue for the audience to contemplate on.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusions and Recommendations

#### 5.1. Conclusions

In this last section, the study recalls to the hypothesis made at the beginning of the research. The assumption was that, there is a strong relation between the issues raised in films that deal with fraud and the present global and local socio-economic conditions. And such films entertain the prevailing perception of youth on how people are getting richer in present socio-economic conditions. From the analysis and in the interpretations so far made on the selected film, it was found out that the local and global socio-economic conditions were apparently entertained from a range of perspectives. The film did not only portray the perceptions of the youth towards economic transformation of classes but also explored some pockets of resistance against changes. In the other hand, it was possible to look closely into agents of fraud and malpractices. Even if, as a situational comedy, it exaggerates socio-economic problems, the way the characters were portrayed and the way the plot was choreographed is not far in resemblance to the reality out there.

To begin with, the perception of poor young people about economic transition across classes was found to be mostly negative. The poor young people get the belief of escaping poverty through hard work at home, hard to accept. In the other hand, some poor old people prefer to take poverty as is to accept social and economic changes that they believe would destruct their very existence.

The beliefs and the values ritualized in the film were able to demarcate the boundaries of virtues, vices and ideologies of social and economic classes. In the course of interpretation, it is observed that the poor young people to sway in a constant clash with societal values. Consequently, it was

possible to understand the ethical dilemma people encounter in a society which is in a dynamic economic reform. As reflected in the film, young people sometimes get suspended between copying the wrong doings committed on them and sticking to the footsteps of their just parents at any cost. In addition, the fierce competition of job creation (entrepreneurship) seems to blur the line where decent job ends and misdemeanor starts. The film choreographed the transition with such inputs from the real world to challenge audiences' common sense. This was extracted and discussed in the paper in detail. Thus, we can say that the analysis and the interpretations helped the study achieve its main objective.

In addition, it was possible to pinpoint the struggle of antagonistic social values and society's influence on deviant behavior. As per the dominant discourses of the film, public integrity is dwindling, bad governance and hypocrisy are abundant and individualism and apathy to societal values are on the rise. Thus, in the courses of both the analysis and interpretation we can see that the film is critical of the status quo.

In the process of analyzing, discussing and interpreting the portrayal of fraud and the youth by the film- Made in China, the study attempted to answer its research questions. A number of social outlooks on subjects related to fraud and the youth were extracted. The total sum thus indicates that the film mainly hammers on the notion of trust. It sensitizes that trust is fading in many places. It epitomizes those who are deprived of trust and consequently feel free of guilty consciousness upon fraud activities.

In the course of analyzing the ideologies reflected in the film, the study was able to discover some paradigm shifts in the common beliefs of the society. Changes in orientation of trade,

migration and even attitudes of the society towards different trans-continental issues are among the major ones. The film has touched upon attitudes as aged as the invasion of Italians and as young as the coming of the Chinese. It also connotes about the future that Ethiopia would be trade and job destination to the Far East nations.

As it was put in the paper (borrowing from John Fiske's idea) while stating the problem; all communication and all meanings have a socio-political dimension, and that they cannot be understood outside their social context (Fiske 1990, 176). Thus, all the discoveries were possible in the study of socio economic conditions in which young people are forced to look for the shortest but dishonest path to escape poverty. The study has been digging behind dialogues, actions and reactions of characters to find out the socio-political dimension of that communication. Consequently, it tried to outline the social contexts to better understand that dimension. Thus, much of the meaning made in Made in China film is from the angle of the lower economic class and the young jobless people.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

More than a decade old now, the newly blooming Ethiopian cinema is not too young to be studied. With its limitations in the scope, diversity of issues, technology and maturity, it has something worth studying for media researchers. Even a replication of this study, portrayal of fraud, on other films would result in different findings which can add significant knowledge to the field of communication.

It is also possible, at the same time significant to study these contemporary films in relation to other social and economic issues. In the process of conducting this study, the researcher has come across a variety of films having issues worthy of studying such as: migration, married life,

behavior of sub social groups and the dominance of commodities on the young generation's lives.

Apart from these, rigorous studies can be conducted on the reasons that force the contemporary local films to diverge from the actual and the prevailing societal issues. In many instances, it is observed that many local films tend to drive real social problems off cinema screen and sometimes distort the reality out there. Even frequent cinema goers are heard complaining about it. Thus, media researchers who are interested in the local cinema industry can dig into the core of the problem and come up with significant results. The results not only add knowledge to the scholarly world but also benefit the film producers and the public at large.

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