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GLOBAL MEDIA:
AN INVESTIGATION ON THE RECEPTION OF ENGLISH
PREMIER LEAGUE SATELLITE TV COVERAGE BY
ETHIOPIAN YOUTH IN ADDIS ABABA.

BY
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Ethiopian youth football viewers in Addis Ababa.

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My lovely Mom- **Senkinesh Zekargie** this is your wish and I made it for you. I always love you. You are in my deepest heart. The time (June 6, 2009 G.C. or 29-10-2008 C.), which you passed away from this world, was very challenging for me. But, now, for the sake of your great love and wish I finalized this thesis and the Graduate Certificate as a whole. God and his blessed mother St. Mary be with you. God bless your soul in Heaven.

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Abstract

In the midst of the broadcasting of football games particularly the English Premier League games in Ethiopia recently youth have been exposed to different kinds of foreign produced media products. It is obvious that Ethiopia, as part of the world-wide trend of influence brought about by globalization, is subject to a situation marked by the increased flow into the country and consumption by the local audience of foreign- produced media products. While at this time English Premier League games take lead in terms of consumption rates of foreign media products. This study, in particular, under the title of *'An Investigation into the Reception of English Premier League Games by Ethiopian Youth in Addis Ababa'* is interested in investigating the web of meanings that arise from the viewing of English Premier League among Ethiopian youth. With this end in view, the study employed observation, focus group interviews, and individual in-depth interviews to gather the data needed to make sense of the youth's viewing experience.

The findings of the study show that youth in their interaction with media contents transmitted in settings far from theirs, actively interpret them in light of the subjective values, aspirations and concerns within their lives. What the youth's own responses reveal is that the plurality of meanings they make when viewing English Premier League games represent a challenge to the premises of the media imperialism thesis, which put forward the homogenizing role of the Developed countries media in terms of propagating developed countries values and interests at the expense of the developing countries like Ethiopia. The concept of homogenization fails to accurately describe the consumption of foreign media messages by local audiences. The research also shows that the coming into the picture of such regional media as produced by nations like Great Britain raises the question whether media imperialism thesis is adequate in terms of explaining the overwhelmingly complicated global exchange.

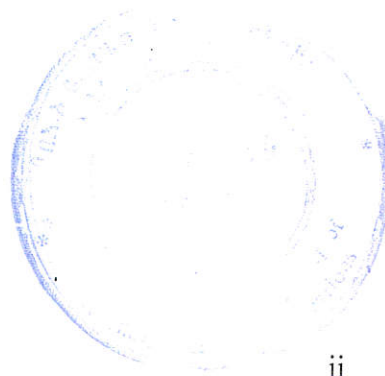


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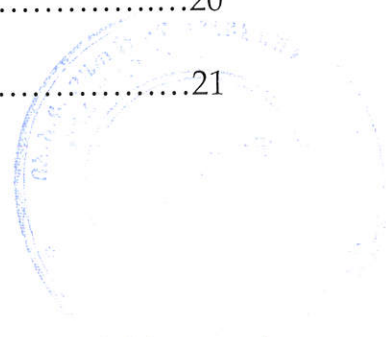
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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that, in this contemporary world, communications media has become significant, and as a consequence it affects our everyday life. The theoretical framework of the research engaged with Global media claims that the western world is dumping large quantities of media products to weaker, more specifically developing countries. As a result, it is claimed, the authentic, traditional and local cultures are becoming beaten out of existence. As theoretical basis of this research, I will discuss the premises of the global media notion in light of broader perception of globalization and media culture. I will also reflect that global media messages manufactured and processed by the few and concentrated media conglomerates like BBC, CNN, DSTV, GTV and other companies are effectively homogenizing the national identity and culture of developing countries like Ethiopia in favor of western values and interests.

The ever-increasing attention given to researching both the production and consumption of the media speaks of the symbolic significance of the communications media in our time. Peter Steven indicates the reason for the scholarly effort on the part of communications researchers that goes into studying the media, saying:

The best way to know what's going on in any society, many people believe, is to study its popular media. Accordingly, social trends, general fears and aspirations, the status of various groups and the power of ruling elites will be seen reflected in the media. When you hear people talking about media as a mirror of society they are framing their comments in this context. (Steven 2003:108)

This paper looks into the reception of English Premier League satellite TV coverage by Ethiopian youth in Addis Ababa. The study more specifically focuses on the reception of English Premier League satellite TV coverage by Ethiopian youth in Addis Ababa and its impact on their understanding of the world and themselves. It will attempt to investigate and show how Ethiopian youth in Addis Ababa deal with the coverage of the English Premier league.

The world's media flow increases at an ever-faster rate, surrounding our lives with images, sounds, data and noise. But some have more media than others, and all of us interpret it differently based on our own experience.” (Steven 2003:14)

This research will have important contribution to current knowledge about and the debate on Global Media and audiences consumption behavior. It should be seen in terms of the interpretation it makes “In almost every corner of the globe ... the media shape the way most of us live our lives.” (Steven 2003:16)

1.1 Background of the study

Developments in technology, politics and society are increasingly putting the media industries and the profession of journalism at the centre of people's attempt to make sense of what is happening in the world around them. So this study tries to explore the practice and performance of journalism and the media in the context of a new environment brought about by globalization. The idea offers a unique experience in the Global Media.

Nowadays, globalization penetrates cultural and social borders around the world and simultaneously strengthens smaller regions and feelings of local identity. Political and social power is taking on new dimensions. Cultural awareness and misunderstanding are growing. So it is possible to say that, Journalism is at the centre of these changes. As Curran & Gurevitch say:

Globalization has often been applied to the spread of western mediated products across the globe, from which few places seem immune. There is much anecdotal evidence of the use of western cultural products, sometimes in somewhat improbable and erstwhile 'remote' places. Curran & Gurevitch (2000:102)

With the growth of advanced communication technology and digitalization, the media has possibly become the most noticeable engine that makes people on all sides of the world experience the presence of globalization more than ever. Steven argues:

Despite huge differences in distance, upbringing and social context, many of us now listen to the same music, read the same books and watch the same games and television. Youth in Soweto listen to LA rap; viewers in southern China's Guangdong province watch pirated tapes of Jackie Chan; Sri Lankan refugee kids in Toronto come home from school to settle down in store. Teenagers and their young siblings in almost every place on earth know Bart and Lisa Simpson. (Steven 2003:16)

Globalization of media brings opportunities to broaden young generation outlooks and provide more equal access to information, but is also threatens cultural identification and values.

While various theories as to how the media may reflect the larger society provide us with valuable kinds of understanding, it's the debates over media effects that have generated the most heat and controversy. Thus the third customary way of talking about this is to express concern or admiration over its effects. This discourse of media effects has a long history beginning in its modern form with the birth of cinema in the 1890s and its possible role in corrupting the morals of youth." (Steven 2003:112)

Here it is possible to say that the case in Ethiopia is no different. Ethiopia, as part of this world – wide trend of influence, is subject to this situation, which I think can be exemplified by the increased flow into the country and consumption by the local audience of foreign produced cultural materials of the media. Global media in the form of print, broadcast and online (magazine, newspapers, television, radio and Internet) are becoming increasingly accessible in Ethiopia, most evidently in urban areas and particularly in the capital Addis Ababa. With more and more video, and Satellite-TV service giving homes spreading, young Ethiopians opportunity for access and use of global media particularly English Premier League football games and popular culture, is increasing. Nowadays, electronic materials and satellite equipments are becoming cheaper, affordable and easily accessible. This gives an opportunity to investigate how the global media products are being consumed by local audiences and to identify the consequences.

Young people as patrons of the global media framework comprise a considerable part of the local audience in Ethiopia; particularly in Addis Ababa where ease of access is better. In real meaning, the occurrence and diffusion of global media in Ethiopia is

quickly increasing enterprise and this could provide the suggestion that Ethiopian youth are potentially consuming it or, at least, have the right to consume it. The focus of this study, by itself, emerges here: what does this mean for young people's cultural identity and involvement in society? I think an understanding of the relationship between the global media with particular reference to English Premier League satellite TV coverage and how young Ethiopians receive media messages is of paramount importance for appreciating the occurrence of global media in the lives of youth and the dynamics it plays in the framework of their perception.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Whether we take the broader perspective of cultural imperialism or its most important and pervasive manifestation, media imperialism, the essence of the theory remains that developed nations patronize the media around the world.

Consequently, third world cultures become victims as western cultural discourses and views created and mediated through the mass media (Noh, 1) impose themselves on them (developing countries cultures)- hence the unfortunate destruction of the massive cultures. In other words, the theory puts forward a one-way pattern of communication, with the West as the sender of cultural forms and the Third World recipient of those cultural forms through the mediation of the mass media.

There is no exception for Ethiopia. The country, as part of this world-wide trend of influence, is subject to this situation. So, that strength of researching how local audiences make meaning out of the global media contents should be taken as an unquestionable agenda for Ethiopian media. In addition, the globalization researchers taking into consideration the country's array of complex social and communal values and norms that can imply their own share of roles in the interaction between global media messages and local audiences.

This research challenges the traditional but popular view that perceives youth in general and Ethiopian youth in particular as passive members of the society by investigating how they formulate meaning out of the global media messages they are given as represented by satellite TV coverage of English Premier League games.

Accordingly, this study examines the use and interpretation of English Premier League by Ethiopian youth viewers in Addis Ababa in order to reconsider the media imperialism notion in the context of the increasingly complex global flows of media and culture.

In the previous definitions of globalization, the enormously central role of the media in the process of globalization seems to be ignored. In her conceptualization of globalization, Rantanen brings the role of the media into the process of globalization by explicitly referring to them. She envisages globalization as 'a process in which worldwide economic, political, cultural and social relations have become increasingly mediated across time and space' (2005:8). In this basis, we might clearly see what cultural imperialism theorists are getting at when they talk of the upper position taken by Western nations in dominating poor nations with their ever strong media.

When this argument is applied to the flow of cultural products between nations and to their perceived effect, there should be a point derivable from the argument; that is, acknowledging this kind of power relations between nations should not rob the local audience of their ability actively engage with cultural products of the powerful nations. This takes to the notion of media imperialism, which is that it takes the native audience as the passive receiver giving in to "the omnipotent influence of the media" (Noh, 2007). The theory doesn't seem to account for the ability of an audience in terms of using and interpreting media products on the basis of both the context they are using them and their individual experiences.

Having said all this, what follows next is the question, "What is it about English Premier League that is resonating with the lives of youth in Addis Ababa?" This is the

basic question that is going to be addressed in this study. In other words, attempt will be made to investigate what meaning those youth derive from viewing English Premier League and how they make sense of them as part of their lived experience. Particularly, the questions that this study endeavors to investigate are:

- What attracts Addis Ababa youth to watching English Premier League?
- How do they make sense of English Premier League in particular and of their viewing experience in general?
- Does watching the British Premier League games result in change of behavior in Addis Ababa youth?

1.3 Objective of the Study

In the previous sections of this thesis, I have already pointed out and made a passing remark on the purpose I want to achieve in this study. Accordingly, the major objective of this study is to examine the reception of English Premier League satellite TV coverage by young people in Addis Ababa and how they view and interpret the experience of watching these games.

The research also explores various ways in which members of the audience are likely to interpret the games in the face of the complex trans-cultural flow of media products in the contemporary world.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study can be seen in terms of its potential to put forward impending into the cross-cultural media products reception of youth, not to mention its contribution in adding to the already existing works in media studies in the nation. Apart from raising new questions with regard to the relationships that exist between

global media and Ethiopian youth and the other factors that come in between, the significance of this study is primarily centered on its contribution to the building blocks that shed light on the perspectives, outlooks and perception of Ethiopian youth on the global media they are becoming increasingly exposed to.

Youth are groups of the society that have their own view, understanding and perspective and who can make their own decision with regard to their life. Those decisions also will have an impact in their lives in different ways. So the result of this study, beyond generating further questions about how Ethiopian youth feel about their rapport with global media and raising awareness to the prominence of giving a serious attention to the views of youth, provides implications of the role of the global media to the Ethiopian youth set in his/her day-to-day life.

In addition, few attempts, with regard to media studies and youth, have been made to promote this cause, thus making this particular study important in contributing to the build-up of more research.

Furthermore, qualitative audience studies of the sort I have undertaken, which started to gain a momentous recognition in the recent years, communication and media studies, in general, are also just a recent phenomenon in Ethiopia. There has, therefore, been little work done in the field in the country. Besides, it is possible to say that, little attention seems to be paid to studying youth in general and their media consumption behavior in particular by the academic community.

1.5 Methodology

It has been set out earlier in this thesis that the major aim of the study is to explore the reception of English Premier League satellite TV coverage by Ethiopian youth in Addis Ababa which derives from watching these games and the ways they make sense of this experience.

Accordingly, I understand that the methodology that seems to be best suited to communication inquiry of this sort is qualitative methodology. While attempting to explain in simple terms the difference between qualitative and quantitative methods, Griffin touches upon the purposes of communication inquiry using the two approaches. What he emphasizes here is that quantitative methodology is engaged in order to build "a universal law that makes prediction possible" while qualitative approach is used to direct social researches through the process of "interpretation that helps make sense of equivocal communication" (2006:14-15). Although I am aware that my preference for qualitative approach to the study of the phenomenon under discussion will have epistemological implications, especially in terms of the presentation of my findings, I'd like to think that the reason why I decided upon qualitative approach as the right methodology for my study is basically technical. The particular research question that I will set out to find answers for in this study will best be addressed by making use of the appropriate techniques of the approach to qualitative research.

Furthermore, working within this framework of qualitative research design, this study depends on focus group interview, individual interview and to some extent observation as the particular methods of gathering qualitative data. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 279), one of the features that typical qualitative research designs share is that they are multi-method in approach. The view that is pretty much taken in this paper is that this openness to various data-gathering tools helps to collect data that will lead to in-depth descriptions and understanding of the consumption and hence interpretation of English Premier League satellite TV coverage.

As a qualitative researcher, I understand perfectly well how important it is to explore, describe and understand the viewing experiences of the youth of Addis within their context. Academic scholars such as Babbie and Mouton (2001: 272) stress the significance in qualitative researches of studying events and actions in their natural context in order to describe and understand them as fully as one can, which can be hard

to achieve if events and actions are analyzed in isolation from their context as it is the case in quantitative researches.

In this study, a snowball sampling is considered as the most appropriate method. Through this method, I was able to get young viewers who happen to watch English Premier League games and who I could get to recommend other youth with similar experience. Part of my duty in this research was conducting observation in the Satellite-TV show (soccer-viewing) houses. Most of these places are located in areas where the youth are found. I selected four Satellite-TV show houses of this sort and observed the viewers there as they watch English Premier League games. From each Satellite-TV show houses four youngsters were picked for focus group discussions. In addition, for the individual interviews, I made a selection of individuals whom I thought were articulate and enthusiastic on the basis of their participation during the focus group discussions. Questions may rise as to how much representative the sample drawn by using this specific method possible. However, what Deacon et al. write about the distinction between qualitative sampling seems to suggest that this need not be a concern for qualitative research. Within qualitative tradition, whose aim is a thick description rather than generalization, samples are used “as *illustrative* of broader social and cultural processes, rather than strictly and generally *representative*” (Deacon et al., 1999: 43; original emphasis). And that is exactly in accordance with what this Research intends to accomplish.

1.6 Thesis Organization

This thesis consists of six chapters. This introductory chapter concerns itself with showing the form that the paper takes, and it is categorized into subsections such as background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, methodology and significance of the study.

Chapter Two, the literature review, deals with some of the literature available on globalization and the role of media in the process of globalization. This chapter also looks at the main propositions of media/cultural imperialism thesis and its critiques, which represent the theoretical framework of the study.

The third chapter is where the social context of the study is discussed. This chapter sheds some light on such contextual issues as a short background to the socio-political history and people of Ethiopia; a brief history of English Premier League and its consumption in Ethiopia; and the advent of the informal Satellite-TV show houses and their role in terms of bringing the local audience in contact with English Premier League.

The methodology of the study is presented in the fourth chapter. This chapter focuses on the following subtopics: the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research; the epistemological foundations of ethnographic research; the data collection methods, namely small-scale observation, focus group interviews and individual in-depth interviews; sampling procedure; and data analysis procedures.

Chapter Five deals with the data presentation and interpretation, and analyzes how Ethiopian youth in Addis Ababa negotiate to the English Premier League games carried by Satellite TV transmissions. This chapter discusses how these youth make sense of the English Premier League games they regularly watch.

Finally, Chapter Six concludes the thesis, highlighting key findings and offering recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I tried to give a rough idea about the major aim of this study, which is an attempt to scrutinize and find out about the complex and subjective understanding of watching English Premier League satellite TV coverage by Ethiopian youth. Here it is possible to say that, the Ethiopian youth find themselves mislaid in the face of larger and broader worldwide cultural forces. As a result, the question is how do they interact with messages from cultures that are totally strange to them? Whether they strongly engage with them to create their own sense or they simply give in to the influential messages has been a questionable issue for so long.

The cultural imperialism model argued that ... the international flows of technology transfer and media 'hardware' coupled with the 'software' flows of cultural products actually strengthened the one-way dependency between developed and developing countries and prevented true development. Again, media and communications were seen as powerful, possibly even more powerful than in the previous paradigm since they would threaten the cultural independence of these nations. (Rantanen, 2005: 74)

According to Rantanen, the existence of a homogeneous audience is under a big question mark for she believes that:

"There is a widely held view that no homogenous audience exists any longer, only a fragmented audience with distinctive tastes. This has been a great achievement of works of scholarship since World War II, when the dominant theory was one of powerful media that could change audience behavior." (2005: 95).

This claim seems to refute the argument made by cultural imperialism theorists whose dominant theory posits the notion of powerful media at the global level, which is "often saturated with American" ways of living, destroying peoples' culture at the local level (Branston, 2000: 61-66).

So, in this chapter, I try to show how the youth in Addis receive the English Premier League satellite TV coverage and make sense of them in light of their life. Here, I will

start from the assumption that "the active and creative role of audiences and the ways in which different social and discourse positions encourage different reading" (Boyd-Barrett, 1995: 499-500).

First, I try to review some of the literature dealing with the role of media in the process of globalization. Then, I look into the media/cultural imperialism thesis which conceptualize the notion of developed countries media as being all powerful and affecting the cultures of developing countries. Finally, I consider some of the theoretical critiques put forward by various scholars in response to the media imperialism thesis. All this will be done based on the frame work of research questions stated in the first chapter.

2.2 Globalization and the Role of Media

The word globalization is such a slogan that everybody wants to speak about it. However, the engagement of many scholars in the discourse of globalization has got them into a debate over the nature and direction of flow of cultural products. According to Schirato and Webb, different writers take different positions as to when this phenomenon of globalization started to be felt with:

"some of writers see it as dating from the empires of the ancient world, while for others globalization is coterminous with the modern era and the process of modernization, or even of post modernization. It seems everyone has a stake in its meaning, and is affected by its discourses and practices, though there is no straightforward or widely accepted definition of the term, either in general use or in academic writings." (2003:2).

In spite of many energetic research and academic debate for many decades, globalization still remains even more dynamic and existence to be a notion of vast interest and debate at this time. Rantanen says, "it is difficult to separate the consequences and causes of globalization" (2005:6). It is however, to be noted that globalization is the catchphrase of the day although (Rantanen 2005:6) is that of Giddens, who identifies the concept as:

The intensification of world-wide social relations, which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. (1990:64)

In this definition, Giddens does not seem to emphasize the different ways in which social relations are fostered, let alone making an explicit reference to the media's role in the process of globalization.

On the other hand, as Cochrane and Pain stated, "what stretched social relations entail is that there are widespread networks of interconnection across the world culturally, economically and politically" (2004: 15). According to Cochrane and Pain description, Intensification of flows is also associated with the stretching of social relations in that it implies "the increased density of interaction across the globe which implies that the impact of events are felt more strongly than before" (2004:16). Similarly, increasing interpenetration, as the term itself indicates, refers to the intensity and extent "to which apparently distant cultures and society come face to face with each other at local level, creating increased diversity" (Cochrane and Pain, 2004: 16).

Similarly, Waters defines globalization "as a process which the constraints of geography on local and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding" (1995: 3). Here it is possible to understand that, Waters is talking more about the transnational movement of people.

On the other hand, Rantanen (2005) defines globalization as "a process in which world-wide economic, political, cultural and social relations have become increasingly mediated across time and space" (2005: 8). This definition, which focuses on economical, political and cultural issues, indicated that how globalization is highly mediated in all spheres of life. However, different from her definition of globalization, in this research, I prefer to concentrate on the role of the media in the flow of foreign cultural products into Ethiopian youth.

2.3 Media Imperialism Thesis

The popularity of media imperialism thesis dates back to the 1970s during which much concern about the penetration of developed countries media was felt by the developing countries that were at the wake of independence. The General conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) brought the theme of the way the media of the richer world operated towards the domination of world public opinion or a source of moral and cultural pollution, after which the much acclaimed movement towards a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) propped up. NWICO strived for the promotion of a fairer and more balanced exchange of information among nations (White, 1994:21).

According to Hesmondhalgh, the 1970s and early 1980s marked the time when the term cultural imperialism was on the mouths of various scholars, which implies the peak of its popularity (Hesmondhalgh, 2002: 174). Hesmondhalgh also writes that its popularity as a theory was due to the sudden attention given to it “when concern about such development found expression in a series of UNESCO reports, seminars and declaration (most notably MacBride Report -UNESCO, 1980)” (2002:174).

As Noh puts it, cultural imperialism representing a form of critical approach “inherits the tradition of political economy of the Frankfurt school” dealing with issues of “the unequal power distribution among countries of the world” (2007: 3). Charging the theory with claims of inadequacy in terms of precisely describing the constructs it tries to explain, White gleans out the assumption of the thesis which categorizes the countries of the world affected by the unequal power distribution into center and periphery.

Another assumption of the theory is that it presumes a centralized approach to the development and distribution of media products. The thinking here is that all media products originate from only center nations that have devious ulterior motives of deliberately wanting to dominate the media of periphery nations. This belief is based partly on the view that no periphery country will even be able to produce media products of its own. (White, 2000: 3)

Similarly, Rantanen, in her book *The Media and Globalization*, strongly argues that “cultural imperialism theories were mainly associated with the USA” (2005: 76). She contends that “this is not surprise since many of the early proponents of cultural imperialism were in Latin America where US influence was probably more visible than anywhere else.” in the world (2005: 76). So, it is not unexpected if some writers think of the notion of cultural imperialism as the process of Americanization in which the dominating role is taken up by the US whereas developing nations are left with no option but to subordinate to the dominant values systems originating from the cultural codes of the US.

The use of the term ‘media imperialism’ and ‘cultural imperialism’ basically point toward an analogous understanding, both referring to the dominance of the values and interests of the developed nations over what came to be known as developing nations. In explaining the significance, implication and application of the concepts, Williams states that: “media imperialism is the dominance of one nation’s media system by another, and cultural imperialism the dominance of one nation’s culture by another. The problem is that the media are the main vehicles for the transfer of cultural values from one nation or society to another.” (2003:218).

Another way of examining the relationship between the concepts is the view that media imperialism forms an integral part of cultural imperialism. According to McQuail, talking about cultural imperialism as media imperialism generates “the question of the centrality of the media in claims about cultural imperialism” (2002:225). Denis McQuail, in his *Mass Communication Theory*, states that “most of the issues surrounding the global mass communication have a direct or indirect connection with the thesis of ‘cultural imperialism’ or the more limited notion of ‘media imperialism’”(1983:221). He further states that “both concepts [cultural imperialism and media imperialism] imply a deliberate attempt to dominate, invade or subvert the ‘cultural space’ of others and suggest a degree of coercion in the relationship.”

The communication-cultural products, which are produced by multinational corporations, are mainly uni-directional in their flow. According to Strelitz, the role of multinational corporations "is not only informational, but also ideological, in that they promote and develop popular support for the values and artifacts of the capitalist system" (2005:52). In relation to this notion, Schiller argues that the economic and cultural spheres are undividable from each other in the sense that the former is increasingly dependent on the latter.

Media-cultural imperialism is a subset of the *general* system of imperialism. It is not freestanding; the media-cultural component in a developed corporate economy supports the economic objectives of the decisive industrial-financial sectors (i.e. the creation and extension of the consumer society); the cultural and economic spheres are indivisible. Cultural, no less than automobile, production has its political economy. Consequently, what is regarded as cultural output also is ideological and profit-serving to the system at large. Finally, in its latest mode of operation, in the late twentieth century, the corporate economy is increasingly dependent on the media-cultural sector. (Schiller, 1991: 14)

media imperialism stands for the most essential part of cultural imperialism in terms of its specificity with which it reveals the particular experience or happening of influence, Boyd-Barrett comments that media imperialism is a process in which a given country's media, be it their content, ownership, distribution or structure, are subjected to "substantial external pressure from the media interests of any country or countries" (1977: 117). In addition, he stated that this form of patronization is often "without proportionate reciprocation ... by the country so affected" (1977: 117).

Boyd-Barrett, who is recognized for originating the phrase 'media imperialism' defines it saying that the process is said to happen to a country when

....the country which originates an international media influence either exports this influence as a deliberate political strategy, or simply *disseminates* this influence unintentionally or without deliberation in a more general process of political, social or economic influence. The country which is affected by media influence either adopts this influence as a deliberate commercial or political strategy, or simply *absorbs* this influence unreflectively as a result of the contract. (1977: 119; original emphasis)

For Boyd-Barrett, a country represents a unit of analysis, and the international media influence is conceived of as something which is exported from one country it originates to another one. The centrality of western media in the proposition of the thesis is captured by Watson and Hill when they attempted to define media imperialism as a term used to describe "the role western media play in dominating 'Third World' developing countries through communication systems" (1984: 173). These two writers further state that media imperialism thesis has another dimension to it saying:

... crucial to the notion of media or cultural imperialism is the understanding of the relationship between economic, territorial, cultural and informational factors. In the age of western economic colonialism in the nineteenth century the flow of information is a vital process of growth and reinforcement where the trade went, so followed developing media practice and technology reflecting the values and assumptions of those who owned and manned the service. (1984: 173)

Here they put forward that the kind of influence suggested by the advocates of media imperialism is something of an extension that came out of the information flow associated with draw back in the colonial period.

On the other hand, Schiller states that research findings which are said to be opposed to the media imperialism thesis are encouraging to the media imperialists and that they are such simplistic explanations they cannot account for the presence or absence of cultural domination. He further argues that: "The transfer of cultural values is a complex matter. It is not a one-shot hypodermic inoculation of individual plots and character representations. It involves a much more difficult to measure acceptance of deep-structured meanings that may not even be explicitly stated." (Schiller, 1989: 149)

From all the above arguments, which are forwarded by scholars, it is possible to say that, the developed countries as an imperial center impose their culture on the periphery. Because they have the money and the means, to produce the majority of the media products, and the rest of the world especially developing countries, like Ethiopia, have been left to take the inferior position when they purchase and watch those productions. As a result, developing countries are hindered in the difficult situation of

overwhelming media filled by the developed countries' way of life. In summary, the media imperialism thesis suggests that the entire process of fabrication and diffusion of developed media products and their subsequent consumption by different people all over the world results in cultural homogenization (McQuail, 1983; Rantanen, 2005).

2.4 Critiques of the Media Imperialism Thesis

The media imperialism theory has gain a massive interest among scholars and academicians of the globalization affiliation, and in the contrary it has had its critique by different scholars too. The issue of cultural imperialism which Rantanen describes as "the faults of media imperialism theory are many and have been pointed out on a number of occasions" (Rantanen, 2005:78). The 1980s and 1990s were especially notable in the rise of criticism against the imperialism theory by scholars (Boyd-Barret, 1982; McQuail, 1994; Schlesinger 1991, Tomilson, 1991, Golding & Harris, 1997). "Most of the criticism was influenced by audience studies and cultural studies, both of which gave attention to the independent role of culture. This is clearly something which media/cultural imperialism theorists had missed, and the criticism has been approved." (Rantanen, 2005:78).

On the other hand, Tomlinson describes, cultural imperialism, as "the idea that global culture is in one way or another liable to be a hegernonic culture" (1999: 79) has been around since 1960s, attaining its most popularity during the 1970s and early 1980s. Hesmondhalgh, however, writes that the momentum with which cultural imperialism was acknowledged started to drift away from the early 1980s onwards when some radical writers began to question the way they once saw international mass communication (2002:174). He further notes that the 1990s marked the critical time when a paradigm shift arise for some writers started to go for the term 'globalization' instead of 'cultural imperialism' (2002: 174).

In the previous section of this chapter, we have seen that cultural imperialism speculates a negative construction of cultural influence as it assumes that the process show the way to homogenization of culture. Here, it is possible to argue that critical theorists who are in favor of this thesis seem to think that contents, no matter where they are consumed or by whom they are consumed, will have relatively identical meanings. Watson, who is one of the ethnographic media researchers, criticizes the notion of cultural domination and homogenization by stating: "Ethnography seeks to understand the particular meaning making process of those it studies and it is characterized by its acknowledgement of the complexities of these processes" (2003: 77).

This kind of practice in audience studies not only examines the subjective use of media by audiences but also what this use means to audiences and the social framework in which audiences go about using media products as portion of their daily activities.

According to Silverstone, when we theorize the plurality of the audience, we should look beyond the familiar sociological differentiation such as gender, class, subculture, etc. which "have all been the object of study as mediatory factors in reception and negotiation with content [of the media]" (Silverstone, 1990: 175). He further states that the plurality of the audience "also consists in the plurality of the social and individual, a plurality which in turn involves both a sociology and a psychology, and in their interrelationship, an understanding of the dynamics of the process of mediation" (1990: 175).

It is obvious that culture is dynamic not static, always in process of change. True, outside influences shape cultures; however it is often impossible to distinguish culture in the modern world as being purely locally produced, as most local cultural practices have "traces of previous cultural borrowing or influence" that have become assimilated and naturalized (Tomilson, 1991:91). As such, if there is no continuity or uniformity in national cultures then "the impact of global media and culture should be seen as simply another part of the dynamic evolution of national identities" (Williams, 2003:22).

According to Williams, “[w]hile the cultural imperialism thesis came to exercise a great hold over the policy makers and peoples of the so-called Third World, many scholars reject the thesis for being too pessimistic” (2003:220). Tracy (1995) attacks the failure to provide empirical evidence in supports rather than the “realities of individual lives”, fail to address the cultural meanings of these flows (1985:45).

Another critique of the media imperialism, Terhi Rantanen, argues that the theory has given too much weight to the role of the global in the homogenization of culture. According to her, as much as the global can be homogenizing, so can the national. In effect, the impact of the national as a homogenizing factor is ignored in the analysis. The media imperialism school has “romanticized the national, instead of seeing it as potentially as oppressive as the global” (2005:80)

2.5 Indigenization

Rantanen states that the idea of indigenization helps to explain *how* heterogenization occurs. She further refers to the idea of transculturation as “a process whereby cultural forms literally move through time and space where they interact with other cultural forms and settings, influence each other, produce new forms, change cultural settings and produce cultural hybrids - the fusing of cultural forms” (2005: 99). This definition of indigenization or transculturation seems to put forward that the idea of cultural purity is challengeable for the process of globalization. Here, it’s important to take into account that globalization challenges the time and space concept for it calls for a redefinition of these entities through the increased interconnectedness that globalization permits people to form in the modern period. Citing Giddens (1990s), Rantanen stats that:

‘transculturation is very close to de-territorization, the loss of the ‘natural’ relation between culture and geographic and social territory, the release of cultural signs from fixed locations in space and time, and the disembedding [lifting out] of people and symbolic forms from the places where we expect them to be (2005: 99).

Hesmondhalgh writes, “to think of culture as being linked to territory in a simple, one-to-one way but more and more the culture of a particular place is comprised of inputs from many other places” (2002: 178). We can understand from this explanation is that cultural hybridity is the arrangement of the time and domestic audiences find themselves hindered in the need to negotiate with contents which are based “not on their interests, concerns and culture of particular nations, but on those of a variety of nations, or of sections of people who share a trans-cultural culture” (Hesmondhalgh, 2002: 178).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter, as being literature review, offers an important presentation on the conceptual basis, academic arguments, scholarly writings and perspectives of the important themes of globalization, global media, and the media/cultural imperialism thesis. Definitions, debates and outlooks on the concept of globalization have been discussed; meaning and implication of global media as part of the broader context of globalization have been presented; and the approaches, and perceptions, and attitudes of youth as global media audiences have been introduced. The final part of the chapter gave the theoretical framework of the study-the media/cultural, imperialism thesis-including historical development, definitions, scholarly debates and outlooks, criticism, and contemporary relevance.

Here, I tried to show the strategic role played by the media in the process of globalization. The center of the description of this role of the media has been Rantanen’s definition of globalization in which she recognizes the process of mediation in economic, political and cultural relations. In my endeavor to explain cultural globalization, I have also talked about the cultural imperialism thesis and some of its critiques, putting the homogenizing versus heterogenizing arguments as to the effects of globalization against each other and focusing on the active role of the audience in terms of how meanings and identities are socially negotiated. This research is adjusted to answer questions of this sort with respect to Ethiopian youth consumption of foreign media products.

Chapter Three

The Social Context of the Study

3.1 Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to establish the general background of the social context in which Ethiopian youth in Addis — interact with developed countries media products, particularly English Premier League games. Based on that, first I will try to present a brief background to the socio-political history and people of Ethiopia. Then, the history and development of English Premier League and its consumption in Ethiopia, and finally, discuss the overall situation of informal Satellite-TV show houses and their role in terms of getting the local audience in relation with English Premier League games.

In the next segment, I will discuss points which are thought to be relevant in terms of giving to the study a historical and geographical context of Ethiopia. The importance of the segment, therefore, should be seen from the side of making the point that Ethiopia's history is recognized by imbalanced and diverse levels of contact with the outside world, and hence suggesting the inequality of the cultural influence experienced by the people at different times of its history.

3.2 Historical and Geographical context of Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of African countries which geographically situated in what is commonly known as the Horn of Africa (Eastern Africa). The country is recognized as one of the largest countries in Africa which covers a total area of 1, 127, 127 square kilometers (CIA Factbook, 2008). According to the United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) 2008 report, the existing population of Ethiopia is thought to be close to 85.2 million,

which is a figure that is likely to place the country in the second position next to Nigeria. On the other hand, the Ethiopian Central Statistics Agency indicated in its 2007 census first draft report that, the total population of Ethiopia is about 73, 918, 505. According to the UNFPA, 17 percent of the total population of Ethiopia is living in Urban.

The Horn of Africa (Eastern Africa) where the country lies also represents the crossroads between Sub Saharan Africa and the Middle East. The country, which represents a diversity of culture, race, language, history, etc, is commonly regarded as the result of the country's history as the melting pot of different people and cultures.

Ethiopia as a country has three thousand years of solid history. The origin of the Ethiopian kingdom can be traced back to the 10th century BC. The civilization of Axum, represents one of the flowering periods of the country's long history. Though it is hard to trace the emergence of the early Axumite kingdom, Roman and Greek sources indicate that this kingdom was thriving in the first century AD, and that makes Ethiopia one of the oldest civilizations both in Africa and in the world with a concrete record of evidence (Hooker, 1996).

Christianity as one of the major religions of the nation was first introduced in the fourth century A.D. with king Ezana being the first person to convert to Christianity. Many historians would agree that the introduction of Christianity can be thought of as a top-down move, with the ordinary people embracing it much later than the aristocrats (Zewde, 1998: 35). Owing to the political might of the Christian rulers, the country is commonly referred to as a Christian nation.

It may be argued that the importance of the nation's adoption of Christianity, in addition to the trade relations with other great civilizations of the time, shows how the country was culturally influenced, which in turn seems to support the argument of some scholars who claim that globalization is as old as the history of humanity itself (Schirato and Webb, 2003: 2).

It is possible to say that the long history of Ethiopia is characterized by a feudal socio-economic system and the last part of this system is marked by the coming of the Dergue regime into power in 1974 which thrown Emperor Haile Selassie I. This situation can be considered as alteration of the socio-economic order from a feudo-capitalist society to a socialist one. Consequently, the once privately owned property including land was nationalized and redistributed for those who were dispossessed (Cohen, 1973: 72). A new transformation taking place then was the country's substitute in establishing close attachment with the former Soviet Union (USSR) and the People's Republic of China, as opposed to the warmly affiliation of Ethiopia with the West, especially with the US and Great Britain. This situation resulted in the limitation of Western influence including the cultural influence of the developed countries media.

However, after the coming of EPDRF to the power, in 1991, the ban imposed against Western materials, including media products is lifted up. This situation fundamentally initiated the expansion and consumption of global, in particular developed countries, media messages. Furthermore, it allows a relatively free access of people to foreign media that this study is tuned to as it relates to the practice of Ethiopian youth in consumption of English Premier League games. In the next section, I will discuss about Ethiopian youth profile.

3.3 The Ethiopian Youth

This research pursue the specific definition of the youth as its guiding basis in the sense that safety measure was taken to make sure that only informants within the particular age range will be included into the study. The lack of safety measure in most definitions of youth makes it hard to come up with a definite age range where the Ethiopian youth' fall in. Recognizing it "as a hypothetically constructed period rather than as a precise age range" (Kuper and Kuer, 1996: 4), some writers indicate that the years of adolescence/youth range from about 9 to 25 years. It is, however, important to note that the writers vary slightly in their specification of this age (Kuper and Kuer, 1996).

According to the first draft of *'The 2007 Population & Housing census of Ethiopia'*, the projected total urban population is estimated at about 11,956,170 which is out of the 73,918,505 projected total population size of the country for the year 2007. Out of the estimated total urban population, the number of young people who are 10 years up to 24 years of age is around 25,671,085 for the same year (Ethiopian population and housing census, 2007).

In the introductory chapter, it has been describe that this research is concerned with exploring the interaction of and consequently sense-making process of the youth audience with the cultural products of Developed countries media. The youth who are the focus of this research belong to the portion of the society with different socio-economic background. From the initial observations I carry out and informal interviews I had with a few of the audience at the Satellite-TV show houses, I came to learn that most of the youth are either unemployed with occasional job opportunities as day-laborers or students with inconsistent school attendance or employed in different disciplines. For this reason, this research strived to look into how the youth integrate the English Premier League games into their specific lived culture and, in light of their lived reality, draw meanings out of them.

3.4 The History and Development of English Premier League and its Consumption in Ethiopia

3.4.1 History and Development of English Premier League

The Premier League is an English professional league for football clubs. At the top of the English football league system, it is the country's primary football competition. It is contested by 20 clubs, operating a system of promotion and relegation with The Football League. "The Premier League is a corporation in which the 20 member clubs act as shareholders. Seasons run from August to May, with teams playing 38 games each." (See <http://www.premierleague.com/>)

The Premier League has been sponsored since 1993. The sponsor has been able to determine the league's sponsorship name.

The Premier League is the most profitable football league in the world, with "... total club revenues of over £1.4 billion in 2005–06 season ... making it 40% above its nearest competitor: Italy's Serie A. Revenues have increased to approximately £1.8 billion in the 2007–08 season, when new media rights deals started." (See <http://www.premierleague.com/>)" Based on November 2007 exchange rates, "... £1.8 billion converts to a gross annual league revenue of about US\$3.7 billion." (See <http://www.premierleague.com/>)

On the other hand, in terms of world football, the Premier League clubs are some of the richest in the world. "... Eight Premier League clubs listed in the top 20 richest clubs for the 2005–06 season." (See <http://www.premierleague.com/>)

3.4.2 Media coverage

Television has played a major role in the history of the Premier League. The money from television rights has been vital in helping to create excellence in the field.

The League's decision to assign broadcasting rights to BSkyB in 1992 was at the time a radical decision, but one that has paid off. At the time pay television was an almost untested proposition in the UK market, as was charging fans to watch live televised football. However, a combination of Sky's strategy, the quality of Premier League football and the public's appetite for the game has seen the value of the Premier League's TV rights soar. (See <http://www.premierleague.com/>)

3.4.3 Worldwide

Promoted as "The Greatest Show on Earth", the Premier League is the world's most popular and most watched sporting league. The Premier League is particularly popular in Asia, where it is the most widely distributed sports programme. For example, The Premier League "... in the People's Republic of China, matches attract television audiences between 100 million and 360 million, more than any other foreign sport." (See <http://www.premierleague.com/>)

3.4.4 Criticisms

One of the main criticisms leveled at the Premier League is the widening the gap between the Premier League and the Football League in the territory of Britain itself.

Another major criticism is the development of the so-called "Big Four" clubs.

“Since Blackburn Rovers lifted the trophy in 1994–95, only three clubs have won the Premier League title—Manchester United (eight of the club's ten titles), Arsenal (three times) and Chelsea (twice). In addition, Manchester United has not finished outside the top three since the formation of the Premier League, with Arsenal finishing inside the top five in all but two seasons, while Liverpool, without an English league title since the pre-Premier League era, have not finished lower than fifth since 1999.” (See <http://www.premierleague.com/>)

In recent years, the success of these clubs has led to these four teams being increasingly referred to as the "Big Four". The Big Four clubs have finished “... in the first four positions for the last three seasons, therefore they have all qualified for the last three seasons of the Champions League and receive the financial benefits of such qualification.” (See <http://www.premierleague.com/>) The benefits, especially increased revenue, are believed to have widened the gap between the Big Four clubs and the rest of the Premier League.

3.4.5 Influence on the global game

Nigerian football officials have claimed the increase in popularity of the Premier League and subsequent worldwide media coverage is having a damaging effect on the national leagues of other footballing countries. “Nigerian football officials stated that with Nigeria being a recent example, citing lower domestic attendances when games clash with Premier League fixtures, and the drain of young talent being lured to the Premier League by wage offers no local club can hope to match.” (See <http://www.premierleague.com/>) On the other hand, one could also argue that the money that comes into these clubs paid for their footballing exports, and the inspirational effect of watching the Premier League on local desire for playing football, is of local benefit. “In an extreme case of worldwide influence, after the 2008 UEFA Champions

League Final, seven people died in Nigeria after clashes between rival supporters of Chelsea and Manchester United.” (See <http://www.premierleague.com/>)

3.4.6 Players

Premier League clubs have almost complete freedom to sign whatever number and category of players they wish.

There is no team or individual salary cap, no squad size limit, no age restrictions other than those applied by general employment law, no restrictions on the overall number of foreign players, and few restrictions on individual foreign players — all players with EU nationality, including those able to claim an EU passport through a parent or grandparent, are eligible to play, and top players from outside the EU are able to obtain UK work permits. (See <http://www.premierleague.com/>)

As a result of the increasingly lucrative television deals, player wages rose sharply following the formation of the Premier League. “In the first Premier League season the average player wage was £75,000 per year, but subsequently rose by an average 20% per year for a decade, peaking in the 2003–04 season, when the annual salary of the average Premier League player was £676,000.”

All the above facts indicated that how far the English Premier League establishes its strength throughout the world in different aspects, especially in economic and media networking.

3.5 The Consumption of English Premier League in Ethiopia

East Africa being one of the destinations of English premier league, let’s now focus on when and how people in Ethiopia started to appreciate English Premier League games.

Before that lets say something which I saw in Kampala, Uganda. In August 2008, I had an interesting trip in Uganda with other East African journalists who come from Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia and Uganda. The trip was focused on the

environmental issues. But, as a matter of chance when we visit the city I saw a crowd of people who were watching English Premier League games in the big hotel hall. The majority of these people are youth. They were chanting and dancing. At a time I was surprised, because, the circumstance which I saw in that incident was similar to Ethiopian youth. I discussed thoroughly about the situation with other journalists. They told me that this kind of situation exists in other African countries too. I hope other journalists, scholars and the society at large might discuss about the situation too.

Let's come to Ethiopia. In the late 1980s, many communist governments in various Eastern European Nations collapsed, which was marked by the break down of the Berlin Wall in 1989. This was soon followed by the socialist Dergue regime being overthrown after the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) took control of the power in 1991. According to Deane et al. (2004), this development is part of the complex political and social changes happening in various other parts of Africa.

Recent developments in Eastern Africa reflect the complex and contradictory character of political and social trends that have affected many other parts of the continent. Since 1990, most countries in the sub region have undergone a far-reaching political transformation, mostly by replacing former one-party regimes with nominal multiparty democracies. Freedom of expression, press freedom and media diversity have become critical indicators of the health or other wise of democratic transition in the sub-region. (Deane et al., 2004: 90)

Following such political transformations of this sort, Ethiopia witnessed a relaxed atmosphere in terms of people's access to diversified media messages, including foreign produced ones. This trend, in general, allowed western media to make their way abundantly to the Ethiopian audience. Thus, it is against such background that this study takes interest in investigating *how* Ethiopian youth in Addis meet with English Premier League games in informal Satellite – TV show houses. The next section, hence, gives a brief background to how those Satellite-TV show houses have evolved and how they operate as cultural space for the youth.

3.6 Satellite TV show Houses in Addis

The reach of this study is limited to the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, where over 2.73 million people live in its area (2007 national census first draft report). According to the first draft of *'The 2007 Population & Housing census of Ethiopia'* the number of youth who live in Addis Ababa is about 1.04 million.

A way in point, for this research is therefore that the majority of these youth, having little or no access to other private entertainment spaces pass their leisure time by watching the English Premier League games as a primary option for their life.

A point worth making here is that football fans (English Premier League supporters) in Addis have three options as to where and how they could enjoy watching games. They can go to 'MESKAL SQUARE' in the city which sometimes transmits such games with huge 'Sony screen', watch them at their own houses by paying the expensive lease fee or visit informal Satellite-TV show houses. Watch them at their own houses as an alternative may not be affordable for the majority of youth in Addis. Furthermore, it might be difficult to watch the games with huge 'Sony screen' at MESKAL SQUARE because, for the majority of youth, the location is far from their home and difficult to go back at the mid night when the game is over. Therefore, the youth in the city are left with the only option of visiting informal Satellite-TV show houses which are easily available near to their living home. So, they can interact with such foreign media experience and the outside world with a price of 3 up to 10 birr per head for each game. The Satellite-TV show houses are frequently visited by the predominantly male, urban youth who are thought to not be able to afford to watch them at their own houses by paying the expensive lease fee. These houses also function as a unique, shared cultural space for the youth in the city. The fact that male viewers are exceptionally seen in such places has something to do with a norm of the society being such that it is socially wrong for females to leave their homes and get together with males in spaces culturally recognized as males'.

These Satellite-TV show houses represent a new trend and are run by a few young males who somehow found a way of getting the capital to open up such places as part of brisk business. It is very hard to find empirical data that suggest the exact number of Satellite-TV show houses operating in Addis Ababa, because any person who has got a decoder from the agents of Digital Satellite Television /Dstv/ or GTV in Ethiopia can open Satellite-TV show house and run the business. Even the Addis Ababa Trade and Tourism Bureau, which is a government body in charge of granting licenses to Satellite-TV show houses, do not know the exact number of Satellite-TV show houses currently in existence in Addis. Some of the reasons for their closure and confiscation of their resource materials put forward by security forces were that many of them are places harboring illegal acts by the youth and that they do not pay taxes. Seeing one little Satellite-TV show house after another in places such as Addisu Gebeya, Kassanchis and Piazza, where this study paid a closer attention too, can be considered as a witness that the response from city's Trade and Tourism Bureau seems to be correct.

In terms of how these Satellite-TV show houses operate, the observations I have conducted indicated that they usually transmit English Premier League games in the afternoons, evenings and at the midnight. What I learned during the observations was that the owners of the Satellite-TV show houses usually receive the games from satellite which they leased by paying big amount of money (more than 600 American Dollars per year) for the agents of GTV and Dstv in Addis. The inside of such Satellite-TV show houses is usually arranged in such a way that the rooms can serve more people than they can actually accommodate. From what I have seen, the houses cannot hold more than 40 to 50 people but the actual number of viewers is most often a lot more than (sometimes double) that number. Contributing to this is the way benches are arranged in the Satellite-TV show houses; i.e. the space between the benches is too narrow that one can barely move ones legs.

Football games are usually English Premier League and sometimes Spanish or Italy. Some of the owners of the Satellite-TV show houses who can afford to prepare two

screens either in two rooms or one hall host two shows on a daily basis. In one of the rooms, English Premier League game is screened whereas the other room is reserved for viewers who prefer watching Spanish or Italian football games or other English Premier League games. The entrance fee in such places is often 3 up to 10 Ethiopian Birr. I myself, as a participant observer, paid the charge every time when I entered to the Satellite-TV show houses.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have made an attempt to highlight the general background of the context in which the Ethiopian youth consume and interact with media products of the developed world. Accordingly, I have briefly discussed some geographical and historical facts about Ethiopia. In addition, I considered what the Ethiopian youth profile looks like. I also paid due attention to a brief history of English Premier League before discussing when and how it started to catch a large audience in Ethiopia. Finally, on the basis of my observations, I tried to explain how the Satellite-TV show houses have developed and operate. In the next chapter, I will discuss the research methodology employed in gathering empirical data and analyzing them.

Chapter Four

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Herein research, I strive to scrutinize how the youth in Addis Ababa, in the midst of their everyday lived reality, creates sense of English Premier League games. In my endeavor to extract truth out the sense they make of these games, I have preferred to utilize a qualitative research methodology embedded in reception theory. This is for which I consider that humans' infusion of their own actions and worlds' with senses can greatest be revealed all the way through the use of such a research approach.

If we, as academic researchers, are interested in understanding how people experience media content, we have to use a research that enables us to explore the process through which people actualize media meanings and incorporated them in meaningful ways in to their daily lives. (Schrolder et al 2003:122)

For that reason, what I commence to achieve in this chapter is to strive to portray and argue the research design and procedure implemented in the research as part of the endeavor to produce empirical facts. Particularly I focus on the next subtopics: *the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research; the epistemological foundations of ethnographic research; the data collection methods, namely small-scale observation, focus group interviews and individual in-depth interviews; sampling procedure; and data analysis procedures.*

4.2 Research Design and Procedure

4.2.1 The Philosophical Underpinnings of Qualitative Research

As it is indicated in the first chapter, the methodological approach in this research is principally qualitative. In communications and media studies, difficulty as to the suitability of some

methodologies on top of others to the lessons of communication phenomena have all the time been emanating. According to Jensen's acknowledgement of audience research "one of the few branches of communication research that has a relatively long history of identifiable phases with characteristic concerns" (1987: 21), has been subjected to such arguments. In addition, Deacon et al emphasizes, the understanding that this notion of impact of the mass media and the need to reconceptualize media's impact have made many researchers seek to use other methods to uncover the result of the meeting between a medium and its audience (1999: 248). According to these intellectuals, the methods that a number of researchers have lately turned their attention to are qualitative methods.

Recognizing that qualitative research methodology includes the entire set of methods and techniques having in common some set of principles or logic. "researchers attempt always to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves" (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 270). Qualitative researcher's endeavor to investigate human attitudes and behaviors within their natural setting is their desire "to preserve the form and content of human behavior and to analyze its qualities, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formula transformations" (Lindlof, 1995: 21). This reveals that where qualitative research approach infringe with that of quantitative research with regard to its philosophical fundamentals. In this light, the qualitative researcher should become more than just a mere interviewer or participant observer. "He or she," according to Babbie and Mouton, "has to make a deliberate attempt to put themselves in the shoes of the people they are observing and studying and try and understand their actions, decisions, behavior, practices, ritual and so on, from their perspective"(2001:271)

It is also important to emphasize that the focus of qualitative research is in the description and understanding of actions and events. Qualitative researchers first and foremost calls attention to as Babbie and Mount states "a lengthy description that captures the sense of actions as they occur, placing events in contexts that are understandable to the actors themselves" (2001:272)

Qualitative research is such a term that indicates a variety of methods and “styles of social research” which share a certain set of philosophical principles (Denscombe, 2003: 267).

There is an argument between writers who think of the quantitative/qualitative divide as representing “divergent clusters of epistemological assumptions” and others who tend to see the choice for one approach over the other at a technical level only (Bryman, 1988: 5). Though, here, it is important to be leaned to the necessity of holding on to the epistemological basis for deciding to use qualitative method in this research. This kind of social reality is the process of making sense, and the suitable technique in which this reality have to be examined and empirical data generated is qualitative method. The issue of epistemology makes it tough for me to ponder by combining qualitative and quantitative methods in a single research design.

The epistemological fundamentals that strengthen qualitative researches on communications and media stem from the philosophical tradition which came to be known as interpretive/phenomenological tradition. As Deacon et al. states:

The central concern here is not with establishing relations of cause and effect but with exploring the ways that people make sense of their social worlds and how they express these understandings th[r] ough language, sound, imagery, personal style and social rituals. (Deacon et al., 1999: 6)

If we accept the phenomenological assumption that the aim of social inquiry is the stress “on the understanding of the social world through an examination of participants” (Bryman, 2003: 266), then we ought to emphasize the need to view the world through the eyes of the participants themselves. For this to happen, Babbie and Mouton (2001: 271) write that the role adopted by the qualitative researcher should be more than just being a participant observer. They further note that by deliberately putting themselves in the shoes of the actors they are investigating in the social world, the qualitative researcher should “try and understand their actions, decisions, behaviors, practices, rituals and so on, from their perspective” (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 271). I am well aware of the relevance close yet critical involvement of the sort suggested by Babbie

and Mouton will have to my study. My academic background, which will have a definite impact on my worldview, is likely to be divergent from the world of experience of those youth I am investigating, and that makes it very important that I pay extra attention to the need of taking the insider perspective to understanding them better.

In addition to the feature of qualitative research discussed so far, idiographic research strategy (versus nomothetic) is another crucial point distinguishing qualitative research from quantitative research. Idiographic research strategy is often associated with qualitative research in the sense that it posits the notion of examining “a single event or case and its structural coherence within a larger context” (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 272). Nomothetic research strategy, on the other hand, which is closely linked to quantitative research, is aimed at searching “for empirical regularities of laws of human behavior” (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 272). In other words, what this distinction means is that instead of aiming at the generalizability of research outcomes to a wider population, as is the case in quantitative research, qualitative research focuses on understanding the particular paying due attention to the context (Maxwell, 1992: 296).

Closely linked to the idea of examining the particular in qualitative research is the overwhelming desire of qualitative researchers to describe and understand human behavior. According to Babbie and Mouton, the thinking underlying this distinctive feature of qualitative research is that ‘thick description’-a phrase coined by Clifford Geertz — is called for “instead of focusing on counting and quantifying patterns in behavior” (2001: 272).

4.2.2 Research Design: Ethnographic Study of the Audience- Epistemological Foundations

While attempting to briefly elucidate the philosophical foundations which distinguish qualitative research from quantitative one in the first chapter, I made a point that audience ethnography constitutes one facet of the approach to this study. Taking the particular research methods and their theoretical background into account, which will

soon be discussed in this chapter, it would be reasonable to go a little deeper and clarify the theoretical assumptions of audience ethnography. Ethnography as a technique of research grew out of the field of anthropology, where it has been made use of as “a means of understanding non-Western people’s rites, culture and means of survival”. (Hartley, 2002: 84). However, ethnography, in communications research, is interested in examining and hence understanding media audiences, and the ethnographer is expected to bring themselves into a closer contact with a particular group of interest “in an attempt to gain insight into their choices and behavior” (Hartley, 2002: 85).

Understandably enough, audiences’ interaction with cultural materials such as games can be perceived as being embedded within the practices of their daily lives. Qualitative audience ethnography is crucially concerned with exploring such uses and consumption of media products by audiences as part of their lived reality. Associated with this central concern of audience ethnography is ethnographers’ “task of providing straightforward descriptions of things witnessed firsthand in the field” (Denscombe, 2003: 86). Morley in his chapter entitled ‘Towards an ethnography of the television audience’ notes that ethnography as an empirical method is an essential tool for understanding the dynamic nature of cultural practices, which is made possible through thick description audience ethnography allows.

If we are to make some sense of the significance of these [cultural] activities which after all are the primary ones for any understanding of the dynamics of the pervasiveness and power of contemporary culture, then we have to take seriously the varied and detailed ways in which they are undertaken. This is the basis for a commitment to ethnography as an empirical method. (Morley, 1992: 182-183)

According to Watson, various research methods are recognized in ethnographic studies, participant observation being the major one (2003: 77; emphasis in the original). This appears to be the reason why there is a blur in the conceptualization of ethnography and participant observation and in them being used interchangeably by some writers. It was sometime in the 1970s, writes Bryman, that the term “ethnography began to become the preferred” one (2004: 292). Bryman further notes that the reason for this preference is that ‘participant observation’ is thought of as implying just observation whereas

'ethnography' "simultaneously refers to both a method of research ... and the written product of that research" (2004: 292).

One of the charges against ethnographic researches is the claim that they lack objectivity. Hartley raises the question critics of ethnographic research pose as to "whether it is possible to gain an objective view of a culture simply by observing it" (Hartley, 2002: 85). This questioning is particularly directed at the possibility of informants being influenced by the presence of the observer, "thereby affecting the outcomes of the research" (Hartley, 2002: 85).

Accordingly, Hartley argues that this should point to the need of "recognizing the researcher's own subjectivity and what it is that they bring to the research" (2002: 85). In other words, "the conceptual tools" that they bring with them for exploring and understanding the cultures they are investigating are far from being neutral (Denscombe, 2003: 88). Such reflection on the implications of the ethnographer's cultural background to the way they make sense of what is observed is what came to be referred to as the issue of reflexivity.

To sum up, the issue of reflexivity takes us to another point having to do with representation. Morley stresses the plausible idea that let alone ethnographic accounts of people's encounter with the media, "any kind of empirical research is always, necessarily, caught up in representation .. ." and "interpretation" (1992: 179).

In the midst of all the theoretical explications about audience ethnography, it would be important to recall that in the first chapter I listed three research methods constituting this study, which are observation, focus group discussion and individual in-depth interview. The next section discusses and describes the specific research methods and sampling procedures employed in the study.

4.3 Research Procedure and Sampling

As can be recalled from the previous section, the three particular research methods have been outlined. The research design adopted in this study is a three-stage design which proved to be advantageous in terms of enabling me to corroborate data gathered through one technique with that of the other. The three stages of the research process and the sampling procedures are discussed below in the order they materialize in the study:

- i. Observation
- ii. Focus group discussions
- iii. Individual in-depth interviews

4.3.1 Observation

As I have already made the point earlier, ethnographic research uses observations to gain empirical data about how people make sense of media products. Writing about observation, Alasuutari argues that “Everything we know and everything we believe about the world is based on observations and inference drawn from those observations” (1998: 25). Alasuutari further argues that no matter how tempting it is to make a distinction between observations aimed at collecting “material for empirical research” and “everyday observations”, there seems to be no ground for such a classification for what really matters is “the research problem” and “the point of view from which the observations are examined” (1998: 25).

It has been noted in the previous section that audience ethnography as a qualitative research design is associated with participant observation, which according to Bryman (2004: 292) entails a method used to uncover the culture of a group by first gaining access to the group and then taking field notes which will finally result in the fruitful account of the culture investigated. Arguably, studies conducted through participant observation are often said to take a considerable amount of time. Unlike in social

anthropology, ethnographers in communications and media studies do not seem to enjoy such a luxury of time. Owing to such pressures from time and the fact that this research is a semester's project, I was forced to limit myself to observing the dynamics of the context where the youth of Addis consume English Premier League games to duration of time not more than one month.

Consistent with what Deacon et al. (1999: 54) describe as the 'strong' version of convenience sampling, I selected three Satellite-TV show houses to observe out of the many situated in Kassanchis, Addisu Gebeya and Piazza areas. The focus of this research was the English Premier League games watching experience of the youth in Addis, and such youth with cultural practice of this sort are abundantly available in these parts of the city. It is this realization that initiated the research process as convenient sampling procedure "focuses around natural clusters of social groups and individuals, who seem to present unexpected but potentially interesting opportunities" (Deacon et al., 1999: 54).

After securing access to the Satellite-TV show houses, I managed to observe and take notes on how the youth consume the English Premier League games they watch. This was made possible by the fact that I approached the owners of the Satellite-TV show houses and established a positive rapport by explaining to them the purpose of my study and what I intended to achieve from the observations. Consequently, in each of the three houses I went to, I tried to spend nearly four hours per day. Though this at times turned out to be exhausting for me, it nonetheless allowed me to actually witness the dynamics of the viewing process, hence enabling me to gain a first-hand insight into the process being investigated (Deacon et al., 1999: 259).

The role that I adopted in my observations is what Denscombe (2003: 203) categorizes as 'participation in the normal setting'. The basis for choosing to adopt this role in this type of observation is because it deliberately permits

...observation without affecting the naturalness of the setting, but it also allows the researcher to keep a distance from the key group under study. This distance might be warranted on the grounds of propriety, or the researcher lacks credentials to take on the role in question. (Denscombe, 2003: 203)

Being aware of it as a variant form of participant observation, which involves the total immersion of the researcher, I chose this method for I thought it appropriate to only let my role be known to the owners of the Satellite-TV show houses. The advantage of adopting such a role was that those researched would be in their natural behavior. It is in this light that I decided to keep my being there “hidden from most of those in the setting” (Denscombe, 2003: 203).

Generally, the insight generated from the observations I conducted helped me to understand the social context where the youth’s interaction with English Premier League games takes place and to see how the setting operates as a cultural space for the youth. This method, however, constitutes only the first phase of the research process, and to probe more deeply into the media consumption practice and sense-making process of the youth under study, I also incorporated into the research design both focus group interviews and individual in-depth interviews. These two data collection methods are discussed in turn below.

4.3.2 Focus Group Discussion

The points made so far reinforces the insight that qualitative audience analysis helps offer into what recipients do with media materials. In such research endeavors, focus group discussions have been extensively used for the purpose of analyzing media audiences since the early 1980s (Deacon et al., 1999: 55). According to Deacon et al., focus group research is closely linked to the necessity of “bringing small groups of people together to discuss issues identified by researcher” (1999: 54), and it is commonly agreed that the group interaction is the most salient feature of it as a method. Referring to a distinction made by some authors between focus group and group interviews, Bryman (2004: 346) puts forward three reasons which are likely to depict the validity of such a distinction. Two of the reasons worth noting are (1) focus groups are concerned with exploring in depth a specific theme, and (2) the emphasis in focus groups is on “how people respond to each other’s views and build up a view out of the interaction that takes place within the group” (Bryman, 2004: 346).

Despite the momentous popularity of the focus group method for the past few decades, Brynnan argues that its implementation goes back in time earlier than the 1980s, being used in market research for “advertising initiatives” and “testing responses to new products” (2004: 346). According to Fontana and Frey (1994: 364), the writers who should take credit for coining the term ‘focus group’ are Merton, Fiske and Kendall (1956), and they used the term to apply to a research situation where informants in the group are asked specific questions about a certain topic, which is done later during the research process. As early as 1969, Blumer recognized the significance of interviewing a select group saying the process involves

...seeking participants.. .who are acute observers and who are well informed ... A small number of such individuals brought together as a discussion resource group, is more valuable many times over than any representative sample. (1969: 41)

As noted in the first chapter and elsewhere in this chapter, representativeness of a sample need not be a concern in qualitative researches such as mine. As suggested by Deacon et al. (1999: 55), qualitative research sampling strategies used for selecting focus groups are characterized by the lack of straightforward sampling guidelines, and I took advantage of such flexibility and my own judgment for choosing group members. In this light, I purposefully selected participants using convenience and snowball sampling. The choice of the participants was based on non-probability sampling for the aim of this research is “to delve in depth into a particular situation with a view to exploring” (Denscombe, 2003: 172) their viewing experience of English Premier League and their likely habit of visiting the Satellite-TV show houses.

Following the observations I conducted in the Satellite-TV show houses, I managed to get in contact with four viewers from each of the Satellite-TV show houses. My selection of these twelve informants resulted from my discussion with the owners of the houses, whose assistance was invaluable in terms of suggesting people who frequent these places. Nine more informants were included into the research process through snowball sampling as a result of the suggestion from the previously selected members. This strategy proved to be essential for it allowed access to researching into “informal social

groupings, where the social knowledge and personal recommendations of the initial contacts are invaluable in opening up and mapping tight social networks' (Deacon et al., 1999: 53). Consequently, the total number of people made part of the focus group discussions were twenty-one in number.

Taking into account the usual minimum number of interviewees in a group suggested by Bryman (2004: 346), I deliberately categorized the twenty-one informants in to seven groups, each of them constituting three members. Although Hansen et al. (1998: 268) argue that there should be at least six focus groups in a research, until comments begin to repeat themselves and little new material is generated, I held seven focus group discussions for this research. The justification for doing that is nothing more than the constraints from time and resources available and the number of interviewees willing to take part in the focus group interview sessions.

As far as arranging the venue for the interviews is concerned, I made an attempt to select a setting which I thought was private, quiet and comfortable to the participants. The interview room was located in a private house of a friend, cafeterias and hotel rooms, and as most of the interviewees are youngsters, every precaution was taken to make sure that they were not overwhelmed and distracted by what is in the room. Thus, other than facilities such as chairs, a TV set and some refreshment, attempts were made to rearrange stuff from the room which would have had a distracting effect on them.

In line with the suggestions forwarded by Bryman (2004: 256), I began all the discussions with an introduction which included "thanking people for coming" and letting them introduce themselves to each other. The advantage of doing that was that participants seemed to feel at ease with the whole situation, which in turn got them to speak freely. Once I noticed that they were relaxing, I explained to them briefly the research goals and the procedures as to how the session is supposed to proceed (see Bryman, 2004: 356).

As a moderator, one of my roles was to “allow quite a lot of latitude to participants” by asking them fairly general questions and letting them speak at length about what they saw as important and interesting (Bryman, 2004: 356). As I am perfectly aware of the fact that some of the participants were reluctant to speak out, I made a deliberate attempt to encourage them to participate by asking them specific questions having to do with the interview guide. This is, however, far from implying that silence shouldn’t be tolerated at times for the silence can sometimes turn out to be a wonderful resource (see Denscombe, 2003: 178). So, part of my role was to try to make sure that the dynamics of the interaction in the interview contributed to the progress of revelation that the research process requires.

All the discussions were made in Amharic, a language that everyone in the groups spoke and understood. The interview guide that I worked from consists of a list of broad points, each one of them having under them a few specific questions. All the thematic questions used in the focus groups revolve around the research questions outlined in the first chapter, and they were drawn out on the basis of what was included in the second chapter. All the discussions made were tape-recorded so that they can be used later as the narrative data to be made sense of. To further corroborate and complement these data, it was deemed necessary to use individual in-depth interviews, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.3.3 Individual In-depth Interviews

Speaking of the distinction between structured interview and qualitative research interviews, Bryman contends, “the emphasis [in qualitative research interviews] must be on how the interviewee frames and understands issues and events — that is, what the interviewee views as important in explaining and understanding events, patterns, and forms of behavior” (2004: 321). Having chosen focus group interview to gather qualitative data from the youth as a community of game-goers, I thought it is very important to follow up the results of the focus group discussions with individual

interviews. The reason to use in-depth interview arose out of the need to corroborate the data gathered through focus group discussions and to further elicit in-depth responses from the informants. Hence, it is in light of this potential of in-depth interview that individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study.

The one-to-one variety of semi-structured interviews is a form of qualitative research interview in which the interviewer is expected to come up with a clear list of questions or specific topics to be addressed, which are commonly referred to as an *interview guide* (Bryman, 2004: 321; emphasis in the original). Denscombe (2003: 167) stresses the flexibility it allows the interviewer in terms of using the interview guide and the open-ended nature of the responses required from the informants.

...with the semi-structured interview the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered and, perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher. The answers are open-ended, and there is more emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest. (Denscombe, 2003: 167)

In terms of drawing sample, I purposefully selected candidates for the in-depth individual interviews from the seven focus group discussions I conducted early on. On the basis of their reactions to my questions and their articulation of such responses, I deliberately selected one participant from each focus group, making seven in total. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with the owners of the three Satellite-TV show houses I observed. In each of the interviews conducted, interviewees were encouraged to speak freely. This was done to deliberately take advantage of the point made by Brynnan about one of the salient features of semi-structured interviewing, which is that it opens up “considerable latitude for interviewees to express themselves freely” (1988: 46).

4.4 Data Analysis Procedure

After having transcribed all the interviews and focus group discussions, I translated them from Amharic into English. All the interviews were conducted in Amharic, and doing that helped me get round “the difficult task of asking questions cross-culturally” (Fontana and Frey, 1994: 366). The task of translating the materials into English was a challenge though, and I thus made every effort to be sensitive to the need of capturing the same sense of the meaning of the respondents’ discourse in the translation. Then, I was faced with the task of interpreting and analyzing the materials.

The mode of analysis that was made use of in this study is thematic coding. According to Jensen, this approach represents “[a] loosely inductive categorization of interview or Observational extracts with reference to various concepts, headings, or themes” (1982: 247). My task, therefore, was to categorize and report those extracts from the transcripts which I thought would illuminate the research questions put forward in the introductory chapter. In terms of the use of interview extracts in research reports, Denscombe cautions us about two of the disadvantages of extracts: (1) “they are, to some extent, presented out of context” and (2) “the process of selecting them involves a level of judgment ... on the part of the researcher” (Denscombe, 2003: 188). However, he writes that extracts can be used to good effects for two salient reasons, saying:

For one thing, they can be interesting in their own right, giving the reader a flavor of the data and letting the reader ‘hear’ *the points as stated by the informants*. For another, they can be used as a *piece of evidence* supporting the argument that is being constructed in the report by the researcher. (Denscombe, 2003: 188; original emphasis)

The presentation of the data was then structured in a narrative form with pertinent quotations used to illustrate and serve as supporting evidence for the major findings of the study.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have sought to discuss the research design and procedure employed in the study. Pointing out that qualitative approach to the study was chosen as the principal methodology, I paid particular attention to the need of explicating the theoretical and epistemological assumptions that qualitative research in general and ethnographic research in particular are grounded in. The chapter also highlighted the sampling procedure in the study along with specifying the three-stage approach adapted to gathering empirical data through observation, focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews. The data thus gathered were thematically analyzed and presented accordingly. In the next chapter, I will present the analysis and discussion of the findings of the research.

Chapter Five

Presentation and Interpretation of the Findings

How Ethiopian Youth Negotiate with English Premier League games

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I attempt to discuss the presentation and interpretation of findings of the research by scrutinizing how Ethiopian youth negotiate with the English Premier League games. Based on the active audience theory and much of the criticisms of media imperialism thesis, this chapter focuses at the appropriation and use of messages of English Premier League games by Ethiopian youth with their living conditions. The findings of the study are categorized into four major sections, namely *Satellite-TV show houses and the Youth in Addis*; *Cultural Identification Created from the Viewing of English Premier League Games*; *The Notion of Cultural Domination*; *English Premier League Games as an Agent of 'Symbolic Distancing' and 'Fantasy'*; and finally a brief *Conclusion*.

5.2 Satellite-TV show houses and the Youth in Addis

It is to be taken into account that in Chapter Three of this thesis I emphasized extremely essential issue nearby the social context of the research. At this point I endeavor to draw the social circumstances where the English Premier League games watching experience of the youth under investigation interconnect with their everyday lives. Therefore, it has been distinguished that what comprises this circumstance where the youth come in relation with the English Premier League games they watch are the Satellite-TV show houses spread throughout Addis Ababa. This research concentrated on three of the Satellite-TV show houses found in Kassanchis, Addisu-Gebeya and Piazza areas for reasons emphasized in the previous chapter. Bearing in mind the difficulty and dynamics of the viewing practice in the Satellite-TV show houses and of the discourses through which the youth negotiate-their interaction with the premier league games, I begin this section with an explanation of the Satellite-TV show houses

emphasizing their operation and role as cultural space for the youth, and youth's identity creation in relation to Satellite-TV show houses.

5.2.1 Satellite-TV show houses operation and their role as Cultural Space for the Youth

As discussed in the research methodology chapter (Chapter four), I select three Satellite-TV transmission houses for my investigation. Before conducting focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews, I gathered data through continuous small scale observations in each of the three Satellite-TV transmission houses owned by Mulugeta Wondimeneh, Solomon Metiku and Alemayehu Yerga. What became clear throughout the observations was that these houses are regularly crowded with more young people than they could accommodate. During one of my visits to Mulugetas' Satellite-TV show house I noticed that viewers were literally on top of each other, which points to the fact that the number of English Premier League viewers is growing faster than the number of Satellite-TV show houses available to serve this audience.

When I asked Solomon, one of the owners of the Satellite-TV show houses, how many people on average visit his Satellite-TV show houses per each game, he answered: "Well, I would say 100-150 people come here for a game. However, there are times when we would have to receive more than 150 viewers. But if the number of people becomes more than that, we will say sorry, and they go somewhere else." I was also able to observe that because of the crowdedness of the houses, it is usually extremely hot, and I found myself feeling faint at times. I could also see sweat dripping down everyone's face. In all the three houses I went to, there was no ventilation except for a tiny window at one of the walls, which is absolutely not sufficient for the amount of fresh air needed in the rooms. I also observe that because of lack of places in the houses, a huge number of youth (some times more than the number of viewers in the house) are waiting in the outside. These youngsters try to watch the game from the outside through windows and doors. They also discuss and shout during the games. I tried to know whether they have shortage of money or not. But all the youth answer me that they don't have any problem with entrance fee. The only reason to be in the outside

is shortage of place in the houses. This situation always happens especially during the game of some popular football clubs, like Manchester United, Arsenal, Chelsea and Liverpool.

Alemayehu, one of the owners of satellite-TV show houses, says the following about the situation in his satellite-TV show house:

Almost all of our customers are youngsters who are students, taxi drivers and conductors. The majority of these youth are the supporters of Arsenal, Manchester, Chelsea and Liverpool clubs. I don't know the reason why they become the supporter of these clubs. But, I think, it is because of their friends and class mates. Sometimes they insulted and fight each other within their group. For several times, I face difficulties to show the games. Sometimes, I was forced to terminate the transmission because of the conflict. But most of the time the situation is good and I got substantial money. As you see, the hall is very big. It can accommodate more than 200 people at a time and everybody should pay 5 birr up to 10 birr per game. This is according the games. If the big four clubs play each and with other clubs the entrance fee will be 10 birr, and if other clubs play the fee will be 5 birr.

As stated at different points in this study, my fundamental concern is the subjective experience of watching English Premier League games by Ethiopian youth residing in Addis Ababa. Fiske, whose name is usually related with the popularization of the shift from viewing media as carriers of dominant ideology to proposing ethnographic accounts which celebrate audiences as active (Teer-Tomaselli, 1997: v-vi), conceives of this media viewing practice as a process of making meanings and pleasures (Tager, 1997: 97). Citing Fiske (1994), Tager in addition notes that the viewer has a lot of freedom in the sense that they have a considerable latitude "to make socially pertinent meanings and pleasures" out of their viewing practice (Tager, 1997: 97).

Learned by much of the critique of media imperialism thesis, this study has tried to look at how the youth negotiate with English Premier League games. Part of answering this question involves paying a closer attention to the social context where much of the youth's negotiation with such foreign media messages occurs, and that is investigating the social dynamics of viewing experiences within the Satellite-TV show houses.

In all the three Satellite-TV show houses I observed, the viewers are almost exclusively males. I asked Mulugeta, the owner of one of the Satellite-TV show house, if they have rules as to who is allowed in his place, and here is what he had to say:

There is no such a thing as practice like that. In my view, I think, one of the reasons why women are not seen in such places is because watching football games during night time is socially unacceptable. Furthermore, whether it is night or day for women to spend time with males of their age is considered as undesirable. Even the very act of going to such places like this is considered to be something that boys should do, with less be in command of their parents.

One of the informants named Natnael, who is a 20-year-old student and an avid customer of the Satellite-TV show houses, had the following to say about his experience:

“If there is any game which is related to Arsenal club I will go to satellite TV show house. I don’t care about other things I will pay any cost to watch the game. Mostly I pay 5 up to 10 birr for a single game. I am a supporter of Arsenal since 2006 and I am proud of that”

Birhanu, 22, who is also an avid customer of the Satellite-TV show houses, says the following about his experience, how he becomes a lover of English football games:

You know why I become the supporter of Manchester United; it is because of my older brother. Before, some 3 years ago my brother invited me to watch the Premier League games. He invited me, not because of my interest, but it is for the sake of him. You know why?, at that time my father gives warning for him not to be late in the night and to be at home early before 6:00 p.m. my father doesn’t like the situation which my brother to be alone at the night time in the satellite-TV show houses. So, to convince my father, my brother invited me to be with him during the games. So, like my brother, I become the supporter of Manchester.

Asked about the same thing, the majority of the informants were of the view that coming to the satellite TV show houses definitely represents some sort of escape from different problems. Many of them even said that they are not comfortable in the country’s political social and economic situation. As they said, they are not interested in the political situation. For instance, the government (ruling party) doesn’t allow any movement of young people unless there is some kind of affiliation with its agenda. Especially after the 3rd national election (2005) the ruling party does not want to open

any free political space for youth. On the contrary, the government media and the so called cadres threatened them in different ways from any free political thought and movement. Because of that, to have safe life and to forget the political agenda they prefer to be a supporter of popular English football clubs. This is similar to other many youth. In addition, they are not happy with the economic and social situation of the country. For instance, a number young people who graduated from different universities are still having no job. Furthermore, the government and its media daily propagate the economic development of the country. But, the fact in the ground is different. The majority of people are living under poverty. So, to forget all these problems for a while at least they turn their face to the English Premier League and become a supporter of popular football clubs.

To the degree that the age profile of the customers is concerned, it became obvious from the interviews I conducted with the owners that the spectators who frequent those places range from 9 years to 35 years of age.

One of the themes emerged from the observations was that in addition to being venues for passing their free time watching premier league games, these places also serve as symbolic spaces where the youth form a marginalized social interaction and solidarity by the virtue of the fact that they share socially frowned upon habits such as chewing chat, a local mild stimulating substance, and smoking cigarettes. Concerning such practices observed in the Satellite-TV show houses, the explanation made by Nebiyu, seems to be self-evident.

I am a high school student, 9th grade. If there is a game, especially for Manchester, I give up everything and go to Satellite-TV show house to watch it. On the other hand, I have been chewing chat and smoking cigarettes for quite some time now. Of all the places, it is here (Satellite-TV show house) that I feel more comfortable doing those things. You know, here no one judges you or bothers to look at you. We even become close buddies with many of those people who do the same thing. You might even have seen some of us sharing a single cigarette among ourselves. These situations attract us to be here and watch the games as we prefer. Even the owners of the show house facilitate the place as we need.

Here, it is possible to understand from Nebiyu's last statement that there is always a kind of solidarity among the spectators which facilitated by the Satellite-TV show houses as cultural spaces.

5.2.2 Youth Identity creation in Relation to the Satellite-TV show houses

It is unavoidable that our situations in life and histories, together individual and collective, are continuously in the process of change, and those changes in events affecting our lives are compelled to persist in modifying, if not renovating, our identity. Teer-Tomaselli recapitulates cultural identity as something that "remains largely about the recognition of whom we are, with whom we associate ourselves or our aspirations, with whom we empathize, to whom we say 'yes'" (1997: x).

It is possible to say that youth in Addis Ababa are viewing themselves in relation to their consumption of English Premier League games, which they are engaged in more or less on a daily basis. Hall (1997) emphasizes the notion of identity,

"We can think of identity as something that is always unified and homogenous. But actually, none of us think identity is like that. We are the sum of the positions that we've ascended to. We are the sum of the ways in which we've been willing to be recognized ... We are the sum of where we hope we are going. What we are hoping to become. We are the sum of the subjects that we dream ourselves into." (Hall, 1997: 11-13). Here it is vital to distinguish the uselessness of sustaining a certain kind of identity continuously.

Throughout the track of the interviews, one of the questions raised to the informants was how they perceive their identity and view the world around them in relation to their interaction with English Premier League games in the Satellite-TV show houses. It became obvious from the interviews that the majority of them agree on the notion that their negotiation with English Premier League games provides them with a rational tool using which they manifest on where they stand and what they can achieve. This idea was uttered in the focus group discussions with the youth. Let's see their responses:

Yonatan: If there is any English Premier League game, as much as possible I always watch it. When I relate myself to the games which I regularly watch, I feel that I am left behind in terms of different things. It's not only me, my country also left behind. In those games, I watch I see how the football players act and play, and this helps me to develop my football skill and makes me to play as much as possible like these players and this situation becomes a remarkable moral for me.

Samson: my experience with English Premier League games has helped me to ask myself the question, "What can I do to improve my football skill in relation to personal development?" Furthermore, it has a considerable impact on my perception of football game. Believe or not, if there is a football game of English premier League I will go to Satellite-TV show house to watch it. It becomes part of my life. I don't care for anything except, the game.

Tesfaye: I always go to Satellite-TV show houses to watch English Premier League games. After watching games, I sometimes ask myself where I stand as a person and wish to be one of the popular players. Sometimes, I even ask myself whether I can play like some of the top players that I see in the games. Occasionally, I find myself trying to be like them. For example, when I play football with my friends, I usually ask myself, "Can I really be a popular player like those who play in the Premier League games?" this is the situation which I usually think and talk with my own.

This kind of identity building as can be seen from the informants own discourse above, which is embedded within the whole process of their engagement with English Premier League games, results from an active negotiation with the messages of global media.

To the extent that the Satellite-TV show houses are concerned, one possibly will suggests that one of the matter come into sight for the period of the interview is the idea of belongingness, the state of being comfortable with people or a sense of desire to form relationship with people that they feel have a lot in common with themselves. Fetsum, one of the interviewees, had the following to say about the issue in his regular visit to the Satellite-TV show houses have an effect on how he views the world:

I think that the time that I frequently spend in the Satellite-TV show houses is an important place that enables me to meet a lot of people, and help me to establish friendship with some of them. Let's say that I and my friends spend this afternoon or evening by watching an English Premier League game together. To your surprise, we always discuss thoroughly about the game, and before we depart afterwards, we set a time to meet the next day. Then the next day, we meet earlier before we go to school and discuss all the day about the previous game, next games, talent of players and all about the English football. Here, we don't care about our regular class. Furthermore, even we don't think about Ethiopian football. It is easy to say that we already ignore and forget the

domestic games. If you ask me about the reason, my answer will be I don't know. To be honest, I don't like the Ethiopian Premier League games. Before some five years, I sometimes had gone to Addis Ababa stadium. But now I completely stopped it.

As it is indicated in the above, Fetsum is referring the opportunity to have solidarity with others because majority of the youth also share similar social conditions. In addition, he completely forgets his country football games. He always dreams the English Premier League games. This could lead him not think about his country. He always worries about European players and English football. So, here it is possible to say that it brings to him a kind of identity crisis.

On the other hand, I also verify the situation during my observation in Satellite-TV show houses. In the three Satellite-TV show houses I attended, I noticed that towards the beginning of the game, the viewing was marked by a complete shouting, applauding and whispering on the part of the audience.

As the game started, pair conversations or group discussions start to take hold. These are usually done in lower or whispering tones. Usually the discussions take the form of casual talk about the major players in the game. When tension gets high in the game they watch, some of the viewers are seen engaged in the very act of sharing with their fellow viewers what they predict will happen next. When one of them succeeds in his prediction, he makes sure that he gets a whole round of applause and this appears to be part of the pleasure derived from the viewing experience. Actions in the Satellite-TV show house are as something signifying the players "competence" in the viewers' own word. The shout by some of the viewers goes: "Oh my God, he is performing in a great way and has great competence. Give the ball to ... Oh! ... Yah!"

Chanting, Shouting, whispering and applauding while they see anything new technique or movement of players is part of the ceremony in the Satellite-TV show houses. Usually, this situation blow up when the goal is scored by one of the clubs. But, there is also a silence group in the other side which might not be happy with goal. These are the supporter of the opponent club or other competitors. Throughout the course of the observations and interview, I discovered that, those shared discussions during and after

the viewing of English Premier League games have a great deal to do with the analysis process that spectators are engaged in. In other words, the implication of the text is 'fixed' during the course of discussion.

5.3 Cultural Identification Created from the Viewing of English Premier League Games

Thoughts of culture and cultural practices within wide-ranging framework of different references, this research endeavored to tap into a variety of implications relating to cultural similarities that English Premier League games have for the local audiences under investigation. In *Intercultural Communication: Pragmatics, Genealogy, Deconstruction*, a book reviewed by Dr R. K. Singh, Young defines the term 'culture' as something that "inheres in all area of human activity and creation of ideas" (1997: 177). That is to say, the whole thing we perform and understand, along with the principles contiguous such human experiences, is innate in the cultural notion.

During focus group discussions I brought one of the questions to the participants that whether they identify themselves and their culture with what they watch in the English Premier League games. The surprising thing about the informants discourse is that how they attempt to relate aspects of the games that they watch to portions of their own culture is that they create an intentional contrast to show how the 'two cultures distinct each other.

Biniyam: ... Here I find extreme difference between Ethiopians and British people. You know ... the British people have great respect for their own national identity and individual's talent. This is for the sake of countries benefit. They measure everything in line with countries national interest, but, we Ethiopian supporters simply shout for nothing. Even, some of the British people may not now were we are located in the map. But we always worried and fight each other for the sake of the Premier League games. Furthermore, we can't compare them with us in terms of economic affluence. They are rich people. On the other hand, we have a lot of problems to be tackled. So, instead of bothering for European football games, we have to focus in our problems to tackle for better life.

Biniyam, 24, speaks that he seriously looks at the social make-up of the Ethiopian youth by comparing it with that of the British society. Jandt notes that this cultural dimension “refers to how people define themselves and their relationship with others” (2004: 184). In addition, the feature of cultures in which “people are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups that continue throughout a life time to protect in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede, 1997 cited in Jandt, 2004: 184).

Biniyam, however, take a more decisive observation in the sense that he emphasis the wonderful aptitude and commitment of British people to maintain and keep their particular identity. This, he states, fundamentally differentiates Ethiopian society from that of British society.

Binyam: What I personally believe is that we Ethiopians have lost, and keep losing, a lot of national values and assets of ours for various reasons. We have let go of national values that we once considered to be our own, and hence, we lost a complete sight of them. British, on the other hand, are very much still holding onto national values.

The attractive point which resulted from the extracts above and valuable is that in spite of the difference among audiences in specific meanings they take from the English Premier League games, they all seem to understand the messages from the games by reflecting on them in light of their existed truth.

As indicated in the introductory chapter, the primary question asked in this research was, what is it about English Premier League games that is meaningful with the lives of Ethiopian youth in Addis Ababa?

During the discussion, I discovered that the majority of the participants emphasized “drawing moral conclusions, forming opinions”, and put side by side what they see in the satellite-TV show houses and to what they know in the domestic games and their life reality. They did all that in response to why they enjoy watching English Premier League games. They enjoyed the Premier League games which are performed along the line of the passion of wining fantasy.

The vital part of the enjoyment taken from such games lies in their perceived ability to make audiences sensitively involved with players. Demese, 22, and Birhanu, 22, had the following to say:

Demese: I began watching English Premier League games before some five years ago. The games bring out the best players in the world in you, and this situation allows you to learn more about football and the qualities of best player. What I am saying is that such games are likely to make you have appreciation of life and civilization. From the Premier League players, I am a great fan of ¹Cristiano Ronaldo. I admire him very much. I am sure that I watch English Premier League games not just for the sake of passing time, but, because I want to. I am such a great fan of the Premier League games.

Birhanu: ... as I told you, I am a supporter of Manchester united club. Now my daily thought and talk is about Manchester and its players. Especially I admire Ronaldo and ²Roony. Really I love them. They are the best players in the world. Especially, Ronaldo is my role model. When I play football with my friends, I always want to be act as Ronaldo. If Manchester has a game with other clubs, by any cost, I always watch it. By the way almost the majority of my friends are the supporters of Manchester. We always discuss about football, especially Manchester. I don't have any relation with other clubs supporters. I don't care about others. I always think and discuss about Manchester strength and its players quality. I know in deep the personal life of these players. Always, after the game, even at the midnight, I discuss about the game with my friends. If Manchester wins a game we go to our home with chanting. Really I am proud of to be a supporter of Manchester. If Manchester defeated by other clubs I don't want to discuss any body. Even, I don't want to eat food. Sometimes I cry. My mother knows my feeling and she always treats me very well. So, I start to think for the next game.

Demese's and Birhanu's telling in describing why they like watching English Premier League games shows how much expressively involved them with games performed along the line of football fantasy and with their all time best player Cristiano Ronaldo. Reflecting on one of the great lessons they take form English Premier League games, they say that although Cristiano Ronaldo is best player he performed in all the qualities that the best player being needs to possess, and for that reason and that only they admires him and looks up to him.

¹ **Cristiano Ronaldo** is an internationally renowned English Premier League player. he gained fame after he becomes Manchester United club player and winning the best player of 2008 prize. [see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_ishwarya_Rail].

² **Roony** is a well known football player in England. He is playing for Manchester United club and England National Team. [see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_ishwarya_Rail]

Tamerat, 19, has a comparable yet a little complex observation in the sense that this observation takes him a little further which can be interpreted in to the fact that he desire to have been born in Europe/England.

Tamerat: What I basically see in English Premier League games — perhaps this has something to do with my watching European games frequently -- are such things as courage, endurance, happiness, etc. I don't think I am exaggerating it if I say that I sometimes see my going to the Satellite-TV show houses and watching such football games there as going to a church to attend mass lecture. After watching such English Premier League games, I find myself being extremely excited. Because there are so many things about them that make me happy, I wish I was born there.

Basically, one important point that this research discovered is that English Premier League games provide themes which have a perceived cultural similarity to their existed experiences. Amusingly, the interviewees' descriptions of how they create meanings of such similarity are structured by related double oppositions, for instance, backwardness verses civilization, etc. This kind of pattern that I noticed from the interviewees' utterance is unconsciously used by the viewers to make sense out of games, and they do that by comparing the first elements of the pattern as being portrayed in English Premier League games to their lived reality and by contrasting the second elements of the same pattern as image of European way of life to the lived experiences of Ethiopians. The significance of cultural identification in the reception of foreign media messages indicated that instead of taking in such media products unquestioningly, local audiences derive their own subjective meanings on the root of their lived reality.

5.4 The Notion of Cultural Domination

As Watson and Hill indicated about the idea of media imperialism thesis 'developing countries are being culturally dominated by powerful nations of the West through their communications system (1984: 173). This theory suggests that being caught up in the predicament of overwhelming media overflowing with the Western way of life, developing countries' cultures will ultimately turn out to be nothing but swept away. In

other words, the outcome of this form of cultural influence is likely to be one of cultural homogenization (McQuail, 1983; Rantanen, 2005).

Here the challenge usually related with cultural imperialism theory is cultural homogenization, which refers to the weaker nations' culture getting swamped by the more dominant culture of the powerful nations. One of the ethnographic critiques, however, which forms the crucial theoretical ground for this research, suggests that individuals experience with foreign media is characterized by subjectivity and that meanings resulting from such media have multiple meanings in nature. Thompson(1995) states about the subjective experience that interacting with the media is individuals' ability to "...draw on material and symbolic resources available to them, as well as on the interpretive assistance offered by those with whom they interact in their day-to-day lives" (1995: 172).

It is possible to understand, from the previous facts, that individuals' meaning-building experience of media messages is noticeable by their vital position in relation to their existed truth. This makes it difficult for us to visualize such practices in terms other than one of subjectivity. This acknowledgment of the vital position of the spectators and of the plural meanings of texts makes the media imperialism theory as well simplistic clarification for how consumers experience media messages.

The next extract is taken from one of the in-depth interviews conducted with Yohans, 23, and it is descriptive of how critical and inquiring, more willingly than simply receiving, audiences can be in their negotiation with the media.

Yohans: whether you believe or not, I would declare that my adore for English Premier League games has in fact made me reveal on and like my own game and cultural reflection rather than make me feel embarrassed of it. In my view, the reason why British have managed to provide such beautiful games is because they make sure that they incorporate certain aspects of their identity into their games. If you ask, a lot of Ethiopians who enjoy English football games, what they can first and foremost tell you about Premier League games is that Britain are dedicated to their own national identity and culture. Therefore, to the extent that is concerned, you are likely to ask yourself, with regard to this, where are we at? This is because our national identity and culture are definitely evaporating unless we take self-esteem in reflecting our national values and cultural assets.

In the above statement, Yohans explains that how watching English Premier League games helped him as a sparkling instrument by using which he critically believes about his national identity and culture. Therefore, he starts to give more respect to his national identity and culture. When he said, “my adore for English Premier League games has in fact made me reveal on and like my own game and cultural reflection rather than make me feel embarrassed of it”, he is instinctively opposing the idea that native audiences let go of their respected national values and identity as a consequence of their exposure to a more dominant national forms coming from somewhere else in the globe. This was not different what was recapped by many of the informants who were of the view that their experience of watching English Premier League games unbreakable their identification with the Ethiopian values, thus allowing them to get in touch with and retain their national character.

In the earlier section, I have noted that the idea of cultural domination is at the heart of cultural imperialism thesis. I have also indicated that one way to understand this idea is to look at how cultural imperialism theorists imply the passivity of the audience in the sense that audiences insignificantly encompass media messages.

5.5 English Premier League as an Agent of ‘Symbolic Distancing’ and ‘Fantasy’

As stated by Thompson (1995:175), a critic of the cultural imperialism theory, local audiences make meaning out of the global media messages they receive within the context of their lived social conditions. He argues that the consumption of global media products by local audience often provides meanings which enable “... the accentuation of symbolic distancing from the spatial-temporal contexts of everyday life” (1995:175).

Thompson further states that the practice of symbolic distancing which is aggravated by the appropriation of global media products allows individuals “...to take some distance from the conditions of their day-to-day lives – not literally but symbolically,

imaginatively, vicariously'' (1995:175). This in turn makes individuals take a critical look at their local culture which assumes central stage of their social context. This experience of symbolic distancing, he writes, enables individuals "...to gain some conception, however partial, of ways of life conditions which differ significantly from their own." (1995:175). He argues that global images provide resource for individuals to think critically about their own lives and life conditions. The partial conception of ways of life which are different from their own and which they come to gain as a result of their experience of symbolic distancing is likely to bring out in the individuals the ability to critically look at and reflect on their lived culture.

Here it is possible to understand that symbolic distancing as a theory is put forward by ethnographic theorists in response to media imperialism theorists to show them how invalid their thesis is. Symbolic distancing represents one of the ways in which we can understand how local audiences actively appropriate global media products in light of their lived culture.

In my discussion with the youth, one of the things that they are critical about is the way they are kept at their school or home most of the time despite their desire to watch Premier League games and play with their friends.

What became clear in my investigation was that part of the enjoyment resulting from watching English Premier League games lies in the active role played by the audiences to assess aspects of what they see in the games on the root of their experiences and interest. For instance, the reflection on one's lived culture in light of one's screening experience with foreign media can be found in the next piece taken from the discussion with Yonatan. At this point Yonatan put side by side our connection to Ethiopian national values to that of the Britain's, and finds that we are special in that esteem.

Yonatan: As to me, what I have gathered from English Premier League games is that British be devoted to and respects their national values. On the other hand, we Ethiopians are very much influenced by Europeans from the ordinary things such as ways of supporting clubs and players. British people, for instance, instead of giving attention to the rest of the world games, due respect for their clubs and players. However, from the games that we watch in the satellite-TV show houses it is possible to say that we are highly influenced by British clubs and players. British, on the other hand, have kept their national identity and cultural values intact. They don't care about the rest of the world. They were being proud of by their clubs and players.

The above statement recapitulates what Thompson writes about how global media images can provide a resource for individuals to think critically about their own lives and life conditions (1995: 175). As we can understand from the excerpt that Yonatan is actually doing here is that he is assessing his lived reality in the context of Premier League games from which he indicates the notion that British keep and prize their national values more than what we actually be able to.

An additional motivating point come out through the course of the interviews was that English Premier League games usually help supporters move away themselves from their everyday lived reality, which can be revealed by how they at times wish to imaginatively and symbolically find themselves in certain aspects of the actions they see in the games. The following excerpt seems to demonstrate this particular idea.

Getachew: You see, there is one emotion that I feel whenever I watch English Premier League games. You know what that is? ... I sometimes feel this sudden desire growing inside of me to act like the players in the games I am watching. What I mean is that in my imagination I feel like I am in the world of the game I am watching, and I wish to myself, if I were him, I would do this or that. When I look back on those games, I am sometimes embarrassed and I say to myself, come-on, it's just a British game.

What we can see from this example is that how viewers symbolically and imaginatively distance themselves from their lived reality by wishing to either find them in certain aspects of the background they experience through watching football games or adjust certain aspects of their lived truth. As Morley cited in Strelitz, the subjective nature of this experience and its recognition by the audiences as being just a wish "show that the 'essentialist approach to the globalization of the media is not an accurate description of consumers' experience (2005: 118).

In a comparable manner, the total agreement revealed through the investigation among the majority of the informants, who are youth, was that watching English Premier League games was indispensable in escaping from their everyday lives. This particular use of the games seems to resonate with these youth coming from their background. Ashenafi, 23, who has completed high school before four years but has been idle ever since, utters:

Ashenafi: ... You know, because of the English Premier League I haven't been good at school. And consequently, I wasn't able to score better grade in the

exam that would enable me to join higher education. So, I continued to spend almost all of my time by watching English Premier League games in those Satellite-TV show houses. You know what is surprising to me when I watch certain games there? I completely forget all my problems and I feel like I am part of that world of the European. And that makes me happy a lot. I see the major players kicking the ball and acting in front of the fans that are so wonderful and fascinating to me that I sometimes even forget that I don't have any of that.

In a similar manner, here is what Habtamu, 19, and Abraham, 17, had to say when I asked them whether the games they watch provide any way out from their lived reality:

Habtamu: You know, watching English Premier League games enables me to forget my problems for a time. When the game is over, the discussions will continue, but it is inevitable that you go back to your problems. So, to forget about what happened I go to the Satellite-TV show houses nearby and watch English Premier League games.

Abraham: I personally watch Premier League games whenever I get money. For example, I sometimes ask my mom for some money. Usually she turns me down by saying she doesn't have any money. That kind of statement really makes me angry. When I watch a game, I completely forget my problems not only for the time being, but also for a long period until the discussions with my friends and other people over. Fully fascinated in the game, I later find myself in a situation where I say to me, "What if this or that happens?" That really takes a lot off my attention.

Here, the vital point made by respondents is that the escape by watching English Premier Leagues permit them to have is only temporary in the sense that their problems and worries come back themselves right after the screening of the games is over. For both Habtamu and Abraham, however, part of the desirability of Premier League games lies in the potential of the games to allow them to escape from their own problems for a time.

Therefore, part of the attraction of watching English Premier League games lies in them allowing the youth to relax with games and actions rendering them the effect of not being boring to the youth.

Here it is important to put what Professor Tareke Gebru who is a historian and recently writes a new book in title '*The Ethiopian Revolution*' gives an interview for Addis Admass Amharic newspaper, June 12, 2009 edition. He says:

Now a day, in Ethiopia, the English Premier League becomes a religion. When I sometimes listening a radio program I laughed and then I cry from my deep heart. I listen every time what the radio journalists announce by saying 'The supporters of Arsenal, Chelsea, Manchester ... your club is defeated.' I also observed the situation in the satellite-TV show places, to watch the English premier league games. Because of that I feel sad and sympathy for the Ethiopian youth. Actually I love football and play it since my childhood. Still I am the supporter of sport activities. I am not saying 'don't love sport'. But, I am very sorry to see this time that the ball considered as a religion. (Addis Admass, 2009:28)

The above explanation gives strength for the findings of this study which identified during the investigation. Prof. Tareke states that the Ethiopian youth are in situation of identity crisis. Instead of considering English Premier League as a sport game, they believe on it as a religion. This is because of global media influence. Similarly, in May 2009, the Ethiopian Television (ETV) transmitted a mini-documentary program which is focused on the English Premier League games and its impact on Ethiopian youth. This program transmitted almost for three weeks, per a week one day (Sunday) coverage. When this program transmitted, many people to give different opinions about the issue in the TV-window. One of the interviewee says the following:

"English Premier League becomes a day-to-day life of Ethiopian Youth. The youth who watch these games exposed to psychological, economical and social problems. Whether they are in school or home or any other place, always think and discuss about the premier league games, clubs and players. They don't know about the consequences. They always worried about the so called their clubs (dream clubs). Because of this they exposed to other problems. Even they don't care about their education. It is possible to say that this situation lead them to identity crisis."

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to present and interpret the reception of messages and contents of English Premier League games by Ethiopian youth in Addis Ababa based on the active audience theory and some of the basic critics of the media imperialism thesis. Results of the analysis demonstrated that the basic premise of the media imperialism theory which hypothesizes the homogenizing function of the developed

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countries media in terms of proliferating Western principles and welfare at the sacrifice of the developing countries, like Ethiopia, is to be challenged. In this research it becomes obvious that the youth who make meanings out of the games are characterized by subjectivity. In brief, it can be argued that the youths' passion with overwhelming English Premier League games is not comparable to the loss of their identity as Ethiopians with their own values.

Chapter Six

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this closing chapter, I try to summarize on some of the findings that came out of the research. First I will attempt to summarize what the research has been all about, how it was undertaken and the major findings that I discovered. Then I will conclude the thesis with suggestions for further research.

6.2 Summary

This research under the title of *"An Investigation into the Reception of English Premier League Games by Ethiopian Youth in Addis Ababa"*, has been conducted with the major objective of exploring how and why the Ethiopian youth in Addis Ababa negotiate with and make meaning out of the global media messages that they are attracted to as represented by English Premier League games transmitted with Satellite-TV from Great Britain as part of their everyday life. My investigation into the phenomenon of English Premier League games-viewing experience of the youth shows that the Satellite-TV show houses that the youth visit on a regular basis comprise a shared male cultural space. The Satellite-TV show houses being a shared cultural space for the males have something to do with the conventional roles prearranged to males and females by the patriarchal society of Ethiopia. This means is that it is socially undesirable for females to enter such places. If females go to the Satellite-TV show houses that could be considered as against the patriarchal norm of the Ethiopian society. In the same manner, the Satellite-TV show houses, in addition to being locations for passing their free time, also function -as symbolic space where the youth form a marginalized social interaction and solidarity by the virtue of the fact that they share certain socially frowned upon habits such as smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohols and chewing chat.

Since the research is about the interplay of the global in the local, I believe it valid to discuss the media imperialism thesis and its critique as the theoretical framework of the study. The foundation of the media imperialism thesis lies on the basis that dumping of developed countries media contents on developing countries creates a homogenizing effect of values and interests in favor of developed countries.

In my endeavor to explore how and why Ethiopian youth make meaning out of English Premier League games in the context of their daily lives, I utilized observation, focus group interviews and individual in-depth interviews. The observations I conducted in the Satellite-TV show houses were small scale, and they demonstrated to be helpful in that they enabled me to gain some firsthand insight into how the youth consume English Premier League games in the Satellite-TV show houses as part of their daily lived reality. The interviews, then again, were of great value to the research in the sense that they helped me to see the reception of the media messages from the perspectives of the youth themselves so that I can understand the meaning they make out of the Premier League games they watch and the complex social settings that come into the interaction between the global and local.

I try to make sense of the quite considerable amount of the data gathered based on the media/cultural imperialism theory and its critiques. Specifically, the active audience theory, along with the other major ethnographic critiques, suggests in response to media imperialism theory constitutes the theoretical framework of the research. Grounded on the assumptions of such critiques, the findings of the study about the attraction of the youth to, and their appeal with, English Premier League games have been presented, and they are classified into four major sections including the Satellite-TV show houses and the Youth in Addis; Cultural Identification Created from the Viewing of English Premier League Games; English Premier League Games as an Agent of 'Symbolic Distancing' and 'Fantasy'; and The Notion of Cultural Domination reconsidered.

One of the major outcomes of this study which challenges the notion that audiences passively and uncritically encompass media messages is that all the youth actively understand the messages from the English Premier League games they watch by

reflecting on them in light of their everyday life. In this approach, it was discovered in the study that cultural identification represents one of the main cause of enjoyment for the viewers of English Premier League games. This outcome of the research is further strengthened by the finding that the youth distance themselves symbolically from their everyday lived reality, which can be reflected by their recognition of it as being just a wish that they are unable of turning it into truth. Here it is possible to say that the importance of this can be seen in the potential of the games to enable these audiences to forget their problems at least for a time.

The subjectivity of the viewing experience exemplified by the plurality of the meanings made of the English Premier League games by the youth is a challenge to the premises of the media imperialism thesis. It thus follows from this that the notion of homogenization as proposed by proponents of the thesis is a distorted assumption in the sense that it fails to accurately describe the consumption of foreign media messages by local audiences. Consequently, it might be argued that local audiences in their interaction with media messages produced in settings far removed from their actively interpret them in light of the subjective values, aspirations and concerns within their lives.

After all, to understand how the impact of globalization can be felt in Ethiopia, it is very important to acknowledge the existence of homogenization and hetrogenization as possible consequences of globalization. Here, it is important to mention what Rantanen states in the possibility for the two processes happening at the same time, "depending on specific circumstances' (2005:74). Ethiopia, as part of the global trend of influence, is subject to globalization, which can be demonstrated by the fast-growing flow into the country and consumptions by the local audience of foreign produced messages of the global media. The scene with English Premier League games, coupled with our local media's dependence on global media companies for international news, seems to be indicative of the homogenizing outcome of globalization through the global media to a certain extent. However, it is important to recognize that "media penetration cannot be equal to cultural domination" (Noh, 2007: 5).

Now a day, the number of people who watch English Premier League games are tremendously increasing, and, on the contrary, the people who watch local football games are becoming insignificant. Thus, it might be argued that media imperialism thesis should be reconsidered for there seems to be a need to give some room for explaining the coming into the picture of certain regional media such as DSTV and GTV Satellite-TV conglomerates in the complex cultural exchange witnessed in the world today.

Many audiences in Ethiopia exposed to global media messages, but the way they make meaning out of them may not essentially be similar to the way they were encoded in the beginning. To take for granted that people allow to go their highly respected values embedded in their culture just because they have much exposure to the global media is equivalent to disempowering them and robbing of their capacity of resistance to contents that they don't want to be influenced by otherwise. The argument here is that the role of the media in the process of globalization should be taken in terms of both their homogenizing and heterogenizing influence.

In this research, we have seen the role of the media in the flow of foreign produced media products into Ethiopian youth in Addis Ababa. This is because of GLOBALIZATION. Here, it becomes clear that, nobody can be out of the globalization. But, there should be some kind of solidarity to prevent the harmful consequences of globalization. So, as a solution it is important to give due attention to the following points:

- All Ethiopians should be responsible to aware the young generation about the impact of globalization and its consequences.
- They should also work hard to develop the country in all aspects to hit the highest point that they want to be.
- The Ethiopian youth, on the other hand, should give priority for their national values and culture in order to protect themselves from any bad external influences.

- They have to give due respect for their own identity.
- They should try to learn from the best qualities of such popular players. Especially they should focus on skill, technique and endurance.
- They should give due attention to their own country's football games rather than other countries.
- The society, government and other concerned bodies should also give due consideration to the needs of the youth.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Further research can be done to further probe how Ethiopian society exposed to the European cultural influence and the role of domestic media. I take the liberty of suggesting that further research should also be carry out at different levels. What I mean by this is that the major themes discovered in this study should be taken one at a time in a single research endeavor, which will make it easier for researchers to probe more deeply into the observable facts, consequently enabling them to come up with a broader and deeper account of viewers' experience with media messages.

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II. Interview Guide for individual in-depth interviews

1. Would you kindly tell me your name and how old you are and why you start watching English Premier League games and visiting Satellite-TV show houses which screen them if you do that at all?
2. If you go to Satellite-TV houses how often do you visit them?
3. Do you like watching English Premier League games? Why?
4. Which English Premier League game(s) have you liked the most? Why?
5. From the game(s) you remember liking the most, which part do you like and remember the most?
6. Who is (are your) favourite player(s) character(s)? What is it about them you like?
7. How far you know the personal life of these players?
8. What do these games mean to you in terms of how you view the world?
9. What do you relate the games to your own lived reality? It is similar of different?
In what way?
10. What is your perception of Great Britain?
11. After watching the games, what do you think of your life?
12. Apart from English Premier League games, what other games do you watch (Italy, Germany, Spain or other)? How often?
13. Would there be anything else you would like to tell me about the English Premier League games you have ever watched that we have not discussed so far?

Thank you very much for your time

Appendix II

Interview Guides

I. Interview Guide for the Owners of Satellite-TV show Houses

1. Can you kindly tell me your name and your daily responsibilities at this Satellite-TV show house?
2. Do you remember when this house was established?
3. Would you tell be who your regular customers?
4. On average, how many people visit your Satellite-TV show house per day?
5. On average, how many games do you screen per week?
6. What facilities do you provide for your regular customers?
7. What are the most popular English Premier League games that are shown in your establishment?
8. Would you say that watching English Premier League games have influenced the youth's perception of the world and their own locality in any way possible?
9. Are there any behavioural changes you noticed in the youth after they have watched English Premier League games in your Satellite-TV show house?
10. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your customers' experience of watching English Premier League games?

Thank you very much for your time!

4. How do they view their own lived reality after watching English Premier League games?
5. Do the players they are in favour of have anything to do with their perception of their own identity?
6. Why do the youth like watching English Premier League games?
7. Which kinds of games do they like the most and why?

IV. Symbolic Distancing and Fantasy

1. Do the games get the youth to reflect on their lived reality and compare it to that of the games they watch?
2. Would there be any temptation on the part of the youth to sometimes wish to be and act like the players they are in favour of?
3. Do the games provide any way out from the youth's lived reality?
4. What is it about watching English Premier League games that these youth are particularly drawn to?
5. Does it have anything to do with their lived reality?
6. For which part of the game do the youth give special attention to?

V. Cultural Domination

1. Do watching the English Premier League games brings a change on youth's attitude to English culture and Ethiopian culture?
2. Is there anything that the youth dislike about English Premier League games?
3. Do the youth believe that their fascination with consuming English Premier League games is comparable to the loss of their identity as Ethiopian youth with their own values?

Appendix I

Thematic question

I. Satellite-TV show houses and their operation as cultural space for the youth.

1. How do these Satellite-TV show houses operate?
2. What is the composition of the visitors like? Are they exclusively male or a combination of both genders?
3. Why do they come to these houses? Just to watch the games or are there other reasons as well?
4. Why do the youth prefer frequenting these informal Satellite-TV show houses?
5. Are these houses a cultural space? What is actually going on within these houses?

II. A Particular Kind of Youth Identity Creation

1. How do the youth view themselves in relation to their consumption of English Premier League games more or less on a daily basis?
2. Why and how do they come to a particular perception of their identity in the construction and confirmation of their identity?
3. Would there be any reason to think that these Satellite-TV show houses impose influences on the youth in terms of how they view the world?

III. Cultural Identification

1. Has the watching of English Premier League games reinforced the way the youth perceive their indigenous life and lived reality?
2. Are there any aspects of the games/players they attempt to relate to aspects of their lived reality?
3. How do they identify themselves and their lived reality with what they watch in the games?

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