

# **Global media in local context: The effects of BBC and CNN news on cultural belonging of local viewers**

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**Global media in local context: The effects of BBC and  
CNN news on cultural belonging of local viewers**

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## **Abstract**

The penetration of global media products specially BBC and CNN International News programmes starting the early 1990s in Ethiopia marks a turning point in the country's media landscape. Local people were exposed to the western products that were made in an environment with its unique political, economic, social, and historical tradition. A larger section of the audiences to these products has been the well to dos of the society until the recent past. However, different sections of the society fall turn by turn to the programmes over the last ten years as cost of satellite receivers fall, and government loosens tighter control of ownership of the equipment. These developments paired with the ever declining local TV content attract even forced local people to put foreign news channels at the center of their choice for current information. This study attempts to investigate how local people relate with both the local and global media, and how they make meaning of it in ways pertinent to their lived reality. By using observations and in-depth interviews I tried to grasp their sense of involvement with the media and perceptions of the locales.

The findings showed that experiences of both local and global cultures, values and practices have a distinct role in shaping their perceptions. The responses indicated that audiences did not engage with one locale but shift between the two for different reasons establishing a multisided interaction with the surrounding media. This throws the media imperialism thesis, one of the guiding assumptions of the study, into suspicion. It equally challenges the active audience theory as audiences knowingly get cultivated to the global messages discrediting the anti-hegemonic resistance argument.

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1. Introduction

This study tries to investigate whether the presence of foreign news programmes has affected local communities, and whether the effect is observable across different social classes and geographic locations.

The first chapter introduces what the study is all about, gives justification to carry out the study and how to go about it. Definitions of some important concepts and terms that are used in later chapters are given in this chapter. A review of relevant theoretical framework is presented in chapter two in a bid to lay the foundation for subsequent discussion and also to put in place logical frameworks. Chapter three presents both quantitative and qualitative data followed by analysis and discussions. Chapter four is for conclusion.

### 1.1 Background and problem statement

Globalization is a phenomenon that has existed ever since man started to trade and to travel around the world. The phenomenon has however intensified dramatically the last decades.

The phenomenon's multifaceted nature impedes a clear-cut definition. Scholars from different fields have coined various definitions as the phenomenon lends itself for definition in different fields.

This phenomenon, which is in a non-stop progression since its beginning, has also affected the field of communication and media studies. Ronald Robertson, one of the leading theorists in the field defines it as "the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson in Barker, 2001:16). The definition projects on the ever increasing connection between different parts of the world and the subsequent evolution social institutions - businesses, governments, cultural and communication systems - underwent due to the interaction with other cultures that is caused by transborder communication.

The industrial revolution that occurred in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the technological advances associated with it are causes for intensified international communications (Chalaby, 2005:28).

Television is one of the mediums that underwent tremendous change due to introduction of new technological facilities. Television began using satellites on March 1, 1978 when Canadian Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) introduced Public Television Satellite Service (sbca, 2006). Since the broadcasting industry begun using communication satellites 46.872 million household have registered until 2006 (ibid).

“What we know as satellite TV actually had its origins in the space race which began with the launching of the satellite Sputnik by the Russians in 1957” (ibid). Direct to Home (DTH) satellite receivers were developed in the early 1980s. Rural areas thus gained the capacity to receive television programming that was not capable of being received by standard methods. (ibid).

Ethiopia is one of the nations where satellite TV viewing has shown steady increase. Over 5,000 satellite TV receivers (commonly known as dish) were licensed between 1998 and May 9, 2006 following the lifting of the ban in 1996 on possession of such equipments. Out of the registered dishes 72 percent are located in Addis. The rest are scattered in all regions of the country (Telecommunications Agency, 2006). Since the year 2000 6,593 dishes were imported to Ethiopia by wholesale and retail businesses.

The above figure hardly reflects the reality about the concentration of the equipment in the country. The main reason for this is that the Ethiopian Telecommunication Agency which is responsible for registering and licensing the TVRO (television receiver only) dishes that are brought into the country is not able to do the regulatory job after 2004 due to shortage of manpower and the high influx of the hardware in different ways. For instance, there are only two officially registered receivers in Somali region. Nevertheless, it is a fact that ownership of the satellite receiver is no different from owning a piece of furniture for many a Somali household.

Dishes swamp the nation as prices get lower and regulation rules are softened. These equipments enable local people to experience different cultures through the media programmes. Global media corporations, owned by western countries, supply their

product, which bears the stamp of its origin, to consumers in other cultural settings. Though there is a possibility that some adaptation could be made on the foreign product by local consumers most of the characteristic features are left unchanged. It is these features, as Barker pointed out "that facilitate production and reproduction of new forms of ideology," (2000:137).

Since its establishment in 1964 EC Ethiopian Television (ETV) has been in the hands of different rulers that came to power. Its purpose was to serve the ruling party's interest as is posited in the editorial law. According to a recent study all ETV programmes excepting Sport and Q&A are labeled dull by viewers (Abel, 2006). This occurrence coupled with lack of choice in local programming, as there is no independent station, make viewers look for alternatives in their media consumption.

And availability of satellite TV broadcasting was the answer that came at the right time. During Haileselassie(1930) and Derg(1974-91) regime, the country had shut down itself tightly to such alien commodities. The entire local programming was blatant propaganda. That dutiful service of the national TV is still unchanged as the media is obligated by Article 1 of Chapter Two of its editorial policy: "The government journalist must support the ruling party, which is elected by the interest of the people. The ruling party policies must be reflected in each television program," (Ethiopian Television, 2005:5). The policies are crafted in such a way to propagate and disseminate the ruling class ideology, as is the trend in many autocratic regimes. During the Derg period the control got even tighter. As possession of satellite receivers was restricted for diplomatic core members and some privileged individuals the control targeted radio, a transnational media that respects no borders. Individuals who were caught listening to the enemy's radio stations like American VOA and British BBE World Service were arrested. The only breathing spaces were the lobbies of international hotels and organizations where foreign dish programming was provided as 'while you're on the wait' service. The general characteristic of the media landscape was that it operated as a means to solidify the leadership in a community that was locked up from the rest of the world communication wise. The programmes did not have a scant regard for audience taste and choice, which are the core elements in media citizenship (e.g.Golding and Murdoch. 1989; Dahlgren and Sparks 1993).

The 1996 proclamation, which abolishes the ban on importation and use of dishes by individuals, came in a time when audience boredom over local television reached beyond its limit. Decreasing price of the hardware enabled even some of the urban poor to own satellite television receivers.

Another scenario that fanned invasion of households by dishes is Ethiopian Television's inability to cover wider geographical stretch of the nation. In 2004 the national station covered 47% of the nation (Meron, 2005). Following the opening of two stations at Enjebara and Adabtole localities in Amhara and Afar states at the beginning of 2006) the coverage has increased to 51% (Interview, Negussie, 2006). That much coverage is impossible without Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation's assistance. The corporation relays all broadcasting via its 30 stations to the 28 transmitters of ETV situated in different states. Ethiopian Television's terrestrial transmission is available for Addis Ababa and its environs within 130km radius.

As a result viewers on lower altitude need dishes to receive the local transmission. What is more, that very precondition frees them from restrictions to access foreign programming too. The researcher's assumption is that, based on findings of a study on Audience Satisfaction with ETV Evening Amharic Programming, the audiences prefer the foreign programmes over the local as a large portion of the local programming is found unpleasant. According to the study (Abel, 2005). 68% of the audience said they watch ETV due to lack of alternative channels while only 17.3% said they view even though they have a choice.

All the above cited scenarios' – tighter control, media's use as mouth piece of rulers, lack of choice in local programming and the sudden opening up of the nation to foreign media – characterize the landscape of television broadcasting in Ethiopia. Seemingly local people are blinded to the alluring events how global media can erode certain cultural values.

If one observes the surrounding keenly it is evident that more and more dishes are planted on roofs everyday. Refreshment centers like cafés, pastries, bars, hotels etc provide dish programs simply because it is á la mode. On the other side people who can't afford to buy dishes go to such places to watch programmes of their taste.

An important point I would like to emphasize for the outset is that despite the swarming of the local sphere by satellite dishes people still watch local TV but in very low amount. An important point in Abel's finding is that a small portion of his samples- 17.3% - have conceded that they watch local TV even though they have a choice. My findings also substantiate his findings. Although all participants in the current study reported they push away local TV quite interestingly they still hold on to it at lowest amount. Audiences' navigation between local and international TV is an important aspect in that it indicates the current study is not only about the global but also about the local. To be more explicit audiences operate in a field in between the two spheres and that the global and local exist in an interrelationship, not in mutual exclusion.

I was inspired to embark on this study by the literature I read working on term papers for Media, Development and Globalization courses, and observation of my surrounding. I modestly believe that this work would give insight to the interplay between global media and local communities.

## **1.2 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to examine why local people watch BBC and CNN news and whether exposure to these programmes has affected their national consciousness.

## **1.3 Research questions**

The specific objectives of the research are spelled out in the following research questions:

1. Why do local people watch global news channels?
2. How do they watch global news?
3. How do the audiences mediate, internalize and transform the set of messages in the news?
4. How do they describe their experiences and feelings of belonging after watching the news?

#### **1.4 Application of results**

This study entirely focuses on the affective aspect of transnational media products and will try to base its arguments on theoretical foundations. It is believed, therefore, that the study can be important in:

- directing attention to the possible effects of transnational media messages and as a result there will hopefully be increased awareness of the cross border media contact.
- suggesting for local programme producers areas that need improvements.
- indicating programming contents that need face uplift.
- signposting to dish viewers of the possible consequences of foreign media consumption.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is mainly to provide an overall picture of local audience perspectives outlooks and perception of global news media which they have become increasingly attached to. It also provides implications of the role global media have in interceding local people's interaction with their environment. Media studies about global media impact on local structures especially international news impact is an area that needs to be studied in order to better understand how communities in the periphery are responding to the global pressure. The serious concern of news in examining dealings of different sectors in a society and countries around the world plays a significant part in publicising the guiding principles behind those interactions. These publicized principles carried by the global media need be studied to comprehend how developing societies are attracted into a different trajectory effortlessly .This study, therefore, contributes giving a start push in that direction. giving overview vital for researchers interested to initiate further studies in the area. The findings and of the study will help the national broadcaster in revitalizing the scene of local television programming vis-à-vis the thriving international television.

## **1.6 The scope of the research**

Broadcasting of international television news is operated by a number of media conglomerates mainly owned by western countries. In recent years we have seen new faces in the business from semi developed countries as companies from the Arab world joined the business. Moreover, third world countries also become partial players mainly by subcontracting and rebroadcasting programmes produced by the first world companies.

Given that many of media groups are multitasked businesses with diversified multimedia engagements this study will focus on news that is produced by these companies. For the purpose of an elaborated study I will focus on the news programmes broadcast via two of the major news channels namely CCN and BBC World. These stations are chosen by virtue of their long time availability to Ethiopia starting the 1970, the time the country was under control of a military government with socialist orientations. Two decade after the programmes' limited availability has started increasing following the expulsion of the socialist government by EPRDF, the current government of Ethiopia.

## **1.7 Limitation of the research**

Given that I was studying a sensitive aspect of individuals lived experience it was difficult to have as many interviewees as possible participating in the study. Therefore the number of study participants is fairly small. However, with that number of interviewees I have conducted successfully the study arriving at findings which might not be affected by increase in the number of interviewees. As finding women with special taste for news was difficult representation of their views is minimal.

Moreover, my role as researcher has some impact on the information gathered from the study site at Awassa since I am an outsider imploring volatile information. It was evident that the subjects were not telling some information due to a local cultural influence; however that did not weigh down the study significantly. Moreover, this adversity is dealt with by establishing informally a friendly contact with the subjects letting them confide with in the researcher.

## **1.8 Organization of the paper**

The study contains five chapters. Chapter one presents a general background to the study and the research problem, the objectives, the significance, and the scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter two looks at underlying theories that shape the study. In this section basic theoretical arguments that surround global media consumption are presented. It also gives a brief background to the contexts of consumption.

Chapter three discusses design of the study, the methods and instruments used to collect the data and techniques employed in the study. The chapter explains and justifies the preference of qualitative techniques as ways of data collection for the study. It also explains why the study employed focus group discussion and in-depth interviews as data collection tools.

In chapter four findings of the study are presented and analyzed in light of the theoretical framework. This is followed by discussion of findings in light of the media imperialism and active audience thesis. Finally, the study concludes by making general statements regarding the research question based on the finding.

## **1.9 Conceptual definitions**

Terms and concepts that are building blocks for the study are defined with the view to establish better understanding of the whole argument and the discussion in latter part of the study. These essential concepts are defined as follows:

**Ideology** - Knowledge and ideas characteristic of or in the interest of a class. By extension, ideology can refer to the ideas of groups other than classes – ranging from gender to jobs.

In cultural communication studies, ideology is seen as the practice of reproducing social relations of inequality within the sphere of signification and discourse. (Hartley, 2002).

**Culture** - “is the deposit of knowledge, experience beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, timing, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and

material objects and possessions acquired by a large group of people in the course of generations through individuals and group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving,” (Servaes, 2002).

**Cultural identity** - is the (feeling of) identity of a group or culture, or of an individual as far as she/he is influenced by her/his belonging to a group or culture. Common habits, characteristics, ideas may be clear markers of a shared cultural identity, but essentially it is determined by difference: we feel we belong to a group, and a group defines itself as a group, by noticing and highlighting differences with other groups and cultures.(Internet, dictionary, <http://dictionary.laborlawtalk.com>).

**National identity** – any given set of language practices, myths, stories, and beliefs propagated to justify a dominant group in maintaining power, or to justify a competing group in replacing them or shifting power among them. (Price,2000)

**Communication** - is a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding (Rogers, 1983).

# Chapter Two

## Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

A large body of literature suggests that globalization is not a recent occurrence. Rather it has been an integral part in social, political and economic dimensions of previous times. It goes by different names – industrialization, urbanization, modernization etc.

Proponents of this line of thought engage in pinning down globalization by its economic aspect. True, the phenomenon is well explained by its economic flank. Recounts of territorial colonization, international trade, etc are traces of globalization from centuries before. But it is not entirely a result of economics; also of the social, cultural and political weathering of different epochs.

In the media realm globalization become clearly visible following the outgrowth of national media companies to inundate the world. Media has diversified in their service to serve the increasingly complex societal structures. Nevertheless media outlets are concentrated in the hands of a few. Though diversified in service, media are owned by a group technically by conglomerates. Cross media ownership left the role of media originally bestowed on them to serve the public, in doubt. Owners may use their holdings to support and pursue an outlook they conceded with. Hence global media reflect on a narrower viewpoint of the powerful few at the expense of diversified opinions. They often carry homogeneous messages curtailing the assorted reality out there (Boyd Barrett 1997,1998, Schiller 1976).

### 2.2 How news organizations become global businesses

The history of news globalization goes back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the first signs of the phenomena are detected (Rantanen, 2004). The influence of globalization on media organizations is better understood by examining the historical development of news agencies and their operation.

News agencies are the oldest electronic media that contributed largely to the process of news globalization (Boyd Barrett and Rantanen in De Beer and Merrill, 2004). The first

borned, the French Havas, the German Wolff and the British Reuters monopolized the world's news market by signing a cartel agreement in 1859 (Rantanen in Boyd Barrett and Rantanen,1998). The American agency Associated Press joined the cartel in 1927. These agencies started as national agencies in their home countries to serve local markets, then expanded their service internationally to meet the growing demands of their clients (ibid).

The expansion of the agencies' services to international markets was derived by their desire to maintain presence in the old colonies. (Sreberny Mohammadi 1995; Barrett and Rantanen 2004:39).

The cartel is built around the discriminatory principle of exclusivity. This law spine the dependant relationship by:

- preventing national agencies direct access to international markets and
- forbidding national agencies to contract with another cartel member for news supply (Rantanen, 1998:45-6).

Based on their host countries' colonial occupation the agencies divided up the world news market into linguistic regions. The cartel agreement entitled the agencies exclusive rights in their respective territories for delivering international news and to be sole agents for local news from the regions.

The 'symbiotic' relationship between the global and national agencies is evidently a structure of power relations. The reigning powers kept under control national agencies that possibly could threaten the status quo if they combined forces. National landlords in turn suppressed disorganized competitors.

Following the market and power monopoly created in both the global and national spheres, power concentrated in the hands of the global actors. They used it to craft the spectacles client local agencies should look through. "The global agency...not infrequently then proceeded to instruct the local agency in how to operate to the standards of the global agency" (Boyd Barrett and Rantanen in De Beer and Merril, 2004; 40).

More importantly, global agencies manipulated their dominant position to set the agenda for local agencies of domestic news. Therefore, news was determined outside the local confines. Even local news was standardized to the agencies' needs.

The power disparity that disadvantaged national agencies ignited discontent leading to decentralization of the stooping power. At local level, publishers forbidden membership in

national associations, formed alliance to get their own news from global agencies (Rantanen, 1998:40-2).

With the cartel disintegrating in 1934 and a wave of crisis hitting the global news system: post war period, introduction of new technologies, collapse of one form of market control in favor of a less regulated and more competitive form, and serious shortage of finance that European agencies faced due to diminishing support from national governments (Barrett and Rantanen, 2001:41); new competitors come into play. Exclusivity in both global and local markets was demolished freeing agencies to contract with different agencies in different markets (Boyd Barrett and Rantanen, 2004:42).

German agency Wolff was forced to exit the cartel after World War I; American agencies AP and UPI who had extended to South America joined the news pact. Another new member, the Soviet TASS extended its activities in new communist countries, the new French agency that followed the tradition set by Havas, joined forces with the evolving powers to create the 'big five'(ibid).

This period (1940-1980) witnessed stiff competition among global agencies. However, the independence of new nation states and the subsequent establishment of a chain of national agencies provided wider market opportunities for the global agencies. Boyd Barrett and Rantanen noted, citing Carlsson (1981), by the beginning of the 1970s more than a hundred countries had national news agencies.

The 1980s marked a new era in the global media world. The period onwards was driven by neoliberal economic thinking, which insistently intermingled with different aspects of life. Consequently, UPI diminished as global agency. Furthermore, the collapse of the communism brought about the demise of TASS (Barrett and Rantanen, 2004:42-3). The two major incidents triggered a wave of changes in the media arena. A quasi-monopolistic situation was created in the global sphere. Competition forced the media to specialize in certain news types (ibid, 43-45). Even more, East European media, including national agencies, went bankrupt and some were destroyed. That stipulated for the relentless western media companies get their hands on the wobbling Eastern agencies.

The period from the 1980s onwards was a turning point in international television news production. The commercial agency dominated system of news production that had transcended centuries was countered by a non-profit making cooperative form, the news

exchange system that came into play following long discussions on imbalance in information flow.

The explosion in broadcasting stations, particularly news channels in the wake of deregulation, laid the foundation for specialization and diversification in the global broadcasting industry (Sreberny -Mohammedi et al.1997, B.Barrett and Rantanen,T., 1998). Of this historical incident specialization in television raw material supply is significant for the current discussion as broadcasters are almost entirely dependant on the specialist suppliers for visual, textual and sound material. They are worth great importance since “they account for why different broadcasters tend to carry the same few international stories each day ....and why those stories tend to look very much alike from broadcaster to broadcaster,” (Sreberny -Mohammedi et al.1997: 146).

Sreberny -Mohammedi et al. categorized the major purveyors of international news as wholesalers and retailers on the basis of scope of their operation and the mandate they have in shaping what is news. News agencies, Reuters Television, Worldwide Television News (WTN), and Associated Press Television (APTV) along with regional news exchange units fall in the first tier category while the other half, the second tier, contains broadcasters who ‘package’ and ‘distribute’ news from the raw material obtained from the first tier members (ibid).

A number of journalism scholars (e.g. McQuail 1997; Molotch and Lester 1997; Fishman 1997) argue that by selecting and presenting specific events out of the countless potential happenings in the world, media reconstruct reality influencing how audiences perceive other nations, issues as well as the world.

News wholesalers play out this task by limiting the range of stories broadcasters can choose for the news cast. This is done “through the choice of stories they distribute to clients, by the amount of visuals provided, and the nature and amount of accompanying audio and textual information provided with that video” (Sreberny-Mohammedi et al, 1997:149). The non profit making news exchange plays the same role as the news agencies setting the agenda for member national public broadcasters. Hjarvard elaborates in Barrett and Rantanen (1998) the very nature of ‘voluntary basis participation’ of the system compels no member how many stories it should contribute and how many stories from the feeds it should carry on the news programme. Moreover, the unproportional exchange between the regional units

leads to dominance of the system by fewer members. Eurovision is the main player followed by Asia vision. In other words the news exchange is dominated by regional units, which command a vast array of technical, financial and human resources. Inside the system some units attain an influential position while others trail in their shadow.

At both the agencies and exchange systems news is selected according to some basic guidelines on which all the members have similar understanding. “The system relies on certain homogeneity of news criteria between the countries. If a certain degree of consensus is not present because of different conceptions of news value, the participants will not consider the offers of the others relevant or usable” (Hjarvard, 1998:211).

Second tier media, although they are not equally powerful as the first tier members, do set the agenda for the agencies. “The coverage decisions of the international television news agencies are based largely upon client interest ...” (Paterson, 1997: 152). Television news is, therefore, determined according to the need and preference of some influential groups who are located in the first world countries. Those countries more often than not have similar social environment, are concerned of similar issues and reflect the same viewpoint on many issues. Hence international media reflect the perspectives of privileged groups on topics of international concern. “With the producers of the source material for international television news and the owners of regional and global television becoming increasingly concentrated, the content of international television news is becoming increasingly homogeneous...”(Paterson, 1997: 155). News is a cultural product that carries the mark of its origin. A remarkable similarity exists in the way cartel members, today’s news agencies and broadcasters controlled and owned news. The periods have limited players; the players have tremendous power to stave off others from coming into the domain. In all the systems the first tier media made national wholesalers, retailers and broadcast services highly dependent on them for international news.

### **2.3 Globalization and the selection of news**

The literature on media ownership has it documented that before 1980 media and especially television was heavily controlled. In many countries, including European nations, private and foreign ownership was forbidden by law. Television has national character serving as an ‘ideological apparatus’ to hold the state together. Content is what

is considered needed to be kept under surveillance. “Most television services have formal and informal rules regarding who has access to the means of production and distribution, not to mention the informal rules of who can say what in which particular style” (Barker, 1997:28).

Internationally, control was possible until around 1980 as the states owned the communication infrastructure. The form of control was either state owned or public against the commonplace private ownership of US media.

Policy shift in the US from public monopoly of telecommunication networks to private ownership set off a world wide deregulation movement. The open skies policy put into force in 1984 broke down the public monopoly on telecommunication networks allowing TNC’s take over (Thussu, 2000:83). The US then turned its attention to the world telecom market lobbying for its native TNC’s expansion. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Trade Organization\_(WTO), an organization born out of the Uruguay Round on General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade(GATT) are major agents in materializing the ‘open skies’ and ‘free trade’ policies expounded by the US and some liberal European governments. “Martin Bangerman, European Union Commission for Telecommunications conceded...that liberalization was absolutely crucial and that the European commission had to push reorganization restructuring of telecom operators to prepare for privatization”(ibid).

The annex on Telecommunications in the 1995 General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) “encourages private corporations to invest in privatized telecom networks in developing countries and in turn, southern governments are encouraged to open up their markets to private telecommunications operators,” (Thussu, 2004:83-5).

In the dawn of alliances among international promoters some countries agreed to the terms of US, WTO and ITU. However, the states did not deregulate completely the media. They maintained a foothold No matter what the opening was. The multinationals started deepening their roots through joint ventures. National media were the bridgehead for global media influx. “In countries like Denmark where legislation mark foreign ownership difficult, local TV and radio became the target of media multinationals,” (Holm in Hjarvard, 2001:118).

Deregulation is the result of a fine combination of shift in policy and advances in technology. Previously governments control views and their diversity by regulating ownership of physical infrastructure and viewpoints provided. New communication equipments turned regulatory laws head on.

The onset of cable and satellite posed dilemmas for national regulatory systems which were used to exert close control over what could be broadcast, and by whom, within their borders. Satellite in particular did not respect national borders (Hitchens, 1997: 208).

The possibilities offered by technological advances in communication equipments extended program delivery mode through the integrated use of different technology. That seriously undermines any ambition for regulation making the distinction between media forms indefinable. “With the privatization of broadcasting across the globe, coupled with new methods of delivering media and communication content namely-satellite, cable and the internet – the distinction between these industries are being dissolved,” (Thussu, 2000:119).

One important aspect of deregulation is that it laid the groundwork for synergies to spring up. “With the convergence of the media industries and integration from content origination through the delivery mechanisms, a few conglomerates will control all major aspects of mass media” (ibid). The downside of such an occurrence is that owners will use their holdings either to support or attack a certain viewpoint of an individual, group or institution, to advertise products of a subsidiary company; in general to enchain audiences physiologically to give approval for the interests being promoted. Murdoch’s exploitation of *The Times* of London to promote his interest in Britain TV business, Disney’s deployment of its different affiliates to sell products that are basically designed after the popular characters in the animated movies are just few examples of the current trend in global media business. “Many commentators have expressed fear about the possibility if so much power being concentrated in so few corporations and that these few mainly American conglomerates may act like a cartel in production and distribution of global information and entertainment” (Thussu, 2000:129-30).

The deregulation movement was one principal reason for international news to become the leading programme. Before the 1980’s news was regarded as a capital consuming

undertaking by corporate organizations nicknamed a “loss leader”, subsidized by profitable entertainment enterprise. Nonetheless, it was turned into a jackpot of fortune at least on global TV after the wave of deregulation movements that reverberated across the globe (Herbert, 2001:20). International news programming became a mark of differentiation.

Globalization activated structural changes including editorial structures. The changing conception of foreign news changed the editorial make up of foreign news desks.

Foreign news departments that were previously staffed by people with special qualifications and interests. It was about political and economic events in foreign countries. International news was largely diplomatic news. Economic events now play as much a role in foreign reporting as does politics. In addition descriptions of culture, sports or general living conditions are now gaining prominence (Hjarvard, 2001: 119).

The change starts with a change of the marker foreign department into global or international department (ibid). Since globalization interrelate with the political, cultural, social, economic and military threads of a society simultaneously global journalism means reporting on different aspects of social life besides the previously elasticized issues (politics and economics) of foreign reporting. The separate foreign desk, equipped with state-of-the-art technology, is unified with other departments due to the demands imposed by global journalism. (Hjarvard, 2001).

The structural improvisation made reorientation on news selection criteria and professional values obligatory. Both selection criteria and professional values are up for negotiation vis-à-vis corporate interest.

A large number of gate keeping studies (the classical 1949 and the updated 1989) found that news is selected on news value. The findings, I argue, are misleading giving a narrower sight of corporate news production. David Manning White criticizes the first study for its endorsement of the subjective decision making. “It begins to appear that in his position as “gate keeper” the newspaper editor sees to it (even though he may never be consciously aware of it) that the community shall hear as a fact only those events which the newsman, as the representative of his culture, believes to be true” (White , 1997:71).

When Holm writes “globalization has made little impact at the level of journalism practice and news criteria” he indirectly is implying there are changes, but not as visible as

structural adjustments. On top of that, looking at the gate keeping results does not give insight into the effect of globalization on corporate news selection process. To understand how the news grid work in the complex setting of global media houses focus must be shifted from the simplistic level to the intricate macro level. After all, globalization itself is a macro phenomenon with indirect effects on micro structures and operations.

Research (Berkowitz, 1997) has shown that TV news selection is based on several considerations in addition to news values. Berkowitz found that influence on decision making comes from organizational structure and type of medium. Unlike other gate keeping studies Berkowitz found decision making for TV is a group process, that content is produced by group dynamics, selection criteria are atypical of the medium, and stories that passed through one gate still face other gates on their way up to being broadcast.

The contradiction between Berkowitz and wire editors' gate keeping studies suggested decision is shaped by organizational structure. As organizational structure and medium environment change, decision making take them into consideration. The evidence that came out of Holm's study that more than one third of the criteria used in the news selection is other than news content, implied media content is dependant on organizational set up and the manner the profession is practiced in the organizational context.

The percentage composition of traditional news against non-traditional 76.7% to 23.3% for TV and 58% to 4%2 for newspapers in Holm's study is descriptive that television news is responding to the needs globalization has brought on international media.

The varied new items are products of the growing 'interconnectedness' between societies and the 'intensified' relations. Even though, global media broadcast internationally they primarily targeted certain groups in the mass audience. The contemporary audience is characterized by role specialization which is a key factor in media consumption habit. The complexity of society (audiences) directed media to tailor programming accordingly to secure a large audience base, a key in global media business. As a result two distinct but related strategies were designed: regionalization and domestication.

The strategy for that last decade had been to regionalize programming, i.e. adjust it to 'local' interests and needs. Often – not least due to financial limitations – what takes place is a kind of quasi-regionalization, in which some of the content is produced specifically for the region and some of it

is recycled from the mother company's global service (Hjarvard, 2001:27).

The shift from reaching mass audience to niche audience assisted the creation of a “common perspective” for the region (ibid). In other words according to Hjarvard the ever increasing competition paired with specialization of audiences pushed media to become inward looking. Global media content has become more domestic oriented. In this regard the collectivizing approach of regionalization does not address every local need.

Domestication is the strategy that helps global media penetrate audience groups blanketed by different tastes. It also made programmes more accessible by removing language and cultural barriers.

This process is distinctive of national broadcasters who depended on a global wholesaler or distributor to fill their program slots. Now and then the end users reconstruct the feeds through national frames. In the reconstruction process the original meaning of the feeds is subject to modification or complete change. This is one of the stages where ideology is injected into the news.

Likewise this course of action works equally well in the reverse direction: globalizing the local. Global media do not only provide programmes emblematic of western view, but for the widening scope of international news, they carry content that originate from a local level. In this process too, meaning is given to the events. Messages are standardized according to the sociocultural realities of the global viewers.

Both globalization and domestication are process of meaning attribution. Their distinction is on the frames they use to produce meaning and by whom it is executed. Despite the process of regionalization and domestication globalization is dominated by its globalizing tendency due to the imbalance in information flow, place of birth and primary goals of transnational media. Globalization is a process of corporate integration, Holm pointed out. It might be argued that through this process countries owing first tier media organizations enjoy the privilege of defining the world while others have their ‘history stolen’ (Holm, 2001:113).

## **2.4 Theoretical background**

### **2.4.1 Media imperialism thesis**

The media imperialism theory gets wide acceptance from the 1970s till the 1980s. This was a time when national development topped the agenda of new nation states (ex-colonies) that gained freedom from the 1960s onwards. The new nation states soon discovered that even though they were politically free, they were actually tied to the colonial centers in a new form of dependant relations – neocolonialism.

Media imperialism is a militant position mainly concerned with inequalities in communication and how this is embedded in the problem of national development/dependency. A group of scholars from third world countries, and some westerners with socialist orientations protested that the existing forms of communication preserved the imbalance in information flow between (ex-) colonial powers and the disadvantaged third world.

A leading scholar in this field is Herbert I. Schiller whose 1976 work “Communication and Cultural Domination” set the field. In this work he argued that multinational corporations, main actors in materializing neocolonialism, dominated developing nations. He charged them of suppressing local formations and ideologies and replacing them with ideological and structural forms that promote and serve imperialist interests.

After Schiller many scholars theorized on media imperialism. They coined various phrases elaborating the multidimensionality of the argument. The theories investigated media imperialism from economic – media imperialism (Boyd Barrett, 1977,1998), structural imperialism (Galtung,1979) economic imperialism (Mattelart, 1994); and cultural view points of neocolonialism – cultural dependency and domination (Link 1984, Sreberny-Mohammedi 1995) cultural synchronization (Hamelink 1983) communication imperialism (Sui-name Lee, 1988) ideological imperialism; electronic imperialism (McPhail 1987) (White:2000).The thesis left its ivory tower in academic discourse on national development in the mid 1980s but retains continuing relevance even to date.

Another exponential focal theorist in the tradition is Boyd-Barrett. His definition of media imperialism is concerned with the political economy of media production and distribution. His earlier definition reads as:

The process where by the ownership, structure, distribution or content of the media in any one country are singly or together subject to substantial external pressures from the media interests of any other country or countries with out proportionate reciprocation of influence by the country so affected (cited in Thussu,1998:165-66).

This definition implied that TNC's domination can be partial or total, the dominated structures are restructured according to models of the capitalist world, and most important the reply by the country so affected is insignificant or none at all. By projecting TNCs in powerful light the theory also holds that communication process is unidirectional, from the north to the south. As media imperialist theorists devotedly argued a central position of the cultural imperialism thesis stresses "homogeneity of global culture through the spread of capitalist consumerism for which global television is one vehicle" (Barker, 1997; 185).

Global media, which contribute a large share in income to the capitalist economy, are catalysts in the homogenization of the world's culture encouraging consumption of products laden with capitalist ideologies and values. "Global media are dominated by American owned multinationals that disseminated pro-American and pro capitalist values. Thus [...] can imposed culture is in the service of American capitalism" (Barker, 1997; 186).

This process threatens local cultures by preventing local societies exposure to indigenous knowledge they need to construct and maintain local identities. Instead global media introduce cultural forms symbolic of western societies. Barker forewords the argument "in relation to television people are denied a cultural experience as a result of homogenization, or fail to be adequately represented as a result of the homogenization of production (Barker, 1998;185). Representation is a key factor in global media as it instructs symbolic recognition and affect.

Barrett's second definition of media imperialism is an elaboration of the first in that it illustrates the mechanisms of imperialist communications.

The sum of the process by which a society is brought into the world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond or even promote the values of the structures of the dominant center of system (cited in Rantanen, 2000).

Media imperialism is not an all defeating phenomena but it needed favorable local conditions. On top of that local elites are accomplices in the domination of local cultures by foreign force. This kind of argument is inherent in Galtung's definition of structural imperialism, which he defines as:

A sophisticated type of dominance relation which cuts across nations basing it self on a bridgehead which the center of the center nation establishes in the center of the periphery nation for the joint benefit of both" (Galtung in Thussu, 2000:64).

Media imperialism operates not only based on inequalities between countries but also within a society. Galtung coined the phrases core/center and periphery to represent those asymmetrical relations. The harmony of interest exhibited between the two cores is exploited by elites in the center nation to "maintain economic and political domination over the periphery nation" (Thussu, 2000:65). Thussu further underscores that the core of the periphery is supported by the center in maintaining its dominance over its own periphery (2000:65).

From this dynamics it is crucial to note that the affluent groups in dominated countries are agents for domination of their society by invading foreign interests. Such was the case in Latin America. Schiller writes quoting Dagnino:

The effects of cultural dependence on the lives of Latin Americans are not a consequence of an "invasion" led by a foreign "enemy," but of a choice made by their own ruling class, in the name of national development. Through this choice, national life and national culture are subordinated to the dynamics of the international capitalist system (Schiller, 1976:16-17).

Implied in Barrett's theory and overtly stated in Galtung's definition of media imperialism the mechanics of the strategy is taking over communication structures and

institutions which are central in the creation of cultural forms. Reading Barrett's definition against Galtung it can be deduced that media imperialism is not directly forced on another culture but invited in. The agents of its installation do not represent the wide public but a few bureaucrats and technocrats of the nation.

Boyd Barrett incessantly argued in his article *Media imperialism reformulated* (1998) that we still need this theory to understand how contemporary imperialism is making inroads in the face of muddled resistance. He thus proposed the generic model but gave no definition. This model instead of proposing idealistically presence of global media will flatten out the world culture as in the preceding definitions it tried to demonstrate the manner through which it operates. The model pinpoints

1. contemporary imperialism operates by invading airspaces that are crucial spheres in shaping point of views we can adapt on issues – that is what Barrett calls colonization of communication spaces,
2. present day imperialism does not rely on strict dependency forms. Instead it requires deceptively loose looking relationships in terms of degree that can nurture formulaic dependence. By focusing on formula rather than specific content it makes sure that capitalist ideologies are propagated and received with wide open arms.
3. Degree and form of dependence are fed continually by highly favoritistic potential in recourses and the skills needed to utilize them.( Boyd Barrett,1998:59-64).

Media imperialism theory lies beneath many current discourses on globalization and its outcome. However, it is challenged by cultural studies scholars. The protagonists reduce media power and celebrate audiences' supremacy over texts.

#### **2.4.2 Critic of media imperialism**

The 1980s marked a turning point in media effects research through a general shift from direct effects approach to investigation of global media messages reception in local settings. Media imperialism is criticized for concentrating on the production and economic aspect of transnational media business and over looking the internal dynamics of local cultures. The hypodermic approach over conflates global media's power by assuming audiences as 'isolated masses that consume media products passively.'

The weak point in this assumption is its totalizing tendency of effects based on uneven penetration. Tomlinson thus attacks it as a fallacious stand "assuming a leap of

inference from the simple presence of cultural goods to the attribution of deeper cultural or ideological effects” (Tomlinson, 2004: 83-4). The idea of domination of one culture by imported culture is problematized as empirical evidence showed audiences are “socially active members who involve both emotionally and intellectually, with particular forms of media material” (Ang,1995: 212) (see also Morley 1985; Radway 2003; Ang 2003).

The shift in communication studies from powerful text centric approach to exploration of autonomous audiences through reception study presented solid countering to cultural hegemony. The new scholarship direction in cultural studies celebrates audiences power by considering them as active individuals “whose individual readings will be framed by shared cultural formations and practices pre-existent to the individual” (Morley in Allor, 1988:548). Disembeddedness of texts reduce their power since “movement between cultural /geographic areas always involves interpretation translation, mutation, adaptation, and indigenization as the receiving culture brings its own cultural resources to bear [. . .] up on ‘cultural imports’”(Tomlinson, 2004:84). The resilience of local cultures upon imported media texts is therefore considered as resistance to homogenizing tendencies of global media. (Tomlinson, 2004, Fiske 2003).

Barker further argued the hypodermic needle model “fails to differentiate between social groups and the meanings they bring to television” (1997:113). Within the embrace of the national culture we have subcultures with myriad orientations. These orientations often influence the ways audiences read media texts. Morley’s (2003) subjects in the *Nationwide* study showed class related readings, Radway (2003) and Morley (1986) detected gender specific decoding, and Liebes and Katz (1986) found decodings shaped by racial orientations.

Baraker further argued it is naïve to think of global marshaling of cultures as “television dissemination is still uneven” (1997:116).

### **2.4.3 Active audiences**

The ground of the narrowly cast media imperialism argument, which assumed structured texts’ authority over mindless audiences, was undercut as research after research showed audiences did not usually pick up the preferred readings. Cultural studies scholars

regarded audiences as interactive people who produce meaning from media texts “in ways that are related to their social and cultural circumstances and to the ways in which they subjectively experience those circumstances” (Ang, 1995: 214).

Global media texts are culturally hegemonic inscriptions carrying dominant ideologies and view points but economic might and structural control can not ensure reception of encoded meaning. In other words as Ang (1995) noted, audiences are producers of meaning not just consumers of media content. Meaning resides not only in media offering but also in audiences and they are formed upon encounter between audience and text. (Ang 1995; Fiske 1987; Barker 1997). This capacity of audiences to produce differential meaning is what makes them ‘active’.

Early reception studies (Morley 1987; Katz and Liebes 1987; Radway 1987) reinforced the active role of audiences by showing that the meanings audiences construct address their questions and anticipations on social and cultural situations. Morley’s classic study of the news magazine *Nationwide* indicated different social groups interpreted the program as objective reality, real but not objective and ideology /propaganda. In a similar vein, Liebes and Katz (1987) did a cross cultural reception study of the popular soap opera *Dallas*. They found that all non-American subjects make associations between their lived situations and the artistic depiction of reality in the program using it as a reference point. American viewers on the other hand observed the showy and glamorous aspect of the soap opera.

Differential meanings marked active audiences’ authority over pre-packed connotations demonstrating they will not be seduced into absorbing messages unsuspectfully. The act of multiple decoding empowers audiences in the tug of war between hegemonic ruling class ideology and subversive popular practices. Croteau and Hoynes (2003:267) pointed out three ways in which audiences exercise their power over texts: through individual interpretation of media products, through collective interpretation and through collective political action. Following this, the essence ‘active’ emanates partly from polysemy of texts and in remaining part from audiences’ ability to use agency.

Fiske (2003) emphatically notes ways of 'make do' are the main forms of resistance mechanisms at the disposal of active audiences to diffuse capitalist ideologies and products. Hence his notion of popular culture.

Fiske describes it as a form of resistance by subjugated subcultural groups against material and ideological forms of the system that disempowered them. "It is refusal of commodification and an assertion of one's right to make one's own culture out of the resources provided by the commodity system" (Fiske, 2003 113).

The decline of cultural socialization institutions make audiences easy target for media manipulation. According to Fiske popular audiences resist from being assimilated into the system by constructing self appealing meanings from pre-coded texts. It is this ability of audiences that pumps life into the practice of popular culture. "The vitality of the subordinate groups [...] is to be found in the ways of using not in what is used (Fiske, 2003:114).

Bennett (1986) characterizes the struggle between high and low culture in the sphere of the popular which is structured by the attempt of the ruling class to win hegemony and by the forms of opposition to this endeavor. Thus popular culture can be conceived as full of protest on the system and egos of the ruling class.

Popular audiences exercise their power by adopting decoding strategies. Fiske (2003) pursuing a model proposed by Hall identified two decoding strategies but Ang (1995) added on another one, the negotiated, which she persistently showed in her writing most of audiences do fall. The positions are dominant, negotiated and oppositional. As such popular culture and decoding patterns are dimensions of struggle for symbolic power.

A number of reception studies showed that audiences (except higher class) adopted either the negotiated or the oppositional position.

The departure from interest in individual's autonomy to context in which meanings are made throws daily life into the circle of media study (Ang 1995). The emerging interest is in the ways in which meaning is constructed by socially located audiences under specific historical circumstances (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003:273).

Studies have showed which social factors and their underlying principles guide reading of a particular message. Morley's (1987) monumental ethnographic study of

news reception showed how meaning extraction is influenced by social class. In another study (1986) he discovered that gender is also a factor in modes of television watching. In addition Radway (1987) Ang (1991) and Liebes and Katz (2003) discussed gendered use of special media. In their assessment of the appeal of popular American soaps to international audiences Ang (1991) and Liebes and Katz (2003) found out how perception can change with race. Moreover, McRobbie's (2003) study revealed gender and age are additional determinants in media preference. Those factors are force lines and media consumption is an interaction of these forces.

To some extent interaction is a play out between local forces but to a large degree it is interplay between standardized foreign force and revolting local force. Bennett stresses that in studying popular culture as a field of negotiation we should be mindful of the "dominant, subordinate and oppositional cultural and ideological values and elements are 'mixed' in different permutations" (Bennett, 1986:352).

#### **2.4.4 Social semiotics**

Differential readings, as argued in the preceding section, is the summation of polysemy of texts and differentiation in positions adopted by audiences while decoding the text. These two characteristics in turn derive from semiology, which is a bedrock in reception and cultural studies as a whole. It is a science which studies the life of signs within society, shows what they are composed of and discovers the laws which govern the (Saussure in Strarinati, 2004:83). Fiske's, and for that matter contemporary ethnographic researchers, theories of text multiplicity and active audiences is guided by the core principles of semiotics.

Cultural studies integrated semiology as a method into audience study because other cultural systems can be analyzed in the same way for relational character with the structure (culture) in meaning generation (Strarinati, 2004:81-3).

Sassure's distinction of language into underlying structures, where meaning is shaped, and its surface manifestation enables linguists study how meaning is associated with a certain sign (Strarinati, 2004:81-2). By the same analogy by examining cultural demonstrations we can study the underlying thought forms that guide practical action.

According to Saussure language is composed of signs and each sign again can be divided into its elements-signifier and signified. Strarinati writes following Saussure's theory "meanings conferred by language arise from the difference between linguistic units which are determined by the overall system of language" (2004:81). By detaching the rules that order appearance of signs Saussure claims there exists no relationship between the sign and meaning, signifier and signified. Therefore, the meaning of particular linguistic unit is not determined by an external material reality which imposes itself upon language" (Strarinati, 2004:81).

This position disregards the power of everyday experience in shaping our view of the world. By denying causal relation between meaning and the real world he considered them as existing independent of each other, and their entity being determined by internal rules rather than external pressures. Separation of signification and real outside world is a serious break in the attempt to locate how the context of everyday life and the way power is structured in it affect meaning production. By identifying the human mind both as a structure and system Saussure reached the conclusion, parallel with structuralism, meanings are understood as mental and cultural signs are universal i.e. members of a culture share them (Strarinati, 2004: 79).

It is Barthes' semiology (Barthes 1957/1983) that is essential to interpret cultural meanings exported as media products. His version of semiology is similar with Saussure's in its identification of structural elements. It breaks away from the Saussurian view by assuming an entirely different relationship how signs interact with the real world. Strarinati thus identified a major diversion in that Barthes' "semiology does not assume there is a universal structure underlying sign systems. The signs and codes it refers to are meant to be historically and culturally specific" (Strarinati, 2004:96).

This important distinction enables us to study how media texts (signs) activate understanding of a phenomenon (meaning) in the material world. The revised semiology claims that material reality "is always constructed and made intelligible to human understanding by culturally specific systems of meaning" (Strarinati, 2004:97). As such although material reality exists it is tangible to the human mind by the meanings we attach to it. Several noted authors in both cultural and communication fields (Barthes 1957/1983; Eco 1981; and Greetz 1973 in Beck et al, 2004) claimed there is no such meaning (also language

and perception) that is neutral. “Codes and signs are not universally given, but are historically and socially specific to the particular interests and purpose which lie behind them” (Strarinati, 2004:97).

Fixing the meanings to their cultural backgrounds helps us understand how popular audiences perceive cultural signs in a different socially structured setting. These structures are frameworks through which meanings are created and shared.

In line with the above points, meaning is not value free but is qualified according to the function it is meant to perform. Barthes argues (in Beck et al. 1973) that values, whose myriad combination gives meaning, have equivalent weight individually but their importance varies against other correlative values when they are put in function (1973:30). Following this logic, differential meanings audiences produce result from degree of importance attached to the cultural values.

Audiences designate value to occurrences “bringing aspects of cultural experience to bear upon the codes and signs” (Fiske in Beck et al., 2003:26). Berger and Luckmann (cited by Höijer and Werner, 1998:62) equate cultural experience with interpretative frames against which new messages are compared to designate value. “Each experience is related not to one another, but to a type of experience (...) won from many experiences and either stored in subjective knowledge or taken from a social store of knowledge” (Höijer and Werner, 1998:62).

Knowledge is believed to depend on degree of exposure to situations thus all members of a society do not necessarily read media texts the same way. Therefore, “readers with different social experiences or from different cultures may find different meaning in the same text” (Fiske, in Beck et al., 2003:27). However, the common denominator of society, that is culture, makes reading gravitate towards a polar perception. “Frames of reference are seen to have stable structure and to be collective and cultural rather than individual” (Höijer and Werner, 1998:63).

## **2.5 Main players in international news supply**

Television news broadcasting on major western stations changed from national service limited to home countries too international service that aims at the potential commodity value of news. The 1980s deregulation movement is the main cause behind the change

allowing broadcasters access to markets as well as to information that can be converted into huge sums.

The main contributing factors for the new trend are economic forces and advances in communication technology (Herbert, 2001). Horizontal and vertical integrations that started in the wake of the 1980 deregulation movement increased the conglomerates capacity to be competitive in the field, operate at reduced cost, and diversify their output (Barrett, 1998:169).

As corporate expansion was a hallmark of the two decades starting in 1980 many national networks in U.S and Europe had ambition to have a strong international presence, however, rising competition at home, corporate cost cutting and lack of the necessary capital funding caused them retrench (Herbert, 2000:20). A strategic focus and decision making by CNN and BBC brought them on top of the iceberg in the race for international broadcasting of television news. Herbert pointed out CNN started 24-hour news broadcasting in 1984, with the Gulf war elevated CNN into a premiere international news channel operating in 140 countries reaching 120 million households. “After the Gulf War, CNN changed its policy,[...]it began pouring money into international reporting” (Herbert, 2001:22).

Similarly BBC had been contemplating on international distribution of programmes since 1968. However, it launched World Service Television in 1991 with a 24-hour service in partnership with Hong Kong’s Star TV in response to the challenge labelled against it by CNN. “Within a year World Service Television was broadcasting to three continents, reaching 80 percent of the world’s population. Within two years it had become a full fledged competitor to CNN,” (Herbert, 2001:23). International news broadcasting became synonymous with BBC or CNN as other potential competitors cannot deliver their service beyond regional reaches (Thussu, 2001).

The two services further developed market strategies – differentiation and specialization – in an attempt to control the television news market. CNN specialized in live coverage of monumental stories. BBC dwells on providing broad variety of news bulletins, a practice consistent with its richly diversified establishing base. Herbert contrasts the two services as:

World Service Television...was producing 24 half-hour bulletins per day. The other 24 half-hours were filled with prepackaged BBC public affairs or entertainment programmes. There was less emphasis on live coverage of breaking news... plus, the 30 minutes of recorded BBC programming shown hourly contrasted badly with the documentary and fixed programmes broadcast by CNN (Herbert 2001;25).

The services further differentiate between themselves on two major fronts. By packaging programmes for regional markets they divided the market between themselves on regional boundaries. At a regional level CNN runs successful business in Latin America with a Spanish language service and it had a marginal control in Asia. In 1993 CNN stage aggressive challenge on BBC trying to break into BBC's unrivaled market in Asia (Herbert, 2001:27).

BBC also applied region-oriented strategy by "tailoring its feeds at certain times of the day more specifically to the Asian market" (Herbert, 2001:27). Yet its principal plan was to expand its dominance by distributing its service to areas it did not have direct market presence. "It made deals for distribution of its signal to the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Russia, Eastern Europe, Canada, Japan, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, (Herbert, 2001:28).

Nevertheless, regional control is the early stage of lasting success. Real success in the global media contest is determined by success at domestic markets. Domestication is the magnifying glass that helps differentiate the dominant from the strong. Contrary to regionalization domestication helps attract local viewers by making programmes accessible to local audiences and by removing the barriers that used to get in the way. A fine distinction is observed between CNN and BBC 24-hour news services with the application of this parameter.

The general view in Asia was that BBC World Service Television provided better international coverage than CNN and was more local .... It was also able to offer, a unique service not yet available on CNN, simultaneous translation of its newscasts into other languages (Herbert, 2001:28).

Flavor and ability to satisfy every local need are, in the final analysis, the secrets for international success. As a general rule three ways of domestication are detected in global

media services. The first is use of a language, usually English and in some other cases local languages, as a medium. India's Zee Tv provides an example. It used to "add Hindi subtitles to Hollywood film broadcasts on its twenty-four-hour channel Star Movies and dubbing popular US soaps into Hindi" (Thussu, 1998: 278). Moreover, its use of a local hybrid language –Hinglish – in more serious genres like news has won it wide acceptance among popular audiences. (Thussu, 1998: 285).

Another way of domestication is upgrading programmes to western standards of production and presentation. Starkly contrasting its news production and style with India's state owned TV Zee produced programmes and news with typical western standards and visual quality (Thussu, 1998: 280-1). By filling 66% of its news bulletin with domestic news and political affairs against the slim share of 12% foreign news Zee was the dominant station that controlled most of the home market share. (Thussu, 1998: 280-4).

One last means of gratifying local taste is to use imported programme formats and fill it with local content. Zee employed this tactic in game and chat shows. (Thussu, 1998: 273).

Put in a few words the fierce battle global media firms are locked in is manifestation of their insatiable need for power through gigantic growth. Herman and McChesney quote one TCT (Tele-communications, Inc) executive as catching the essence of the process. "Much of TCTs' and News Corporation's interest in a global television news channel is that they both know that news means control and a tremendous amount of influence" (2001:49).

## **2.6 Values in international news**

A large amount of scholarship studies have been produced explaining what factors make events get into the news. In this regard the infamous Galtung and Ruge's 1965 study is the "most influential explanation of news values" (McQuail cited in Herbert, 2001:34).

Other studies that came in the wake of Galtung and Ruge's study explored predisposing factors with emphasis for the angle/approach. Yet the bottom line of all studies is events and actors.

Herbert J. Gans' 1979 original study gave a different perspective by engaging in sociological approach. I found Gans' study most suitable for the current discussion since it provides insight about the “values” that are propagated through individual stories global media carry. Gans categorized the values as topical and enduring. Values that came under the second group are persistently referred to in the news. These values " help to shape opinions,... and opinions are only specifications of enduring values" Gans remarked (2004:41).

Of these values I chose order and leadership to focus the analysis of international news with regard to the theoretical foundations of the study. I felt that these specific values are very handy for the analysis since the news carries at least one story of this type in each broadcast. Similarly in his discussion of societal values around which the news usually revolves Gans identifies that news about social order and leadership takes the lion's share.

Order is an important precondition for social life to carry on its natural course and leadership is the indemnity that the social dynamics is not disturbed. According to Gans the quest for social order in news is projected by the huge amount of disorder stories that appear in the news (2000:57). Gans identified four types of disorder stories namely natural, technological, social and moral. Yet it is the last two types that are emphasized by American, and for that matter western, media (2000: 53).

Gans defines social disorder news as news that “deals with activities which disturb the public peace and may involve violence or threat of violence against life or physical property; it also includes the deterioration of valued institutions (2000:53). The term public peace entails that there are appropriate manner of conducts vital for orderly interaction between community members in the public space. Merlman (1976), in his discussion of western conception of public order, identified civil liberties, due process of law and right of majority and minorities as constituting elements of social harmony. The codes like traffic lights regulate social interaction setting rules of fair play. As Gans observes news keenly reports branch of social codes, since “within communities” civil liberties become a problem, because individuals (. . .) find it difficult to abide by the rules of fairness, restraint and reciprocity (Merlman, 1976:93).

Gans proposes that the “conception of order in the news varies with each type of disorder” (2000:58) implying order has different texture. Order could be individual, familial, neighborly, communal and social. Inherent with the afore mentioned definition of social disorder, order is understood to mean healthy conditions in the way members of a community interact with each other in the public sphere. It is about rights and obligations-legal, moral, social and customary- that every member of the community should obey to make the shared space a peaceful environment. News is mainly concerned with stability of prestigious individuals and institutions since resentment on these elements is indication of unsteadiness of the social cord. Therefore, “disorders in affluent areas or elite institutions are more likely to be reported than their occurrence elsewhere” (Gans, 2000:58).

Social disorder is said to occur depending on the nature of protest. The first view has it that violence is the main indicator for disorder. “Trouble was defined as stone throwing and other physical or verbal violence against the police, or fights between demonstrators and hecklers” (Gans, 2000: 53). The other view by stressing that absence of apparent violence does not mean uncontested order, it suggest peaceful protests should also be taken as possible danger charged with possible instant offence. “Marches, especially those involving large numbers, where deemed potential threats to the social order because so many people were involved” (Gans, 2000: 54).

Yet the most important criterion to differentiate an event as disorder story is, according to Gan, ‘the target of demonstration.’ “Social disorder is viewed as the absence of violent or potentially violent threats to the authority as long as they abide by the relevant enduring values, both in public and private realms” (Gans, 2000:60). By that Gans is implying protests, both violent and non violent, are assault on legitimate leaders who are considered legal holders of power. Therefore, protests are by induction offence on the legal system. By the same token the domain of leadership can be extended to include individuals that sit on higher positions in different social institutions and strata exercising power of differential levels. As these individuals are entrusted by society to steer its daily social life order can be equated as stability of the dominant groups in social structures. “It would be fair to say that the news supports the social order of public,

business and professional upper middle-class, middle aged, and white male sectors of society” (Gans, 2000:61).

From the above argument it can be deduced that society is characterized by asymmetrical relations. As Merlman (1976:90) argues these social strains are exploited by selfish individuals for personal gain. Civil disorders are mostly associated with community members who are positioned on the lower level of social strata as they are victimized by existing conditions of social relations “The motives that produce such challenges do not usually involve elaborate deigns on the part of villains to gain power. Those within who revolt against the community seek revenge for various sorts of frustration” (Merlman, 1976:94). These groups exploit “citizen gullibility” to peruse their goal since western society teach that “those within a community can be trusted, while without can not” (Merlman, 1976:95).

From this perspective news of local disorders functions as maintenance mechanism of the social values by identifying offenders and possible threats and reporting them. Gans supported this point remarking the social function of news in the local environment where it is produced. “Beneath the concern for political order lies another, perhaps even deeper concern for social cohesion, which reflects fears that [. . .] informal rules of social order are in danger of being disobeyed” (Gans, 2000:59). It carries out this function by giving equal attention to order restoration upon the breakout of disorderly incidents and reforming individuals with moral failings.

Gans’ examination of news coverage of the 1967 American ghetto disturbance by Newsweek showed that four times as much text was devoted to police and army attempts to restore order as to descriptions of the disturbances (2000:54). By pointing out the sources of revolt it implies reforming the system is a solution to prevent such recurrence (ibid).

Nevertheless, news is not always anxious about protests and protesters. “Some demonstrations even began to be seen as responses to the moral disorder on the part of the president and his hawkish policy markers” (Gans, 2000: 54).

Moral disorder stories emphasize “legal or moral transgression by public officials and other prestigious individuals who by virtue of their power and prestige, are not

expected to misbehave” (Gans, 2000: 56). Therefore, leaders by respecting social customs must be models for society to abide by social norms.

The purpose of moral disorder news is to supervise expected moral failings of influential people and groups who are considered as models of appropriate action at public spheres. The social process above all others, is shaped by leaders (both individuals and institutions) whose leadership qualities inspire others, guide them in the right course and ensure societal norms that form the basis of unification are obeyed ( Gans, 2000:62-3). Their weakness impart to society that consent on social values is infringed which in turn ignite fear that the community is prone to villains’ attack.

Therefore, the main duty of a leader is continuously asserting morality of citizens to civil liberties and make sure his subordinates did not transgress the power endowed upon them by law. The president whom Gans pronounce the foremost leader in America “is viewed as the ultimate protector of order. [...] Through his own behavior and the concern he shows for the behavior of others, the president also becomes the nation’s moral leader” (Gans, 2000:63).

Gans argues citing a study in Times magazine which shows that leaders have certain qualities that are rare in non leaders. Their ability to proportionately use the qualities is of a leader—honesty, candor, vision, physical stamina and courage— are the source of their ardent but resolute leadership. A leader must be assuredly being able to state morality of his followers, in this case public officials that “their moral failings and inefficiencies are sign of weak leadership” (Gans, 2000:63).

Ultimately order can be seen as mutual respect both by citizens and leaders to social values that hold society together. As citizens rest their trust in leaders, whose leadership will carry society through to achievement amidst challenges, moral disorder news “looks askance at the government bureaucrats who carry them out” (Gans, 2000: 62). Gans observes the values underlying social and moral disorder news are the same except that their subject and object are switched with each type of disorder news.

Disorder news is, therefore, concerned with collectivity of society that is established on orthodoxy to social values by individual members of a society. Even though western societies are mainly seen as individualistic, social order news provides evidence that it is the form of collectiveness that is different from the communal systems

in other mainly third world countries. “When high officials are guilty of moral disorder, news may raise the possibility of resulting social disorder. If people lose faith in their leaders, there is fear that the social fabric may unravel (Gans, 2000:53). Indeed Western collectivity is lavish with individual freedom. But individual freedom is limited by social liberties which police individuals’ interaction at the public sphere.

In section five I will use these two values to test the claims forwarded by media imperialism theorists with regard to use and consumption of international media in Ethiopia. Audiences are believed to have a fine acquaintance with these values due to their frequent appearance in news. That in turn is useful for my study as I am interested in examining how global messages are consumed in a different cultural setting. Moreover, I will try to look into possible effects that derive from consumption of these values.

These values were developed by Gans two decades ago in America in the wake of a series of social turmoils that shock the society in the 1960 and 1970s, a time in American history when black African Americans had reacted violently to the deep cutting anxiety and frustrations generated by the existing system. It was a time call on the social arrangements was made. Gans theorizing is a characteristic reflection of the gripping need for change in that particular society as it captures the pulse of that time. Important to note here is that even in that time in American society demonstrating is unlimited right. What is more, the American society is considered the most democratic society in the world even though it is constricted by conflicts within it arising from social inequalities, mainly racial. Gans’ theory sustained the hegemonic culture of leadership drawing on its essentials although it leaves room to contest its principles at times.

Using Gans’ values discussed above in a current Ethiopian context pose no challenges for me as there exist some similarities between the local context and the global environment the news refer to. In Ethiopia the political system has changed to democratic practice even though it is not in full swing yet. This in turn facilitated to study how the democratic principles and rights are understood by local people. Further more the existence of social division in regard to ethnicity favored exploration of , against that of racial for the American- social situations. Incongruence in the degree of democratization also gave impetus for my study casting conceptions of the local people’s with regard to some of the democratic principles and practices emblematic of western nations.

# Chapter Three

## Research Methodology

### 3.1. The research design

This study took the form of qualitative research design since qualitative study “involves in depth investigation of knowledge” (Grix, 2004:119). As I am interested to explore what meanings viewers of different cultural and social groups produced from global media qualitative approach is most suitable. Many researchers noted knowledge is deposited in loose forms as culture, practices and viewpoints and it is found in their natural locations. Therefore ethnographic study is a suitable approach as it enables “studying people in their natural settings, seeking to document that world in terms of the meanings and behavior of the people in it” (Walsh in Seale, 2004:228). For this purpose the study look at how situations in contexts contribute to certain media consumption, in this case global news.

The qualitative approach is used since it gives an insider understanding of the phenomenon to be studied. In other words, as Alasuutari (1998:63) noted, qualitative research is concerned “to unravel ‘from within’, the internal logic of the behaviors and ways of thinking that are characteristic of the culture concerned.

Grix(2004:120) argues that qualitative research involves the interpretation of data, where by the researcher analyses cases, usually a few in numbers, in their social and cultural context over a period of time. Therefore, I used a two stage triangulated method to generate data to give an account of the researched consumption practices and resultant attitudes on certain issues. Observation of the study areas enable me gain insight into audiences interaction with their environment and people during and after news viewing.

Since qualitative research allows the use of a variety of techniques of inquiry (Walsh in Seale, 2004:28) I also used in depth interview method to explore how audiences’ make sense of the messages carried by global media.

### **3.2 Sampling**

As the study follows a qualitative design the choice of sampling techniques was dictated by it. At the outset I aimed to use purposive sampling along with non participant observation. Purposive sampling was preferred because this method enables to choose subjects who by virtue of their knowledge about the subject being studied are relevant to study. Sarantakos therefore suggested “the important criterion of choice is the knowledge and expertise of the respondents, and hence their suitability for the study” (2005:64). Therefore, respondents were required to be viewers of either BBC or CNN news channels for one year and more.

Women were under represented in the sample for one reason it was difficult to find women who are earnest viewers of news. Besides, I have come across some women who are occasional viewers but they were not considered since I found that they do not have the “knowledge and expertise.”

I used snowball sampling as the social groups I want to study are normally unreachable due to the sensitivity of information I want to extract from them. Deacon et al recommend using snowball sampling in studying informal social groupings, where the social knowledge and personal recommendations of the initial contacts are invaluable in opening up and mapping tight social networks (1999:53).

I forego the original judgmental random sampling method in favor of the snowball as attempts to draw samples by judgmental method failed to give results because of the groups secretive nature. Therefore, I identified hotels and café’s that show either BBC or CNN stations as extra service through observation. Then I asked the owners to recommend me individuals who are regular viewers of the news shows. All of the samples taken from Awassa are made accessible by recommendations. In drawing the sample from Addis Ababa I used a slightly different approach as all interviewees watch the news at private places instead of public places. Thus, I located homes with satellite receivers and asked the family to collaborate for the research. In this way I draw three interviewees and the rest are selected by snowballing. In both places it took me over a week to draw the samples and get their consent to participate in the study.

Following Deacon et al’s argument that having representative sample is not critical in qualitative research (1999:50) I sampled a total of fourteen people. Besides the

sample size is made fairly small as new information did not come up usually after the fourth interviewee. In other words Sarantakos' (2005:165) advice is taken that "the process is continued... until saturation that is until no more substantial information can be acquired through additional respondents." Moreover, the difficulty of getting samples that watch either of the news programmes and willingness to participate in the research had limited the possible number of samples.

In depth interview and observation were used to extract data that respond to the research questions and also that talk to the theoretical framework. The research instruments are discussed in the following section.

### **3.3 Data collection**

In May 2007 I visited the study site at Awassa and identified a hotel and two cafes that show BBC/CNN news, for observation. On each visits I paid attention to the routines the viewers perform. Mason (1996) cited in Deacon et al (1999) support for observations as "natural and 'real life' settings can reveal social reality, and that it has to be experienced and shared by the researcher for research accounts to have any validity or adequacy (1999:249). I remained an observer participant all the way through since this way I can remain not disturbing the scene despite initial attention by the scene participant because I look like a stranger.

Moreover, observation allowed me to have a fair assessment of the context. I spent an hour observing the interactions on scene during each visit.

For the observation I did in Addis Ababa in April 2007 I selected a family to watch its dynamism during the news hour. This is because all interviewees watch news in their homes. I made sure that none of the respondents have any direct experience with other cultures beyond the local except through television.

In addition to observation, I used in depth interview to gain a sense and understanding of certain meanings respondents condon to certain actions because of news watching. Alasuutari (1998:142) suggest for interviewing remarking "informal interviews are the way to get 'deeper,' to learn what things mean to the study subjects."

Moreover, with interviews “issues that might be of a sensitive nature,[...] or which interviewees may be reluctant to talk about can be approached with sensitivity to open up dialogue and produce fuller accounts” (Byrne in Seale, 2004, 182).

Once access is gained and interviewees grew eager in letting me grasp their own accounts of their behavior, attitudes and action I have to ensure that the peer type conversation is maintained.

The semi structured format of the interview guide was of some help in letting respondents’ experience flow in a natural, uninterrupted manner. In addition probes and prompts were used to encourage respondents to answer questions, and to elaborate on partial responses (Sarantakos, 2005:278).

Interviews were conducted at the respondents’ viewing places to create the mood of one’s own place hence the conversations will not be hampered by over consciousness of respondents.

### **3.4 Data processing and analysis**

As the interview was followed unstandardized format data has to be recorded. Before the interviews begin I have to seek agreement from interviewees to record the conversation and all have agreed. Later on the tapes were transcribed verbatim into English.

While doing the transcription attention was given to retain the ‘sense’ of the answers rather than exact literary translations as the interview was conducted in Amharic, a mother tongue.

Amharic was chosen as a medium taking into consideration the point that respondents may not be versed to narrate so naturally in a second language with a reasonable degree of proficiency- that speaking and writing are the highest level of competencies in language skills. Moreover, some concepts and ways of saying things may not be expressed well in a second language. Field notes were incorporated to describe, analyze refute interview data.

The data was thematically coded and analyzed in a way that addresses the research questions.

# Chapter Four

## Data Presentation and Analysis

### 4.1. Disengaging local

Having in mind the objective of the study, I investigated how messages of global media outputs are consumed, interpreted and appropriated by local audiences' situated in a different context.

Speaking of the appeal of foreign news most of the participants indicated disinterest in a local socialization institution, i.e. local television, has rendered them more open for a foreign cultural product. Foreign news channels treat the unsatisfied need offering choices to fill the aperture with. They compliment the disengagement by attracting audiences into an eccentric context where they can have more choice and gratification. The following statements by Mesfin, a 49 years old middle class, manager who is tired of local TV's propaganda, and Bezuhan a young aspiring economist looking forward, demonstrate local TV as:

Mesfin: I'm stunned how on earth everything can be related with something like Genbot 20.<sup>11</sup> That's unacceptable. Then I'm like why bother and zap to BBC or CNN. ETV is old and droning, the news is a packed story under a certain directive.

Bezuhan: ETV is really annoying. They tell us we have grown by 10% in the last 3 years. Sometimes I think I did not understand development correctly. I see more poor people around, many people struggling hard not to give up on life, many dozens sendementing on the bottom of living....

For Belay 45, a civil servant and single father of two young boys; Abeba a married office woman in her late thirties and Mulugeta a retired agriculturist, local TV is boring, repetitious, and therefore worth little.

Belay: Although I could not say everything on ETV is not important its

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<sup>1</sup> Genbot 20 is the day the ruling government EPRDF has overthrown the former military government, Dergue. Therefore this day is celebrated as a national holiday.

programming comes nowhere near BBC, CNN or Al Jazeera in terms of diversity or choice.

Abeba: My husband often remarks that it's enough to watch ETV once a day when I had the TV on the local station. Indeed nothing novice will not occur on ETV for couple of days. Then I switch to BBC.

Mulugeta: I don't watch local TV. Their programs do not interest me. There were some excellent sponsored shows like Awde Seeb<sup>2</sup>, Filefit<sup>3</sup>. Aeynachn<sup>4</sup> was my favorite. They start good but get wiped off when the host quits.

Moreover, audiences are disappointed with the late arrival and inaccuracy of local news.

Mulugeta: The news is usually late by one or two days. A story you heard on radio days before will be put on TV as new. Even bad sometimes they tell inaccurate information. Once the sport reporter was giving a commentary on a football match in which a player had committed a serious foul. The reporter was saying that the player will be penalized according to a certain rule. But the rule has already been put out of service by FIFA.

Absence of programmes oriented to audience taste is a main point identified to have staved away audiences from watching local TV. This point is documented in Abel's study (Abel, 2006) as he found that local news was the most dissatisfying programme on ETV. Not only news but other 'serious' programmes on ETV like current affairs are rated most unsatisfying in Abel's study into Audience satisfaction of local viewers with ETV. This occurrence is responsible in obstructing local people from experiencing local cultural forms as is argued by Fiske in the literature on media imperialism. This leads to withdrawal from participating in local cultural activity in this case experiencing the local through TV watching. This occurrence marks the beginning of the disintegration of a person's cultural life. In other words the above narratives showed that internal factors rather than external pressures initiated an escape from local cultural forms.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a local programme about success stories of celebrity and ordinary people.

<sup>3</sup> This locally produced talk show is an equivalent of BBC's *Face to Face*.

<sup>4</sup> This is an investigative reportage digging out malpractices in the local beau racy. It had attracted extremely large audiences in its heyday before the beauracy starts backlashing it.

## 4.2 Emotional hideout

Audiences put off by local media resort to foreign channels. The foreign is regarded as an 'escaping place' from boredom caused by barefaced propaganda. Nevertheless, interviewees are well aware that foreign stations are neither free of ideological programmes but the prejudice is in acceptable amount.

By enduring the acceptable amount of ideology in foreign news and rejecting indoctrination by local TV, audiences resisted local authority's control on their perspectives circulating programmes with dominant ideological messages. They also let the foreign dilute their experience which fosters reexamination of the dominant ideology of submission and obedience to leadership as inculcated both by the global and local media.

Mesfin: If you watch attentively you can pick it up that they (foreign media) are also prejudiced but it is pretty well covered up by the content and presentation. You can tell the difference if you regularly watch it.

Zelalem: CNN is more American. If a major incident happens in America CNN ignores other events and show that happening all the time. I watch CNN for something American and if I want details on American thing. But usually I watch BBC.

Local TV is further shoved off by foreign TV as audiences usually put on programmes shown on foreign stations to put the house alive.

Ababa: I usually have the TV on BBC when I am alone till my family comes home. Even if I don't watch it I like hearing its mesmerizing sound.

Bezuhan: When I have to do something at home I like doing my work listening to music shows on BBC.

Discontent with the local programming is resisted by avoidance of local TV. Shutting out local content devalue the hegemonic power entrenched in local TV programmes, hence the control over citizens political lives is destabilized.

Siemon: I'm accustomed to watching the 8pm news on BBC. The bulletin is more diversified. That is my usual time for news.

Bezuhan: I rarely watch ETV, twice or three times a month. That is also accidental. When I come home for lunch I put on BBC. I take a nap afterwards and go off to work. In the evening I enjoy watching news and other programmes.

Zewdneh: Usually I arrive home around 9pm. I switch BBC on till 10 or 10:30 pm.

The overlap in timing with the local news broadcast which is aired at 1pm and 8 pm, and the choice of these specific hours by interviewees to watch foreign news resulted in waver of the local. Zewdneh's late arrival at home in the evening, though partly it was because of his bachelor lifestyle, is an exercise not to run into the local news and other programming which he branded as basically of the same seed. My assumption is affirmed as I found out his tangential practice of carrying a World Space radio set in his car so that he will not tune to local radio too.

Moreover, obstructed viewing habits are used by audiences as protection from being influenced by the articulated hegemonic discourse while at the same time keeping the string with local not to split altogether.

Mesfin: I can't avoid it totally. I'll grow restless listening BBC endlessly at prime time. I want to know if something good stuff is on and I come back. Then I feel I'm wasting my time, switch to CNN. Half or an hour later I come back in case there is something interesting.

Important to note from Mesfin's response is that audiences still need local products they can identify with. Hence ETV is not totally outcast but had to compete with the more tempting foreign TV.

Mulugeta: Sometimes I watch ETV when the kids are not at home. But they come and change it to a movie channel or something. My wife also likes their taste. So I have to let it go because it's only me that want watching local TV.

Tewodros: I watch ETV once a day. Usually it is at a time different from the main BBC news show. And it should also not clash with the kids programme on BBC too because my son watches it regularly.

Menagesha: I watch local TV during the day when I am not busy. Usually it's in the afternoon after all customers are gone.

Eyob: I have a very strong nationalist feeling. So I watch local news everyday. Of course I like BBC news and Al Jazeera.

However, the local TV gets the opportunity rarely when there arises a forcing situation.

Semert: Of course I watch the news on ETV once a day. That is because I am a journalism student. Our instructors ask questions from the daily bulletin and I have to answer that. Had it no been for that I don't watch ETV.

Bezuhane: When a major incident happens in the country I watch ETV. Otherwise I don't remember the time I watch ETV with interest.

In a nut shell findings presented in the above sections indicated that programmes dealing with core issues of the local situations (politics, topical issues, etc) have less power in molding citizens' attitudes as they are rejected in favor of the global. In his study of *Audience satisfaction with Ethiopian Television evening Amharic program* Abel similarly found that overall ETV Amharic programmes gratification is very low (1.85 on a Likert scale). According to Abel local people find less relaxation and information value in local TV in addition to its lower integrative role with the other local people. In his study ETV was given better scores by majority of subjects for the sheer behaviors of unintentional habit of watching and pass time with average mean score of 3.5 and 3.55 on a Likert scale measure (Abel, 2006). The better gratification earned in 'habit' and 'pass time' are indicative, as I argued above, ETV has very little importance in incorporating local people into the existing system.

Local TV's marginal command depicted by occasional, obstructed and sometimes compelling viewings in my study showed that cultivation to local hegemony is very little because of sporadic and instantaneous exposure. Also in Abel 68.7 % of the subjects spend below 7 and half hours in the week watching ETV.

The smaller number of interviewees who watch ETV on and off in my study suggest that ETV is, as a whole, a busted ideological machine with little influence on highly restricted groups of the community. This is in a resonance with Able's finding considering 17.3% of the total sample watches local TV although they have access to alternative channels. Out of the total dissatisfied respondents (76.7%) 68.3% responded they watch local TV because they do not have a choice (Abel, 2006). In short ETV's

control of local people's views is unproductive with insignificant reach of its target.

### **4.3 Watching as surveillance and socializing**

Besides providing emotional hideouts from the boring, party line talk on local television, foreign news watching is essential for all interviewees in making sense of the world around them. Local TV was too short off acquainting them with events happening beyond the local sphere. Asked what use does experiencing others situations have for their daily lives Bezuhan, Negussie and Mesfin responded news allows one find out about the myriad of incidents which are otherwise incomprehensible.

Mesfin: Being informed is a necessity in today's globalized world. What is happening in my next door country concerns me too. So does what takes place in America. So I get up in the mornings asking my self how the world was getting on in the past few hours while I was in sleep. It touches my life in some way.

Negussie: To get new information. And you need be informed to discuss something, to know how new things in other countries affect us, to diversify my outlook it's useful to understand people from "other" places. I see some new things in their cultures. That shades light on the peculiar.

The desire to know about other places beyond the local is symbolic of the possibility that become open to Ethiopians after 1990 when restriction of experiences to local and to some degree to socialist worldviews was removed. That helped viewers of satellite TV reorient themselves with the new world system which is often characterized and presented by international services as full of clashes, global wars between capitalism and fundamental local resistance. Audiences' understanding of such intertwines is affected by choice of media and their lived experiences.

Tewodros: Media has impact on what we think of things around us. It shows part of a story. Western media show Arab brutality. On the contrary Arab stations show Palestinians suffering and dying of Israeli attacks. It's a skewing game. You have to filter the information and adapt a refined mindset.

Mesfin: What's going on in Middle East is directly related with my very existence. What happens there has to do with Christianity. Every

incident in the Middle East is signs of Dooms Day. The incidents parallel with the biblical signs of Christ's coming. For me the whole thing is a struggle between evil and God's power, a war between anti-Christ and Christ. I feel that Middle East is the beginning as well as the end of the world.

Mesfin's judgment of the world through a strictly religious structure can be traced into his relationship to the Ethiopian protestant church. The flexible frames help surfing around issues revealing the complex interactions.

The knowledge of other cultures that is mediated by news watching is shaped by frames drawn from lived experience. This knowledge is used in identifying oneself with the surrounding environment, and alerting one of friendly and unfriendly groups within it.

Mesfin: Again all human race is somehow tied with the Arab-Israel conflict.

How can an Islam in Ethiopian be in solidarity with Palestine? How can a Christian be pro Israel? So for me news is important to make sense of the world around me. It doesn't stop with understanding. You discuss about news with friends, family. The discussion is useful to make sense where I'm standing among my own people.

Discussions that usually follow viewing are restricted to the circles of intimate and impartial groups each serving a different goal. The discussions with the impartial group of people mainly serve as a socializing practice, to revive attachments with other dwellers of the given situation. In other words discussing news helps mediate the friendship in addition to the media content. Belay and Ababa indirectly reflected so when asked if they discuss the news with others:

Balay: I sometimes discuss stories from the news with colleagues when we are free. Of course the discussion is short and shallow, simply talking about new things we have seen and exclaiming greatness ... amazing isn't it?

Abeba: At the work place, on long field trips there is the driver and other coworkers. We roll the road talking about current issues. I converse with someone I thought can understand me regardless of our age, sex, social position. Usually the discussion is a sort of retelling the story.

Zelalem: My supervisor comes and watches the news with me when the tide is off. Sometimes we discuss other similar events that were on the news, of course very much, if a customer didn't show up. Since our hotel is the

best in town we have many foreign customers. They greet then they start talking about the weather or ask me if they have missed something interesting in the news. I need to watch the news to participate in those kinds of things.

The 'fly-over-type' discussions index that a certain distance is maintained between discussants. This non crossable area becomes meaningful when affixed into its background, the political atmosphere. Within Ethiopia political control is maintained by state and this has instigated a certain fear among people to discuss politics freely with anyone. This state of affairs is inferred to when interviewees answered they do not discuss about news because they don't have friends who have interest for hard stuff while Mesfin and Bizuhan replied discussion mates are very intimate people they know for long. Similarly Zelalem and Ababa said they discuss news stories deeply with very close associations. The discussions held within peer circles are mainly instrumental in identifying with particular worldviews. Here is what Bezuhan said about the discussions which also represent Mesfin, Ababa, and Zelalem's views.

My friends come over to my place for the news. Our viewing is accompanied with abrupt comments. Usually we get in extended discussions afterwards. Political news, uprisings and actions taken by people or government, natural disasters, something unusual with large social impact is issues for discussion.

In this and other dialogues interviewees mentioned political news as the first item they usually discuss (followed by sport, movie and culture regularly). This priority indicates the need local people felt to adapt a progressive political identity, one which enables them overcome ,to some extent, their current frustration of being voiceless thus powerless, as a result of watching protest news on global TV. Not only viewers but also the nation faced the new reality in which community is challenged by versatile identities. The utility of private places as sites of construction for new identities may imply that the nation state was incapable of rebinding its members in prospect of the challenge posed by globalization. However, some micro social structures like bars, cafés and hotels were reflexive. This practice suggests that private places (Bezuhan, Zelalem, and Abeba) sabotage the heavy control on free exchange of ideas. Moreover, some pockets of public spaces like disserted or off limit corners in bar and café's are where deviant orientations

are consolidated. Mesfin, who hang out in an inn with intimate friends from his childhood village Deber Zeziet, thus describes the opportunity unique to these places.

We meet here between 6 and 8 pm. There are six of us. This table (a corner seat on the veranda) is ours. The attendants reserve it for us until 6:30 Pm. We are ok with the other groups who hang out here. No one goes into the other's territory or wants to overhear. We freely discuss about politics, economy, sport, everything.

For Mesfin it is unusually strange to hangout in a bar because of his religion. However, convincing justification is found for his behavior when considering the enjoyment he gained from discussions over a Coke or Pepsi unlike his friends on the well segmented veranda which is a unique place from the main bar in that it is reserved for regular customers like his and other groups. The two tables on either wing of the veranda are separated spaciouly by the door to the main bar. Hence the place is unique to Mesfin in that it provides recreation after work and help him wrought his identity with his friends regularly. Therefore, the discussion is a preservation exercise which makes sure the binding fiber of ideological harmony is not watered down by state control mechanisms. The state, unable to change to the new actuality it faced, is regarded as a stumbling block in the realization of contemporary identities.

#### **4.4 Reconstructing order**

##### **4.4.1 Resisting control**

As already noted, the selected viewers of BBC/CNN news are mainly discontent with the local TV which they consider is an instrument of state control over citizens views. Hence distancing themselves from local TV and embracing foreign channels provided them with broad orientations of other cultural practices. A large number of cultural theorist argued that globalization and its related thesis of media imperialism should not be taken as total danger to the world cultures, which they are said to destroy influencing and replacing them with a homogenous capitalist culture. Tomilson, notable exponent of cultural studies argues those imperialistic messages and their baggers of capitalist values are resisted from flattening local cultures as the latter's established system react to naturalize the former.

Supporting this claim active audience theorists further argued audiences appropriate media messages in ways that are relevant to their lived experiences. One way of such indigenization is semiotic guerrilla warfare which Eco (cited in Fish 2003:115) explains as a way of meaning construction out of the hegemonic global texts.

Given their estranged sentiments it is no wonder that a large part of their attraction to foreign TV news lies in the varied readings and interpretations of texts in a manner that nurses stained feelings of disempowerment that is inflicted by the existing socialist democracy order. For example, the majority of them engage actively in decoding and interpreting hegemonic articulations of news in relation to relevant local or global knowledge frameworks. Interview data indicate that this tactic is central in redefining the distorted presentation of social disorder in global media. Seimon for example talks about his version of disorder as common in our daily lives preferring the oppositional meaning.

Seimon: It is more of a human nature. Every time you satisfy one need you create another, big one. You can't stop it at a certain point. One group wants upper hand and another resist it. In between that gets you into disagreement. Such things are colors of our lives. It happens by itself. It's because of globalization that news brings them up constantly that we notice them. Nothing is new.

By extracting disorder out of its political context and placing it in the human behavior grid, Seimon rejected the dominant discourse that views protests as dangerously destructive. By reinstalling protest in a different environment Seimon can be seen as altering the phenomena into a cyclical development.

Mesfin: In the first place demonstrations don't disturb public peace. Demonstrating is one of the manifestations of democracy. It is a way of getting those in power listen to your questions.

The understanding of protests, with culturally specific functions in democratic systems, as voices of ordinary people is central in the general understanding of demonstrations as requests for rights. Therefore, these voices are emblematic of solution seeking means that they do not infringe public order.

Tewodros: Protests have a genuine cause. Protestors crushed with high living cost asking for salary increment are right. I understand that strikers have convincing reasons. Protests have been there in society from the start and will remain part of social life. It's a means of solution seeking.

Abeba: In foreign countries protesting on leaders and the system is common place. They... society know its rights, obligations and what to demand. By protesting they ask for their rights, pressurize leaders into their execution. The cause is humanitarian. It's the intention... forcing leaders into their commitments, making them sensitive to others.

Situated in a cultural context where such rights are not fully realized, local audiences experience the influence protesters exercise in determining issues that touch their lives. As such, viewing news that shows disorders is perceived as the exercise of power citizens should practice to make their lives meaningful. Note the following replies to the question about what message disorder news imparts.

Abeba: I see freedom. In those countries they have plenty of democracy. I dream of that. They can demonstrate any time, speak as they wish, do as they wish. No influence on that. The extent of their freedom, what it serves, that I learn from the news. It astonishes me. I wish had we have it here... should we change to that ...

Zelalem: I think whatever compliant they have they are free to express it. There is the possibility. Sometimes I think... they have too much of it. They protest on minor things. That's funny. We don't have a chance whatever serious the thing is.

Most important, witnessing police civility in the news communicates that the voice of protestors' is respected by the state despite that fact that the existing system is the root of their annoyance.

Bazuhan: To some degree I recognize how much freedom they have. Without any exaggeration police didn't use guns, won't hurt a single person. It's very peaceful. Police just looks on the protesters, no violence, nothing. And I'm astounded by that freedom. Police ah...they (protestors) are aggressive but police did not act to that. In someway I think they have a better administration.

This perception is significant as it highlights the understanding of local audiences' abject deficiency of some rights which they came to sense through the valor of protestors they

see in the news. As such they develop the view that the state stalls democratic/ civil rights, leading to the understanding of its arrangements as disorderly.

Semert: In the first place we can't have such peaceful demonstrations here. Police intervenes sooner than it starts. Demonstrators also throw stones. It gets high. It will end in total commotion.

Menagesha: I am very jealous when I see Ethiopians living abroad protesting on issues, the same issues which are of prime concern for us. Because they are able to show their concern through peaceful demos. To be able to do that is fascinating. Here, from what I saw and heard demos have a tragic ending. That made me dream of the time we have that liberty here. Show your objection without any risk, express freely your view, seek solution for problems...I am very much eager to see that.

This frustration is in stark contrast with the general democratic political direction the country proclaims it is perusing. This is documented in the limitation and censoring of demonstrations. It is banal that unexceptional demonstrations are often pretentious. This is unsurprising given that the system is acclimatized, politically, to a laissez-faire mode but practically it is static.

Menagesha: Our experience is very different from the one we see in the news. Protests are unusual here. Possibilities are very slim. Sometimes when they occur they end up badly. Protestors get hurt. It is unusual and dangerous.

Belay: First of all demonstrations are non existent. Even then one needs to seek permission in advance to stage a rally.

Semert: From what I see in the news, protestors in foreign countries can express their opinion freely and vigorously until their cries get across clearly. They protest until a reply, a convincing reply comes along. But here demos are a sham. Not so powerful. Protestors don't brazen out until solid reply is given. They are done with pretentious replies. They accept it. They don't push hard. Nor did they demand immediate response.

Given that this basic right is very rare or absent in the local situation viewers are discontent with the political culture they live in. Unsurprisingly all interviewees identified themselves with protestors that they witnessed on global news. All said, they watch demonstrators' actions keenly.

Abeba: I notice the protestors. How do they show their protest, what do they do? What drive them to the streets... what answers are they given...

Mulugeta: That is not something in my choice. I think I'm drawn to the demonstrators seconded by security personnel. The way they show their disapproval is stunning. People do sit down strikes to attain their goals. No stone throwing, no physical violence. Neither did police poke them with sticks nor did they shower them with foam. They simply carry the protestors aside. I can't help being glued on that scene. The degree of tolerance, respect is amazing.

Abebe: First they are grieved. The slogans they carry are surprising. The enormity of their temper, the intensity of emotions is marveling. Some are madly angry, some are sobbing. Their different reactions tell how intense the predicament is. That just catches my attention. Then I follow how it was solved, what responses were given.

Moreover, the gentle treatments protestors receive are another source of attraction of the audience towards international protestors.

Seimon: It is the response I like to see. Things said, things done to the protestors. How is the resolution arrived at is very interesting to me. Protestors can be aggressive but will government resolve the conflict amicably? I don't agree that protests are threatening because they are accompanied with bulged emotions. The way it is handle, the way government prefer to handle it is what I want see.

Semert: They demonstrate because something is not working. OK. I want to see how their protest is dealt with, what rely are they given. I am curious to knowing how (with emphasis) the thing is solved.

Repeatedly, viewers of these news programmes draw attention to the "how" it is solved aspect emphasizing not only their desire to have "a voice" but also hinting the congenial relations they expect from the state. Alike Radway's finding of romance reading among women that reading give a release from tension providing escape from the social burdens of being a housewife and symbolic gratification of meeting the physiological need for being given care. Similarly, thus identification with protestors by putting the self in their situations serve as an emotional retreat in which viewers are entitled to perform in an idealized fashion what is impossible in their real lives.

Eyob's comment "protests are rare in our country" indicates the incompleteness surrounding viewers lives for their dispossession of "the means off struggle". Therefore,

cheering protestors is a moment of identification as well as entitlement with the attributes that winkle at local audiences. These qualities i.e. unsuppressed voice of protestors and their authoritative stature deriving from it, are presented to audiences as 'another being' to be by global media. Local audiences move between the contexts, imaginatively, confirming to their feelings of difference. Hence the news provided the resources which are mixed with the old self to create a new identity that seeks and get triumph over the less powerful character.

Therefore, it is the representation of events as decoded by viewers (the cyclical process as way of solution seeking at the disposal of citizens when rights are subjugated) that lead to the conception of protests as a powerfully effective negotiation practice with the dominant system, to claim back rights, fight unfairness. The power of protestors' standout from the relative contrasting representations of police inactivity and demonstrators liveliness.

#### **4.5 Disorder as struggle for empowerment**

One of the enduring concerns of media imperialism theorist is that western global media affect local cultures by imposing western ideology, values and systems of operation on local organizations. Schiller holds American and Western transnational corporations (business, scientific, educational and media) responsible for affecting local structures. He writes, transnational corporations "provide in their imagery and messagery the beliefs and perspectives that create and reinforce their audience's attachments to the way things are in the system overall (Schiller 1979 in Tomilson, 2000:81). Schiller further noted the structural rearrangement is imitated by presenting an alternative western model embodying different futures absent in the local. "The crucial incursion [...] is the implementation of the model [...] Primary incursion defines the path that will be taken and brings the country in question in to the orbit of interest of the dominant powers (ibid). Watching global news gave the knowledge that protests are ways of expressing ones discontent with the way things are. Merlman also support this notion when he cites frustration with the social system as a source of disorder (1976:90).

Audiences may learn form the news that relations in the physical world are polarized, and that these relations are used by dominant groups to maintain or revise the

inequalities in ways that advantage the system. Therefore, relations are responsible for the impoverished situations a noticeable sum of citizens inhabits. This particular view justifies the previous claim that protests are part of everyday life. Zalalem draws on a local experience that develops out of the disempowerment/empowerment contestation.

In this town there are lots of street gangs. The number increases every time. The situation pushed them to the streets. You can't walk around after 8:30 in the evening. You will be robbed and stabbed. Sometimes I think what they did is straggling to survive. When you look around you notice how some individuals live extravagantly while others languish like a dog in poverty. Sometimes I dream of if the rich feel more responsible... if a rich person helps 2 or 3 poor people ... (unfinished pregnant thought).

The understanding of crimes as empowerment on the agony of inequalities – political, social, economic and ethnic – may help viewers learn the skill indispensable to survive through the harsh local situation. Embracing violence as a tool to tackle displeasure with local situations is partly instigated by the local experience and it is reinforced by global media's prominent presentation of protestors. The negotiated cohabitation with the social ills in the above narrative partly contributes to the understanding of violence as struggle for empowerment.

This perception is appropriated invariably on tensions arousing in different socio-political environments. As a result of parallels in local and foreign experiences violence is looked upon as struggle for empowering oneself.

Negussie: America and Europe have identified groups in their society. I understand what they did have to do with rights. From the other side's `point of view they are terrorists. From the terrorists' standpoint it is about asking respect for their identity. Of course the lose of human life, the damage to property is alarming but...Uh...well you can't help it.

The discourse of empowerment is a very curial point behind what the news prefers to call disorder. The strong thesis of empowerment, circulated among the news viewers, have its pillars rooted in structural and political questions of access and equity for resources and seeking recognition for a different self. (These points are further explored in section 2.3 and 2.4.). Therefore, the popular discourse of empowerment is informed by a pessimistic view that the established cultural and structural configurations questioning their

neutrality. A number of interviewees contended that existing configurations and cultural values are instruments that exacerbated powerlessness.

Zewdneh: Conflicts are about interests. Interests are not only material but also of ideological type, like having a view on things. It can be concern like America's prohibition of oil extraction from Alaska. In the human life there are issues popping up here and there. There are sectors of groups of people who will have a certain antagonistic view because it gives them direct benefit or it entertains a certain values, belief system or opinion so they have to protect it.

Negussie: Conflicts are associated with interests hence there is no right and wrong. There are beneficiaries and disadvantaged. That dictates the positive and negative.

Zelalem: They disadvantage some people. These things are socially crafted. There are always groups who manipulate it. For their own benefit. If one is denied what should be fairly even then discontent will take over.

The realization of established systems, practices and values as socially crafted rules entails the position that these things are designed by the creators – the dominate groups – serve their interests and secure the vantage positions they enjoyed of a certain group. Hence their legitimacy is questioned.

Mesfin: Social values have a marginalizing character. They are created by a group, who is in control of power, and handed down to the inferiors. Bending below one's knee and kissing the feet of someone, these are 'values' landlords installed in tenants. It infiltrated the social sphere that today we do it to show respect for someone. But it also shows one's acceptance of the inferior position.

Abebe: For the southern people Habesha Lebesa <sup>5</sup>(please explain in a footnote what this mean – foreign readers might not understand) has no meaning. It's a cultural dressing used in the north. The way it is tailored has a specific function for the northern people. The Afar didn't use it because it's unsuitable to their environment. But there is a strong claim that it is a national dressing.

The awakening on complicit workings of a system or culture is vital allowing audiences taking different readings from disturbance news. This informant position entails those

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<sup>5</sup> This is a traditional white cloth made of cotton. It is made in different shapes for men and women. It is also regarded as a national dressing.

controversies involving groups of equal powers are minor disagreements usual in day to day struggle with life. However those involving differential power groups attract special attention as they are struggles for a dominant groups' salience and the weak not to submit to the exploitative desires of the hegemonic. In such cases audiences pay attention to the values or institutions that are being fought over rather than the disturbance itself as spoiling social tranquility. Identifying the intrinsic worth of values that are fought over is central in audiences making up their minds what the controversy is about hence they identify with a like minded party. Consequently audiences develop the view that conflicts among ordinary citizens are mere competitions as they have equal footing. However, conflicts that involve unmatched power groups are regarded as serious offenses with repressive intensions, the values behind them seriously pondered at. Therefore, established cultural values, systems and practices become the point of struggle as the hegemonic forces that create and legitimize inequalities strive to recreate them to sustain the established dominance while the heterogenic that refuses assimilation flout them as in the following comments.

Mulugeta: Social values have strands of racism or clanism within them. If you study closely black Americans who reached the summit of their professions they are trapped when they become successful. How many times was Tyson charged of rape? Simpson, Michel Jackson, What I want to say is sometimes allegations of trespassing social practices that are accepted and adhered to are not genuinely concerned about rules. Motions pro or against a law have their own perspectives, interest and aims. Social values are not absolute.... What become social values are those wishes of the powerful because they are better situated to classify what is right and wrong.

Eyob: In one news story I saw Nigerians demonstrating opposing the staging of a beauty contest. They object it because the contestants had to perform in bathing suits. That is acceptable in the West because of their culture. But in that African community, they are also Muslims, nudity is a very serious transgression. It is against the culture and immoral.

The above reading is example of Ethiopian viewers' resistance to the dominant global news discourse, which has similarity with repressive local culture that incapacitates certain social classes. This discovery is a first step in the counter action which is launched and fought through different social, cultural structures. The resort to these structures as

spheres of struggle between the forces of dominant stereotyping state power and oppositional repressed citizens bring the very cultural values and structures into the center of competition. In the process of interaction the cultural systems as well as its underlying values are examined critically in light of the new revelation, their functionality is upgraded. As media imperialist argued global culture affect local culture by acting upon the latter's cultural structures, transforming their constitution and function. Bennett also emphasized "A bourgeois hegemony is secured not via the obliteration of working class culture, but via its articulation to bourgeois, culture and ideology so that, being associated with and expressed in the forms of the later, its political affiliations are altered in the process. (1986:350). Therefore, the local cultural values systems are reshaped for the need by its owners to serve them better in the new environment, which also pressurized by global forces. Their whole make up is shaped anew through the interaction of the forces.

Mesfin: Take for instance Eder<sup>6</sup>. They are of two types. One is of the form established by people who live together in an area regardless of who they are. They second type is established based on race, religion, social class... these have a certain goal to peruse other than mutual aid giving. When I saw the overwhelming number of people at the parade called by CUD I asked my self what is going on in the city. I can't find any answer how that many people stand behind whatever cause it is. In the least I want to know who the mastermind behind the lobbying was, how they did it. From discussions and bits of information I gathered later on I learnt Eeders were used for lobbying the massive turnouts.

The merging social cultural forms are updated versions that are crucial in enabling the group that originally controls them deal with the ever inconsistent reality. This argument is grounded in Mesfin's explanation of how a local cultural structure is turned into a gadget to resist and challenge state power during the last election.

#### **4.6 Access and equity for resources point of contention**

The whole process of the struggle between the hegemony and audiences to maintain the status quo or subvert it is characterized by issues of access for and equity in resources; in

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<sup>6</sup> This is a local self help group established by people living in an area. It gives financial and logistics assistance to its members at times of difficulty i. e. when a family of the members dies. Moreover, it is used by local community to discuss and solve social problems like gangerism in their area, collaborating to clean their locality etc.

our case the civil rights to freedom of unrestrained expression and representation. Merlman also agreed with this popular discourse when he writes “The agents of civil disorder are mainly community members who are victimized by existing conditions of social relations. Those who revolt against the community seek revenge for various sorts of frustration (1976:90-94).The subjective appropriation of the global message speaks to the local experience which is painted by limited or no access to opportunities, and unproportional distribution of some resources. This locally produced frame of equity in access is used to interpret a French disturbance news which is referred to by many respondents. Its recurrence suggested parallels between the African refugees and local people who face discriminatory practices.

Bezuhan: The French disturbance instigated by West African refugees is the worst of other riots. They burnt too many cars, damaged so many things. That was because they were racially badly treated. I never accept racism. Evidently they are mistreated. What they did is right or wrong is a different issue. They have so just a cause. They are not guilty. Nor could I say full heartedly they are right. Better if they could express if differently.

Eyob: The French disorder news is an example of how dangerous inequality is. Look at them, the Africans. They are competitive, skilled but have no jobs, live in shanty houses.... No one gets into violence unless is forced to. They are a must when... look at the Africans. They... at certain point such things are intolerable.

Audiences understand conflicts happening within communities are primarily concerned about equality. Equality is deprived by controlling and restraining egalitarian distribution of resources among different social groups. Distribution of resources is used to twist the arms of certain (subversive) groups and make them comply with the regaining power. Therefore, resources are used to install and solidify control.

Belay: Nigeria is one of the worlds’ richest in oil. But the people are suffering from shortage of oil. People get killed in explosions as they try to tap into oil pipes. That country is mysteriously always in chaos.

The same discriminatory practice in the local along the line of ethnicity is perceived as menace on equity of a right originating from nationality.

Zelalm: (Tightening the Forehand) Last time there was an uprising at Wondo Genet. The natives (these are the Sidama clan) want other people to leave. Imagine. You try to keep going. Work hard, earn little but try to cheer up. And someone tells you this is not your place, you're a bug. Aren't people making a living in other countries? Even Palestinians work in Jerusalem. I have friends in US who own deluxe homes and cars.

Ethnic segregation became a feature of social interaction especially in region states in present day Ethiopia as governance system is one based on ethnic federalism. This occurrence is evidenced during the field observation. In addition to Zelalem's (he came from a near by town, Yeagalem, to work in Awassa) testimonial cited above I noticed that small local pubs are filled by natives. Appearance of an outsider (like me) at these places brings the house into vigilante for some minutes. The suspicious eyes stealing a look at the intruder, use of a local tongue for conversation and avoiding tables near to the outsider are clues of separation. Ababa and Negussie's watching habits even cement the claim on segregation. Ababa, who watch news first thing after work, said "I would not have got time for news had I drawn close to my neighbors. The aloofness is probably the cause for my viewing." Negussie who is from the northern part of the country takes his daily service in a four star hotel located at the suburb of the city hence inaccessible without transportation. The hotel lounge is very spacious that customers can sit at arms length distance from each other. Nevertheless, this occurrences faded out of the picture when it come to Addis possibly because it is a capital belonging to no ethnic group and is therefore serving as a meeting point.

Question about equity and access to resources which are intricately interwoven with empowerment are usually cast as tensions. However, they can commend aggressive ways of dealing in cases where the question of empowerment is meet by denial. Mesfin's recount of clashes in the localities of Gambella and Somalia over the question who controls the extraction of an oil deposit support this point.

Mesfin: The conflict in Gambella is all about the right to share from the resource and also of who should control it. They are right. It just happens laying there under their land. What is fair is to let them get some thirty or forty percent of the income and use the rest for national development. It is the same issue with Somalia.

Therefore watching disorder news showing conflicts between social classes of different power hierarchies aggravates ethnic tensions in local communities.

#### **4.7 State as initiator of disorder**

As noted in the preceding sections social interactions are markedly constrained by inequalities within and among societies, and with struggles for salvation. Such cycle of events is usually associated with the ways a dominant power is played. Three of the subjects proposed such inequalities are artificial creations of the state.

Mesfin: In Venezuela because Chavez backs the working class, which constitute massive political support for his party it always want to attack the petit bourgeois and middle class. Disturbances in Venezuela can often be tracked back to class based aggression.

Belay: In Iraq Iraqis kill each other over religious grounds as the Shia government controls the national wealth. They can have differences but peaceful coexistence without killing each other was also possible.

It was interesting that many times during the interviews audiences argued that unequal footing of social groups has to do with leadership. Although Gans analysis of values is dominated by articulations of the dominant discourse, it has reservations in condemning protestors as sole initiators of disorder. Public officials can also be the cause of public melancholy. "Such common practices as logrolling, deal, patronage appointments, or failure of election candidates to abide by campaign promises are reported in such a way as to indicate that these practices are immoral." (Gans, 2006: 56). For inequality is characterized by favoring a group over another, by empowering it excessively, and by the marking of unlimited access. The above quotes are revealing of this segmentation.

The view of government as generator of inequalities gives impetus to the outlook reflected in section 2-1 that protest are necessary as solution seeking means. Therefore, the implication that governance and protests are inseparable as seasonal cycles.

Abeba: Government and opposition are two faces of a coin. The situation determines which one is drawn.

Here Abeba was suggesting that not only order and disorder are mutually inclusive but specifically the amplification of one lies in the interaction between differential forces. So

interviewees in this study nearly unanimously recognized how treatment of troubled situation directs unfolding of events. They emphatically commented responsibility lies with leadership:

Mesfin: Whenever such situations take place police is more responsible than the protestors in leading the course of events in Korea police absolutely did nothing even though protestors get outrageous to the extent of attempting taking away the shield. It shows how much endurance policemen developed in the course of their training.

Abebe: Government is expected to train officers who are capable if not with 100% perfection of handling like situations whatever it takes.

Mesfin: The response from police is an important aspect to watch. If they have a will to squash it mentality everything is spoiled before it begins.

The viewer thus perceived police, as agent of the state and guardian of peace, as a moderator whose integrity decides the outcome.

Mesfin: When demonstrations took place responsibility lies not with protestors. They are already enraged.

Mulugeta: Chaos occurs when protestors are emotionally high; police actions push them into aggression. The culture is also one factor. Here the community is shy and reserved.

Description of protestors as 'shy and reserved' even in a highly tensioned emotional state where a little poking can make it explode reflects the tolerance and civility displayed by protestors. This perception echoes with identification with protestors and the strong appreciation for a right they have, as was argued in section 2.1. However, the option for orderliness is not pushed away by demonstrators as Mesfin put it in the following extract.

Mesfin: There are two possibilities when social 'disorderliness' surfaces. A leader who sets out to solve it will deal with whoever is involved and settle the dust. The stubborn will blow it up, will invite bloodshed and massacre. After that he will either be thrown away by force or will continue castigating the people.

Mesfin's conditional statement is a sign of his double reading of the global message. By accepting the preferred reading he constructs government as sensible and responsible

while the rest of the reading offers the opposite picture. The half bright half shaded construct is emblematic of the context audiences live in where democratic rule is claimed yet some rights are embargoed.

The question about which participant attracts their attention in disorder news gave uncontested insight into how the respondents regard their relationship with the state. They talk in terms of police and us since that is how state is represented in the news. This representation was important in showing away which sphere of the state's power structure is in regular contact with citizens. The humane and respectful presentation of police in the news was a point of fascination by the respondents with foreign police and by deduction the state. The mediated experience helps reflecting on the deep seated stereotyped perception of authority.

Mesfin: I experience how much respect both have towards each other. Sometimes police arrest one or two protestors. I laugh in amazement as police tie the hand with thick plastic lines not to hurt them. The humanity, civility, the feeling of caring far their follows... it makes me... uhu... leaves me heavy hearted.

For Bezuhan police is under populated and inactive in the global news. Zelalem agreeing with Bezuhan's view added that police is very clam though protestors can be evocative.

Bezuhan: I keenly watch police and demonstrators. But it's the demonstrators that catch my eyes as police is inactive, relatively small in numbers. Demonstrators actions move the scene and I happen to watch them unintentionally.

Zelalem: Demonstrators sometimes march quietly, chant slogans, they smash billboards, windows and sometimes they attack policemen. Sometimes I wonder how passive policeman are despite all that they just retreat into a corner and put up their shields. They don't shoot, they don't beat people. In such cases I sympathize with them.

The representation of police as passive in foreign news has double importance. First, it help viewers recognized their rather subjugated position in the local systems. This understanding in turn helps them associate police, representative of the state, with moral disorderliness through oppositional reading. Therefore Gans remark "legal or moral transgression by public officials and other prestigious individuals who by virtue of their

power and prestige, are not expected to misbehave (2006:56) become meaningful mainly for the denotative meaning embedded in peaceful western police.

Comparison of local police with that of western countries is very useful to lay bare the depressed, downtrodden conditions of local citizenry. This particular side of life is allowed to come to the fore through memory of a monumental incident that followed the May 2005 election.

Bezuhan: It gets international attention because it involves too much force. It is plain fact that police reacted much relative to other countries experience... in other countries police just stand around the protesters in circles. Many things are thrown at them ... stone, bottles... I noticed police just stand affixed. Their reactions are minimal, may be they arrest some people; I didn't see them carrying guns; they have tear gas but not arms. In our country there are official death figures. They can't hide it. You just reaction they're shot at. That shows how much force is used, how excess police reaction was.

Zelalem: I don't remember a news in which I saw rough policemen. Most of the time they are inactive. They shield themselves when demonstrators throw things. They use tear gas and water. But here demos are bloody. People get hurt badly. Some also die. It's impossible that you die in a demo. If someone dies you know it's with a bullet.

Mesfin: As for me the situation can be handled. But the mishandling... that's why we experience that horrific riot after the election.

The experience of police brutality on citizens' validates local people imagery of government as savage and egoist. The point of savageness and egoistic leadership are explored in depth in section 3.

#### **4.8 Violence to bring in order**

In the previous sections this study explored understandings of international disorder news by local people and how it resonates with their disconsolate identity of citizenship.

Bennett in explaining how imported cultural practice gain power over local practices writes, "its political functioning depends on the network of social and ideological relations in which it is inscribed as a consequence of the ways in which, in a particular conjecture, it is articulated to other practices.(Bennett, 1986: 352). Therefore, it is espousing of global practice of violence with a context of different social and ideological

relations that rendered the popular meaning “violence as power” over inability and incapacitating conditions.

The study has established that protests are not harmful (disorderly) but instead ways of empowerment to resist malfunctioning in the social interactions. What emerges out of such discourses is a popular disposition that embraces protest as power on the dreadfulness of inequality and frustration of subordination emanating from state insensitivity.

Zewdneh: Protesting is like voting. There is always a group delegated by government or the people to listen to these disappointments. They will listen and will react to it somehow.

Mesfin: Demonstrations are not only signs of instability but are threshold to orderliness. Demonstrations are platforms to show one's concern. If officials keep on subjugating rights confrontations are inevitable.

The oppositional reading recast protest, which is presented as threat and violence of other's rights in the dominant televised news narrative, as power that retaliates the forces that cause social instability by squeezing out rights.

The above narrative suggests that state-made disorder (stifled rights, inequality, subordination) can be corrected by protest, in its real physical form. Therefore, audiences support the view that popular protests in their actual eventuation are options that are left by the existing order for audiences to grapple with. Therefore, the inherent popular discourse reciprocal violence is an answer for provocative violence. In other words, violent protests are reconstructed as aggressions with good cause. This fortitudinous, naïve disposition has at its center obsession with the use of force in settling conflicts and urge to their employment. This is a cultivated opinion by global media text. Note the following narratives.

Mesfin: In the Middle East and Far East demonstrations are excessively outrageous. Demonstrators carry machetes and swords. If you remember how the demo staged in opposition to president Musharraf's dismissal of the attorney general ended it was deadly.

Tewodros: Milosovich was dethroned before my very own eyes. He was addressing parliament when oppositions broke into the court. After that his guards escorted him away.

The narratives constructed around instruments of violence (machetes and swords) and violent forms of actions (breaking into parliament forcefully and deadly demonstrations) are telling that protests of violent nature are effective in fighting the terror of oppression. The constructed violent identities are products of a mediated experience by global media which offer other possibilities (adaptation of violent persona) to surmount the horrific unresponsiveness.

Mesfin: In this country people have no recognition; they are not taken as citizens. Of course they protest. But no one gives a damn about it from the lower ranking civil servant to the top manager. They turn deaf ear on your cries. I wonder if can solve problems with rallies.

Abeba: Some people think that they can win their cause by protesting. Yet protests may not be solved in some cases. There is a traditional thinking on protest and solution. Resolve lies in the judgment and that is relative. Different countries will have different outlook. Sometimes protests don't lead to solutions.

Therefore, the fascination with and advocacy for violent protests, those involving force and severity, are chosen over the placid forms of protest. Such violence is regarded as necessary for a malicious state violence of its citizen's right. And its aim is emancipatory from extreme conditions imposed by the state. Note the following narratives used to illustrate Zimbabwe as severe human condition that invites for violent resistance.

Bezuhan: People should resist dictatorship. I feel terribly bad about Zimbabweans. The situation is beyond imaginations crazy. Prices go up twice a day. Now the cost of something has sky rocketed to 1.5 million percent its worth. A loaf of bread is sold at 44, 000 Zimbabwean dollar. What option is there except protesting against such madness?

Mesfin: They (Zimbabweans) are made lingering ghosts. Shops are out of stocks, inflation goes up by over 5000 percent, four in every five Zimbabwean is idle. They're made to face the worst humiliation. For them there is no difference in order and disorder. With all frankness I will be a dedicated advocate if they get the chance to protest and if it every yields something.

## **4.9 Leadership**

### **4.9.1 Idealizing the leader**

Examination of local audiences' reception of leadership role represented by satellite TV news shows corollaries between textual intentions and audiences interpretations. In constructing their ideal leader audiences replicated the western model offered in the the global news. They envisage it as humane, integrated and rational, giving proof to the media imperialism claim that local institutions are forced to lose their legitimacy as a result of the global's better accommodation capacity (Gaultang, 1979). For instance Tewodros' version of the leader is one that is fair and who keeps balance while serving the people of assorted social groups and interests.

Tewodros: A good leader puts the majority's interest at the center of his carrier. In doing so he takes care of minority interest not to disregard them.

Zelalem who is at odds with the community he lives in being ethnically marginalized views a leader as a good father, a conception reflecting his yearn for a friendly relationship to nurse his injured sense of belonging.

Zlalem: Didn't we say a leader is like a father, a passionate caretaker, fortress from mishaps? For me a leader must be that and it is important he is rational.

Zelalem's fantasized visualization is revealing of his search for belonging in the system that cast him out out of ethnic inwardness. This sense of placelessness, though in Zelalem's case was oriented towards his tie with the very immediate people he lives with and in, is raised in other interviews characterizing the inhospitable relations between state and citizens. Zelalem's association of his senses of dislocatedness shows away the traditional practice of divide and rule governance system in Ethiopia. The craving for the "passionate caretaker and father" leader indicates audiences detachment from the local, as pointed out in the preceding sections, is mainly related with the traditional governance system in Ethiopia with the legacy dividing the society along different lines – class, religion, etc. for political benefits. Moreover, this system is reinvigorated by the use of force. Audiences become critical of this very practice due to experiencing western

governance through media. They acutely felt waging for the authoritarian practice when recognizing the persistent punishment protestors are awarded.

Belay: Wisdom and intelligence is expected of a leader in difficult times, at all times. They can use force to silence in compliance because it is in their hand. Often civil unrest bud on such blind decisions. If wisdom and foresightedness are given chance disagreements can be solved.

In the above extract valuing moderateness reveals the need for change of the traditional governance system. The envisioned form, no wonder it resembles the western model, is liberal, who listens and is noninterventionist. Given audiences' withdrawal from experiencing local TV, their imagination of leader and leadership role is glossed over by the western project of a leader image. Zewdneh's conception of a leader is filled with qualities Gans (2006) has pointed out as persistently referred to in leadership news stories.

Zewdneh: Because these guys are visionary they hold more the cause of society than their own. They have a big sway. They are the future of their group by virtues of their vision, transparency, passion and diligence to serve the people. They are not like common people we don't promote any ordinary person for that task.

Mesfin's wished for leader is emblematic of the western social processing of democratic culture. His "servant of the people" figure gave insight on the urging desire to fill the vacuum in audiences' lived experience.

Leaders of western countries and those of the third world aren't the same. Western leaders are elected by the people, are closer to their people. They catch chances to talk with their citizens. They talk to them humbly with respect. They show up at disaster sense and comfort victims. They know exactly their duty.

The comparison of African leaders with western counterparts illuminates rejection of values embodied in local administration. The consistent reference to honest and friendly relations reflects on audiences' need to be enticed, to get the feel of being at home.

As a result of watching news on satellite TV the citizenry started questioning critically their connection with the state for the knowledge they get through mediated

experience. The following narrative by Mulugeata represents such dispossessed subjectivities.

From the news I understand how close leaders are to their citizens their simplicity. When you come to third world countries one who says is democratically elected his first task is to create a rift between him and the people. They drive on evacuated streets. People are beaten up and confined in near by buildings until they drove away.

#### **4.9.2 Edifice of third world leadership**

The connection between citizen and leader is, therefore, marked with tensions. The leadership, which is shaped in the past by monarchial and then military rule, has a clearly designated manner of how people relate with the state. Therefore, a question about perception of a local leader role gives a magnificent understanding into citizenship of a third world country like Ethiopia. Seimon simulates the relation as a power machine functioning independently poised to show where the rapture lies.

In foreign countries leaders are put in the system, they are operators of the system. It's the system that functions. The system offers him the possibilities and he makes decision on the part of the people. He can affect the system but not substantially. But cannot affect society.

Seimon's differentiation between the person (leader) and the system (leadership) is a signal knowledge that brings to light the breakage in the local tie. By this understanding he implies that leaders even if they control the power, they are ultimately ordered by citizens. This lack of ability to have a say on their own issues is the very source of citizens' abstention from feeling belonging to the state. Mesfin, who is extremely fend off by the local situation, retorts warily how the system is hijacked to install superior-subordinate relation.

African leaders are dramatic. They seize power saying they are elected, they reformulate laws, constitutions to retain power. Obasanjo is a greedy lunatic who wants the constitution changed so that he can run for a third term Gadafi, Mugabe and the like gangs are eternal dictators. For me human being can never be free. They start as freedom fighters; they drag their people into a new slavery. They expelled colonizers and there we are with a marvelous system.

The resentment is predominately characteristic of local governance which is depicted as powerful leader against weak and submissive citizenry. Therefore, audiences' perception of local and by large third world leadership is an autocratic one, a preferred meaning they took from the global representation. Such way of relating with the people is maintained by coercive leadership as is enthusiastically accounted for by all respondents.

Mesfin: I perceive them as cruel remorseless if one challenges their power. They can never understand human suffering. They do not have the senses to realize the ordeal a family will go through when the father is devoured by the monstrous rule.

Belay: Leaders, instead of being alarmed that a civil unrest will draw their power to an end and resorting to force, they should be tolerant and considerate of the people.

Mesfin's perception is heavily influenced by his past experience as a member of a local secessionist movement, E'hapa. Hegemonic global message has reinforced his stereotyped attitude that that subjectivity is allowed to enact on the leader figure of third world countries. Mesfin vehemently made the claim thus:

For me African leaders are ... I don't know ... don't have the words.... They are insatiable ... tricky. It is not only African leaders but third world leaders are that I know of a Kazakhstan leader who wants the power for himself down to his third heir!

In depth discussion of leadership role help unearth a different subjectivity about leaders' greed and savageness. The different subjectivity holds that savageness is innate to leadership in spite of its origin. Hence western leaders also have this attribute but it becomes visible when applied on other people. This perception is consequential of global media consumption.

Belay: Harly Burton Inc. get hold of Iraqi oil because its owner Dick Chenny is in office and republicans are on power had Chenny or republicans did not have power Burton will not control the oil. As long as us government allows it you can do nothing about it. It is not right but no one can stop them.

Mesfin: There is a similarity between European leaders superiority and African

leaders savageness. Our leaders don't have a fraction of freedom to debase western leaders as they wish unlike any ordinary people do. They know where the circuit of their life cycle will be cut off if they dare do that.

The contradicting subjectivities summons the bewilderment local citizens are tied in. By discovering that savageness as inborn characteristic of leadership they negotiated with the hegemonic message that western leaders have more a sense of responsibility. However, they accepted the stereotyping ideology that third world leaders as savage dictatorial aviaries letting the global text mediate and reinforce their experience of the local governance. Assuming such positioning help them conceive of the relationship they ought to have with the state. This dreamt of relation characterized by egalitarian rights and representation and trustworthiness is uncovered with a frequent reference to a habitual event which four of the interviewees' referred to as symbolic of the leaders disrespect for citizens.

Mesfin: If the president or some minister happens to pass by where you are you're ordered to get out of sight by rough policemen and sometimes you collect a nice whip. It is very irritating that I'm hassled and beaten because a leader is going to pass by.

The same comment is made by A1 who tells it in a joke of a woman who was strolling around in the avenue to Bole airport.

Abebe: Once an old pumpkin woman was walking around Bole. All of a sudden an officer told her to face to wall. The lady alarmed by the incident did as was told. Few hours later she stole a glance at the street to find pedestrians walking up and down. She looked for the officer and saw a young policeman. The woman asked what the matter was. He replied with respect the president was passing by. Then she exclaimed "were you protecting him from evil eyes?!"

### **5.3 Leadership and values**

Moreover, the relation between the state and citizens depended largely on the values upheld by the leader. In Ethiopia the leadership, which is characterized by suppressive official trends, is in constant struggle to create a citizenry that is integrated despite the nations enormous ethnic diversity. The question of influence officials' action and

behavior had on the sense of citizenship becomes a volatile subject in this study. In line with the points made in the literature review section I examined if leaders behavior can affect the collective identity of citizenship, a question that made different subjectivities pour out. Some interviewees responded in a manner that underestimates such an influence.

Abeba: It can't affect it. Because every one has a conscious mind that can discern what is good and bad they shut out harmful behaviors displayed by leaders. It is a matter of consciousness rather than influence.

Abeba, and for that matter the other interviewees, responded to this question; having in mind the picture of local leadership; oppositional reading is a typical self distancing action from the dominant culture whose values are at disarray with the expectations of the citizenry. Therefore her interpretation is of the intention to protect these cherished values that bind its members from being spoiled and destroyed since she later on conceded in the interview that social values are at risk of being tainted by official malpractices.

In a half democratic country like Ethiopia social and political rights are highly restricted though there is some freedom in participate and practice. Under such circumstances audiences' reaction was a direct reflection of the existing local situation. Menagesha and Negussie said in third world countries leaders' behaviors have a direct impact.

Negussie: If you look back in history you see the feelings and desires of leaders had remarkable influence on the people in Africa here as you don't find the same effect in the west. There the leader proposes for an action. He is not superior. His opinions will be discussed and if it is not in the best interest of the nation it is rejected. When the leader's wish is failed whatever he does he can't raise it from the dust.

Menagesha: Their good deeds become a model, bad deeds made had exemplar. But I don't think that their bad deeds will influence social behavior. Individuals are what they believe in, what they do. Leaders will have many followers when they do well. Their bad actions are ignored, don't get followers.

Yet audiences' perception of such an effect is guided by a multilayered experience of the global and local when they identified social, political setups determining the outcome. Their double layered perception was the product of exposure to global media.

Simon: In western countries the presidency is where decision is made by consensus. In Africa it's different. Mugabe is the government and the president too. That is what I understand of African leaders. There the president can not affect the people but here it affects the people because the leader is the system itself.

Zewdneh: Leaders represent big dominion and it is made of multiple sub layers. Their behavior can not infiltrate to the social sphere. So the effect will be one way, from public to leaders and usually they uphold right, fair and just values.

Negussie: In African countries the decision makers are leaders. Their actions influence society by 100%. Here the system... political, social structure is under developed. So their actions change things dramatically. When they smile I guess a lot of good things will happen to us. The same when they are angry.

The negotiated meaning that leaders can affect social bondage in Africa but won't affect western social system is a hallmark of conflicting subjectivities clumped by satellite TV news messages. Therefore foreign TV affects the local institution of government by debasing its value system and practice.

Audiences understand the effect to be determined by the presence or absence of social mediating institutions-involvement in decision making, direct participation and representation- hence appropriating the sociological global discourse onto local situation. This perceptive is useful in understanding the direct effects of official practices on the social cohesion. The effect is a result of their unobstructed power.

Mesfin: Look what the PM's wife is doing. Her engagement in fighting harmful traditional practices give a nice guidance for others to follow here involvement as a leader had good impact on society. Leaders bestow continuity for a social system, ensuring continuity of good practices and erasing out the harmful.

Eyob: We are definitely influenced by our leaders. Once Arkebe <sup>7</sup> was shown on TV testing for HIV. Then lots of people started streaming to testing centers. Obvious they were influenced by him.

Similarly, their bad deeds are reproduced by society eroding away the stable linkage.

Semeret: For instance Andreas Esehete <sup>8</sup> was once shown smoking cigarettes while having an interview. Then in the following days I saw many young boys smoking cigarettes in the open at school. I was in high school then. They say it is alright because Andreas was doing it too. I think their mimicry is as a result of the influence.

A community's cohesiveness is mainly worked out by leaders complying to the duty and responsibilities expected of them for the status and power they held. They wrought the social tread influencing the social, political, cultural and economic aspects of the community.

Mulugeta: During the time I started to work taking bribes was unusual. In those days you only bribe a judge or policeman. One gives a good fat sheep, jars of honey, kilos of butter, not money. Today leaders' immersion in embezzlements... rather society takes an honest person as fool. This is a direct influence of leaders on social behavior.

Mesfin: Taking bribes has now got this name "business". We are living in a country where a wife didn't ask her husband where the held he gets fancy money; she would blame him that she is unfortunate to marry a man who doesn't do "business" like others. All these are products of corrupt leadership. One who is corrupt doesn't have moral authority to tell off others.

Therefore social cacophony, that derives from incomppliance to social values of fairness, equality, respect and abstinence from interference others private lives leader's incomppliance to social norms and values, is proclaimed to take over social accord by leaders violation of these values. Therefore, in the final analysis social discord is a formulation of leadership.

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<sup>7</sup> Arkebe Ekubaye was former mayor of Addis Ababa City Administration. He became famous with the local people after his successful mission mobilizing thousands of citizens in a mission to clean the city under the motto "Clean and Green Addis Ababa".

<sup>8</sup> Andreas Esehete is president of Addis Ababa University. This university is the oldest, prestigious learning center in the country.

# **Chapter Five**

## **Summary and conclusion**

### **5.1 Summary**

This study has been conducted with the aim of exploring how Ethiopian viewers negotiate with and make meaning out of the global media messages they are exposed to as represented by BBC and CNN news programmes. Specifically the study explores how viewers interpreted and appropriated certain news contents they consume in their lived context. Subsequently I take in to account some of the social establishments that have contributed to viewers' exposure to CNN and BBC news channels and how these set ups have influenced meaning attribution.

The study revealed how consumption is textured by cultural and socio-political shadings of the contexts. One of the major findings of this study is that audiences of international news programmes integrated viewing foreign TV in their daily routines. This happens at the expense of avoiding local TV which they found less useful in acclimatizing them with the local situation. They regarded local TV as instrument of state propaganda that they labelled it tasteless in comparison with international TV. Hence local TV's role as a cultural socialization institution is challenged by global TV's appealing and relatively real presentation. The image of the local is further suffers form lack of diversity in programming relative to the foreign which is more diversified and enticing. Therefore, the presence foreign TV has contributed in setting apart local viewers from the local. As such foreign TV wears down the connection viewers should have with the local traditions by detaching them for their context, imaginatively.

While consuming the foreign media audiences engage actively with the messages carried over. They attach values to the programmes they watch in ways that serve deal with some aspects of their local lives and use them readily to shape their views on the world. Circumventing the argument by anti-globalists that the disembodiedness of global messages will reduce their power as they are received and interpreted by social groups of different class orientations; in this study global messages become more powerful being re-embedded in another cultural setting affluent with different orientations on reality. Through oppositional readings audiences gained high utility values in the global texts that

nurtured their experience of feeling alienated from the local. Disgruntled audiences find global texts important in offering them alternative ways of associating with their local environment which is characterized by acute inequalities and stiff suppression of rights.

The global texts influence become commanding as audiences identified themselves with the “powerful” characters they saw in the news. Their relative disempowerment enforced on them by the authoritarian local custom influenced their reading leading to their viewing of protest as actions of empowerment over suppressing, provoking and disadvantaging practices and cultures. Global media cultivated audiences to resist different forms of control by providing them with symbolic alternatives. In line with this point the study discovered audiences developed a radical conception of protests as peaceful mechanisms of negotiation, and acceptance of violence to bring change to despotism. This fascination with aggressive identity is in sharp contrast to the local culture of submission and undue acceptance of containment.

Results of the interviews indicated that the respondents adopt mixed reading positions while receiving leadership news appreciating some ingrained values of the global texts. That positioning also serves to look critically at the local administration practice which they distance themselves from mainly for its depravity and viciousness. Their preferred reading of leadership traits throws light on their disapproval of local leaders for the detrimental values they adhere to. They also rejected the traditional leadership conduct of their own and third world countries in general due to their preferred reading of global texts. Therefore, global media accelerates the demise of local cultures by acting on unsteady cultural attachments degrading the loose tie.

The study detected that global media has altered audiences’ perception of cultural values, institutions and practices providing them knowledge that established systems and practices are taken over by dominant groups to promote their interests. Audiences are suspecting some the values behind “state’s order”. They displaced the hegemonic claim that protests and the like actions are uncivil on the ground that these actions are naturally part of government. They charged a strong argument in defence of their rebellious conception that accepted values are often manipulated to create inequalities, maintain repression and at times used to punish incompliance. As a result they are distrustful of the values the state uphold.

Another discovery related with the above finding is that rejection of dominant values lead to rejection of some institutions like government, police and higher social class. The state institutions, with inbuilt values systems of brutality and dictatorship in putting situations under control, are looked upon as enslaving and preventing citizens' equality and development. Global media contributed to this consciousness connecting audiences to other cultures with distinct civilization availing self comparison. For this reason, audiences rejected local governance system and sought it refurbished with the global pattern and values system. The interaction of imperialist messages with the local setting has consequently challenged local structural and cultural practices for their efficacy. Global media as is argued by cultural imperialism theorists changes local cultures not by replacing them entirely but initiating their renewal.

In light of the above points I argue that cultural imperialism is not a full scale war unleashed on local cultures. Neither is it an honest tradition. It works slickly corroding away specific cultural features that are less optimal to the local culture. It is a gradual degradation process. Barrett (1998) has, therefore, correctly proposed to study media imperialism "in terms of degree".

Given that the transaction volume in media products exchange is heavy in favour of the capitalist world with little response from the south, in our case no response at all, it is difficult to say imperialism is resisted by local audiences. This is not to undermine the active audience but rather my argument is to examine critically how effective the resistance is considering the products are all "imperialist creations with consumer taste oriented" messages. This study has proved that in the case of Ethiopia media products flow is one directional not neglecting the more crippling aspect of economy. Interviewees have conceded that taste is closely related to diversity and choice which the local media is very short of.

This unevenness has further affected consumption of local products. Thus degree should also be examined in terms of consumption of local productions against the foreign. Discovered in this study, avoidance of local media on the basis of lifelessness compared with the global has resulted in heavy consumption of the global among those who have access to it. It is difficult to conclude as the active audience and pro-globalists

theorists argued that imperialist media messages are completely resisted by audiences taking some instances of negotiated and oppositional readings.

Instead plausible conclusions can be reached thus by examining how much of the global text consumed is resisted and how much it let free reign. In the current study we have seen audiences decode global texts varied ways employing the different decoding frames. However, that is not enough a proof to claim immunizing resistance exists. Audiences in this study opted the oppositional textual reading but its purpose was to construct an identity that is in opposition to the local hegemony but in the best interest of the global imperialism.

Therefore, supporting Barrett's argument imperialism should be studied in terms of its degree of influence. This I believe is the most appropriate way to look into the globalization and imperialism claims as the project of imperialism has evolved from aggressive penetration of cultures aided by mighty economy to the intricate seduction of audiences playing with taste.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

I discovered by interviewing local people, even what seems reflexive media choice and uses are not accidental behaviours. Instead it is a produce of mindful past thoughts, laying readily in the back of peoples minds, transforming into instant action at certain monuments.

This time-sedimented codes as was demonstrated in this study instruct viewers actions as well as perceptions. Their choice of global media over the local is not a fleeting behaviour caused by the multifaceted global media excellence. Rather it is an outcome of a judgement fashioned through time hence gaining a certain value.

The findings of this study vividly indicated that meaning making from media programmes is a complex undertaking as audiences shift between personal lived experiences, mediated experiences, and cultivated thoughts affixing themselves with different way of life and identities under different circumstances in ways that are most suitable for their craving self.

As much as meaning is not fixed neither is people's consciousness. Therefore, while studying media effects we should be aware of dual infixities instead of one. It is my

perception that all the dynamism we identify in media-audiences interactions is a result of diffusion of the two components in varying intensity.

I also found that the global and local media have a clearly distinguished purpose to serve, although this study did not search for the local's purpose. This was a drawback as the point was not included in the project. However, it was exhibited, in lesser intensity, when audiences replied they watch local TV despite the fact that they detest it. From this observation I realize that audiences' zealotry with global media did not indicate firmly that the global has made them forfeit the local. The global is watched to diversify one's cognizance of the immediate and wider sphere beyond. On the other hand, the local is needed, although it is less gratifying, to situate one firmly relative to current situations. For that reason, audiences grappling with these media should not be considered in a narrow sense of being overtaken by one but as part of a very complex action in asserting a compelling creed.

Finally I would like to remark that audiences' switching between the two media indicates that the whole activity of television watching is not limited to obsession and self confinement with one media but how viewers operate in a field between the global and local. The global and local exist not separately but in an interrelationship.

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## Appendix 1: Research participants profile

Name	City of residence	Class background	Profession
Mesfin	Addis Ababa	Middle class	Manager, accountant
Belay	“	working class	Writer
Mulugeta	“	Upper Middle class	Agriculturalist, retired
Siemon	“	Upper middle class	Medical doctor
Eyob	“	Middle class	Civil Servant
Semert	“	Working class	Student
Zewdneh	“	Upper middle class	Engineer
Abebe	Awassa	Upper middle class	Manager, Communications
Menagesha	“	Middle class	House wife
Abeba	“	Middle class	Nurse
Zelalem	“	Working class	Hotel clerk
Bezuhan	“	Working class	Banker
Negussie	“	Middle class	Aid worker
Tewodros	“	Working class?	Civil servant

## Appendix 2: Thematic questions

1. How often do you watch the news on BBC or CNN?
2. Do you watch it alone or with other people?
3. How does watching it fit in with your lived situation? Think of it as intimate companion or break from the routines?
4. Since when did you start watching news on satellite TV? Why?
5. Which channels is your favorite to watch the news?
6. Which actions you see in the news do you understand as disorderly?
7. Do you like watching protest, demonstration or disturbance news?
8. What does these actions means to you?
9. Is protesting breaking the law?
10. What is it that attracts your attention in disorder news?
11. Are there any reasons that can justify disorderliness?
12. Of the characters in the news whose actions do you watch attentively? Why?
13. Are there any similarities or differences in the way protests are portrayed in the news and in Ethiopia?
14. Do you discuss news stories you have seen in the news with others? If yes who are the discussants? Does the discussion has any utility?
15. Has watching disorder stories changed the way you perceive such actions?
16. Why do you think individuals protest on the system?
17. How do you describe a leader?
18. What role do leaders play when disorderliness occurs?
19. Does the actions and behaviors of leaders can affect social norms?
20. Can social norms be dictated by leaders?

# Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all the sourced of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Martha Hailu

November 2007