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The Presence of Women in the Kenyan Film Industry: Applying Postcolonial African Feminist Theory

By

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A thesis submitted to the University of Glasgow, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of PhD in Film Studies

DECLARATION

I declare that this PhD thesis titled The Presence of Women in the Kenyan Film Industry: Applying Postcolonial African Feminist Theory is my own work. It has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of another degree or diploma.

Carolyn Khamete Mango   September 1, 2022

DEDICATION

To my dad, Rev Aggrey Kwegir, Mango Ambwaya (RIP) for believing in me, and to my family. Thank you for your selflessness! Your constant encouragement and all-round support made this PhD possible.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFDA	Art Film Drama Association
AIC	African Inland Church
BFI	British Film Institute
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CoK	Constitution of Kenya
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FAWEK	Forum for African Women Educationalists, Kenya Chapter
KECOBO	Kenya Copyright Board
KFCB	Kenya Film Classification Board
KFC	Kenya Film Commission
KFS	Kenya Film School
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NACOSTI	National Commission of Science Technology and Innovation
NVFV	National Film and Video Foundation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
VC	Vice Chancellor

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ABSTRACT

In this study, I examine the presence of Kenyan women in the film industry through the lens of postcolonial African feminism. Situating the study in this theoretical framework heightened the awareness that ideologies of womanhood and struggles against gender oppression intersect and cannot be analysed without considering the contextualisation of womanhood. Postcolonial African feminist theory reflects that issues that affect women in each place and time are different (former colonies and western regions). This study explores and uses the afro feminist lens to analyse the responses by Kenyan women filmmakers to comment on filmmaking in Kenya. The film industry offers an important arena where manifestations of African feminism can be explored, as espoused by the women filmmakers in this study: Matrid Nyagah, Jinna Mutune, Ng'endo Mukii, Wanuri Kahiu, Judy Kibinge, Dommie Yambo-Odotte, and Anne Mungai.

By adopting a qualitative research design using face-to-face semi-structured interviews, I examined the filmmakers' career paths, motivations, perceptions, challenges, and barriers to getting into and remaining in a male-dominated industry.

The thesis reveals that the level of Kenyan women's representation in the film industry on the global scene was proof that the women were empowered, competent, talented, and able to tell their stories through their lived experiences.

The study also identifies barriers and challenges that impede their reach to a wider audience. Key among them were the lack of proper film schools in Kenya that teach the requisite content, the ongoing patriarchal system, the lack of defined film culture, a lack of a government policy on film, lack of government support, lack of funding, and poor marketing and distribution channels, among others that seem to truncate the full potential of women in the film industry.

I argue that Kenyan women filmmakers have excelled, given an excellent account of the stories they tell from their lived experiences. These filmmakers' films not only deal with women's issues, Africa, war, famine, disease, and the girl child alone but also seem to focus on neo-feminism (as defined by Obioma Nnaemeka) and tackle subjects on sexuality, female emancipation, mother-daughter relationships, HIV/AIDS, drugs, science and technology, post-election violence and terrorism. Neo-feminism offers space for women filmmakers to work alongside men since it advocates for negotiating with them to achieve hard ideals.

The study found that though women in the Kenyan film industry did not agree they were working within a feminist framework, they objected to the western attitude toward feminism. It is also found that whereas some of the women filmmakers trained locally, the training they received abroad contributed to their being better filmmakers. Indeed, the Kenyan film industry has offered mixed signals as regards supporting its women filmmakers. While the government has faltered, the women filmmaker's grit and sense of purpose have helped them stamp their presence in the film industry both locally and internationally. Also, the study revealed that despite the important role women filmmakers play in the film industry, there was a lack of support from the government. However, family members continued to provide both financial and emotional support to the women filmmakers to live up to their dream. In addition, the lack of a national film policy to regulate the film industry meant that gender was not mainstreamed in it. Women filmmakers continue to negotiate for space through their passion, supporting and mentoring each other, recognising other women's efforts in the industry through film awards and establishing funding opportunities specifically for women but also for men.

Chapter One

BACKGROUNDS

In taking part in film criticism, African women can correct images of themselves and even their surroundings. (Wanjiru Kinyanjui)[1]

1.1: Introduction

This study explores the presence of women in the film industry in Kenya. By presence, the study considers not just the fact of existence, but also the conditions that necessitate their existence within the film industry. The conditions are hinged on their place in the film culture, training and other collaborative opportunities, as well as the opportunities for funding the projects that they undertake in the industry. Indeed, a cursory examination of the Kenyan film industry reveals that there is an increasing presence of women who are active and vibrant if their output is anything to go by. They are prolific as producers, marketers, directors, actresses, and animators; in short, they are present in all the departments of filmmaking. What may account for this vibrancy and presence?

In Kenya, women in the film industry are empowered through the provisions of the Constitution of Kenyan 2010, the Kenya vision 2030, the Kenya National Gender and Equality Commission, and the ratification and domestication of various global efforts that favour gender equality and women empowerment like Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Treaty. However, despite this support, there is still a relative dearth of women in film hence the need for such an exploratory study aimed at unravelling the presence of women in the Kenyan film industry Again, the differentiated social and cultural needs of women and men necessitate the study on the presence of women in an industry that is both historically and globally male-dominated. The following subchapters will appraise some of these local and global efforts that directly and indirectly affect the presence of women in the film industry in Kenya.

1.2: Instruments of Gender Empowerment in Kenya

In Kenya, gender equity has been put at the centre stage resulting in the enactment and development of various policy interventions. A report by the Society for International

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[1] Wanjiru Kinyanjui (2000) as quoted in Sisters of the Screen by Betti Ellerson.

Development (SID, 2012) enumerates some of the efforts Kenya has undertaken to mainstream gender. It notes that:

> Kenya recognized the importance of international and regional treaties, conventions and agreements/instruments, and their role in promoting gender equality and gender equity. In 1984, Kenya signed and ratified the recommendations by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); in 1985 the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (NFLS) was adopted, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) in 1995, and in November 1996, the National Assembly adopted the motion for the implementation of the Beijing Platform; the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were signed in September 2000; the resolution of the African Union Summit (September 2004) on employment creation and poverty alleviation; Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989; United Nations Declaration on Violence Against Women (1993); and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), 1994.

All these treaties and conventions are supposed to mainstream the agenda of gender and essentially recognise and safeguard the place of the woman within the socio-political and economic milieu of the nation. Below is an interrogation of four of these efforts.

1.2.1: The Kenya Constitution 2010

Promulgated in 2010 and hailed as one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, the Kenya Constitution of 2010 has some provisions that are gender responsive and progressive. Key among these provisions is the National Gender and Equality act established the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) that I will discuss below. There is also the bill of rights which contemplates the equality of every person despite their gender or affiliations. Perhaps the greatest act of gender-responsive provision is the requirement that parliament enacts a law that will operationalise the two-thirds gender majority in all government and state functions including commissions and ministries. The two-thirds gender bill aspires to achieve equality of the sexes in all spheres. As Murunga (2010) says, 'The central pillar upon which the 2010 Constitution was anchored on was the concept of inclusivity, which is the belief that Kenya can only progress if everybody is included in the country's governance.' Article 81 (b) states that "the electoral system shall comply with the principle that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender".

This constitutional article contemplates a society that is gender-balanced in terms of power distribution. This is in opposition to the current situation where power is concentrated

in men through patriarchy; a colonial construct of state imposed on Kenya and maintained in the post-colonial era by successive governments. The need for increased women's participation in public office arises from the fact that gender-responsive development is more sustainable as it carries everyone along (Nzomo, 1998) as will be seen under the discussion of SDG 5 below. Although the Kenyan parliament has failed three times to operationalise this provision, the intention by Kenyans on the need to have a gender-balanced exercise of state power has already been established through the referendum that led to the promulgation of the Constitution in 2010 (Murunga, 2010). The exercise of state power is a key factor in the regulation of activities of the film industry. When state power is exercised in a gender-imbalanced manner, there are high risks of women being ignored, left behind or even truncated in the industry, especially in a patriarchal system like the Kenyan one (Nnaemeka, 1998). Therefore, it is imperative that we also look at how state power affects the presence of women in the film industry.

1.2.2: The National Gender and Equality Commission

Established by an act of parliament in 2011, the National Gender and Equality Commission of Kenya is operationalised by Article 10 of the Kenyan Constitution of 2010 which pivots on National Values and Principles of Governance that includes human dignity, equity, inclusiveness, equality, non-discrimination, and protection of the marginalised (Kimani & Kombo, 2010). Its core *raison d'etre* is to promote gender equality and freedom from discrimination. It does this by facilitating and monitoring the integration of the principles of equality and freedom of discrimination in the national and county policies (NGEC, 2010). Women in the film industry thrive in environments of equality and free of discrimination hence the creation of this commission ought to provide safe spaces for their presence in the film industry or at least provide redress where their presence within the industry is threatened.

1.2.3: Kenya's Vision 2030

The Kenya Government formulated and launched in 2008 a long-term blueprint (Vision 2030) to hasten economic growth and transform Kenya into an industrialised and middle-economy country (Wamwea, 2010). The Vision 2030 aims at meeting the goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which Kenya is a signatory. This blueprint aims at providing a high quality of life for all its citizens, in a safe, secure world by the year 2030. This high-quality life for all its citizens includes the inclusivity and empowerment of its women who have traditionally been alienated through acts of disempowerment steeped in harmful cultural practices. Gender inequalities have contributed to unemployment and underemployment, low

education, health challenges, and overall poverty. Lack of access to finance, access to/control over capital assets, and occupational segregation, are other hindrances to participation in the formal employment market. Many of these issues disproportionately affect women more so women plying their trade in the film industry.

The Kenya Vision 2030 estimates that there is a need to narrow down gender gaps in education, training, and employment. Secondly, it calls for safe spaces for living free of gender-based violence including sexual harassment. Thirdly, it also seeks to increase access to capital either, or through credit facilities and market opportunities. Indeed, as we shall see in the discursive chapters of this study (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) these are some of the issues that affect women in film.

Ouma (n.d) has misgivings about the power of the Vison 2030 blueprint to fully exorcise the ghosts of gender inequality and freedom of discrimination. She notes that 'though the Vision does speak to the issue of gender inequalities, it, unfortunately, stops short of articulating sufficiently radical solutions that would offer women greater autonomy and voice and a greater ability to tackle their agency.' She sees a disparity between what the Vision outlines for women's agency and what it can deliver or how it will be actualised. Of deeper concern to this study, she also has misgivings as to how the Vision 2030 will deal with social issues (film industry included) when she notes that, 'though the social pillar of the Vision 2030 does speak on the issue of equity and suggests some ways of tackling these issues, the solutions are limited mainly to the education and training sub-sector of the social pillar. Other sub-sectors that have to do with health, water and sanitation, housing, and environment do not provide concrete ways of engaging marginalised individuals into mainstream development processes through measures that can either improve their access to assets such as land and affordable housing.' She further notes that 'there is a sub-sector under the social pillar, intended to deal with gender issues (as well as the youth and other vulnerable groups), and though there is a reference to gender mainstreaming of development interventions, the fact that the proposed solutions are isolated under this sub-sector, suggest challenges for the integration and implementation of these proposed solutions within the Vision.' Further, Ouma (n.d) reveals that a lot of effort has been put in by the government to address gender issues. However, the problem is that these efforts seem uncoordinated, and this entrenches the discrimination and inequality that keep persisting amid all these efforts. There are hardly tangible and substantive results toward equality and freedom from discrimination. Indeed, these are issues that women in the film industry talked about and are grappling with in their practice. Let us now turn to the treaties ratified by Kenya to safeguard women and social issues.

1.2.4: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

If we are to introspect the presence of women in any industry in a world of global inequalities, there is a need to review the background of global efforts that have attempted to prescribe safe spaces and equality for women and their well-being. Indeed, women in film are still drivers of the economy. Yet sadly, as Women2030 (2018) notes, 'globally, women earn an average of 23 percent less than men for the same work, and women take home one-tenth of the global income while accounting for two-thirds of global working hours.' This essentially means that women work more and are paid less for that work. This twisted state of being calls for an urgent reflection on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Khanna, Kimmel and Karkara (2016) observe that CEDAW is an international legal instrument that requires countries to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and promotes women's and girls' equal rights. Kenya has domesticated this legal instrument through the National Gender and Equality Commission. Of concern to this study, the convention requires that the member countries achieve substantive equality. This equality is discernible in access to opportunities of living and livelihoods and results for women and girls. Countries that ratify CEDAW are under obligation to do everything possible to ensure that women and girls tangibly feel equality in their lives. The ability and freedom to tell their stories is important to women if they are to feel tangible equality. Who tells the story matters fundamentally, and therefore, it is crucial that women and girls represent their own experiences. The use of art for political advocacy can reach new audiences in new ways, opening eyes, hearts, and space for dialogue on issues of gender equality and freedom from discrimination. Women filmmakers are integral in defining the story that is told from these marginalised spaces hence their presence in spaces of storytelling needs to be investigated, known, acknowledged and appreciated.

1.2.5: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sustainable Development Goals are the United Nations blueprint for the global development agenda. Numbering seventeen (17), the SDGs are about the improvement of human life in a long-lasting way rather than in a short time. The improvement of human life includes, among others, the welfare and well-being of women and gender issues. The SDG that addresses itself to women and gender issues is SDG five (5).

Women 2030, a global entity that tracks policies that affect women note that the fifth SDG targets to ensure that 'women fully and effectively participate and have equal

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opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life' (Women2030, 2018). In one of its publications, Women 2030records that this is one way of mainstreaming women's issues in decision-making so that they are not left behind as has been the traditional practice. There is a great danger of women being left behind in the film industry because of the lack of their own in key decision-making organs that operate and operationalise the industry. Since stories are important in that they reveal how people are perceived, women must tell their stories so that their voices can be raised in an agency of development and achievement of sustainable social lives.

Data Hub (2019) in its exploration of the SDG goal number five and indicator of gender index in Kenya realised and noted the following about gender equality in the Kenyan context:

> Kenya has seen significant action in recent years to build institutions, infrastructure and policies to promote gender equality, including a Plan of Action to implement the National Policy on Gender and Development, launched in 2008… However, many girls and women still lack access to basic services, and women remain under-represented in decision-making positions and political leadership.

It is emerging that the need for representation in a decision-making position and political leadership is a key desirable if women's presence is to be felt in any industry.

Women 2030 (2018) estimates that empowering women and girls is not just desirable but also has a multiplier effect on sustainable development hence the need for SDG number five which is meant to ensure 'universal access to sexual and reproductive health and affording women equal rights to economic resources such as land and property.' It also seeks to ensure an increase in the number of women in public office which will help strengthen policies and legislation for greater gender equality.

Reviewing the Sustainable Development Goals is important for this study since it helps advance the argument that the presence of women in any industry, even film, is also predicated upon the global support they receive. Furthermore, it has revealed that there are three target areas of the 5th sustainable millennium goal that intertwines with the presence of women in the film industry. These are outlined by Mitullah (2003) and JointSDG Fund (2020) as follows:

1. The need for equality in education and training to achieve gender parity in education.
2. The need to increase the number of women in public office, and decision-making organs to shore up policies and legislation that are gender-responsive. This is done in the belief that the inclusion of women in politics and governance is a cardinal ingredient for discovering the human potential that different societies strive towards

in the cultivation of sustainable development, human rights, peace and security (Mitullah, 2003).

3. Availability of capital and economic resources as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, to women to make them economically viable. (See also Joint SDG Fund, 2020).

Indeed, these three have also been identified in the Kenya Vision 2030 as key and target areas of concern in gender issues. And these three are also important intervention points that may aid the presence of women in the film industry. Let us now turn and look at the industry itself in Kenya.

1.3: The Kenyan Film Industry

The film industry in Kenya has been viewed as having the potential to stimulate economic growth by attracting foreign investment, creating employment, and encouraging tourism. If more film-centred companies get confidence in Kenya through tax incentives, they are likely to set base here hence boosting the economy since big film companies employ thousands of people to produce just one film. Even local film enterprises have the potential of providing employment opportunities for the youth. Secondly, it has been observed that 'film-induced tourism has been on the rise in recent years, in part because of the drastic increase in competitiveness between destinations. Traditional methods of destination marketing don't cut it anymore' (Tunup Travel, 2018). Therefore, film tourism is the new frontier that can stimulate the economic growth of a country.

The report, "Economic Contribution of Film and Television in Kenya: Final Report", released by Emerging Markets Economic Africa that was commissioned by the Kenya Film Commission in 2013, revealed that the economic contribution of the film industry in Kenya is shown by the values of direct and indirect economic and financial contribution to the GDP, value-addition, employment, and employee income. As such, the total value added (GDP at basic prices) of the film industry alone in 2011 amounted to 74,127.9 million Kenya Shillings (approximately 680,0725 USD) which was equivalent to 2.45 per cent of the total GDP of 3,024, 782 million Kenya Shillings (approximately 27, 750 USD) growth (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Further, the film industry in Kenya is viewed as a growth industry with the potential to stimulate economic growth through infrastructural development, tourist attraction, capital investment, and the creation of employment opportunities. More recently, it is estimated that the Kenyan film industry is generating approximately six (6) billion Kenya

Shillings (56,084,160 USD) in revenue against a potential of approximately over40 billion Kenya Shillings (approximately 373,894,400 USD) registering a 1.8 per cent growth (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

Besides, a vibrant film industry can also contribute to the creation of a more informed nation, shape attitudes, and develop the minds of local audiences (Nguma, 2015). Additionally, the film industry can be used to shape the nation's image in the international community, especially from a cultural perspective. Across the world, there is a trajectory that reflects the importance of filmmaking as a cultural institution embedded in the national psyche. The results have been significant socio-economic as well as political development (Nguma 2015). Of special concern is the participation of young women in the industry. It is therefore imperative to keep interrogating the link between film and its socio-economic impact as well as its imprints on the cultural lives of its producers and consumers.

1.3.1: Establishment and Components

The Kenya Film Commission (2013) indicates that the screen industry encompasses the film and television sectors. Within these two, the Commission notes that there are two cross-cutting and interlinked components of production and distribution. While the production component is concerned with the generation of content for film and television audiences, the distribution component is made up of the enterprises that engage in the selling and supply of the produced film content to television broadcasters, cinemas, and other retail outlets including online distribution. A third component that the commission may have omitted, thereby creating a lacuna, is research. This is a huge omission that perhaps studies such as this one must come in to fill. Research provides guiding principles upon which the industry can thrive.

In 2014, Kenya's Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology through the Communication Authority of Kenya announced that Kenyan Television stations had been given until the year 2018 to air at least 60% of local content on their daily programming (Waitathu, 2015). The gist behind this directive was to allow the local content development industries to thrive. The key sector of growth was to be the film sector since it would supply these Television stations with film and television content. It is important to recognise that the issuance of the broadcasting licences is not tied to any demand on television stations' production of content; rather, the policy aims at ensuring that the industry can utilise the available resources to optimally exploit the increasingly globalised film market (Kenya Film Commission, 2013). It is, therefore, recognised that the film industry derives its content mostly from the indigenous arts, literature, theatre, and music of a community. Film, therefore, can be

viewed as providing a significant medium of celebration and expression of the nation's culture and heritage in which women play a key part (Ministry of Information and Communications 2010).

1.3.2: The Kenya Film Industry and Kenya's Vision 2030

The Kenyan film industry has been identified as a key growth industry with great potential to spur economic growth and help in the realisation of Vision 2030 through investment and employment (Kenya Film Commission, 2013). The Vision 2030's blueprint states that the government will implement the following programmes as a way of developing a major motion picture production industry with sufficient employment:

- Market promotion and generation of investments within the industry.
- The development of creative and technical skills.
- Improvement of public, mass media facilities and equipment.
- Development of information, education, and communication services.
- Public awareness about the industry.
- Film administration and facilitation.
- Incorporating a general restructuring and reforms within the film industry.[2]

Agencies such as Kenya Film Commission have established points of interlock between the rubrics of the vision and their mandate. They have sought to find a correlation between the growth of the film industry and the three social, economic, and political pillars of Vision 2030.

The economic pillar aims to enhance the prosperity of Kenyans through the implementation of an economic development programme that covers all regions. The economic programme also aims at achieving an approximately 10% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate (Kenya Vision 2030). While it is acknowledged that the major economic mainstay in Kenya has been agriculture, it has been established that it is no longer sustainable. New forms of mainstay like manufacturing industries are slowly becoming urgent. The creative and cultural industries too have been thrust into the limelight. Film belongs to the cultural and creative industry which is fast being seen as a key income earner of the country through the creation of employment and as a marketing tool for the tourism industry.

On the other hand, the social pillar is driven by the need to build a cohesive and just society that embraces social equity in a secure environment. It is through the social pillar that

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[2] See the write up of the project motion picture of the Vision 2030 here, https://vision2030.go.ke/project/film-industry/

women's participation in the film industry can be easily realised because it is predicated on social equity and human rights (Kenya Vision 2030). The social pillar is buttressed by the political pillar which envisages a nation that embraces democracy and seeks to meet the citizenry's aspirations and expectations. The nation also embraces the entrenchment of equality and gender parity in all spheres of life irrespective of the individual's gender, religion, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. Thus, Vision 2030 sees Kenya as embracing a democratic political system that is driven by issues, people-centred, and result-oriented approaches that ultimately are accountable to the public; a political system that can meet the needs of the people while vigorously defending their rights (Kenya Vision 2030). Such a political system creates the appropriate atmosphere for the development of the film industry by allowing storytellers to engage in creatively retelling their stories through film production.

1.3.3: Regulatory Frameworks of the Kenyan Film Industry

The Kenyan film industry is operationalised, controlled, and regulated by several frameworks, the most important being under CAP 222 of the Laws of Kenya, which is the Film and Stage Plays Act, whose provisions regulate the production and exhibition of films and associated licensing and liaison services (Kenya Film Commission 2013). The Act delineates the responsibilities of the Kenya Film and Classification Board and its regulatory mandates and activities (National Council for Law Reporting, 2014). Important and key agencies include:

1. The Kenyan film Commission (KFC), is a state agency whose task is to develop, market and promote and archive the film industry. It was established by Legal order number 147 of 2015.

2. Kenyan Film Classification Board (KFCB) which is the key regulatory agency of film in Kenya was established in 1959 under the Film and Stage plays Act, CAP 222 of the constitution of Kenya. It regulates, examines, classifies, and licences the production, dissemination, and distribution of film in Kenya.

3. Kenya Copyright Board (KECOBO) was established by the Kenya Copyright Act of 2001 and its function is to administer and enforce copyright and related rights in Kenya.

4. The Department of Film Services (DFS) produces and disseminates films and other audio-visual material for the government.

5. The Kenya Film School (KFS) is a fairly new agency that is a talent-based educational institution that undertakes capacity building and training in the film industry.

During this study, reference is made to these agencies and how they manifest the presence of women in the film industry.

CAP 222 which established KFCB has been found wanting in some of its provisions as it is seen to curtail and be in opposition with the other constitutional provisions, especially on the bill of rights. It has been seen to curtail the freedom of expression; fundamental freedom within the bill of rights that directly affects the creative and cultural industries. It is on the pedestal of this Act that KFCB stood to ban Wanuri Kahiu's film *Rafiki* (2018) as shall be seen in Chapter Five of this study. This study sought to investigate also whether these laws are operationalised in a gender-responsive manner to allow women to thrive in the industry.

The Constitution of Kenya (CoK, 2010) has elevated intellectual property rights and culture and, therefore, opened opportunities to upcoming independent filmmakers (Kenya Film Commission 2013). The constitution has also impacted the capacity-building efforts meant to serve the industry. In the last few years, the industry has witnessed the mushrooming of training institutions including universities and colleges. It behoves researchers to establish whether this increased training opportunities as well as copyright laws have had an impact on the presence of women in the film industry or not.

1.3.4: Legal and Regulatory legislations

Section XII of Chapter Five of the Constitution of Kenya provides the fundamental rights and freedoms of an individual which include, protection from discrimination on the grounds of race, tribe, place of origin, the residence of other local connections, political opinions, colour, creed, or sex (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). An overview of women in the film industry in Kenya depicts women from various geographical and social classes. Therefore, it is important to establish the relationship between the legal and institutional frameworks that may encourage or impede women's involvement in the film industry in Kenya and how this involvement can be encouraged at decision-making levels.

1.4: Women Participation in Economic Activities

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) estimates that in Kenya, women constitute approximately 50.3 per cent of the population and can be impactful and productive economically (KNBS, 2020). However, patriarchy has diminished and impeded their efforts and participation in many economic practices. The same cultural barriers have prevented women from ascending to higher levels in their careers (Makori, et al., 2016). This study seeks to find out how women in the film industry have been able to break these barriers and step out to engage in decision-making positions and this has been discussed in Chapter Six of this study.

Secondly, the differentiated social and cultural needs of women and men necessitate the study of the presence of women in an industry that is known to be male-dominated. That is why the study adopts a feminist perspective but with an African thought and background. Feminism is not just about claiming spaces but also about creating creative and inclusive spaces to discuss the challenges and responses to issues affecting women in society. It is against the culture of silence that keeps women and girls trapped in non-inclusive paradigms. It further challenges systems of oppression like patriarchy and neo-colonialism. It, therefore, deconstructs hegemonic inscriptions of patriarchy and colonial legacies that Eurocentric tendencies embedded in them that also replicate patriarchy. Although the term feminism has been frowned upon in many African contexts, due to what may be erroneously seen as a fight between women against men, its key tenets as outlined above cannot be disputed.

1.5: Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, international, regional, and national level legal frameworks which demand that gender equality and equity be reflected in the provision of equal opportunities for men and women in employment and decision-making have enabled women to step out of the shadows and participate in decision-making in the economy. If indeed film is a massive capital-intensive venture, it begs the question, how do Kenyan women navigate these bottlenecks to stamp their presence in the industry?

The Kenyan film industry is growing, and the government has acknowledged the importance of the arts as a significant revenue earner. There is an appreciable number of women in the Kenyan film industry. However, how they come into the industry, how they are sustained in it, which opportunities are available to them, and what mechanisms the film culture offer to them remains unresearched, unknown, and undocumented. This is a serious gap since women form slightly over half of the Kenyan population. This research sought to examine how the women in Kenya come into the film industry, how they are sustained in the industry, what challenges they face in the industry and how they overcome these challenges. It is only by understanding their presence within the industry that we may discern their voice and agency hence ascertaining their participation in revenue generation for the film industry and the country at large.

1.6: The Purpose of the Study

A perusal of the databases in the Kenyan film industry does not seem to have any study undertaken to capture data on women's participation or representation in the film industry in Kenya in terms of presence, participation and sustenance. Thus, the film industry in Kenya is

plagued by a dearth of documentation and consistent statistics. The present research on the presence of women in the film industry in Kenya is significant as it seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge of the industry and form a basis for future research by adopting a post-colonial African feminist paradigm. It is an exploratory study in conception and in nature as it also aims at giving direction to future research into policy for gender response and the progressive film industry.

1.7: Specific Objectives

The objectives that this study focussed on are:

1. To interrogate the presence or lack thereof of women filmmakers within the Kenyan film industry as seen through its film culture.
2. To examine the factors that enhance or inhibit the presence of women filmmakers with specific attention to training, collaborations, and funding opportunities.
3. To explore the inclusivity and responsiveness of the Kenyan film industry to women filmmakers.
4. To survey the barriers that women face in the film industry in Kenya and how they navigate through them.
5. To explore post-colonial African feminism as a paradigm that gives Kenyan women filmmakers agency in their work.

1.8: Research Questions

The research questions that the research set out to answer are:

1. How does the Kenyan film culture enhance or inhibit the presence of women filmmakers in the film industry?
2. How does the film industry manifest inclusivity and responsiveness to women filmmakers?
3. How do the opportunities in training, collaborations, and funding enable women to enter the film industry and how do these opportunities sustain them in the industry?
4. What are the barriers that impede women's career paths in the film industry in Kenya and do the women endeavour to navigate through them?
5. What are the major issues that are unique to African women filmmaking that affect the African feminist?

1.9: Justification of the Study

The film industry in Kenya is growing and needs to be supported to play a significant role in the economy of the country for it to fulfil the Kenya Vision 2030 and The Sustainable Development Goals. This study is therefore significant in that it provides a discussion on the selected women filmmakers in Kenya and how they have sustained their careers in filmmaking. This discussion can be extrapolated to show how the women of Kenya have exploited available opportunities to contribute to the growth of Kenya's economy and more so in the film industry. Ibarra, Carter & Silva (2010) have observed that even though multinational consumer goods companies were investing heavily in mentoring programmes to facilitate highly talented women, it does not translate to the promotions of women. Hence, the study sought to establish whether there was a clear mentorship programme that encouraged women to participate in decision-making levels in the film industry,

The identification and description of women's career paths in the film industry that this study has done paves way for the government and the private sector to develop strategies that reinforce women's representation to reduce inequalities in the workplace in Kenya and globally. This can also pave the way for other studies that could compare the career paths of women in the film industry in Kenya with the developed countries to determine if there are similarities or their impact on the advancement of women.

This study sought to examine the source of funding for women in the film industry. This is because funded projects have a direct bearing on the content produced in the film industry which in the end may not necessarily have an impact on a target audience and eventually cut out opportunities for women's creativity. The study sought to understand the barriers facing women around funding to evoke policy responses at the government level.

The fifth Pillar of the SDGs which promotes gender equality and empowerment of women is what this study will embed itself in. Sometimes it may be difficult to draw a line on gender issues but achieving gender equality is important for workplaces not only because it is 'fair' and 'the right thing to do,' but because it is also linked to a country's overall economic performance.

The study contributes to existing knowledge of women's career paths and attempts to fill the knowledge gap on the same in the film industry in Kenya. It further serves as reference material to both public and private learning institutions in Kenya, in the region, and beyond.

1.10: Scope of the Study

The study sampled seven women involved in the film industry and interviewed them. These are Wanuri Kahiu, Jinna Mutune, Judy Kibinge, Matrid Nyagah, Ng'endo Mukii, Dommie Yambo-Odotte, and Anne Mungai. These women have achieved an appreciable measure of success as directors, screenwriters, and producers of film in Kenya. As is clarified in the methodology this study limits itself to women directors, screenwriters and producers because these three professions of filmmaking determine the kind of stories that come out of a film. The study also appraised reports and documents by government organisations involved with the film industry including the Kenya Film Commission and Kenya Film Classification Board. References were also made to external agencies such as the National Gender and Equality Commission of Kenya, Kenya Vision 2030, Devolution and Planning Ministry, Kenya Tourist Board, Brand Kenya, and the Women Enterprise Fund.

Furthermore, the study is exploratory as it is meant to establish the presence of women in the Kenyan film industry as well as provide direction for future research in the film industry, especially on women in film in Kenya.

1.11: Limitations of the Study

During the study, the term feminism seemed not to augur well with the key sources of data (the interviewed Kenyan women filmmakers) as a perspective of analysis on their presence in the film industry as they were very cautious with the term and its implications. Nonetheless, from a scholarly point of view, feminism, particularly nego-feminism which is proposed by Nnaemeka (2003) as well as post-colonial feminism propounded by Mohanty (1988) have been instrumental in providing a perspective for this study. This comes out clearly in the third chapter of this study.

1.12: Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the key concepts that the background information on the vibrancy of women in the film industry in Kenya. It has stated the problem at hand which is the fact that there are many women in the industry in Kenya, yet no study has been able to establish how they enter the industry, how they are sustained in it and what kind of challenges and/or support they get in the industry. From this statement of the problem, it has derived five objectives which have now formed the five questions that the study responded to in the discursive chapters. Lastly, it has explained the significance of this study as well as named the African feminism

perspective as the approach that guided the study. The next chapter discusses the literature review.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: Introduction- Theoretical Perspectives and Review of Related Literature on the Presence of Women in the Kenyan Film Industry

The film industry in Kenya has been viewed by UNESCO and many other industry players as having the potential to stimulate economic growth through the attraction of investment, the creation of employment, and the attraction of tourists, as has been noted in Chapter One of this study (UNESCO, 2021). A vibrant film industry can also contribute to the creation of a more informed nation, shape attitudes, and develop the minds of local audiences (Nguma, 2015). Additionally, the film industry can shape the nation's image in the international community, especially from a cultural perspective. Ultimately, the film sector has the potential of providing employment opportunities for not just the youth, but women as well. Across the world, there is a new trajectory that reflects the importance of filmmaking. Forward-looking countries have embedded film in the nation's psyche and culture. As mentioned earlier, the results have been significant socio-economic as well as political development (Nguma, 2015). Consequently, some developed and emerging economies have developed vibrant and strong film-oriented policies. For instance, India, South Africa, China, and Brazil have promoted vibrant film industries. Thus, these countries have allocated large fiscal and personnel resources to document and archive films both from within and outside their boundaries (Okioma & Mugubi, 2015). The colonial legacy that underpins the operations of countries like Kenya may help explain this lack of documentation and investment.

While writing about the trends and challenges of African film, UNESCO in its (2021) report acknowledges the Kenyan film industry as one of the African film industries that has a vibrant involvement of women in film.[3] The report pays homage to such filmmakers as Wanuri Kahiu, Dorothy Ghetuba, and Judy Kibinge among others for their outstanding contribution to the growth of the film industry in Kenya. These accolades point to the direction that there is indeed more that needs to be done in terms of structured research and writing about these Kenyan women filmmakers to put their contributions in their rightful place in social history and to tap into the insights that they present to the scholarly world. UNESCO (2021) delineates

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[3] UNESCO (2021). *The African Film Industry: Trends, Challenges and opportunities for Growth.* Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

three areas that it considers key to the presence of a film industry in a country. These are the funding avenues, training opportunities, and promotion through distribution and screenings. This study addresses all three and how the female filmmakers in Kenya have contributed in those areas; an area that the UNESCO (2021) report fails to adequately capture and interrogate.

This chapter browses through existing theories in a bid to find an anchor theory that helps analyse data collected from women filmmakers as key stakeholders within the Kenyan film industry. Such a theory ought to help in defining Kenyan filmmakers as women, Africans, and storytellers. This triple heritage is important as it sets the women apart as a distinct community of practice and their work as emanating from this identity. Being women, they remain a key social group with its idiosyncratic challenges, but also advantages that must be taken to account. Inevitably then, it ought to be a feminist theory that enshrines and satisfies the other parameters like their African hood and role as storytellers. Defining them as African gives this study a direction, bearing in mind the significant colonial legacy of certain African nations. As storytellers, women are seen as creative, artistic, and makers of the imagined worlds. Further, it examines theories that take care of the double marginalisation of women; by patriarchy/culture, and by colonial hangovers and legacies.

The chapter starts by contextualising feminism in Africa and then goes on to interrogate the theories of postcolonial African feminism as well as Nego-feminism. It draws heavily from the writings of Mohanty (2003) and Nnaemeka (2004). In the end, it will explain the theories chosen to analyse the findings in the subsequent chapters and why they have been chosen.

2.2: Contextualising Feminism in Africa

To understand the concept of feminism in Africa, it would be helpful to look at its history in Africa. Women actively and significantly participated in the struggle against colonial domination and powers in Africa. Besides, they also fought for better reproductive rights (McFadde, 2011). Therefore, African feminism salutes this common struggle alongside African men in breaking the yoke of foreign domination and European and American exploitation (Guy-Sheftall, 2003). To study the contribution of women in social culture, therefore, calls for a theoretical approach that is anchored on a retrieval, revitalisation, or restoration of the African identity. This suggests that African people need to reposition themselves within their cultural knowledge as a way of understanding their powers and collective responsibility in addressing oppressive social issues (Wane, 2011).

African feminism differs from western feminism in that it owes its origins to different dynamics than those that generated western feminism. Mikell (2010) notes that it has largely

been shaped by African women's resistance to western hegemony and its legacy within African culture as. Indeed, within the Kenyan context, African feminism would arise from the resistance to colonialism that was waged by women such as the legendary Syokimau[4] of the Akamba people and Mekatilili wa Menza[5] of the Giriama sub-nation. It would also genuflect at the altar of the no-nonsense Wangù wa Makeri of the Agikùyù people who broke barriers of male dominance to become the first Chieftess in the colonial Gikùyù land.[6] It would provide a continuum of some of the makers of Kenyan history on the political scene like the vocal multiparty democracy agitators Charity Ngilu and Martha Karua as well as the environmentalists like Wangari Maathai. African feminism is just as much about the interconnectedness of legacies of slavery, colonialism, racism, patriarchy, and how these historic realities have caused women's oppression.

While it is acknowledged that feminism is a social theory that begs to be adopted by all women in the world and used to deal with their specific and concrete problems, Mangena (2013) and Kolawole (2002) argue that there is a possibility of universality with a difference based on the differentiated local and material conditions of various communities. Kolawole (2002) points out that the diversity of feminism is emphasised in contemporary gender scholarship whereby issues of identity and intersectionality (diversity of women's experiences and differences) have become determinants of feminist orientation. This study embraces African feminism since it adapts to cultural exigencies.

Further, a closer examination shows that feminism is diverse, competing, and often opposing collection of political movements, social theories, and moral philosophies that are largely motivated and concerned with the experiences of women within the context of their social, political, and economic inequalities (Akin-Aina 2011). African feminism respects women's self-reliance and the propensity to work cooperatively through the social organisation; a strand that is very key for this study since filmmaking relies on cooperation and organisation. Nevertheless, an institutionally predominant type of feminism in Kenya focuses on eliminating gender inequality to promote women's rights, interests, and other gender issues in society (Chege, 2001).

The African feminism that this study embraces borrows heavily from many of the arguments by the Nigerian feminist Obioma Nnaemeka in her thoughts on Nego-feminism.

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[4] See Mutunga, F. (n.d). Syokimau-The Kamba Prophetess. Frankard Website.
[5] See Brantley, C. (1981). *The Giriama and Colonial Resistance in Kenya, 1800–1920.* Berkeley: University of California Press
[6] See Wanyoike, M. (2002). *Makers of History: Wangu wa Makeri*. Nairobi: Eat African Education Publishers.

Using this nego-feminism, Nnaemeka speaks about the tensions as well as the aspirations of African feminism. Nnaemeka (2004) and McFadde (2011) state that it is important to recognise that the contemporary situations in the global south present significant disadvantages to women (the situation has not been subjected to any significant change) because women are still being systematically marginalised both at the local, regional, and global levels.

African feminism recognises that certain inequalities and limitations existed in traditional societies and that colonialism reinforced them and introduced others. Guy-Sheftall (2003) argues that African feminism examines institutions that are valuable to women and rejects those that work to their detriment and African feminism does not simply import western women's agendas. Thus, in one breath, African feminism respects African women's status as mothers but questions obligatory motherhood and the traditional favouring of sons. This is because, as Bisschoff (2009) observes, the dominant role that African women play in the maintenance of the family and community is well-documented and many examples exist to refute the assumption that African women are completely helpless and subordinated. Women certainly hold control over many areas of their lives. This is the definition that best suits this study since issues of race may not at the forefront within the Kenyan cinema industry as it is alive in other contexts such as South Africa.

From the foregoing, three conclusions can be drawn on how African feminism defines feminism in African terms as follows:

1. It draws upon the *Ubuntu*[7] philosophy of grassroots organisation and ordering women into social and economic empowerment enclaves,

2. It looks at women and women's issues as part of the social whole rather than as an independent structure,

3. It recognises the role of men in gender complementarity.

The next section turns its attention to postcolonial African feminist theory as a framework for analysis.

2.3: Postcolonial African Feminist Theory

In this section, I attempt to elucidate postcolonial African feminism and its contribution to the Kenyan film industry. The main impetus of this section is to understand how colonisation and power struggles have shaped women's rights in Kenya and subsequently influenced women's

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[7] Ubuntu is an African philosophy that looks at the society as interconnected so that the joy of one is the joy of all and likewise the suffering of one is the suffering all. It encourages thinking about others in the actions of an individual.

presence in the Kenyan film industry in the manner that Mohanty (2003) proposes. Since the term feminism has been controversial as discussed previously (Marchand & Parpart, 2003), I have opted to use the term postcolonial feminism since it has heightened awareness that ideologies of womanhood and struggles against gender oppression intersect with, and cannot be analysed without considering race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and contextualisation of womanhood (Spurlin, 2010). The failure of western feminisms to recognise evident differences among African peoples has necessitated the choice of engaging postcolonial African feminism within the African film industry with a focus on Kenya, hence considering the diversity of African experiences.

Postcolonial African feminist theory concerns itself with the representation of women in formerly colonised countries and also the western regions (Ruti, 2014). The discourse on African feminism is a vibrant enterprise on the African continent since it is driven by African women themselves (McFadde 2011). As the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists (2006) points out, African feminism gives space for Africans to find their identity, and as such, African feminism pays closer attention to the continent's history following colonisation, but also the present struggles under neo-colonialism and globalisation. This concept of continental struggle emerging from the messy moments of colonialism is key in the analysis of the presence of women in the Kenyan cinema scene. Colonialism is perhaps the single most global project that defined and has continued to define lives on the African continent and indeed the whole global south. The fight against the hangovers of colonialism, and the restoration of what was truncated or lost in colonialism, continue to define research and the definition of lives on the African continent. The place of women in this definition and indeed the definition of women themselves continues to draw critical attention. Therefore, this study incorporates several perceptions of postcolonial theory from an African feminist perspective.

Postcolonial feminists like Mohanty (1987) argue that oppression relating to the colonial experience, particularly racial, class, and ethnic oppression, has marginalised women in postcolonial societies. For example, dispossessing thousands of acres of native farmland by colonialists had an economic impact in that it opened fertile highlands to white farmers and forced displaced Africans to work on British farms (Kamoche, 1992; Oldfield, 2013). This had a direct bearing on disempowering women who worked the farms to produce and nourish society. The persistence of this racial discrimination that had bearing on the economic standing of the Africans led to the Mau uprising-the freedom movement in Kenya and a militant group that emerged among young Gíkùyù men to protest British rule. Women, especially from the

Gĩkũyũ community joined the men in the insurgence leading to the declaration of a state of emergency was declared in 1952.

The Mau uprising has been viewed as an agency to the rise in feminist issues agitated for and by women. The issues that have continued to confront women from colonial times to the present times have not changed. These are landlessness, low wages from subsistence farming, grabbing of public land by politicians, and police brutality, among others. These are the real issues that affected and continue to affect women on the African continent. Brownhill and Turner (2004) mapped out Kenyan women's engagement with feminism between the years 1940 to 2003 by describing the three phases of the Mau Mau insurgences. In the initial stage of the 1940s, they described women's activities as elaborate with subsistence activities and relations. In the 1950s, women were engaged in advocating for land rights, a period known as enclosure (Kershaw, 1997). In the 1960s, women began a period of resistance which was expressed in three ways: landless women squatted on all types of public land; landless women who could afford, joined women groups or land buying companies to purchase farms; and coffee wives[8] (coffee farms were economically unproductive) channelled resources into the community and domestic economy (Brownhill & Turner, 2004; International Coffee Organisation, 2018). Women have therefore been fighting for their reproductive health rights, land rights, economic empowerment, and access to education since the 1940s and they continue to do so to affect the status of women even today.

Postcolonial feminism is critical of Western forms of feminism, notably radical feminism and liberal feminism and their universalisation of female experience and a lack of attention to gender issues in mainstream postcolonial thought. Essentially all feminist theories seek to understand the nature and types of gender inequality. Its focus is on power relations, gender politics, and sexuality including the marginalised others. Some of the issues and themes that concern feminism include stereotyping, discrimination, objectification, oppression, and patriarchy.

Postcolonial feminists argue that cultures impacted by colonialism are often vastly different and should be treated as such. Colonial oppression may result in the glorification of pre-colonial culture and traditions of power stratification along gender lines, which could mean the acceptance of, or refusal to deal with, inherent issues of gender inequality.

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[8] The economic contribution of women in Kenya in agriculture has been undervalued as such the economic returns of women in agriculture are often lower than those of their male peers. See http://www.ico.org/documents/cy2017-18/icc-122-11e-gender-equality.pdf (p.14)

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According to Mohanty (2003), women in the third world feel that Western feminism bases its understanding of women on "internal racism (exhibiting racist attitudes towards members of the same ethnic group), classism (hatred against people of different social class) and homophobia (dislike for homosexuality). These are indeed global issues but not immediate to the African woman. Going forward, Fawcette, et al. (2005) believes that the approach advanced by Mohanty (2003) is strongly related to African feminism and postcolonial feminism. Its development is also associated with concepts such as black feminism, womanism, "Africana womanism", "motherism", "Stiwanism", "nego-feminism", Chicana feminism, and "femalism" (Fawcette, et.al, 2005; Layli, 2006; Fourie, 2001).

This theory works for this study as it accepts women's vulnerabilities in the face of postcolonialism with its racist structures and northern hemisphere hegemonies as well as patriarchy that has stunted, stifled, and denigrated women's agency, voice, and empowerment in virtually all the global south. How can this theory be appropriated to the film industry? This is the question this study turns to in the next subsection.

Since postcolonial feminism pays close attention to the representation of women in once colonised countries and Western locations, in this chapter I am concerned with how this relates to African cinema more broadly. African cinema production is a post-colonial activity that emerged after the independence of the African nations. Before this, the film industry in Africa was under foreign rule. As such, the film industry in colonised Africa did not reflect an accurate portrayal of the cultures it was intending to represent. This industry was instead permeated by stereotypes and ironically Africa was used as an exotic background for Western cinema or by explorers, tourists, and game and trophy hunters who wished to record their escapades for private consumption (Okioma & Mugubi, 2015). Colonialism itself was masculine and patriarchal. It entrenched the emasculation of the black man and woman and normalised European male dominance. Supported by Christian missionary work that emphasised the original sin of Eve (representing all women), colonialism regarded women as the inferior gender that needed to be pitied and guided but simultaneously objectified for sexual pleasure. Indeed, the tropes of colonialism; moronisation, infantilisation, and sexualisation affected women to a large extent (Tsikhungu 2014). Colonialism excluded women from discourses that affected their lives on questions of land, and health, among other socio-economic issues. Women, just like African lands were dark and mysterious and for that reason, they had to be 'known' and conquered; they had to be 'penetrated' and subdued literally and figuratively. This backdrop of colonialism and its denigration of the female body is restaged in the post-colony.

According to Bisschoff (2009), the significance of designing a suitable theoretical framework for the analysis and critiquing of African women's cinema has been underlined by many theorists in the field of African cinema. She further observes that most discourses on African films in general revolve, and are structured historically and thematically with most theorists looking within African traditions for unique African cinema aesthetics. Whereas postcolonial theory offers a model for a theoretical enquiry into African women's cinema, it seeks to account for how racism and the political, economic, and cultural effects of colonialism impact non-western and non-white women in the postcolonial world. Nevertheless, Africans in the contemporary age continue to straddle the two models of tradition and modernity. The tensions that are generated by the opposing models occupy a central position in cultural production as it is represented in the literary works, films and theatre productions in all colonised African states. It is, therefore, necessary to develop a postcolonial theory of African women's cinema, given that the involvement of female directors and producers is a postcolonial phenomenon.

Some African film scholars such as Dovey (2012) have observed that African women filmmakers face the challenge of empowering women in their endeavour for self-representation. Accordingly, the political and social currents in contemporary African nations demand new levels of critical awakening to face the emerging challenges to the supposed intellectual hierarchies, such as the notion that societal challenges can only be addressed within the confines of traditional intellectual disciplines, as can be seen in film productions tackling taboo subjects on sex, HIV/AIDS, drugs, and post-election violence. Women filmmakers in Kenya have transcended these hierarchies to address issues that have not been explicitly addressed by the existent intellectual disciplines in the country. An example of these films is *Something Necessary* (2013) by Judy Kibinge which describes the consequences of the 2007-2008 post-election violence experienced in Kenya. When cinema is applied as a tool of awareness-sensitisation, it becomes a contested terrain where conventional representations are seriously challenged, but at the same time, African women's subjectivity is reclaimed. Suffice it to say that women filmmakers are engaged in the process of redefining the female identity and actively reclaiming subjectivity for African women. Indeed, Ellerson (2016) has explored this subject of self-representation through the use of the documentary medium by African filmmakers in detail. She has argued that filmmaking is an ample but intangible cultural resource that has afforded African women filmmakers a platform for self-representation.

According to Bisschoff (2009), the emerging African women cinema seeks to undo the stereotypical western representations, as well as offer a critique of the persisting traditional

African patriarchal structures through the creation of an alternative representation of African womanhood. They have embraced a cinema of advocacy through documentation and storytelling. Bisschoff (2009) also observes that many African women are increasingly taking up the challenge as filmmakers.

Moreso, the pioneering work of the film historian, Beti Ellerson, has become invaluable in shaping the enquiries into women's involvement in cinema. Ellerson's work is anchored on an analysis of a comprehensive catalogue of various films directed by African women and complemented by interviews she conducted with African filmmakers. The research efforts resulted in the publishing of her book, *Sisters of the Screen* (2000). She has also interviewed some pioneering Kenyan women in cinema as well as emerging ones. In these interviews, she has elicited responses from these filmmakers testifying that apart from power structures and practices in Africa, they also reveal the African women's will and agency to dismantle these power structures and practices that inhibit their presence in the film industry (Ellerson, 2002).

Ellerson produced a documentary based on the book. The documentary sheds light on the lives of African women in the modern era. She highlights women in the film industry succeeding which goes against the popular portrayal of African women in media as living in poverty and helplessness. The film shows African women in power, which can have positive effects on their lives, as well as those of their families. It also shows women fighting back against patriarchal and colonial mindsets that seek to police women's bodies and voices. *Sisters of the Screen* showcases women across the African continent who work as directors, screenwriters, and actresses in the film industry. It presents the perspectives of these women from a feminist approach as they struggle against racism, bigotry, poverty, and sexism (Ellerson, 2002).

It is important to acknowledge the works of Beti Ellerson in introspecting the works done by African filmmakers. Her works have also been greatly supported by those of Lizelle Bisschoff as has been discussed above. These two scholars provide a beaten path in this area and this study intends to follow in their footsteps as far as constructing a thesis on the presence of Kenyan women filmmakers in film is concerned.

2.4: Nego-feminism

Postulated by Nnaemeka (2004) in "Nego-Feminism: Theorizing, Practicing, and Pruning Africa's Way (2004)," the theory is defined as feminism by negotiation. Nego-feminism ordered and clarified from an African perspective all those arguments advanced by the predecessor theories on the place of the African man within the definition of African feminism.

Like its predecessor theories, it rejected the confrontational hard-line western feminist theories on this question but also sought to assert the place of the African woman within spheres of life. By this time, it had been clear that African women and the notion of African feminism had rejected the tenets of western feminism that looked at the man as the problem and the stumbling block against women's empowerment. Nego-feminism advocated thus for negotiating with men to subtly achieve otherwise hard ideals. It sets out to handle issues such as peace, conflict management, and resolution through negotiation, complementarity, give-and-take, and collaboration. This is important for this study since women have been instrumental in creating the cinema infrastructure on the African continent and they have been working alongside men (Ellerson, 2002)

As a feminist approach, it describes a new paradigm that can assuage the never-ending gender war. Nego-feminism is about cooperation. According to Eisler (1995), "As feminists devise ways of dealing with gender injustices, it is worth noting that the choice of what kind of world we live in is up to every one of us" (p. 214). This quote underlines the essence of cooperation and negotiation to eventually achieve the desired effects.

To Nnaemeka (2004), this is a feminism of compromise, contending with the myriad aspects of patriarchy and dealing with the phenomenon in an African way. She contends that African feminism embodies the African cultural principles of negotiation, compromise, and balance. Nego-feminism is viewed as a guide for dealing with the feminist struggles that are inherent to the continent. The approach recognises the implication of the patriarchal traditions and aims to dismantle the customs while negotiating around these challenges. This may be done by including men in discussions and advocacy for feminism, or what the late Nobel laureate and founder of the Green Belt Movement, Professor Wangari Maathai (Maathai, 2010) describes the "the reintroduction of the African man to his family" (p.275). For instance, since the early days of colonialism, the African man has been uprooted from his home to seek employment. I agree with Maathai's observations that this separation has disrupted families thus creating cases of women-headed households and single parenthood families, which are becoming a norm in Kenya. Nevertheless, men should not be viewed as only an economic tool for development but as effective participants in the social, economic, cultural, and political development of African society and women.

For example, efforts to include men in negotiations of providing equality to women in education in the Maasai community (Kenya) where early marriages for girls are prevalent have been explored by The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). FAWE has collaborated with Centres of Excellence such as AIC Kajiado Girls Primary School and the

Maasai elders and chiefs to build shelters for girls rescued from early marriages and female genital mutilation (FAWE, 2009).

The distinct similarity between Nego-feminism and Womanism is that they both address cultural specificities. But then, cultural issues are not the only issues affecting women in their struggle for equality. Today, African feminist scholars, artists, activists, and politicians as demonstrated by Leymah Gbowee (2013)[9], Simphiwe Dana, a Xhosa musician from South Africa,[10] and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2006), a renowned Nigerian writer of novels and short stories, and feminist[11], coupled with the feminist organisations that include Africa Gender Institute and African Feminist Forum stand at the forefront of using knowledge, creativity, and activism to alter the negativity that affects women in Africa today (Kolawale, 2002). In effect, it is only African women who can bear the responsibility of connecting their histories and cultures to the contemporary situation. It is accepted that there are many glass ceilings to shatter.

Within the context of this study, Nego-feminism will be used to interrogate how the presence of women in film advances their course in a negotiated way. This is because the negotiated approach serves the interests of women by guaranteeing them a seat at the table where cultural, social, and economic resources are shared. By cooperating with men, complementarity can be easily achieved; hence strengthening their position. While this theory agrees that women have been disempowered in many spheres (Nkealah, 2016), and that is why they need to negotiate their way back to the table, it fails to acknowledge the legacy of colonialism in this disempowerment. This study therefore also sought to find a theory that could help rethink the double marginalisation of women along patriarchal and colonial lines. This led the current study to focus on Postcolonial Feminism theory.

2.5: Thematic Expression of Postcolonial Feminism in the African Film Industry

In this section, this study seeks to understand how postcolonial feminism feeds into the African film industry by exploring some themes featured by African filmmakers. Even though women's

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[9] Leymah Roberta Gbowee (born 1 February 1972) is a Liberian peace activist. She led the women's nonviolent 'Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace' movement that helped bring an end to the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003.

[10] An award-winning musician, Dana has been in the forefront for fighting for women rights. She is known for simple and straight forward approach to feminism. When asked what it means, she is quoted as saying, "Don't treat me as anything less because I'm a woman. That's what feminism is."

[11] Adichie practices "a brand of feminism or "gender activism" that disregards the specificity of the colonial oppression Africans face for being black." She has stated, "Black women are not just oppressed because they are women; they are oppressed because they are black women." This is in line with intersectionality theory which is based on the same premise (see Crenshaw, 1989 …).

participation in the film industry has gained traction, the industry is still male-dominated. Indeed, this ambivalence is well captured by Riesco (2015) in an online article when she notes that:

> The African woman has found herself in an ambivalent position: lauded on the one hand, as symbol and even subject, in the works of the Senegalese pioneers Ousmane Sembène and Djibril Diop Mambety and of the Malinese Souleymane Cissé; on the other, disparaged in terms of her actual production[12]

This ambivalence of simultaneously being celebrated while being belittled calls to mind the thematic preoccupation and consideration of most African filmmakers are undoubtedly shaped by the prevailing social-cultural contexts that the filmmakers live under. Consequently, the themes that African women filmmakers choose to explore through cinema reflect their lived experiences (Bisschoff, 2009). In most cases, gender positioning is used to further inform the productions of women filmmakers, most often opting to develop female themes anchored on their experiences and ultimately to position the female characters at the core of the narratives.

2.5.1: Personal Expression and Representation of the Self

Whereas Bisschoff, (2009) argues that the African cinema produced by men and women can make commercial sense, a thematic exploration of the African women filmmakers in both west and south Africa shows clearly that the main prerogatives are not commercial consideration or entertainment, but a serious commitment to personal expression. This is buttressed by the desire for the articulation of feminine identity coupled with the desire to raise awareness or offer an alternative view while also critiquing the oppressive social structures. Bisschoff (2009) further opines that these African women filmmakers are drawn to film by the aspiration to transmit knowledge to other women, contribute to the positive development of African women and highlight issues that affect the African community. In Kenya, this can be attested to by Ojiambo (2019) who points out that female filmmakers in Kenya aim at overcoming present realities to realise a more desirable nation. They are also motivated by the longing to break the social challenges facing women. This is demonstrated by the works of Kenyan filmmakers such as Anne Mungai in her film *Saikati* (1992) in which she depicts the plight of young girls who are forced to discontinue their education because of early marriage, more often to men old enough to be their fathers or grandfathers. The filmmakers' desires are thus complemented by the need

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[12] This is a quote by Riesco in the online article available here, https://www.buala.org/en/afroscreen/the-woman-in-contemporary-african-cinema-protagonism-and-representation, par.6.

to express their identities and to ostensibly correct the negative notion held against African women perpetuated by western filmic representation of Africa (Armes, 2006). This gendered representation of the self is critical in this study as it highlights the instinctual ability of Kenyan filmmakers to tell their stories through internal motivations.

However, the challenge for African filmmakers has been to produce films that sustain the interests of their audiences. The tension here is the persistence in the post-independence period of Western dominance in film over African screens. For example, in Cameroon, foreign films appealed to Cameroonians perhaps to provide a different form of entertainment to distract the people momentarily from the country's pressing social and economic problems (Armes, 2006). I will be much interested to see a similar or dissimilar scenario in the Kenyan film industry.

2.5.2: Representation of Indigenous Experiences

As advanced by Okioma and Mugubi (2015), post-independence African films, just like African literature, struggle to represent indigenous experiences. They often illustrate the aspects of contemporary urbanised Kenyan society. Both *Battle of the Sacred Tree* and *Saikati* are seen to be working against the depictions of women as mostly ineffectual figures occupying a position on the margins of humanity (Okioma and Mugubi, 2015).

While according to Levitin, Plessis, and Raoul, (2003), African cinema belongs to a social realist narrative tradition that tends to thematise contemporary issues and consequently joins in the contestation of and struggles for identity within the postcolonial paradigm, it would be interesting to find out if the same is true today. Social realist films reflect the various tensions. This is where African feminism comes to the service of this study. According to Nnaemeka (2004), African feminism builds its identity through both resistance and negotiation. The areas of differences and resistance revolve around motherhood, feminism, language, sexuality, priorities, gender separation, and universalism while the question of involvement of men within feminism is a negotiated one.

2.6: Domesticating Afro-feminism

Domesticating the African brand of feminism requires breaking the barriers that truncate the voice of women on the continent. In Kenya, the film industry offers an important arena where feminism can be explored as espoused by female film practitioners. The exploration of women's participation and the choice of the themes they advocate reflect the role of feminism in contemporary Kenyan society. Thus, it is one arena where feminist discourse is still being

undertaken. In Kenya, as in the rest of Africa, there have been sentiments that feminism is foreign although it has not stopped women from carrying on with the work of feminism (Kamau, 2014). Sometimes, their point of view is seen as being divorced from the local [Kenyan] reality. This emanates from the fact that, contextually, issues that affect women in each place and time are different. That underlines the need for studying works by women filmmakers in Kenya as being rooted in a brand of feminism that is explicitly domesticated in the country. Therefore, this study sets forth to elucidate the presence of women in film and the roles they play in propping up the film industry through the lenses of feminism with an African touch.

Of course, film in Kenya is an artefact of cultural production introduced at the height of colonialism; not for Kenyans' sake but as a tool of entrenching the colonial enterprise. Film was introduced to produce educational materials by British colonial officials. However, the postcolonial engagement in film has seen a rise of an active industry that is producing local cinematic materials that often deal with the turmoil of the post-independence era. Despite being a growing industry, the Kenyan film industry occupies a narrow space in cinema scholarship. The African film scene in the rest of Africa, except for Nigeria and Ghana, remains an under-theorised area in African film (Levitin, Plessis & Raoul, 2003). This study is therefore important in the theorisation of the presence and contribution of women in the African film industry work through the prism of African feminism and especially postcolonial African feminism which is the basis of my study.

The postcolonial feminist theory will guide this study in introspecting the tension that the colonial legacy created, and which continues to be recreated in the post-colony as the Cameroonian social critic, Achille Mbembe (2001), terms it. This persistent tension; between tradition and modernity; patriarchy and women's emancipation and rural versus urban survives and feeds at both symbolic and thematic levels in the Kenyan film industry and literature. The Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o has touched on these issues in the representation of his characters in his novels (Okioma and Mugubi, 2015). The characters are located between the positions of Christianity or modernity and traditional worldview. For example, these themes become essential in films by Kenyan directors such as Wanjiru Kinyanjui's *Battle of the Sacred Tree* (1994) and *Saikati (*1992) by Anne Mungai where themes similarly revolve around women, who find solace in traditional values and practices while, a contradiction, engaging in modernity (Okioma and Mugubi, 2015).

2.7: The Voice of Women in Postcolonial Cinema

African cinema emerged in the wake of independence, starting as a reconstruction of the historical identities and cultures that had been subjugated under the yoke of colonialism. The cinema medium's didactic possibility and opportunity appealed to many writers who were frustrated by the prevalence of illiteracy in their countries. Consequently, the early films were inflected with a literary sensibility that was heavily influenced by oral traditions. In Africa, oral tradition is a method in which history, stories, folk tales, and religious beliefs are passed on from generation to generation by being spoken, as opposed to writing. During the early days of filmmaking, art often served to define the specificity of the national cultures while also serving as an indictment of corruption, inequality, and social justice (Armes, 2006). In most of these films, women were represented as archetypes that symbolised heroines or victims and were largely confined in traditional spaces, some of which were courtyards or participating in traditional celebrations (Riesco, 2015). Such films include Sao Gamba's 1986 film *Kolormask* and Ingolo wa Keya's 1997 *Baisikol.* However, they were largely deprived of their voices except for the irregular ruptures of traditional music and dance that would stray into an ambiguous cinematography territory which, essentially, cannot be described as film since it was more spontaneous and short-lived. *These Hands* (1992) by Flora M'mbugu-Schelling is an example of a film where the woman's voice is deprived save for a mourning song which is intoned by a circle of women. Their voices are heard as they sing when one of them is hurt or killed − it is not clear which − as they pound rocks for a living (Harrow, 1999) by a rock slide. I would expect that this film, having been made by a woman, would give women more space and voice. This will form an interesting study in the Kenyan film industry if women filmmakers reveal the space given to women by Kenyan filmmakers.

Conversely, early women filmmakers (1970s and 1990s) such as Safi Faye, *Mossane* (1996), Zara Mohamat Yacoub, *Dilemme au Feminin* (1994) as well Fanta Regina Nacro, *Puk Nini* (1996) attempted to present a realistic representation of women in their cinematic production (Ellerson, 2002). In Kenya, Anne Mungai stands out in her portrayal of women as progressive in her film *Saikati* (1992). Saikati, the titular character breaks norms thereby proving that one does not have to live by society's expectations.

Whereas it would be excessive to numerate the recent efforts undertaken to broaden and enrich the presentation and images of the contemporary African film representation, nevertheless, some examples suffice. In Kenya, the film by Judy Kibinge, *Something Necessary* (2013) focuses not just on the wrongs of the 2007/2008 post-election violence experience in Kenya after the disputed election results were announced, but also on the plight of a woman

who lost everything, including her husband, to the violence, but decides to go back to her home to rebuild her family's home. The protagonist does so even though she is afraid of being attacked by her brother-in-law. This film reveals the guilt that perpetrators of election violence live with and serves as a record of a dark moment in the nation of Kenya. Therefore, the woman's voice is necessary for filmmaking to highlight such evils.

From Senegal, the movie, *Madame Brouette* (2003) by Moussa Absa tells the story of Madame Brouette who killed her husband. However, the story is a symbolic critique of the Senegalese society and the roles held by men and women as well as the fate of women in their struggle to survive. *Karmen Gei* (2001) by Joseph Gai Ramaka is a representation of what happens in Africa with the presentation of power and politics and the ever-pervading corruption, present even among strong women protagonists (Oteng, 2012). However, the themes they promote through drama and music arguably represent a significant departure from the position of the African woman today because the films represent the identification of women with a voice as a re-emergence of the idealisation of the feminine observed in the earlier films albeit with current urban themes such as women murdering as in the case of *Madame Brouette* and *Karmen Gei* living a lawless life of smuggling and using men as playthings.

In their struggles to avail an authentic voice to women constantly being subjugated by their male peers, women writers and directors from the 1970s onwards made significant strides in employing the autobiographical film method, which allowed them the latitude of choosing what they want to express and how to do it. In this regard, Riesco (2015) salutes the efforts of Safi Faye, a Senegalese female director who examines the feminine collective view which represents both the militant and the subjective. Indeed, Faye's style is rooted in the oral traditions of the people she depicts while situating her gaze centrally within the communities whose voice she seeks to enhance. It can be observed that in her productions, she blends fictional elements, documentary, and ethnography while she is presented as both a witness and an agent with a remarkably subjective character. Faye develops an image of a woman as a subject, physically but with the potential of being dynamic (Armes, 2006). Furthermore, there is a necessity to contribute to written works in postcolonial African feminism in the film industry. In an interview conducted by Beti Ellerson with Aminata Ouedraogo, a musician, and filmmaker from Burkina Faso, it was observed that there was a visible absence of women in the film debates at film festivals and film forums such as the African International Film Festival, Carthage Film Festival, Cairo International Film Festival, and Pan African Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou, among others. The debates often suggest the under-representation of African women in film criticism involving written works (Ellerson, 2000).

This is reiterated by Dovey (2012) when she notes that African film scholarship is impoverished when it comes to gender analysis within the film context. Even the few great female directors on the African continent in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s like Sarah Maldoror, a French filmmaker of African descent (Guadaloupe), the Senegalese Safi Faye and Anne Mungai, from Kenya, have received little critical attention from film scholarship from a gender perspective. To this end, if Africans are to write a comprehensive critique of the history of filmmaking in Africa, there is a need to pay critical attention to the conditions that make it difficult for them to be seen and heard. Visibility is a key issue that requires deep introspection hence, the necessity for studies to examine the works of African women in the film industry through lenses that are attentive to the perspectives of African women.

As Harrow (1999) observes, filmmaking in the postcolonial context despite being drawn between tradition and modernity, is also radical in terms of themes presented and the representation of women. He further argues that the films in the early periods (pre-1990) of filmmaking in Africa can be seen to offer an alternative African perspective as they give voice and presence to once silenced or misrepresented African characters. Postcolonial African feminist theory is the vehicle that affords this study the impetus to construct a narrative of the voice of women in the Kenyan film industry and initiate a discourse on their contribution and presence in the industry and society.

2.8: Reviewing Literature on Studies on Women in Kenyan Film Industry

Most studies on women in Kenyan films have tended toward examining their artistic outputs rather than the social conditions that necessitate that artistic and cultural outputs. Those that have attempted such a study have limited themselves to merely examining the place of the women filmmakers as makers of national allegories (Ojiambo, 2019), as Postcolonial artists (Diang'a 2010), or as just but a section of Kenyan filmmakers (Nyaole, 2012). Here below I review some of the writings of these scholars in the way they inform this study.

Ojiambo (2019) examines how the films by women filmmakers in Kenya serve as allegories of the nation. Using Frederic Jameson's notion of National allegory, she reads Anne Mungai's *Saikati I* (1992*)*, Wanjiru Kinyanjui's *Battle of the Sacred Tree* (1995), Wanuri Kahiu's *From a Whisper* (2008), and Judy Kibinge's *Something Necessary* (2013) among other films as a representation of certain moments within the Kenyan psyche and identity. She starts by ably demonstrating that the earlier films by women filmmakers like Anne Mungai were about a return to a glorious past that has been undermined by contemporary social upheavals. She further demonstrates that the more recent films by filmmakers like Judy Kibinge and

Wanuri Kahiu are more interested in how the private lives of women characters are intertwined with national socio-political concerns. She concludes by reflecting on how the myriad voices that women characters in the films by Kenyan women filmmakers, become voices of the nation allegorically.

Going through her study reveals several gaps that this study sought to fill. First, she analyses the works of these Kenyan women without laying a background of the social conditions that these women work under. These conditions, of being and place, determine their creative and cultural productions. Secondly, she does not also lay bare the foundation of their funding. Funding is the engine of filmmaking as it keeps all the other parts moving. Whether women filmmakers birth stories that are allegorical to the nation or not is largely determined by how the very nation supports or truncates their filmmaking practice. This is a basic gaping hole that Ojiambo (2019) does not fill and which this study hopes to initiate the debate to fill.

Another scholar who has written quite extensively on film in Kenya is Rachael Diang'a. Although not specific to Kenyan women filmmakers, Dianga's (2013) thesis analyses Kenyan message films including Anne Mungai's *Saikati* (1992), Njoki Mbuthia and Mona Ombogo's *Unseen, Unsung, Unforgotten* (2008). Diang'a (2013) sets forth to interrogate how these films initiate and transmit messages to the audience. She concludes that indeed the films by Kenyan filmmakers are loaded with messages that are contemporary and contemporaneous to the films. Her conclusions are in tandem with those by Ojiambo (2019) in that they look at the Kenyan filmmakers as the *griots* of their times. This study has gone further to examine how these women work within these contemporary situations, enjoying the creative freedoms and support systems but also suffering from the contemporary challenges to come up with these cultural productions. Diang'a in two other articles (Diang'a 2016)[13] and (Diang'a 2017)[14] emphasises the centrality of the reinforced message in Kenyan films. In the article on themes in Kenyan Cinema, she argues that Kenyan films are historically grounded and varied just like the history of the country is varied and not homogenous. In the other article on message films in Africa, she makes a broad sweep on films in postcolonial Africa and concludes that issue-based storytelling which was present in pre-colonial Africa was highly aided by the culture of the moving image. A survey of Diang'a's writings reveals a passionate interest in the message that the Kenyan film conveys. This study supports her writings by looking at the conditions upon which the conveyors of these messages ply their trade. It further examines the specific

[13] Diang'a, R. (2016). Message Films in Africa: A Look into the Past. *Cogent Arts & Humanities 3(1)*
[14] Diang'a, R. (2017). Themes in Kenya Cinema: Seasons and Reasons. *Cogent Arts & Humanities 4(1)*

advantages they enjoy and the disadvantages they suffer as women filmmakers in an African country.

Some other scholars also address the situation of film in Kenya. Kimani (2016) has extensively written about the production and meaning of sound in Kenyan films and curiously includes Wanuri Kahiu's film *From a Whisper* (2008). He concludes that the narrative dispositions of non-verbal elements of sound design in Kenyan drama films are essential in telling the stories through plotting, thematic rendition, location, mood, and characterisation.[15] Another scholar Azangalala (2014) analyses the cinematographic elements of Kenyan films and concludes that the avant-garde Kenyan experimental films contribute to new ways of looking at cinematographic technics of filming.[16] Yet another scholar Mutunga (2014) interrogates the dramatic aesthetic of the Kenyan film and concludes that indeed the Kenyan film is rich in storytelling as it draws from its oral repertoire as well as the cinematic modes.[17]

An appraisal of all the above studies points to the fact that literature on Kenyan films has been growing especially in the country over the last decade. This then invites us to examine the literature on Kenyan film particularly addressing itself as the place and role of women filmmakers in Kenya that is yonder the continent. Apart from those already examined, Ojiambo (2019) and Diang'a (2013), there is Mukora (2002) who had earlier examined the feministic perspective of Ann Mungai's *Saikati* (1992) as well and Wanjiru Kinyanjui's *Battle of the Sacred Tree* (1995). She concludes that Kenyan women filmmakers use film as an agent of illuminating the ever-shifting nature of national and cultural identities and belongingness and that questions of identity and representation in Kenyan films must be 'situational, circumstantial, and dependent on personal choice.[18]

Apart from these studies, there is almost a global silence on the study of the role and contribution of Kenyan women filmmakers with only a sprinkle and token of mentions in two world volumes on women studies in film. The two notable ones are the 2015 *Women Screenwriters: An International Guide* edited by Jill Nelmes and Jule Selbo in which Jeremy Wagner writes of the milestones that some Kenyan women filmmakers have achieved in screenwriting.[19] The review is so thin that it captures less than 1% of the output of Kenyan

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[15] Kimani, T, G. (2016) Narrative Dispositions of Non-Verbal Elements of Sound Design in Selected Kenyan Drama Films. Unpublished M.A Thesis of Kenyatta University

[16] Azangalala, B. (2014) Cinematographic Techniques in the Kenyan Experimental Film. Saarbrucken: Lambert Publishing

[17] Mutunga, S. (2014). Aesthetics of Kenyan Drama Films. Saarbrucken: Lambert Publishing

[18] Mukora, B. (1999) *Disrupting binary divisions: representation of identity in Saikati and Battle of the sacred tree*. McGill University

[19] Wagner, J (2015). *Kenya*. In Jill Nelmes, Jule Selbo (eds.*)* Women Screenwriters: An International Guide. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

women filmmakers and their role and contribution to film. It omits the very key contributions of the majority of contemporary Kenyan women filmmakers. The other edited volume is *Women Filmmakers: Refocusing*, edited by Jacqueline Levitin, Judith Plessis, and Valerie Raoul and published in 2003. Here again, there is one article by Mukora (2003) who again analyses the politics of identity in two Kenyan films.[20] There is also an appreciable interrogation of Kenyan filmmakers in Betti Ellerson's seminal monograph on *Sisters of the Screen* where she pays glowing homage to the works of two Kenyan filmmakers; Anne Mungai and Wanjiru Kinyanjui among other African filmmakers. This book was published in 2000 and sought to understand the role and situation of women filmmakers on the African continent and due to this broad sweep, it could not attend sufficiently to the question of Kenyan women filmmakers. Furthermore, since its publication, a lot has happened in the Kenyan film scene that warrants a fresh revisualisation of the place of women particularly post 2010 when a flurry of film-related activities has been witnessed in the Kenyan film industry. Then, it is safe to assert that the contribution and space of Kenyan women filmmakers have been under-theorised and occupy a reductive space in global film scholarship debates. The present study aims at expanding this space of scholarship by including a scholarly debate on the recentering of Kenyan filmmakers in it.

2.9: Conclusion

This chapter started by reviewing available literature on the different forms and journeys that the feminist movement has travelled within the African context. It acknowledged that while feminism is not originally an African idea, it has been used to serve African interests. For example, the rejection of the Western brand of feminism in preference to what Nnaemeka (2003) refers to as negotiation has helped advance the agenda of women of Africa. Additionally, it recognised the key concepts of African feminism which include the recognition of African women's power to order themselves both socially and economically through empowering grassroots movements. The chapter has gone further to express its preference for Postcolonial African feminist film theory and explored its advantages in constructing the thematic circumstances inherent in African women's film productions as cultural artefacts that showcase their identity, as well as reinforce their pride of place within the social milieu. In between, it has extolled the value of African Feminism that embraces the voices of various

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[20] Mukora, B. (2003). Beyond Tradition and Modernity:Representations of Identity in Two Kenyan Films. In Jacqueline Levitin, Judith Plessis, and Valerie Raoul (eds). Women Filmmakers: Refocusing. Vancouver & Toronto: UBC Press

African women who speak about their personal experiences in patriarchal societies, hence shaping their own ideological home for African feminism. It has further demonstrated the importance of employing African feminist perspectives of postcolonial feminism, concerning the film industry in Kenya. It has done this by first acknowledging that an interrogation of the presence of women in the film industry in Kenya must anchor itself on the triple heritages of these women which are, African, women, and storytellers in cultural productions. Since film plays an essential role as a means of education, information and awareness, there is a need to adopt and consider the development of a relevant and complementary model that will enhance the efforts of women and development from a gender perspective in Africa and more so in Kenya about the film industry (Armes, 2006). This will move the discourse on African women beyond the notion of victimhood within the colonial process to recognise them as participants in the different phases/faces of the post colony, and not simply as a recipient (Mekgwe, 2006).

An important aspect of this chapter has been to take the advice of Shohat and Stam (1994) seriously when they say that the postcolonial theory must be expanded further to be situated politically, geographically, and institutionally. Similarly, this chapter has sought to expand the postcolonial feminism theory to include the African perspective as well as the cinematic notions that Shohat and Stam explore in their various writings. This is because filmmaking in the African postcolonial period has been dominated by men with very few women emerging particularly in the realm of feature-length fiction filmmaking until recently (Ellerson 2016). A shift appears to have occurred in the past decades which has seen many new dynamic African and African diaspora women filmmakers appear on the film scene (Ukadike, 2002). In this way, specific issues can be addressed by women in the film industry in Kenya.

The chapter has further reviewed scholarship in Kenyan film studies and narrowed it down to those that attempt to address the place and the social role of women filmmakers and the films they make. It has been concluded that little research has been conducted on Kenyan women filmmakers and therefore this study is a timely intervention. The next chapter discusses the methodology that guided the research.

Chapter Three

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Until the Lion tells his side of the story, the
tale of the hunt will always glorify the Hunter
(Zimbabwean Proverb)

3.1: Introduction

This chapter outlines the methods used in this study. It discusses the reasons why qualitative research design was preferred and describes how it was deployed in this study. It further explains the data sampling, collection, and analysis techniques that were employed in the study. Lastly, it outlines the ethical considerations put in place to ensure the validity and integrity of the data collected.

3.2: Research Design

In this study, I adopted a qualitative research design in which interview was the key data collection method. I employed face-to-face interviews and secondary data in the form of policy reports on women filmmakers who are well acquainted with the industry's development. Throughout the study, I inferred the specific responses from the interviews to make generalised statements on the trends and patterns of the presence of women in the Kenyan film industry. I interviewed a select sample of women filmmakers in Kenya at various stages of their careers, all of whom have experienced a certain level of success. While they speak about their own experiences, I identified themes and patterns that enabled me to draw some general conclusions about women's position in the film industry. These patterns and themes are supported by secondary sources such as policy and industry reports. Therefore, this is a qualitative inferential study in the sense that Hancock and Algazzine (2006) define the term inferential study (see p.5).[21]

I obtained data through qualitative methods of collection and used it to arrive at explanations of the status of women in wider film culture and the challenges that beset them in the Kenyan film industry. The qualitative methods of data were found to be more appropriate for this study since they involve collecting data from the natural settings of the respondents,

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[21]Hancock, D. and Allgozine, B. (2006). *Doing Case Study Research: A Practical Guide for Beginning Researchers.* New York & London: Teachers College Press.

participant interviews, as well as using multiple sources of data collection.[22] The overall import of the study was to understand the Kenyan film industry from the perspective of its women in an emic style of inquiry − a more direct approach in which the respondents give information themselves. Through the eyes of the Kenyan women, I interrogated the state of the industry as far as training, collaborations, funding, and the general film culture are concerned. I also investigated the challenges that beset these women and how they can be overcome. That is why I devoted a considerable amount of time to women filmmakers in Kenya that I had personally sampled and interviewed for this inquiry. I analysed their responses to the interviews with theoretical proclamations on women in creative worlds in Africa through the Afro-feminism paradigms as well as the rest of the world. I recursively interacted with the information collected through the interviews throughout the investigation process. Every time I needed to explain a concept in the film industry and how it affects women filmmakers, I went back to the interviews and searched what the interviewees had to say about that concept since I had already set the agenda through the semi-structured interview questions. I employed a variant of feminism in this study as I was interested in exploring the stand of women in an industry that circulates visions and images of these women from marginalised spaces. I opted to deploy feminism in the manner Saadawi understood it as a perspective that is embedded in the culture and struggle of all women all over the world (TRTWorld, 2021).[23]

I employed postcolonial feminist theory to conceptualise the research problem under investigation. Postcolonial feminist theory applies to this study since it seeks to dismantle the hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal dividends that coalesce around the colonial enterprise and thus work against the advancement of women around the world. In dismantling the dual disadvantages of patriarchal and colonial hegemonies, this theory provides a platform to interrogate the visibility of these women and celebrate their presence that may have been truncated by patriarchy and colonialism.

Many women filmmakers in Africa work on the periphery of mainstream state-funded filmmaking, which is also a consequence of the lack of established national cinemas in most African countries. Postcolonial inquiry argues that nations emerging from colonialism tend to embrace neo-colonial tendencies rooted in their state's leadership where a specific country's

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[22] Creswell, J. & Creswell, D. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th ed. London: Sage Publications

[23] See TRTWorld (2021, March 21st). *The extraordinary life of Nawal el Saadawi, renowned Egyptian feminist*. Retrieved from https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/the-extraordinary-life-of-nawal-el-saadawi-renowned-egyptian-feminist-45217

administration is like that of the respective colonial master. Postcolonial scholars such as Lizelle Bisschoff (2009) have postulated that postcolonial feminism is insightful in contextualising the contribution of women in postcolonial nation-building. Nation-building has been fraught with a myriad of challenges in many developing countries, particularly those in Africa. This is a qualitative study on the presence of women in the Kenyan film industry which essentially is a postcolonial state.

3.3: Research Sites

The research is situated in key areas. Conceptually, it is situated in postcolonial African feminism; while geographically, it is situated in Nairobi, where all the interviews took place and where these filmmakers are based. Nairobi is not just the capital city of Kenya, it is also the heartbeat of the film industry. all the interviews were carried out in Nairobi. As a discipline, this study is situated in film studies.

3.3.1: Conceptual sites

The film industry in Kenya, just like most film industries in post colonies, is evidenced by colonial legacies which challenge women participants who not only deal with women's issues but also with other postcolonial challenges for instance; civil wars, famine, diseases, HIV/AIDS, drugs, and politically instigated violence. Therefore, in this study, I chose Kenya as a relevant case study to examine the applicability of the feminist theory in the country's film industry. This is because women filmmakers are visible in Kenya and have received critical acclaim. On a personal level, being an African, and a Kenyan gives me an edge in conducting this research owing also to my wealth of experience as a teacher in various girls' high schools, an editor, and a human resources officer in charge of training and development, a gender officer, and a member of The Forum for African Women Educationalists, Kenya Chapter (FAWEK). FAWE is a pan-African Non-government organisation that has chapters in 34 countries. FAWE empowers girls and women through gender-responsive education. I have also previously researched women's participation in the book publishing industry in Kenya and found out that despite being competent, they did not occupy the higher echelons of decision-making (Mango, 2015). In all these positions, I became aware of the issues affecting girls and women in Kenya and that women were underprivileged, in terms of relatively low access to education, as well as low attendance and retention rates in school compared to boys and men.

Having attained her independence in 1963, Kenya continues to grapple with postcolonial effects which are both discriminative and impoverishing. Therefore, my focus was

on postcolonial feminism which often embraces non-western feminism and is characterised by the negotiation of political demands such as nationalism, eco-feminism, social feminism, and the everyday social challenge of patriarchy often supported by institutional and legal discrimination which are characterised by domestic violence and sexual abuse (Tomaselli, 2009).

3.3.2: Geographical Sites

The research was carried out in Nairobi city, which is the capital city and economic hub of Kenya. Nairobi is logistically convenient for purposes of obtaining primary data and meeting up with industry practitioners who can promptly offer in-depth interviews. The study respondents are Nairobi-based since it is primarily where the film industry is in terms of production and marketing companies, and this made it an ideal site for conducting this research. It is here that professional acting training centres, schools, and colleges that offer training in film studies are found. Nairobi is also hosting various film festivals like *Kalasha* and *Udada* and hosts the Hot Sun Foundation, an organisation dedicated to the discovery and cultivation of young talent in Kibera, one of the slums in Nairobi, which lack access to education and professional acting training institutions (UNDP, n.d).

The selection of the filmmakers was purposive since they needed to meet a basic criterion as follows. They ought to have been visible in the industry through their film-related activities as producers, actresses, directors, or marketers. Secondly, their activities ought to have generated interest in the film industry and attracted either local or global recognition. I met the targeted respondents after making prior arrangements on the specific dates of the interviews. This primary data collection was done from January to March 2018. The language of communication was English and Kiswahili, both being the official languages spoken in Kenya, and which the respondents and myself knew well. Therefore, where the respondents spoke in Kiswahili, I provided the English translation.

3.4: Data Collection

I obtained data from two main sources, namely, primary, and secondary sources.

3.4.1: Primary Data

I collected primary data using in-depth interviews that were administered through a semi-structured format. It allowed me to veer into other areas the respondent seemed more interested in if it gave more information that I regarded relevant to the study. For example, one of the key

questions I needed a response from the respondents was whether feminism was a key concept in their presence in the industry. However, the responses of the interviewees always allowed me to tactfully probe further, especially those who were openly against feminism as they felt that it was a radical concept that was 'anti-men'. The questions were aligned with the objectives and were specially designed to elicit opinions, ideas, and views from the interviewees. Essentially, I had a set of questions that I asked every respondent as these were in keeping with the aims of the study. However, I also allowed space for other topics that had not been originally planned, but which were later considered relevant to the study. See Appendix 1 for the interview guide tool.

3.4.2: The Anatomy of the Semi-structured Interview Schedule

By being open-ended and semi-structured, the interview schedule helped me address the key areas of the research while still having the leeway to ask the interviewees to give me any new information that would be useful in the study. Additionally, it helped me read their body demeanour while responding and therefore read in between the suprasegmental like a change of tone, rise in pitch or tempo, among others. These changes helped me establish the key points of argument and how passionate they were to the Kenyan women filmmakers. Body language and tone are very important parts of data collection when using the interview as an instrument.

The interview schedule generally started by way of introduction − I introduced myself to the interviewee and then asked them to do the same − before proceeding with the interview questions which I had organised according to themes. I then asked them about their background in filmmaking but allowed them to veer off to any other area of filmmaking. I followed this with a question on the major impediments in the film industry, dwelling a little more on patriarchy. The responses to this question formed the kernel of discussion in Chapter Six of this study. Next was a series of questions regarding the Kenyan film culture and how it admitted women filmmakers or how women filmmakers entered it. These questions included the policy formulations in film that aided women filmmakers, the role of the Kenyan Film Commission, the role of women in leadership, and how women prop up fellow women in the Kenyan film industry. These series of questions were important in the discussions that are captured in Chapters Four and Five of this study. Another series of questions were concerned with feminisms in general and Afro feminism. I sought to understand how Kenyan women filmmakers perceived the idea of sisterhood in film as expounded by Ellerson in her various writings on women in film in Africa and the diaspora, as well as their take on the grounds of the feminist movement with an African perspective. The responses were part of the discussion

in Chapter Two which is on the perspectives of women filmmakers in the film industry. Generally, the semi-structured interview questions helped me structure the discussions to meet the objectives that I had proposed at the beginning of the study.

3.4.3: Secondary Data

I collected secondary data for this study to provide an in-depth understanding of the research problem. The collected data formed two intertwined components of data: academic, particularly on theory, including articles, texts, book chapters, monographs, and other publications and industry-specific information policy documents, research-based reports, archived documents, and film policies. This dual focus was necessary to give the study academic integrity in addition to providing a relevant industry-oriented experience. The academic information focused on postcolonial feminism and its application in Kenya. This was drawn from academic research done previously on the subject under study, particularly from journals, reports, policy documents, newspapers, and books both published and unpublished to address my research problem. The collated industry information was drawn from Kenya's film-related reports which include annual government survey reports, websites, and reported articles in leading newspapers in the country. It is important, at this point, to point out some of the difficulties I went through in accessing this industry information. For example, some of the reports on websites were outdated and therefore were not giving sufficient information. Secondly, one could not easily find recent authoritative information about women in film in Kenya. Thirdly, there were great difficulties in contacting some of the key stakeholders in the industry who could point me out the areas of reports I could use for this study.

Internet-based research, including blogs, online reports, websites of KFC, KFCB, KECOBO, and from offshore, was very key in filling voids created by primary and bibliographical data. I also used this material to determine how the key publicly funded agencies tasked with supporting the film industry in Kenya were responsive to the needs of women filmmakers.

3.5: Target Population and Sampling Method

The population of interest in this study is women filmmakers engaged in Kenya's film production. Categorically, the selected women were practitioners in Kenya's film industry who are well versed in the industry's development. The sample population is, therefore, representative enough to draw generalisations about individual working practices and lived experiences of women in the Kenyan film industry.

3.5.1: Sampling of Key Respondents

The interviewees were selectively sampled to conduct a case study of women engaged in Kenya's film industry. The filmmakers in the case studies were selected because they have certain characteristics that I was interested in exploring such as age, academic background, and environment, and their getting in the industry as well as relative success in the film industry in Kenya. Further scrutiny of these filmmakers' work reveals that, of late, younger women are being involved in filmmaking as opposed to a decade ago. Hence, my study sought to find out the reason behind this trend. Further, examining the issues addressed by these filmmakers in their films there is a shift in that, they focus not only on women issues, Africa, war, famine, and disease but on nego-feminism and tackling taboo subjects on sexuality, HIV/AIDS and technology. In a nutshell, the sampling was purposive.

In addition, I settled on seven (7) of these women filmmakers out of the fifteen (15) that I had identified as possible interviewees. These seven (7) women were independent filmmakers and were from diverse social and economic backgrounds.

The women filmmakers I chose are Jinna Mutune, Matrid Nyagah, Judy Kibinge, Ng'endo Mukii, Dommie Yambo-Odotte, Anne Mungai, and Wanuri Kahiu. Full details on each of them are available in Appendix 2. Although literature (Conti and O'Neal, 2007; Stephens, 2007) suggests that it is better to send formal letters and then to follow up with phone calls to book interviews, I decided to establish contact through emails and Facebook accounts first, then followed by sending out formal letters following the regulations laid down by the University of Glasgow Ethics Committee regarding conducting research. I interviewed them face-to-face since face-to-face interviews are characterised by synchronous communication in time and place (Opdenakker, 2006). In this respect, during the face-to-face interviews, I took advantage of social cues that only such interviews afford. This model is best described by Opdenakker (2006) who observes that social cues, such as voice, intonation, and body language of the interviewee can give the interviewer a lot of extra information that can be added to the verbal answer of the interviewee on a question. (Example interview with Judy Kibinge reveals more through body language, tone of voice, and manner of responding than her words especially when she seems to care less about feminism). Hence, this enabled me to capitalise on the semi-structured questions in my interview schedule to gather richer data from the respondents. Face-to-face interviews enabled me to collect data in a natural setting, provided flexibility in formulating working hypotheses and were useful for uncovering participants' perspectives and facilitating immediate follow-up for clarification (Hughes, 2016). This is significant because qualitative data methods require the respondents to be in his/her natural

habitat, meaning that they are in a place they are comfortable. The researcher blends in and participates in their lives as the interview goes on. That is why meeting Mukii in her studio and Mungai in her office was deemed best. Also, meeting Mutune, Kahiu, Nyagah, and Yambo-Odotte in a café was good since it was leisurely and relaxed. Being a qualitative data collection procedure, I allowed the respondents to choose the interview location. This method of data collection assisted me to gather more precise and reliable data that eased the process of data analysis.

3.6: Reliability and Validity

To ensure the reliability and validity of the research, I used the interview schedule which I developed to probe the practitioners' motivations, challenges, possible barriers, and opinions on how to raise the level of women's participation in the Kenyan film industry at the same time also gather information on how their lived experiences inform postcolonial African feminist theory and vice versa. The research instrument, the semi-structured interview schedule, was premeditated and designed using clear and concise language (see Appendix 1). As noted, before, the respondents were free to bring in new ideas that supported the key issues that were raised in the interview guide. Indeed, some of the respondents even disagreed with some of the questions terming them not so relevant to the pressing issues that affect the women filmmakers in present Kenya. For example, when they were asked whether the lack of competence or ambition were major impediments affecting women filmmakers or not, all seven(7) interviewees disagreed with the statement.

The study ensured the validity of the data by restricting it to the objectives set out. Any data that was found to be inconsistent with the set objectives (outside the parameters of the research objectives) was deemed unnecessary and thus not given prominence.

3.7: Data Analysis and Presentation

The data analysis was aimed at understanding the emergence and participation of women in Kenya's film industry. To this end, the qualitative data was analysed from the aforementioned research instrument. Qualitative instruments of data collection, such as interviews, are considered the best way for ensuring that the experiences of women—and other oppressed social groups—are heard (Wreyford & Cobb, 2018). The qualitative research of fewer Kenyan women filmmakers, precisely seven (7), as mentioned earlier, enabled me to be closely associated with them, and delve more deeply into their lived experiences, hence the "validity of fine-grained, in-depth inquiry in naturalistic setting" (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). This

method was complemented by quotations from interviews. The data was coded by explaining its relevance to the chosen themes that were based on the objectives of the study. These themes are interrelated, that is, the presence of women in the industry in film culture, training, and collaborations as well as the challenges that these women face and how they mitigate them.

A method that was extensively employed in the data analysis was the use of verbatim/direct quotations of the key speeches of the interviewees and how they aligned with the concepts/themes that were under discussion in the various chapters. This was part of the qualitative way of the research by allowing the voice of the Kenyan women filmmakers to resonate through the discussion of the findings.

Secondary data supplemented the information derived to increase the credibility and validity of the information.

The main objective was to record, as extensively as possible, the specialist knowledge of the respondents on the variables which were introduced and were not captured in the objectives or the literature review but were highly insightful. For such reasons, I recorded all the interviews using an audio recorder. This is the best practice for transcription purposes. Transcribing interviews helped in coding the data better and organising illustrative examples of the code pieces into core topics and later emergent themes. In this study, the respondents were not anonymised as it is necessary to highlight and document the journey of the respondents in the Kenyan film industry. Further, the transcribed interviews would aid in reading the text much faster than listening. In addition, the transcriptions ensured a complete and accurate record of the interviews hence, avoiding misinterpretation of data. Additionally, transcriptions provided a source of reference while conducting follow-up interviews.

Before going into the field, I conducted a mock interview with Dr David Archibald, a senior lecturer in Film and Television Studies at the University of Glasgow who is also a film practitioner. The interview focused on his experiences in producing his short film, *Govan Young*, his background, and his journey from journalism to filmmaking. This mock interview served two functions. First, it helped me improve the strength and weight of the semi-structured interview guide in that I restructured it to have only probing and leading questions that could elicit more information from the interviewees. As a result, I did away with superfluous, non-leading, and non-probatory questions. Secondly, it enabled me to gain confidence and build skills in processing responses in a split second which is a hallmark of the use of interviews as a method of data collection (Jensen, 2013).

A thematic content analysis approach was used to analyse transcripts and field notes from these interview responses by comparing the responses through coding of common

underlying patterns, themes, and categories in the data and in line with the research objectives and research questions (Wahyuni, 2012; Given, 2008). These findings were then analysed in line with the specific objectives of the study. The data found in this research is hereby presented in analytic discourse as narrative.

3.8: Integrity and Data Ethical Considerations

Permission to carry out this study was sought from the University of Glasgow through the crafting of a proposal that was endorsed by the University's ethical and research committee. I also obtained a research permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI); the body charged with documenting all the research carried out in Kenya.

Lastly, the data collected through interviews has been used specifically for this research and study purposes. Once the examination process of this study is completed, the field notes and the recordings will be destroyed following the dictates of the research ethics of the University of Glasgow.

The next chapter presents an analysis of information on women in the film industry from a theoretical perspective.

Chapter Four

FILM CULTURE AND SUPPORT FOR KENYAN WOMEN FILMMAKERS

> *Power comes from those who say things. There is a widespread attitude that if one does not express oneself, has nothing to say, then one does not exist; and that the problem is that culturally speaking, Africa does not say things. (Folly Reimann; 2000)*

4.1: Introduction

Film as an industry, and as a cultural artefact, feeds into the locational culture and in turn, creates its own culture. Kenya, like any other locational culture, feeds its film industry with its quotidian practices that eventually coalesce to form a national film culture. This study is also concerned with the national film culture because I seek to understand what kind of national film culture Kenya has created and how it serves the interests of women filmmakers. It is this culture that this chapter now turns to, to assess its components and how they have occasioned the presence or absence of women filmmakers. The chapter seeks to fulfil the requirements of the first objective of this study which is to interrogate the presence of women filmmakers in the Kenyan film industry. Film culture will loosely be understood as those salient definitive (because they define the particular national film culture, in this case, the Kenya National film culture) practices that are idiosyncratic, either by borrowing or by indigeneity, to a specific film industry practice. The chapter will therefore discuss how women are either embraced or erased in the Kenyan film culture through its component elements such as film policies, the culture of cinema-going and/or film viewing, the culture of film funding, film marketing and distribution avenues as well as the culture of regulation and censorship. The discussion in this chapter is ensconced in Obioma Nnaemeka's brand of Postcolonial Africa Feminist theory of nego-feminism which among other tenets advocates for a 'negotiative' approach to women issues on the African continent and its Diasporas. It also draws lessons from Lizelle Bisschoff's treatise (2009).

4.2: Film Culture

The creation of a film industry depends on the vibrancy of the film culture. A feeble film industry is a result of a lack of strong institutions supporting it or working towards ameliorating its productions. Conversely, a strong film industry arises from the support it garners from institutions related to it. Hodson (2002) describes film culture as:

A process measured by the discourses surrounding the films and the business, the craft and the industry that produces them. These discourses shape values, practices, activities and institutions that, in sum, constitute film culture.[24]

In this vein, film culture encompasses not only access to and reception of films and people going to cinema, but also describes the state of the industry and availability of support for it. How people talk, write, and imagine film discourse thus determines how the film culture is developed and sustained. In this regard, the presence of women in the film industry depends on how women negotiate or cut a negotiated space for themselves in this industry and therefore, determines the extent to which they stamp their presence in it. Thus, film culture and the film industry are interrelated hence the chapter discusses the components of the film industry that include film policy, film going/film viewing cultures, film regulation as well as government interventions in film matters. Left out, deliberately, is the discussion on the production of films itself which is extensively discussed in Chapter Five of this study. Rather, the discussion here aims to introspect how film discourses are conceived and circulated in the Kenyan milieu and thus refer to the presence of the film industry and the negotiated space available to women filmmakers.

As envisaged by this study, a healthy/flourishing film culture enhances the success of women filmmakers since they are an integral part of the social culture that enables the film industry. It provides a platform for them to negotiate not just their womanhood but their humanity. A vibrant film culture is a safe space where women thrive in participating in the filmmaking and film consumption processes. Conversely, a film culture which is shunned by women, or which shuns women, inhibits its growth. As noted in Chapter Two, women bring into the film industry the power to organise which is essential since the filmmaking and consumption processes require proper organisation. Secondly, exclusion of women in the film industry may mean an exclusion of more than half of the society hence making it an incomplete industry. Women carry the heaviest burden of societal issues that are narrated within the film industry.

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[24] This is an online article retrievable here https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2002/feature-articles/forum/

4.3: National Culture, Film Culture and the Negotiation of Space by Kenyan Women Filmmakers

The wider national culture can harm the film culture of a country. In this regard, women in film are often placed in a difficult situation, if they come from a dominant national culture that does not fully support the basic human rights of women, particularly freedom of expression, assembly, and association. Kolawole (2004) argues that a culture of silence can place barriers on women in any vocation, including filmmaking. However, when film is made to serve a central role in a nation's economic pursuits as well as nation-building, it is easily integrated into its national culture (Ukadike, 1994, p. 111). Film imagines a nation, a state, or a community, and recreates it. The recreation of a nation is not always antagonistic to the nation-state; it usually supports its culture. This also has positive ramifications for women in film, especially when laws are passed to expressly support their voice, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Kenya has made great strides in terms of mainstreaming women issues in its national psyche and popular culture. Compared to her neighbours in sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya has seen the rise of women who take up leadership and political positions and use them to voice the plight of fellow women. The Kenyan constitution passed in 2010 sought to give women a voice by insisting on not more than two-thirds gender majority in appointive positions in the country. This means that in every organisation whose members are appointed, there must be a two-third gender majority of either gender. This legislation was to cushion women who, it was discovered, were less than a third in many government agencies. Although this wish has not been fully implemented, it expresses the desire of most of the Kenyan populace, who resoundingly voted to pass the 2010 Kenyan constitution through a referendum, to thrust women into the limelight, especially where matters of nationhood are being discussed.

However, this desire seems not to be matched by the actions exhibited by the same populace due to patriarchy. Patriarchy centralises power in men and only bequeaths tokens of power to women at the behest of men. This means it recognises the man as dominant and the woman as the subordinate in all aspects of social life. Mwakalinga (2010) rightly states that a highly patriarchal culture affects the performance of women in the film industry. It is hard for women to make headway in the film industry in an environment where men are responsible for the way things are run in a state since the state regulates the film industry. A culture that does not encourage the empowerment of women in any industry, including film production, places challenges on women filmmakers. Kenyan women filmmakers have decried the meddlesome nature of patriarchy in the Kenyan film industry and how it stunts their growth. For example,

Wanuri Kahiu laments how patriarchal stereotypes sometimes limit her quest to full potential in the industry when she says:

> I think patriarchal stereotypes is challenging because it doesn't allow anyone to see their full potential. If you [are] told, if society wants you to be one thing and you want to do another, you feel like you are going against the norm. And you feel like you're going against your culture or community, or you feel like you are the other like you're outside… So these patriarchal stereotypes are very limiting … And they are heart-breaking, it's heart-breaking in 2018 and we are still talking about equality for women (Wanuri Kahiu, March 7, 2018).

Judy Kibinge takes a deeper tangent to differentiate between traditional patriarchy and its modern version which is subtle and almost unassuming as seen in Chapter Two of this study. But just like the traditional patriarchy, the modern one also denigrates the efforts of women and restages the hushing of their voices. In the forward for Women in African Cinema Beyond the Body Politic by Lizelle Bisschoff and Stefanie Van de Peer, she notes that she:

> …realised how modern African patriarchy was reducing traditionally strong womenfolk to second-class citizens, maintaining oppressive cultural practices whilst simultaneously stripping away the respect and esteem that past generations had accorded us (Kibinge, 2019).

Patriarchy in everyday life; the here and the now, assigns women a corner of society, the home. The role of "women as homemakers" that is defined by the strong patriarchal culture in Kenya limits the vision of women filmmakers since filmmaking requires the broadening of the horizon and thinking outside the box to tell a story in the best possible way. Jinna Mutune attributes the lack of a vibrant involvement of women filmmakers in the Kenyan film culture to this debilitating patriarchy when she notes that:

> Yeah. Because like I said…just because a woman is a homemaker, she should not apologise for having a vision at all. (Jinna Mutune, February 18, 2018).

Here, Mutune defends the visionary woman who, against all odds, tells the cinematic story and provides it to the audience (and the world) to consume and create discourse around it. She accepts the power of homemaking assigned to women but quickly points out that it should not provide an obstacle to visionary ideas that women possess in the film industry.

It can be noted that the dominant national culture in Kenya which genuflects at the feet of patriarchy creates a culture that inhibits the participation of women in film. It, therefore, behoves women filmmakers to negotiate for their space in the classic example of Nego-

feminism as advanced by Nnaemeka (2004). First, she posits that postcolonial African feminism identifies postcolonial interstice as the locational point where theory on women issues meet practice. She calls this third space engagement in the French meaning of the word since it is a space for contestation and not just engagement. This third space is a contested terrain that is fluid and keeps shifting. Kenyan women filmmakers existing in this liminal space, therefore, find points of interlock to negotiate the patriarchy that may be debilitating. Anne Mungai says:

> I feel sometimes when women tend to tell stories they are more passionate, they are more sensitive to issues (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

That sensitivity and compassionate role that women have distinguishes them in terms of filmmaking. She insists that the women's ability for compassion helps them deliver films through a sensitive perspective, and this sets them apart. This sensitivity and passion is a negotiation that Kenyan women filmmakers embrace to tell African stories that are authentic to the African course. Secondly, she notes that women may not stand a chance against patriarchy if they are divided. Therefore, to negotiate patriarchy, they inspire each other to greater heights within the film industry. In an anecdote on winning awards with her seminal and inaugural film *Saikati* (1992), Mungai noted that:

> When I was getting my awards, I was so happy. I would say I am receiving this not only on my behalf but also on the behalf of the women of Kenya because this is going to inspire them (sic). That if I can get this award, if I can do this, get international recognition, they can also do it (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

Thirdly, Mungai insists that Kenyan women ought to be keen on telling the story rather than looking at the monetary returns of a film. Although debatable, this might be a way of ensuring that women filmmakers get established first before looking for films' commercial success; kind of investing before breaking even.

Fourth, Kibinge, another interviewee for this study, insists that women should be confident in making films and gives little regard to the gender of the person involved in the film. She advises that women should refuse to be drawn into the gender lens of looking at the film industry because it gets them no results. She believes that women who have made it in filmmaking in Kenya are there not because of the advantage or disadvantages of being women but because they are confident and organised enough to run a production. To her, negotiating the film industry is a matter of order and confidence and not government support which she insists has not been forthcoming in Kenya. I agree with Kibinge's thoughts on the power of women to organise and run film productions. However, I disagree with her assertion that

government support is inconsequential in the film industry since a responsive government will create necessary structures for film to thrive while an oppressive and suppressive one will truncate these very structures hence making the industry feeble.

4.4: Film Policy as a Negotiating Agent for Women's Presence in Film

Governments that desire to reap from film as an industry invest in favourable policies that enhance the production and consumption of film. Where policies are clearly spelt out, women tend to thrive since the business environment is straightforward and legitimate. An environment with unclear or lack of policies rarely attracts women due to the shady and underhand dealings that characterise it. Responsive film policies play critical roles in the enhancement of a strong film culture. Policies formed 'up there' by the government institutions really impact 'down here' the lives of common citizens in major ways. Having a defined film policy can facilitate the development of a strong culture that can go on to enhance the production of films by independent filmmakers. In the face of the immense potential that film holds, Moggi and Tessier (2001) posit that the Kenyan government should have a progressive film policy to support the local economy, enhance governance and promote gender equality. Indeed, having the right policies could promote the production and marketing of local films (Barson, 2007).

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) envisions a conducive environment for filmmakers in Kenya. A well-defined Bill of Rights, for example, recognises the socio-economic rights of the Kenyan citizens (chapter four) which creates a framework for filmmakers to express themselves and their ideas without state interference or harassment. This is the kind of environment that women thrive in as they are protected by law. The Bill of Rights gives women impetus to experiment with previously taboo subjects in film storytelling. For example, under the pre-2010 constitution, no Kenyan filmmaker had dared tell a story of same-sex love. However, the current constitutional dispensation, especially the provision for freedom of expression and association in the 2010 revision of the Kenyan Constitution, emboldened Wanuri Kahiu to tell the story of two girls in a lesbian romance. Although she lost the case filed against the film *Rafiki* (2018) by Kenya Film Classification Board, the fact of setting such precedence and taking the legal battle right at the government's doorstep speaks of a rejuvenated Kenyan female filmmaker emboldened by the new constitution. This study will return to the discussion of this film *Rafiki* (2018) later in this chapter.

Secondly, the constitutional framework has rejuvenated intellectual property rights and culture through the formation of a vibrant Kenya Copyright Board (KECOBO). This has opened opportunities for upcoming independent filmmakers by protecting their work through

registration and copyrighting (KECOBO, 2019)[25]. The establishment of KECOBO added impetus to the formation of Collective Management Organisations (CMO) for various units within the entertainment industry to collect royalties on behalf of various segments of entertainment providers. It is in this vein that the Performers Rights Society of Kenya (PRISK) was formed to unionise all performers including film actors. It is worth noting that PRISK as a society, and as constituted presently, has a heavy representation of women on its board, as shown on its website (PRISK, 2019)[26]. Whether this representation has given women filmmakers an advantage is yet to be established through research and documentation, and it is still too early to tell. However, women filmmakers have a platform to negotiate their presence and interests in such societies.

Thirdly, the ease of doing related business through the creation of service centres dubbed Huduma Centres[27] (Doyle, 2018; Ng'aru & Wafula, 2015) has led to many Kenyans establishing businesses that support capacity-building efforts to serve the industry. Since 2010, the industry has witnessed the mushrooming of training institutions, including universities and colleges that offer film and related courses as discussed in Chapter Five of this study.

Diang'a (2017) notes that the constitution of Kenya has called for the devolution of national bodies to grassroots areas in response to the call for devolution of government functions to counties that were created by the promulgation of the 2010 Kenya constitution. That is why several government agencies are scrambling to set up service centres in major towns of the country. KFCB has set up centres dubbed *Sinema Mashinani* which are aimed at "encouraging enterprises in the creative sector by identifying and nurturing talents across the country… and also to facilitate production of films in vernacular, celebrating Kenya's cultural and linguistic diversity."[28] Although this is a noble cause, questions have arisen on whether KFCB is the appropriate government agency to achieve the above objective since it is a regulator of film. In response to these questions, KFC has also sought to set up Film Hubs in different centres in the country with the same objectives as KFCB mentioned above i.e.

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[25]See the Newsletter KECOBO (2019). KECOBO Newsletter. Issue 35. Retrieved from
https://www.copyright.go.ke/issue35/3.html

[26] PRISK (2019). PRISK Members Express Confidence in their B.O.D. Retrieved from
http://www.prisk.or.ke/index.php/en/prisk-media/latest-news/155-prisk-members-express-confidence-in-the-b-o-d

[27] *Huduma* is a Kiswahili word which means service. The Government of Kenya introduced huduma service to transform public service delivery by giving her citizens access to various public services and one-stop-shop citizen services and through integrated technology platforms. Retrieved from
https://www.itweb.co.za/content/LPwQ57lyJ2lMNgkjprisk

[28] see KFCB (n.d). KFCB Sinema Mashinani Concept. Retrieved from https://www.kfcb.co.ke/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/MASHINANI-BRIEF.pdf

'developing Film Hubs across the Country to satisfy the grassroots film production needs.'[29] Unfortunately one does not see the presence of women in all these efforts since, in the documents used to set up these hubs, one does not see any policy that provides a safe space for women filmmakers or even budding filmmakers to engage in the activities of these hubs and centres that are set up.

Regrettably, despite all these constitutional efforts, the Kenyan film industry still suffers. In an article in Quartz Magazine, Dahir (2018) gives a list of what ails the industry as follows:

> "…punitive" regulations. To shoot in Kenya, both local and foreign filmmakers…are expected to incorporate a company, register as an agent with the film department, acquire a license, submit the script for regulatory appraisal, strictly state the number of days and locations of the shoot, and then pay a daily rate to use them. All this… creates a "hostile" environment that deters many from coming.[30]

In such a 'hostile' environment, the voice of women filmmakers is muffled because going through such a lengthy process to legitimately shoot a film takes a lot of bureaucratic work that scares many potentials, and/or budding filmmakers, especially women because of some of the issues outlined earlier in this chapter.

Secondly, while the constitution enshrines all these freedoms, implementation is problematic. In Kenya, just like many other sub-Saharan countries, the executive arm of government breaks the rules and constitutional laws that the legislative arm establishes. The establishment of the regulatory body KFCB has generated more heat than light in discharging its mandate. While the board has drawn attention to the need to protect children from harmful content, its description of censorship for the protection of national and cultural values continues to be debated. The Katiba Institute (2019) reports that by the expansion of its supposed role and its attempts to become Kenya's moral guardians, KFCB has trampled on media freedom and freedom of expression through puritan perspectives. While the constitution creates gains for the film industry, it also creates room for strong oversight institutions which can be used to trample on the very freedoms it enshrines. Perhaps the greatest casualty of this strong-arm institution has been Wanuri Kahiu's film *Rafiki* (2018). Celebrated all over the world as a love

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[29] See KFC (n.d) Kenya Film Commission signs a memorandum of understanding with Bomet County. Retrieved from http://kenyafilmcommission.com/index.php/industry-news/what-s-new
[30] Dahir, L.A. (2018, March 28th). Kenya is readying to set itself up on the global film stage. Retrieved from https://qz.com/africa/1221150/oscars-2018-kenyas-film-industry-could-go-global-take-on-nigeria-south-africa-if-it-jumps-these-hurdles/

story that overcomes cultural barriers, the film was condemned by KFCB as an affront to national cultural values and thus banned from being screened in Kenya, yet the film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for the Queer Palm. In between this fight, the Kenyan film community lost a chance to watch a woman filmmaker's perspective on the issue of same-sex relationships. It is worth noting that Wanuri fufills the biblical verse which says, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his hometown and among his own family" (Matthew 13:57, New Living Translation Bible). Some of the accolades that Wanuri has won on the international film scene are: five awards including Best Director and Best Screen Play at the African Movie Academy Awards in 2009; Best Narrative Feature at the Pan African Film Festival in Los Angeles in 2010; her short film *Pumzi* (2009), premiered at Sundance Film Festival while she won Best Short film at Cannes Independent Film Festival and Silver at Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia in 2010 while Citta di Venezia 2000 Award in Venice, Italy.

Historically, women in Kenya have faced inhibitive cultural and legislative environments. In the Kenyan context, Mohammed (2007) argues that "the lack of a cultural policy framework that recognises the role of the film industry in employment creation for women," has hampered the propensity of the film industry to empower women. In the end, without meaningful policy interventions, women face numerous challenges in the industry as has been discussed above.

As mentioned earlier, a film policy can be routed through affirmative action. Although the constitution in Kenya calls for the implementation of affirmative action, no documented study in the country shows that women have been legally empowered in the film industry. Most women must negotiate these barriers by themselves to get into the film industry, without any substantial support from legislative infrastructure. Therefore, it is not clear that more women in legislative positions or the creative industry, would improve this situation, even if the Gender Bill, mentioned in Chapter 1 under 1.2.1 and Chapter 4 under 4.3, is passed. It may remain wishful thinking as there is currently only one Member of Parliament with a creative background and he is male as revealed by Nyagah in an interview for this study:

> Right now we have KJ[31] [John KJ" Kiarie] … a member of parliament …[who] was
> telling other members of parliament and senators that there is money in film (Matrid
> Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

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[31]John Kiarie aka KJ is a former member of the comedy show Redykyulass in Kenya but now serves as a member of parliament for Dagoretti South. Retrieved from https://nairobinews.nation.co.ke/news/comedian-kj-is-the-next-mp-for-dagoretti-south.

Nowhere in the laws or regulations governing the film industry in Kenya do we have a law mainstreaming the participation of women. No support is specific to women filmmakers that help them 'catch up' with their male counterparts. A film policy document that mainstreams women participation in the vision of the growth of the film industry would be a good starting point to streamline the industry and create a culture that respects diversity in all its different facets. One way for women filmmakers to gain support is by having a deliberate initiative to set up and shape the policy document. Already women have been negotiating for this space by being part of the efforts that gave birth to the draft film policy. The Kenya Draft Film Policy (Government of Kenya, 2015, p5-6) aims to:

> …develop the film sector through legislation and regulation reforms, institutional development, capacity building and promotion of local content, structured partnerships and facilitating county governments to grow their respective film industries, among other aims.

The above discussion proceeded on the assumption that with the marginalisation of women in almost all social spheres through dominant patriarchal cultures, a film policy is necessary to streamline film activities, correct past injustices against the marginalised and correct imbalances like gender disparities. The next section will consider how Kenyan women filmmakers are represented through film regulation. It is a continuation of the discussion in this subsection because it still looks at government agencies charged with regulating film and the kind of film culture they create as they discharge their mandate.

4.5: Film Regulation and Women in the Film Industry

Women's bodies, sexuality and total existence are often regulated, supervised, and controlled the world over against basic human rights and freedoms. These unnecessary and undue regulations often find themselves in their representation in almost every media. Sometimes governments create a culture in which women are regulated through draconian legislations that often denigrate women and how they can be represented. Some of these laws find themselves in constitutions of postcolonial states as hangovers from the colonial legal frameworks. A classic example of such a law is the CAP 222 of the laws of Kenya and the Statutes Laws (Miscellaneous Amendment Act) of 1999 that regulates and controls the Kenyan film industry. CAP 222 is the Film and Stage Plays Act, whose provisions regulate the production and exhibition of films and associated licensing and liaison services. The Act delineates the responsibilities of the KFCB and its regulatory mandates and activities (*Laws of* Kenya, 2012).

The laws often determine the stories that women can tell through film. These laws are hangovers of the puritan imaginations of imaging the female body. According to Dodge (2007), structures of power, particularly colonialism and its legacies, influence the state of the film industry as it is. Although there has been a drive towards the "liberation of the oppressed, whether this oppression is based on gender, class, race, religion or ethnicity", the war is yet to be won. Even though film has been used to reveal the "hidden" struggles of oppressed groups such as women (Dodge, 2007), this Act that regulates film still makes access to opportunities for women in the film industry untenable in most cases as explained below. Dodge (2007) further argues that film can be used to "question structures of power, particularly colonialism and its legacies." It is also a powerful tool for the liberation of the oppressed. This is in line with the feminist theory which roots for the total liberation of women from oppressive cultures and laws (Mangena, 2013).

Further, film can be used to "rearticulate the nation," which in line with this study, can advance the cause of women in the film industry through gender and class-sensitive legislation, recognising that colonial legacies have had drastic effects on women in the film industry. This agrees with postcolonial feminism theory which postulates that there are enduring socio-economic, cultural, and political effects of colonialism on the non-white world (Chatterjee, 2012). As such, the theory creates a space for African women to voice their ideas in the context of male-dominated economies and the lack of access to resources for women in the industry (Nguma, 2015).

The KFCB has been accused of imposing censorship in Kenya and overstepping its mandate. This explicitly shows that, by censoring certain content, the KFCB's agenda is not about furthering the film or entertainment industry but rather about controlling what stories and images are represented in the media. Among the films that were banned because their content was deemed "contrary to Kenyan cultural values" were the American Box Office movies *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) for extreme scenes of nudity, sex, debauchery, hedonism, and cursing, *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2015) for prolonged and explicit sexual scenes depicting women as sexual slaves (Ombati, 2016) and as already mentioned, *Rafiki* (2018) for allegedly depicting homosexual scenes (The Guardian, 2017). It thus becomes hard for the industry to affirmatively address issues that are thought of as taboo in African culture.

The above-mentioned censorships caused a public uproar that forced KFCB through its CEO, in 2018, to consider changing the CAP 222 of the constitution of Kenya that operationalises it. It came up with a proposed bill which was labelled the Kenya Film, Stage Plays and Publications Bill. However, actors in the film industry viewed this proposed bill as

problematic to the industry since it paradoxically aims "to expand the reach of the Film Classification Board to determine the suitability of other forms of media, including books, gaming, over-the-top services, billboards, entering into the functions of Internet Service Providers and advertising content other than audio-visual, while also increasing the variety of content genres that could be deemed offensive" (Heva Fund, 2017).

In addition, the bill proposed "to complicate the business of making film and content by increasing the number of licenses and costs requirements to produce; introducing new and higher penalties for enforcing these new requirements; appropriating the power to arrest and attempting to insulate the board from review and prosecution" (Heva Fund, 2017). The bill could challenge filmmaking through the introduction of draconian regulation (Adagala and Muyonga, 2016). And thus, the bill was shelved and has not been revisited in any documented manner. Again regrettably, the proposed bill did not consider any support for women filmmakers to thrive. Absurdly, it seeks to continue with the colonial legacy of regulating women's bodies, sexualities and lives through the pretext of 'national culture' and/or 'national values' that are not expressly defined. For example, it seeks to prohibit same-sex expressions of love as well as prescribe the dress code in the name of national culture.

Also, a culture of censorship often seeks to control women's bodies and monitors how they can be seen in the name of culture and protection. The presence of Kenyan women filmmakers in the film industry could be felt in a film culture that respects diversity in all its facets. It would further be felt in an environment that values their productions and is willing to create policies that give advantage to their films as local content as the next subsection discusses.

4.6: Focus on Foreign Content as an Agent of Disempowerment of Kenyan Women Filmmakers

The influence of foreign cultures on the local film industry is viewed by Halle (2010) as telling "tales of foreign cultures and distant peoples" (p. 304), which affects the film culture of a country. The local film culture can be watered down by the influx of films from other countries. A feeling of incompetence, because of 'superior movies' in terms of production investments such as high budgets, studio investments and star names, can affect the development of the local film culture in a country. If an increasing number of people prefer movies from other countries, the growth of the local film industry is hindered, as it is hard to get a substantial

domestic market share. How do global hegemonic film cultures affect Kenyan women at the levels of patriarchy, racism and the long-lasting political, economic and cultural effects?

In Kenya, the absence of proper legislation has led to laxity in the regulation of films and TV programming. Since Kenya's independence in 1963, television stations had to make their own decisions regarding the content televised (Nguma 2015, p. 4). Since the advent of the new constitution in 2010 though, the scenario in the country has seen immense changes.

Indeed, research shows that the invasion of the local film industry by movies from other parts of the world can challenge the growth of film culture as these films are regarded as superior as mentioned earlier. Haynes (2007, p.4) cited in Garritano (2013a), argues that the Ghanaian film industry nearly suffered a fatal blow thanks to the invasion of Nollywood films from Nigeria. In Kenya, local film and TV content is often aired to fill statutory quota obligations for local television stations. This may not necessarily support the development of the local film culture as argued by one of the interviewees:

> …I have the reports, in 2004 there were several TV stations including KTN that aired 100% foreign content… [now after policy changes] the local content is in but we have stayed at the level where *bora ni* [as long as it is] local content it doesn't matter what the message, it doesn't matter how it impacts, how even the industry grows or how the skills grow…. (Dommie Yambo-Odotte, February 20, 2018).

Here, Yambo Odotte is against airing local content for its own sake since it may lead to a culture of malfeasance. Airing local content can enhance a strong film culture and production. However, that content must meet the broadcast and local threshold. This could enable women to tell their stories without foreign dictates. Indeed, her concern is that promoting local content that is feeble in message and production disenfranchises viewers who rate local films lowly while craving foreign films. It is for this reason that Peter Mutie[32] (2012) decried the stagnation of the film industry arguing that the dominance of foreign content in local TV broadcasting and cinema houses was killing the local films. Mutie argued that this trend was "indicative of a people without a sense of national cultural identity." However, he revealed that the local All Free to Air television channels that were airing local content had increased their viewership even though the 40 percent regulation was yet to be realised (CNBC Africa, 2012). However, one notes that at the time of these pronouncements, Peter Mutie was at the helm of the Kenyan Film Commission (the government agency mandated to develop film in Kenya). He was, therefore, better placed to turn the tide in favour of local content.

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[32] Former CEO KFC (2010-2013)

In a 2004 study titled "Cultural Imperialism in Kenya Today: Breaking the Yoke of Colonialism in Africa," Mwaura (2005) explained that a mere 0.8% of hours were allocated to programming African content on Kenyan television positively. Foreign programming filled the other 99.2 %. At that time, the national broadcasting house, Kenya Broadcasting House (KBC), accorded less than 20 hours per week for local content. This shows that African content has historically been low. Although this trend has changed over the years on the small screen (TV), African content on the big screen has remained small and limited, due to the lack of funding (BBC World Service, n.d.). This limited exhibition of African content on the big screen has meant fewer and fewer audiences hence the lack of or the underdevelopment of the cinema-going culture. This inhibits the development of a film culture, which in the end makes it harder for women to make their mark in the film industry and have their films viewed. The latter will be discussed in the next section.

4.7: Cinema-Going Culture

As mentioned in the earlier section, the limited exhibition of African content in cinemas led to the underdevelopment of cinema-going culture. Kenya established several cinema houses mainly concentrated in the capital city Nairobi that created a culture of cinema-going, particularly in the period between 1960 and the 1980s. However, many of these cinema halls were later converted gradually into churches and exhibition halls (Agade, 2020). This conversion dealt the cinema-going culture a body blow as the discourse that accompanied these practices fizzled out almost completely. So bad has been the blow that even the present efforts to revive that culture seem futile as the present Kenyan adults were not initiated into that culture while young. Films are made to be watched by an audience and through this viewership, a discourse is created. Consequently, this discourse becomes a currency embedded in the social lives of the audience creating a ripple effect across ages on the development of film culture. Jinnah Mutune laments the lack of this culture when she notes that:

> There were cinemas in South C. [a middle-class estate in Nairobi city], there were all these cinemas, all these cinemas have been shut down. They need to be brought back to life because we need numbers to sustain the industry. Yeah. So, if Kenya Film Commission is willing to identify 5 cinemas, (sic) the government wanna buy back as government and refurbish them and you know, the cinema culture will pick up (Jinna Mutune, February 18, 2018).

Although KFCB took the initiative to refurbish one of the cinemas that is the Nairobi Cinema, it seems too little too late. The then Chief Executive officer of KFCB, Ezekiel Mutua

had expressed plans to establish grassroots cinema halls as part of the project *Sinema Mashinani* (KFCB, 2019). He cited one of the reasons that make Kenya not do well in the cinema-going culture is the "obsession with new technology while cinema was supposed to be an experience" (Agade, 2020). What Mutua suggested here is that whereas one can watch a film on a phone, tablet, laptop, or TV while sitting on a couch, however special to watch a film on the big screen. His opinion, and which this study agrees with, is that the provision of the grassroots cinema halls will inculcate the culture of cinema-going. However, Mutua fails to point out that in the 1980s and 1990s there existed a cinema-going culture in Kenya dating to the colonial period. This included the mobile cinema that was used to reach the colonial propaganda to the grassroots right in the villages and peri-urban areas.

Kenya Film Corporation, a mobile cinema govermental agency that provided grassroots cinema experiences to Kenyans in the 80s and 90s and thus sustaining the colonial film project. While the colonial film project was meant to hoodwink the colonised into saluting the efforts of the colonial government as Nyutho (2015) points out, the Kenyan Film corporation under the Department of Film Services, the government of Kenya was interested in showing Hollywood and Chinese Kungfu films as forms of entertainment. However, this project was hijacked by the then government that used it to show the government projects and achievements. Before starting the films, the mobile cinemas first screened some government projects that the then President, Daniel Arap Moi had commissioned or attended to as a way of propping up the same government. It had to do so to enjoy government backing and funding (Nyutho, 2015). However, this support was withdrawn upon the exit of the late President Moi from the stage as head of state in 2002. Thus, the Kenyan populace, especially the adult ones have memories of that cinema-going experience through these mobile cinemas. It is therefore not entirely true to suggest, as Ezekiel Mutua of KFCB seems to suggest, that the Kenyan populace does not understand the experience of cinema-going.

Additionally, in 2015 Kenya Breweries Ltd, under the public-private partnership, refurbished the Kenya National Theatre to support projects that positively contribute to the economy of the country (Akaki, 2019). The then Cabinet Secretary of Sports, Culture and Arts noted that such a reconstruction would contribute towards the development of art skills and enable Kenyans to "locally consume and export our entertainment talent." The Cabinet Secretary saw this initiative as "supporting the government in generating revenue through this sector." Although not a cinema hall, it set good precedence upon which cinema halls can be refurbished and restored to serve the purpose they were initially meant to serve. In 2018, the newly refurbished Nairobi Cinema, which was renamed Nairobi Film Centre, was home to the

screening of the main film Sustainable Blue Economy *Going Blue*. Ezekiel Mutua of KFCB hosted the event (Kenya Film Classification Board, 2019). In addition, on March 14, 2019, the chief executive officer of KFC, Timothy Owase, hosted the officials of the Nairobi Film Festival, a brainchild of Sheba Hirst, Mbithi Masya and Melissa Mbugua, to discuss the possibility of forming partnerships between the artists and KFC to revitalise the cinema-going culture in the country (Kenya Film Commission Instagram page, March 14, 2019).[33]

The efforts bode well for foregrounding women in filmmaking because creating a culture of cinema-going empowers and gives women filmmakers a chance to interact with their audiences through films that manifest a female perspective in storytelling. However, these efforts are yet to yield appreciable fruits since the culture of cinema-going is yet to gain traction and therefore it is still early to predict how it will affect the presence of women in the film industry. Secondly, there are no documented reports to show that women have been using these facilities to launch their films and none of the women filmmakers I interviewed for this study mentioned using these facilities for film purposes which include screening, distribution and marketing.

4.8: Film Marketing and Distribution Channels

A strong film culture also advances the ability of women to market their film productions. There are various channels used to distribute movies around the world. One of the current channels that could be appropriated by women in film distribution is the internet (Bakari, 2009), as it has more female users than male (Fortson, Scotti, Chen, Malone & Del Ben, 2007). However, this does not seem to hold in Kenya since as Wainainah (2020) points out, more men use the internet on mobile phones compared to women. The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2020 by Global System Mobile Association (GSMA) shows that only one in every three internet users in Kenya was a woman. GSMA observed that there was a gender gap of 34 percent that year, a drop from 39 percent the previous year. This meant that women were increasingly using the internet as the gap shrank. This created opportunities for women to distribute their films as posited by Tabor (2015) in her study titled, "Digital technologies, social media and emerging, alternative documentary production methodologies." As such, this study is ground breaking, as

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[33] Sheba Hirst is the producer of the famous children's TV show *Tinga Tinga*, the founder of the Sawa Sawa Festival and the award-winning musical, *Mo Faya* (Sakina, 2018). Mbithi Masya's award-winning film *Kati Kati* (2016), produced by Tom Tykwer and One Fine day Films, has been screened in over 40 film festivals globally (Mwangi, 2017). Melissa Mbugua is a managing partner at MNM Consulting Africa, a company that helps artists to brand themselves. She describes herself as an entrepreneur who supports businesses in the creative industry to scale up.

it points to the potential disruption of the traditional film distribution practices that could aid women filmmakers reach a diverse and global audience while bypassing the traditional distribution channels that have always been laborious and out of reach. Lydia Dean Pilcher and Melissa Silverstein, while referring to "The Ms Factor: The Power of Female-Driven Content,"[34] observed that women have tremendous spending power and made up to 85 percent of all consumer-buying decisions (Levine, 2015). In Kenya, women made up to 80% of consumer buying decisions (Mwololo, 2015).

Pilcher[35] and Silverstein in [36]Mitchell's (2015) article titled, "Positive 'women in film' stats in new PGA toolkit" observe further that, "Female moviegoers in the U.S.A today outnumber male moviegoers, women are the majority of mainstream network TV audience, women make upwards of 85% of all consumer spending decisions and by 2018, wives will earn more than husbands in the U.S.A and U.S. women watch more content on all digital platforms than men." In Kenya though, women have less opportunity to watch content online than men because as already pointed out, their internet access is about a third (33.3%) of that of men (Wainainah, 2020).

These statistics, therefore, mean that online viewership may not be directly proportional to the support in terms of paying for viewership since in most cases viewers use contraband software to pirate and access the film/video products. If this meant that women would be interested in films by women filmmakers, it would be one way of increasing visibility for women-directed films, thus diversifying the cinematic landscape. Bakari (2010) urges filmmakers to explore the benefits associated with the internet, which include a large audience reach, among others.

Another important channel is overseas exhibitions and festivals. On the African continent, it is often hard to exhibit movies since "it is more profitable for theatre owners to rent Hollywood films than the independently made African films perceived as too intellectual for popular consumption" (Gebre-Egziabhe, 2005). The idea of African films being intellectual probably stems from the socio-political issues that they tackle rather than the mundane kickboxing that Hollywood and Chinese films tend to show. In Nairobi for example, a study

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[34] This is a toolkit launched by the Women's Impact Network of the Producers' Guild of America (PGA) and Women and Hollywood to raise awareness among decision-makers in the entertainment industry about the profitability of investing in women producers, directors, protagonists and storylines. Retrieved from https://www.producersguild.org/page/WIN_toolkit

[35] Pilcher is an American independent film and television producer with over 35 feature films, and chair of PGA Women's Impact Network. Retrieved from https://tisch.nyu.edu/about/directory/grad-film/1055130539

[36] Silverstein is a writer and speaker with an extensive expertise in the area of women and Hollywood. Retrieved from https://womenandhollywood.com/about/

by Ng'ang'a, (2015) shows that 75 percent of Kenyans in Nairobi City County preferred foreign films while 25 percent preferred local films. This showed that local films were the least popular in the study population.

Independent women filmmakers can take advantage of overseas exhibitions and festivals. This has been successful in some instances as shown by *Rafiki* (2018) which earned a showing in 2018 at the Cannes Festival, France (The Guardian, 2018). On the African continent, and albeit with difficulties, women filmmakers continue to exploit film exhibitions such as the week-long biannual Pan-African Film and Television Festival (FESPACO) which is held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. For example, Bisschoff and Van De Peer (2020) observe that in 2005, only three female directors were included in the competition, Fanta Régina Nacro and Napolline Traoré from Burkinabe and a German-Nigerian director, Branwen Okpako. Unfortunately, between 2007 and 2009 no women from the sub-Sahara presented any films, but female directors from North Africa were represented in the competition by Leïla Kilani from Morocco. Rwandese women were among the filmmakers who exploited the 2017 edition film exhibition where they displayed their films on various subjects (Jason, 2017), and the inaugural Thomas Sankara Prize, was awarded to the Rwandan female director Marie-Clémentine Dusabejambo for her short film *A Place for Myself* (2016). This culture of presentations and attendance at FESPACO, a premier African Film Festival, has been at best lacklustre by Kenyan women Filmmakers due to a lack of support from organisers of film festivals and exhibitions, and their governments.

The National (2019) in an online article, "Gender equality in African film industry called into question," pointed out that though established 50 years ago, by 2019, FESPACO had never awarded its top prize to a female director. Bisschoff and Van De Peer (2020) agreed with this by highlighting the four female-directed films in the competition, with Apolline Traoré presenting her fourth feature film, *Desrances* (2019); Yasmine Chouikh, *Ila Akher Ezaman/Until the End of the Time* (2017), Algeria; Wanuri Kanuri, *Rafiki* (2018), Kenya and Selma Bargach, *Indigo* (2018), Morocco. Despite this, no African female director has won the grand prize at FESPACO (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2019). Women end up winning other smaller prizes at the competitions.

On the other hand, FilmContact.com (2014) revealed that even with over 50 African countries with over 500 FTA TV channels, they still operate with small budgets and hence content delivery is often costly and difficult; travel costs are high, but prices are low, and volumes are very small, resulting in a low return on investment. Therefore, to mitigate this challenge, FilmContact.com reported that, Africa Media Management (AMM) and its sub-

company, Africa XP (a digital content distributor), are addressing content packaging and trading issues in Africa intending to change the business model of content distribution. Africa XP hopes to help content distributors to reduce time and the cost of acquisition by offering bulk discounts in exchange for long-term contracts. Nollywood's model and partnership with Africa XP can be borrowed as a strategy to improve Kenya's film content distribution channels, as so far, no proper distribution channels on the African continent are in place. In support of this view, one interviewee in this study, Nyagah, revealed that she had to "hawk"[37] her first movie, *Twists of Fate* (2009), everywhere she went to try and sell it among friends and in offices.

Not only was there a lack of proper distributional channels, but cinemas were few in Kenya and the few there hardly showed African films (Ng'ang'a, 2015). Due to online piracy, there was a proliferation of pirated foreign movies in the local market. Consumers may access foreign films more cheaply than locally produced ones through vendors that buy or pirate them on internet sites. Sadly, these vendors are recognised by the government through licensing by KFCB and this poses a serious challenge to the marketing of local films (Oyier, 2016).[38]

Available screening channels are cinema halls, Television screening and online through Showmax[39] and VIUSASA[40] platforms as shall be explained shortly. Oriare (2010) believes that it is possible to promote films via multiple TV stations in Kenya; most of which as segmented based on viewer preferences. He further suggests that Kenya's television audience can access diverse media choices that are heavily fragmented based on audience habits and preference patterns. Since some of the TV channels have viewership in surrounding countries and stream online (Njogu, 2016), it is possible to promote Kenyan films to various audience segments locally and internationally.

It appears that the Nollywood commercial model is worth the mention. Nollywood received recognition by UNESCO in 2010 as the second largest film industry in the world after Bollywood. In 2017 and 2018, Nollywood produced over 8000 films (Mauyakufa, and Pradhan, 2018). Nollywood's unique content market and VCD/DVD distribution network are based on Africa's commercial farming model. The FilmContact.com blog explains this process

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[37] Kenyan slang used to denote the act of aggressively selling wares from one place to place – door to door, offices, public squares, streets, public transport vehicles etc. -on small scale basis due to lack of permanent selling points.
[38] Globally, the typical pirate is a 16-24 years old male who lives in an urban area. Women constitute 40% of pirates, which means that women also pose a challenge to fellow women filmmakers by pirating films. Retrieved from https://www.wired.com/images_blogs/threatlevel/files/MPAstudy.pdf
[39] See about Showmax from https://faq.showmax.com/eng/about-us
[40] See about VIUSASA website: https://viusasa.com/about

in the following way: "You grow or create your product and sell it in the market immediately - then reinvest in more product with the proceeds, making some profit in each cycle" (FilmContact.com, 2014). The result of this was that the commercial model practised by Nollywood seemed to address the challenge that African content distributors face in selling content to TV channels across Africa. As a result, a new wave of Nigerian women filmmakers has emerged, who make movies with bigger budgets and better narratives. They also released their films in cinemas rather than on DVDs, which was a major boost to the film industry (Bisschoff and Overbergh, 2012) and screened their films at international film festivals. Such women filmmakers are Kemi Adetiba, *The Wedding Party* (2016) and Mildred Okwo, *The Meeting* (2012) (Rayo, 2018).

Haynes and Okome (1998) point out that Nollywood films are extensively distributed at local and international levels through film festivals and other non-commercial outlets (cited in Giwa, 2014, p.5). This is the central role of international platforms in the distribution of films, including those made by women. However, the Kenyan scene is different since the marketing of films made by women is often a major challenge as pointed out by Yambo-Odotte:

> … You're talking as a business concept, you have to set it up as a business concept for any business to thrive you must have the finances and you must have the access to the market. And the film industry in Kenya has not been seen as that yet. Right now, we are just thinking of filling up the baskets of the TV stations with content. Whether that content can be sold to another TV station other than that paid for it is another thing altogether. So we are looking for access to resources and access to the market… (Dommie Yambo-Odotte, February 20, 2018).

As claimed by Yambo-Odotte in the interview, women often struggle between access to funding to make their films and access to funding to market their films. The lack of access to state funds in promoting films at global festivals impedes the distribution of Kenyan films and more so those produced by women. The lack of marketing of Kenyan films creates non-visibility on the global scene. It then follows that for women filmmakers, funding must come from other sources in the bid to screen their movies globally.

Even though some Kenyan women in the film industry market their work locally and internationally, not all women get this opportunity. One reason for this could be the low number of Kenyan movies produced, and therefore screened or marketed on international platforms. Mutune, in the interview for this study, claimed that while South Africa and America created about 1000, 2000, and more films respectively in a year, Kenya produced less than 50 (Jinna Mutune, February 18, 2018).

Another significant channel for distributing films is through local and international streaming services. Online streaming services like VIUSASA, Showmax and Netflix offer competitive streaming subscription services. VIUSASA is a brand under Content Aggregated Limited (CAL), a Kenyan content aggregation and distribution company. Through VIUSASA, CAL stores, distributes, markets and promotes, and monetises content in all genres on behalf of content partners. CAL enters contracts and agreements with Kenyan local content producers to showcase and earn money from their content.

Showmax also provides content for online viewership in Kenya. Although it prides itself in uniquely providing African content, its statistics show that many of its products are not African but foreign content. These online services are important as they offer a variety of content for Kenyan consumers. For example, with 1,000 Kenya Shillings (approximately £7) one can watch as many movies online as opposed to using the same amount of money to watch one movie at a cinema. While these platforms have increased the film viewership in Kenya, the trickle-down effect on the filmmakers is very low and no research study has been carried out to establish the presence of women on these online platforms as content producers. Furthermore, one cannot easily establish what amount of monetary output women have generated from these online platforms.

Kenya is putting in place mechanisms to expand her legal regime to control the online film service industry. The shelved Draft Film Policy Bill is an example of this as one of its tenets is to censor online content (Heva Fund, 2017). This can strangulate the market accessibility for women-made films. in the name of culture as has been seen by the banning of Wanuri Kahiu's *Rafiki* (2018)[41] The Kenya government expects international online streaming services to obtain licenses to stream locally (KFC, 2018). When Netflix started streaming into Kenya, KFCB had misgivings. This is because Netflix started streaming without express permission from the Kenyan government causing KFC to raise objections. However, KFC seems to be warming up to Netflix. On 13 November 2019, Timothy Owase, CEO of KFC, hosted Ms Frida Karuri, Advisor to the Cabinet Secretary ICT, Ms Joan Chan, Manager Global Licensed Content Netflix, Ms Juliette Vivier, Head Asia and Africa Hiventy and Ms Celestine

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[41] Netflix is an international streaming service that has over 75 million subscribers. KFCB believe that Netflix is a threat to Kenya's national security and to the moral standards of Kenya's children. In dispelling these claims, the then Netflix's spokesperson, Joris Evers, affirmed that Netflix's viewers were empowered to make smart viewing choices by providing details on Netflix, including ratings, episode synopsis and parental controls. Kahiu concurred with this view at a recent interview at Cannes Studio and disclosed that she hoped *Rafiki* would get an over18 rating from KFCB. She believed that the Kenyan audience was mature and discerning enough to be able to deal with that subject matter. She added that, "They're old enough to vote, so we believe they're old enough to watch the film" (Wise, 2018).

Mbindyo, Executive Vice President Africa Hiventy. The meeting focused on how to have Kenyan films on Netflix as a way of exporting local content to a global audience (KFC, 2019).

In Kenya, movies made in Riverwood are often marketed through DVDs for quick distribution and consumption (Kiome, 2010).[42] However, as Kaiyare (2012) notes, this creates room for pirating thereby denying the producers, such as independent women filmmakers, any meaningful returns in the end. Musuwi (2018), in his article, *The Status of the Film Industry in Kenya* observed that Riverwood had over 200 filmmakers. However, Riverwood women filmmakers in Kenya are not visible in extant literature. In 2017, the Riverwood Academy Awards registered only one female director, Voline Ogutu, with her film *Seed*, who won the award of the best director (Mwangi, 2017). In the 2018 edition, on the Nominees' list, there was only one female director, Carol Odongo of the *Sumu La Penzi* TV Series (Film Link Africa, 2018). Thus, it can be concluded that even Riverwood has not provided ample space for the distribution of films by women filmmakers.

KFC and KFCB have limited resources and technical knowledge to carry out the distribution mandate and so do local filmmakers and women filmmakers. For this reason, new and emerging content distributors like Content Aggregate Limited, Owners of the brand Viusasa and Africa XP are stepping in to help producers market their films online. In this way, women filmmakers will have the opportunity to have their films travel locally and internationally. The greater advantage to this form of distribution, as hinted earlier, is that it bypasses the traditional methods of distribution where one had to sell the content on DVDs. Rapid changes in technology have meant that the age of DVDs that Nollywood enjoyed, may soon be obsolete. As of 2019, Nollywood had mostly moved online. Africa XP is therefore convinced that "[technology] must enable distribution worldwide and into new content delivery platforms of all technology, shapes and sizes, has become adaptable to various new commercial models like revenue share and pay per view" (FilmContact.Com, 2014).

It is often hard for women to use the available distribution channels effectively due to the lack of proper policies that offer structural and infrastructural support, and in the local market due to censorship. Those who cannot get access to international distribution channels are left without the opportunity to effectively showcase their work. The low presence of Kenyan films in popular distribution networks such as Netflix coupled with local film preferences for foreign movies also denies filmmakers the opportunity to promote their films

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[42] Riverwood is a colloquial term used to refer to backstreet film making industry in Nairobi, Kenya. Most of these films are shot, edited and sold in premises along Nairobi's river road (street). Even in this backstreet productions, one does not see a heavy presence of women filmmakers.

locally. This limits the competitiveness of Kenyan films against those from stronger industries such as Nollywood.[43]

This section has presented how film distributions and marketing are part of film culture that women can exploit and be visible in the film industry. It is however worth reiterating that Kenya lacks a coherent film distribution that women filmmakers can plug into. Like film viewership, distribution relies on aggressive marketing to ensure that the film reaches the market. A Kenyan female filmmaker thus must do virtually everything ranging from preproduction, production, and postproduction. The absence of an organised film distribution channel means women filmmakers, who, Judy Kibinge extols as being organised and confident, tend to strictly follow the rules of the book, and suffer the most as their films do not find a market that can help recoup the costs. Yet these women still need to negotiate these barriers to make films that are of broadcast quality.

4.9: Negotiating for Space by Women Filmmakers in Kenyan Film Culture

The preceding discussions have revealed a worrying trend in which women filmmakers receive minimal support from structures that create the Kenyan film culture. This is already problematic since it results in what Bisschoff (2009) calls,

> an imbalanced representation of socio-cultural complexities as well as disproportionate representations of individual and collective subjectivities and identities. (p.41).

Independent Kenyan women filmmakers agree with what Nnaemeka calls the negotiated space in the face of these challenges. How have Kenyan filmmakers negotiated for space in the Kenyan Film culture? The responses from the interviews give interesting findings. Kenyan Women filmmakers like Mukii and Nyagah mentioned that they had made efforts to increase the numbers of women in the film industry by either taking them on as interns (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018) or launching a women's festival and conducting workshops for women (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

Increased state funding for the film industry and other cultural initiatives can enhance the development of strong film culture. However, since this has not been forthcoming at the appreciable levels that can ameliorate the visibility of women and in the absence of established policies, some established women filmmakers have created avenues to help fund film activities.

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[43] See the undated report on Audience Consumer Trends Survey commissioned by KFC Retrieved from http://kenyafilmcommission.com/images/Audience-Consumer-Trends-Report.pdf

In this vein, Judy Kibinge, along with other like-minded filmmakers established Docubox; an East African Documentary Film fund that helps those in need of funding for projects that fall within their objectives. While writing about its objectives on its website, it is noted that the Docubox exists:

> to enable talented, driven, focused and accountable East African artists to produce unique films that unearth new realities and cross trans-national boundaries. Through training, development and production grants, screenings for people who love documentary films, we promote East African filmmakers and share their unique stories with the world through creative documentary. [44]

Such efforts by women filmmakers provide avenues for other Kenyan filmmakers to tell their stories through film thus filling voids left by lack of government funding.

Nyagah, one of my respondents, confirmed that she received support from the KFCB when she offered training to street children in Dandora.[45] Despite Dandora being one of the roughest places to live in Nairobi, some short films and documentaries have been made to showcase some positive stories from this slum area by the Nairobi Community Media House such as *Slums Footwear Statement*, *Away From Trash*, and *Changing Lives of Dandora*, among others (Nairobi Community Media House, 2019).

Paradoxically, KFCB was funding projects like Nyagah's in *Dandora*. It begs the question of whether the KFCB should have the dual mandate of funding as well as ethical oversight/control. This constant clash of mandates forced the KFCB and KFC leadership to come together to find a common way of funding film in Kenya. This led to the signing of a memorandum on April 5, 2019, to collaborate and execute their respective yet related mandates to grow the film industry which would in turn create a film funding culture (KFCB, 2019). There have been fruits to this end where KFC made a call for expression for film funds to cushion filmmakers against the effects of Covid 19 as part of the presidential award to artists through the 100 Million Stimulus package for Artists[46] (Muriuki, 2020). Out of the 33 filmmakers awarded, 8 were women. Although this is a small fraction, it attests to the fact that women too can rise to the occasion when given a chance.[47]

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[44] See the mandate of Docubox here, https://www.mydocubox.org/
[45] Dandora is an eastern suburb in Nairobi, which has the largest dumpsite in East Africa. Dandora is the home of extreme unsanitary conditions and is controlled by gangsters, making it one of the roughest places to live.
[46] See the press statement on the 100 Million Stimulus package for artists by the president here http://sportsheritage.go.ke/100-million-for-artist-actors-and-musicians-stimulus-package/.
[47] See http://kenyafilmcommission.com/index.php/industry-news/what-s-new. Here KFC writes of the awardees of its efforts to cushion Kenyans against the effects of Covid 19 through the presidential Covid 19 100Million stimulus package for artists as well as the awardees of its KFC Film Empowerment Program.

Secondly, KFC also called for applications for funding for independent filmmakers in what it dubbed KFC Film Empowerment Project (KFC, 2020). It awarded funding to 45 applicants in production, marketing, and distribution. Of the 13 awarded for production, 7 were projects led by women. This kind of statistics is very welcome as it shows Kenyan women filmmakers can compete favourably in a transparent funding situation. It also shows that women are using available funding opportunities to negotiate their presence in the film funding culture.

Through this kind of transparent funding environment, KFC is creating a film funding culture that is accountable and can give women visibility. Such a culture will support the desires of African women to create a narrative of themselves based on their backgrounds, experiences, and the realities of their lives. As Bisschoff (2009) observes, a vibrant film culture where "Female filmmakers will not only provide alternatives to representations of African women in the Western media and patriarchal African discourse, but they are also developing innovative forms of indigenous feminist aesthetics which offer examples of how women can integrate into modern societies" p. 38. And this is a key tenet of the postcolonial African feminist perspective that this study has based on to discuss the presence of women filmmakers in the discourse and the culture of the Kenyan film industry.

4.10: Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how the components of film culture have supported or erased women filmmakers in the Kenyan film industry. It has established these components as being the national film culture and discourse, funding, film distribution, cinema-going culture, a culture of regulating and censorship as well as film policies. Based on this discourse, it is evident that the mechanisms put in place to ensure government support for independent women filmmakers, such as KFC, cannot offer the requisite support to these women. The structures that help prop up a vibrant and supportive film culture are weak thereby derailing the efforts of independent women filmmakers. A dominant national culture still hanging on patriarchal undertones that undervalues women creates an unconducive environment for women filmmakers. Strong emphasis and favouritism towards foreign content by Kenyan television channels as well as cinema houses put Kenyan women at a disadvantage as their productions are relegated to the periphery. Strong-arm government institutions that regulate the film industry occludes women from telling their stories honestly without the ramifications of government censorship. Foreign funders, who may not understand the local cultural context in which the films were produced, may also dictate the kind of stories told by women filmmakers.

This creates a dilemma for women in a country, which is a melting pot of many cultures and ethnicities, which makes it hard to define the national socio-cultural values.

Regarding the policy framework, the laws aimed at empowering women are not fully implemented, which also challenges access to resources for individual women filmmakers. The distribution of films as well as showcasing them in film festivals is not matched by government funding and other forms of support. This makes it hard for women to market their movies and find international acclaim. In conclusion, the film culture in Kenya works towards the erasure of women in the film industry instead of choreographing their visibility. Nonetheless, as we have seen from the responses in the interviews of the women filmmakers, their confidence, power to be organised as well as sensitivity towards the African perspective of storytelling has worked to help them gain this visibility and create a culture of vibrant and daring filmmaking.

The next chapter explores the training, funding and collaborative efforts that have created an environment in which women filmmakers in the Kenyan film industry have thrived.

Chapter Five

TRAINING, FUNDING AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

> *I make my films alone without government money, and I find it unacceptable to comply with government censors who want to cut my film so as to cover the activities they have committed against their own people.*
> *Safi Faye as quoted in Ukadike (2002)*

5.1: Introduction

Establishing the presence of women filmmakers in the Kenyan film industry means establishing how they enter that space and how they are sustained in it. One can enter an industry space through two routes: training before the job and training on the job. Sustaining oneself in a film industry needs frequent projects that pay appreciably as well as collaborations that offer financial, social, and emotional satisfaction. This chapter uses primary and secondary sources to assess how women filmmakers in Kenya enter the film industry and how they sustain their presence in it. It looks at how training, funding, and collaborative efforts have created an environment in which women filmmakers in the Kenyan film industry have thrived. First, it investigates how training affects women's filmmaking career progression. Secondly, it assesses how funding sources influence the kind of films that women produce. Thirdly, it explores how collaboration with gatekeepers and non-governmental organisations can benefit women's performance in the film industry.

5.2: Training

Breaking into the film industry in Kenya is not easy, and women with good training − and, often, good connections − have a significant advantage. This picture emerges from the findings of the primary data for this research and is consistent with the situation in many African cultural contexts (Nyutho, 2015; Owusu, 2015). However, this assessment is yet to be supported by Kenyan e-government reports on women's career paths (which are silent on this issue) or a body of any academic literature. This may, however, change as the government begins to recognise the role film could play in Kenya's Digital Economy (Manyala, 2016). The available academic literature dealt with (a) the history of filmmaking in Kenya from 1900 - 2015 (b) funding of Kenyan films, or (c) textual and contextual analysis of films in terms of narrative structure, semiotics, mise-en-scene, etc. (Steedman, 2019; McGarrah, 2015; Okioma and Mugubi, 2015; Diang'a, 2005). Thus, Kenyan women's training and career preparation in the film industry is an under-explored territory. This makes this research even more urgent and significant because there is a need to establish how women enter the film industry and how

they are sustained in it. The section starts by examining available spaces of training and then proceeds to discuss the impact of local and western training on the presence of women in the film industry. It will also interrogate government input in film training after which it will explore what compels women filmmakers to remain within the film industry despite the challenges.

5.2.1: Access to Training

Limited access to training is one of the several challenges that African filmmakers face. Other significant challenges include lack of capital, equipment, training programmes, and opportunities as well as production and marketing channels among others (Nyutho, 2015; Riesco, 2015).

Those who anticipate a brighter future for women in filmmaking could point to rising levels of education. In the last ten years, women's enrolment in universities has increased, according to the Kenyan government's *Economic Survey* of 2013 and 2016. In 2013, the growth of women students rose from 80,560 to 105,115 and in 2016 from 147,412 to 184,164 (Ng'ang'a, 2013; 2016). Conversely, in a country of about 52 million people, less than 200,000 women university students are still not an appreciable percentage, although the sharp rate of increase could be viewed as a positive sign. It is hard to reach statistical conclusions on how many women in universities are studying film as well as how many are receiving on-the-job training in the film industry since there is a lack of organised mechanisms to collect such data. There are only six public universities teaching components of film in Kenya that is, Kenyatta University, the University of Nairobi, Maseno University, Moi University, Maasai Mara University and Multimedia University (Janeson, 2018). Additionally, there are currently four private universities also teaching components of film. These are Daystar University, St Paul's University, Kenya College of Accountancy University (KCA-U), and the United States International University in Africa (USIU-A). Besides, two government-funded mid-level colleges that teach film − Kenya Institute of Mass Communication and Kenya Film School do not have any proper records showing the number of female students training or have graduated in film studies.

Kenyatta University offers degrees at certificate, Diploma, Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral levels. A cursory glance at the curriculum reveals that only one unit course in the four-year Bachelor of Arts course addresses women's issues. The course code named CFT 420: Women in Film stands out of the over fifty (50) course unit a student ought to take satisfactorily

to graduate as the only moment the student studies the nexus between women and film.[48] More so, one does not fail to notice that the emphasis is on teaching film as an art rather than technology. None of the courses seemed to emphasise film as a cultural implement that can address societal issues apart from the course CCM 105: Media and Society. These lukewarm concerns on film as an image-forming force may not provide a stable foundation for graduates to interrogate and deploy film production as a perspective-changing engagement especially when it comes to women's issues. The postcolonial project has questioned the innocence of film in the colonialism enterprise. Shohat and Stam (1994) affirm that film is never innocent as a cultural institution that presents a nation to other cultures. This, therefore, reinforces the centrality of the training of filmmakers to understand that both the process and the product of filmmaking are essentially cultural engagements.

Moi University also teaches courses leading to a Bachelor's and a Master of Arts in Film and Television studies. At the face value, one may be tempted to imagine that the course is heavy on the nexus between film and television. However, on reading the titles of course units, one realises that there is a whole spectrum of courses from the other artistic disciplines like drama, theatre, philosophy, Literature, and Music. Only two courses address the nexus between women and film that is, PHL 223 Feminist Philosophy as well as SAS 301: Contemporary Gender Issues[49]. Maseno University, like Kenyatta University, combines Film and Theatre studies. But unlike Kenyatta University, Maseno University offers studies at the Certificate and Diploma levels only.[50] The Multimedia University of Kenya offers film production together with animation and from the catalogue, one notices a heavy bias towards technology in production. Again, one is not able to discern whether the course equips the students with a knowledge of film as a cultural institution that probes issues affecting women and their place in society or not. Maasai Mara University offers a Bachelor of Arts in Literature, Theatre and Film. From the above survey, one notes that public universities in Kenya give feeble regard in terms of teaching film as a cultural production that responds to and engages in issues that affect women. Secondly, it is difficult to ascertain the statistics of women pursuing film who have passed through these institutions.

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[48] See the write up on the courses a student takes for Bachelor of Film and Theatre Arts Retrieved http://creativearts.ku.ac.ke/index.php/component/content/article/100-programmes/undergraduate/279-bachelor-of-film-and-theater-arts

[49] See the online course catalogue for B.A (Film and Television Studies) of Moi University retrieved from https://sass.mu.ac.ke/index.php/k2-categories/undergraduate/ba-film-television#second-year-2.

[50] See the online write up about courses offered at Certificate and Diploma levels Maseno University. Retrieved https://www.maseno.ac.ke/index/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1178%3Acertificate-in-film-and-theatre-studies&catid=127%3Aprogramme-details&Itemid=706

For tertiary mid-level colleges that are government-sponsored and train film, there is only the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication (KIMC) and Kenya Film School (KFS) which was recently established and launched in 2016. While KIMC was established in the 1970s[51] and has trained filmmakers like Anne Mungai who this study interviewed, it also falls short on how exactly it gives an advantage to women filmmakers and makes them thrive within the Kenyan film industry. The Kenya Film School was established to nurture talent for the creative economy; the buzzword that has dominated the Kenyan political discourse on the arts. Indeed, Kenya Film School traces its establishment in the Manifesto of the ruling Jubilee party elected to form government in 2013 and then re-elected after five years in 2017. In its manifesto, the Jubilee party promised to:

> *Promote indigenous Kenyan creative and production talent by establishing a Kenya Film School and increase domestic Kenyan content in our TV channels to 60% half of which should be independently produced.[52]*

Due to its relatively recent establishment, having been in existence only for about five years by 2020, it is too early to tell the impact of the Kenya Film School or that of its graduates on the Kenyan film industry. Secondly, the malady of lack of statistics also afflicts it and thus one may not ascertain the number of female students who pursue film production. Its impact is therefore yet to be established.

A plethora of private educational institutions also offer qualifications in film production. As of 2020, private universities that offer film studies at the degree level include United States International University (USIU), Daystar University, St Paul's University, and KCA University. Diploma courses are offered by Africa Digital Media Institute (ADMI) and East Africa Media Institute, among others. Notably, eight graduates of ADMI in Nairobi were part of the team who made the film *Watu Wote* (2017) nominated in the category of best short live-action film at the 2018 Oscars in Hollywood. The film was directed by Katja Benrath, a German actress and filmmaker, while pursuing her masters at Hamburg Media School, Germany, together with Matrid Nyagah (one of the interviewees for this research). In 2018, the recently established East Africa Multichoice Talent Factory Academy was inaugurated to train students and provide them with skillsets to develop their talent, connect with industry professionals and tell African stories (Rajula, 2018).

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[51] Retrieved https://www.kimc.ac.ke/academics/training-departments
[52] See the quote of the Jubilee Manifesto - "Transforming Kenya": Securing Kenya's prosperity (2013 - 2017) under its unity pillar https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3.sourceafrica.net/documents/119133/Jubilee-Manifesto-2013.pdf
https://www.kenyafilmschool.go.ke/about-us/admission/

However just like the public ones, one may not easily ascertain the statistics of the private institution's output in terms of its training of both male and female Kenyan filmmakers due to poor online record keeping and documentation. Therefore, one may be hard-pressed to establish how their pedagogy and training affect the presence or truncation of women in the film industry in Kenya.

There is scanty information concerning the training of women in film, however, this study infers studies on other African countries to shed light on this status although cross-cultural comparisons may be risky. In many African countries generally, training opportunities are an obstacle for both women and men who aspire to get into filmmaking. The opportunities seem to be fewer for women, and women also face additional barriers (UNESCO, 2014) as shall be explained in Chapter Six of this study. The problems are long-standing and systemic. In Ghana, for example, there were few women in film schools since the nascent stages of the film sector (1923). Most women were denied access to formal education due to colonial-inspired "bourgeois Victorian ideology of domesticity" (Mama, 2011, p. 257). The industry sunk into near oblivion due to harsh economic decisions and a lack of policies to protect and sustain it as Baidoo (2017) explains. However, with the Ghanaian Parliament passing the Film Bill 2016, Baidoo believes that this would revitalise the film industry since the Bill has directives and policies that are sure to create an enabling environment for producers, distributors, and other major players within the sector.[53] It is safe to conjecture that this would increase training in film thus creating an opportunity for women to participate more in the Ghanaian film industry.

This research into present day-Kenya (2016 to present) found that respondents often reported travelling to North America or Europe, or in some cases South Africa to receive training, due to a lack of opportunities in Kenya. These countries have invested huge budgets for film training, which acts as a pull factor for filmmakers in the country. Mutune, in the interview for this study, claimed that while South Africa and America created about 1000, 2000, and more films respectively in a year, Kenya produced less than 50 (Jinna Mutune, February 18, 2018). As such, strong film industries in these countries are strong attractions for filmmakers.

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[53] See Parliament of the Republic of Ghana (2016). Development and Classification of Film Bill, 2016. Retrieved from
http://ir.parliament.gh/bitstream/handle/123456789/301/Development%20And%20Classification%20Of%20Film%20Bill%202015.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

When the government-owned Kenya Institute of Mass Communication (KIMC) was set up in 1961, with monetary aid from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation of Germany, it was the first film school in Kenya, and for forty years, the country's only film school (Diang'a, 2007). This school has trained many Kenyan women filmmakers and television presenters including Dr Anne Mungai, one of the interviewees for this research, Catherine Wamuyu, the Head of Inooro Television of Royal Media Services, and Sophie Ikenye, a presenter at BBC. Since it was the only film school in Kenya from the 70s to the early 2000, positions for training were very limited. When women and men competed for these severely limited openings, cultural bias [such as early marriage and parental unwillingness to advance their daughters' education] put women at a disadvantage. However, in the absence of admission percentages, it is difficult to evidence that women wanted to gain admission to the film school.

The lack of a proper film school and the lack of strong film culture, among other factors, is probably what has contributed to Kenyan filmmakers, particularly women, in this study opting for training in film in foreign institutions. Despite the initiatives to increase capacity building in filmmakers in Kenya, limited data is available to prove the number of women who have accessed training in film.

5.2.2: Local and Western Training and their Impact on Kenyan Women in Film

Against all odds though, some of the women manage to succeed, through self-sponsorship and scholarships in obtaining film training both locally and abroad (Diang'a, 2005). For example, Kahiu pointed out that she studied film (Master of Fine Arts) in Los Angeles in the United States of America (Interview with Wanuri Kahiu, March 7, 2018). Kahiu believes that the fine art degree taught her the much-needed basics about filmmaking such as how to handle equipment, what to expect from the crew and the limitations of the art. Kahiu first pursued a degree in management science (Warner, 2015; Kermeliotis, 2010).

Although Mungai studied at the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication (film production) and Daystar University for her undergraduate degrees, she used foreign-based institutions to gain hands-training (these institutions offered hands-on training in audio, visual, graphic, and 3D design among others) at the American Centre[54] in Nairobi. Further, Mungai undertook courses in the development of film, film writing, and directing in Germany. In addition, she graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy from Kenyatta University in 2019. The

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[54] The American Centre which was known as the United States Information Centre, is located in the USA Embassy Nairobi and serves students, teachers, researchers, journalists, business professionals and individuals who are interested in broadening their horizons on any topic (U.S Embassy Kenya Website).

title of her doctoral study *Film and Social Change: Ideology, Class and Pluralism in Selected East and West African Films* is a timely reminder of the need to interrogate intra-Africa filmmaking practices and ideologies. She explained that often filmmakers create lofty ideas without thinking about the impact the films may have on their audience and how academia may analyse their creative works. Regarding local and western training, Mungai's view is that:

> Local training helped me understand the local environment, while western influences gave me a mirror with which to view gaps that need to be addressed in the local film industry (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

As such, she learned in time the challenges facing the local film industry. Her western training made her understand how other countries had overcome these challenges. She was thus well equipped to deal with some of the seemingly unsurmountable challenges facing the Kenyan film industry as discussed in Chapter Six of this study. In her early career, she began as a film editor and worked in all departments of filmmaking, the production side, directing, lighting and sound, but switched to screenwriting and directing which gave her skills to later direct her first feature film *Saikati* (1992).

Dommie Yambo-Odotte was trained locally at the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication in film, cinema, and video. At the time of the interview, she was undertaking her master's in psychology at the University of Liverpool. She justifies studying a psychology course because the documentaries she makes are of human interest and hence the need for knowledge of psychology.

Another filmmaker, Matrid Nyagah, is among the first students to graduate from Kenyatta University's film school with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Arts and Film Technology. Nyagah also holds a Master of Arts degree in filmmaking from Hamburg Media School in Germany.

Jinna Mutune studied Communications at Daystar University in Kenya and later moved to Cape Town at the prestigious Art Film Drama Association (AFDA) in South Africa where she studied directing and producing films. It is instructive to note that her switch to AFDA after only one and a half years of study at Daystar University was occasioned by the feeling that she was not getting the requisite training she craved to make her the filmmaker she wanted to be. In her words, Mutune says:

> So I ended up been taken to Daystar to study mass communication. After one and a half years, I felt that there was more I needed to learn, and I discovered this school in South Africa called African School of Arts School (sic) which I ended up transferring. Here, I majored in directing and producing in Capetown South Africa… I loved the school

because they were very strict in terms of developing us as futuristic filmmakers who were going to tell an African story to a global audience. And they fed us on a diet of African books so that our worldview would change in terms of understanding how to share this narrative (Jinna Mutune, February 18, 2018).

Film training in Kenya at that time may have been feeble in terms of curriculum to allow the take-off of the industry. Secondly, and as Mutune says later in the interview, training in Kenya alone may cause inbreeding in the industry. A multicultural cast seems to serve better in the film industry as it encourages cross-cultural fertilisation of ideas; a phenomenon that has gained currency in global filmmaking practices.

Ng'endo Mukii went to Kent Institute of Art and then transferred to Rhode Island School of Design, United States of America, where she graduated with a degree in film and animation. After working in Kenya for some time, she decided to go back and pursue further studies in film at the College of Art and Law in the United Kingdom as she explains in the interview:

At some point I felt that like I could be doing this for another 10 years and that's great but there is something that is missing and it's that sort of artist I was before that is missing and I need to find that again. I really enjoy doing this work but there is part of me that is not feeling satisfied. So I started looking for a school to go to and I got into the Law College of art in London (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

Again, the main reason she left to pursue further training was that she felt dissatisfied with her knowledge, and she could not find a suitable training institution in Kenya.

From these interview responses, it can be deduced that some Kenyan women filmmakers in this study have accessed training in filmmaking both locally and internationally. They supplemented their local training with training abroad to enhance their understanding of filmmaking through support especially from family, as I outline in the next section, 5.2.3.

Although my study concentrates on the women filmmakers mentioned above, the findings obtained from this small sample can be extrapolated to represent the experiences of other Kenyan women filmmakers. This is because they offer the all-rounded experiences of a woman filmmaker in Kenya. This is particularly so since documented research is absent in this direction. From their revelations, it can be deduced that local training (formal and on-job-the training) in filmmaking is a recent phenomenon in Kenya. This is evidenced by Diang'a (2007) and Edwards (2008) who identify the challenges related to access to training in filmmaking in Kenya as well as the nascent state of training in the country.

5.2.3: Support for Film Training

For women who had managed to get extensive training in the film industry like Mutune and Nyagah, such training was only possible due to supportive parents. Mutune was able to pursue her training in filmmaking because of the educational and financial support of her parents from the beginning. Nyagah got the opportunity to pursue the relevant training from the onset. This stems from the fact that she had supportive parents who were her role models since her childhood in her passion to pursue what she wanted. Mukii's trajectory is like Nyagah's as she agrees that she was able to pursue training in animation after high school owing to the support of her parents:

> So when I graduated high school I already knew I was gonna go to art school and because of my dad's past [he used to be an artist in high school who used to win competitions but was discouraged by his parents and advised to take up a more sensible career. He ended up taking law.] And because my mom who was also very supportive you know whatever we were meant to do my mom was always supporting us and trying to encourage us to, you know, go forward with it. So, unlike other people who were in Nairobi at the same time you say you want to go to art school, you know, your parents are having a family meeting to discuss where they went wrong. So, I went to art school, my friends, some of them had to do accounting and other like pharmacy, like more sensible career paths as well. And they also ended up coming back to filming (laughter) back to art after completing their accounting degrees. (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

These findings show that the presence of supportive family members played pivotal roles in the choice of filmmaking as a career for some women since it correlated with their propensity to access specialised training in the sector. However, sometimes parents did not want their daughters to undertake training in filmmaking since they thought that this was not a promising career choice. In most cases thus, the routes into the industry were not necessarily linear. Mukii's story shows that she did not plan on entering the film industry from a young age as she was inclined toward art. She revealed that her friends ended up in other careers such as accounting and pharmacy as indeed, Film did not seem to have a [sensible] career path. Lucas (2015) observed that the film industry lacked the clear and established career ladder that is present in many other fields, hence creating a gender disparity in the industry. The lack of a clear career path in filmmaking did not deter female filmmakers from pursuing film as a career as Mukii posits that her friends joined the industry even after completing their initial degrees in other fields.

Using the Nigerian experience, Olaosebikan and Olusakin (2014) agree that parents influence what careers their children choose by the way they talk about work at home, their overall satisfaction and pride in their work, and one must not also forget the position and payment of their work, which in the long run affect the family status. As Mwaa (2016) and Lucas (2015) also note, most African parents would like to see their children pursue white-collar jobs in fields like teaching, medicine, accountancy, and law rather than in the creative arts as the latter are perceived as not being "real careers" with promising financial returns as people often worked project to project and for long inflexible hours.

Similarly, a study commissioned by World Bank (2011) showed that students tend to be attracted to courses, often based on employment prospects after school. Thus, parents often urge their children to pursue courses that are considered marketable [financially viable career choices]. This underlines the tendency of parents to urge their children to pursue the courses whose job prospects they know. To this end, Alfaro and Ketels (2016) argue that in most cases people pursue academic courses based on their earning potential as graduates. This could explain why Mutune's parents sent her off to the USA so she could have a better chance of developing herself even though she had returned from South Africa where she had majored in film directing and production from AFDA, a very prestigious high-cost film school in Cape Town. On the other hand, Nyagah's mother was supportive of her career choice. Nevertheless, she cautioned Nyagah that pursuing training in the film industry could derail her prospects of a 'meaningful career.' Nyagah pointed out:

> So I remember my mom even both of them [her mother and father] telling me please just make sure you don't return to tarmac […] Like so and so daughter, so and so son (Mutune, January 11, 2018).

To "tarmac" is a Kenyan slang that describes the long duration (literally walking from office to office) that graduates who have completed their academic training spend looking for employment. However, this seems to be the opposite since the respondents for this study are successful independent filmmakers. For example, on her return to Kenya from South Africa, Mutune did her internship at Kwani Trust where Binyavanga Wainaina, the 2002 Caine Prize Winner for African Writing, was her mentor. Mutune was commissioned by Wainaina to produce and direct her first music video, *Mashairi* (2005) which was a narration of how Kenyan writers fought for their democratic writing space in promoting African literature. This video

was nominated for MTV Base, becoming one of the first Kenyan content that began screening on an American platform (MTV America) from Africa (Jinna Mutune, February 18, 2019).[55]

Cham (2004) believes that filmmaking by Africans is not only a creative expression of culture and art but also an intellectual and political engagement. From the interviews for this study, it became clear that filmmaking is also viewed as a way of telling African stories with a global audience in mind. It is the postcolonial urge to revalorize what may have been lost in colonial translation. However, there is also a fear in the Kenyan milieu that training in film production is a waste of time since film as a career does not pay. This fear is well-founded given that in Kenya, arts entrepreneurship is frowned upon as infrastructure to encourage profitability has not been developed through the state mechanisms. This is rooted in the colonial project that geared education towards finding gainful employment in services and industries that were already established, preferably government-owned or at the very least parastatal bodies. Gainful employment thus could guarantee income stability for many years. That is why it was troubling to their parents when Mutune and Nyagah chose film seeing that it was a very young and exotic career choice in the early 2000s. They seemed to equate it to sheer waste of money since they did not see any employment security in it.

Apart from lack of family financial and emotional support, access to training is often confounded by other challenges in the lives of women such as lack of formally trained film producers. As Nyutho (2015) points out, Riverwood (an informal film industry in Kenya) was started by informally trained film producers. Consequently, the quality of the films made is often compromised in the absence of professional training. This leads to mixed results regarding the quality of films made in the industry. Although it must be understood that in some instances, some self-taught filmmakers make high-quality films owing to industry-based experiences, it is a difficult feat to overcome capacity challenges among women in the film industry. (Alamu, 2010).

It is worth mentioning that Riverwood was born out of the frustration of actors and filmmakers in the 1990s who felt disillusioned by the lack of government commitment to set up proper infrastructure and create a conducive environment for them (Ombati, 2016). This made the actors and filmmakers start hawking their wares on Nairobi's downtown streets - River Road. Nyagah attests to this as she revealed that she used to hawk her first movie, *Twists*

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[55]Kwani Trust is a Kenyan based literary network that was established in 2003 by Binyavanga Wainaina. Kwani is dedicated to developing quality creative writing. It is committed to the growth of the creative industry through the publishing and distribution of contemporary African writing. It also offers training opportunities, producing literary events and establishing and maintaining global literary networks (Afritrada, 2019).

of Fame (2009) denoting poor distribution channels for projects as has been discussed in Chapter Four of this study.

5.2.4: On-the-Job Training

On-the-job training has also been pivotal to the development of female filmmakers. In this regard, Shimkus (2006) argues that working in the film industry enables women to gain access to training [formal and on-the-job]. These sentiments are expounded by Bisschoff (2009), whose research reveals that women filmmakers often receive training in related disciplines like "theatre, communication or audio-visual creation like film/television production" while others get experience by "working in areas like print media, radio or advertising." In some instances, others get into the film industry from "totally new areas either by chance and/or by sheer passion for the profession" (pp. 20-22).

According to Obonyo (2007), no schools were offering accredited filmmaking courses in Kenya before 2007. This explains why Mungai ended up at the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication when she found out that the University of Nairobi did not offer courses in film but journalism. Schools like KIMC trained electronic engineering and technicians for the then Voice of Kenya (VOK) which was rebranded as Kenya Broadcasting Service (KBC). The commercial arm of KIMC offered (and still does offer) services to external clients to generate income such as film/video production services which include location filming, editing, and dubbing (KIMC, 2020). As a result, and in the absence of formal schools, most pioneering local women filmmakers in this study have had to rely on training overseas as well as receive on-the-job training locally as already seen in 5.2.2. In other instances, filmmakers have had to apply the knowledge acquired from closely related courses to the film industry. For instance, in the past schools like Daystar University and the University of Nairobi offered communication courses. Even though they offered media studies, they concentrated heavily on journalism. This emanates from the fact that journalism offered more obvious career paths. Mungai attested to this by revealing that:

> So yes, from Butere Girls [High School], I came to Nairobi, University of Nairobi to do film but I was told they only offered journalism, but I was referred to Kenya Institute of Mass Communication (KIMC) (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

Judy Kibinge's career trajectory differs from that of the other respondents in this study. Even though Kibinge's background is not in film, as she did "not go to any real film school" she quit her job in advertising to pursue filmmaking (Judy Kibinge, February 15, 2018). She pointed out that she had a background in writing and natural storytelling. Owing to her passion

for film from childhood, she pointed out that after college she got into the arts; first with commercials (advertisements) before moving to films. Coming from a non-film background, in advertising, she has proven that women can migrate the skills acquired elsewhere, hone them, and use them to break through the film industry in Kenya. Kibinge also changed the post-colonial narrative while still in the advertising sector by being the first non-male and non-white Creative Director in an international agency (SCANAD)[56] in the region. In the film industry, she ushered in a new wave of female filmmakers by making films that reflected on socio-economic issues that made her uncomfortable yet were not spoken about. In her forward in Women in African Cinema, Beyond the Body Politic (Bisschoff and Van de Peer, 2020), Kibinge mentions these issues as including land rights, gender justice, poverty, and inequality.

Indeed, Kibinge fits Bisschoff's description of those women filmmakers who get into the film industry from a different career. Kibinge did not have formal training in the film industry. However, she managed to make inroads into the industry after a ten-year career in the advertising industry as already mentioned elsewhere in this chapter. To this end, she points out that:

Because I think being an artist in the 70s and 80s was not a particularly easy thing and so I just couldn't help it. It was dreary, but I found myself after college drifting towards the arts. And in particular to advertising, which I joined in the early 90s. I used to come and work in the different agencies as a summer job. Was very [advertising] dominated by white, male, creative directors. To some extent the big agencies have recently just started to let go of that grasp. And so I joined McCann, at a time when they had a lot of continent's biggest brands, from Unilever to Coke Africa and so on. And I was the first sort of non-expatriate creative director at 28. And it was such a fantastic learning space because you know like I've just said many times when you're making an ad [advertisement] you're actually making a little film because you're breaking it if you do right. You're writing your thirty-second script, you're breaking it into a storyboard, your storyboard will if it is a thirty-second script will often have as many as fifteen frames. You are writing the lyrics of the jingles, sometimes and for me, it was whether it was that Blueband [a margarine brand in East Africa], I start (singsong voice) step by step, day by day (Judy Kibinge, January 23, 2018).

The findings from Kibinge's interview show that women could gain skills in the film industry later in life even without necessarily going for direct training in filmmaking as her

[56] SCANAD is an African Marketing Servies Agency.

career in advertising helped her immensely. Even though she does not attribute her scriptwriting for commercials to film school, she nevertheless within a year of quitting her advertising job, produced the movie *Dangerous Affair* (2009). This shows that experience in other creative arts could enable women to get into filmmaking.

5.2.5: Competence as Precursor to Thriving in the Film Industry

A seven-year study carried out by the European Women's Audiovisual Network shows that 44 percent of directors graduating from film school are women. However, only less than half of this number end up working in the industry (CineEuropa, 2016). This is evidence that training may not always translate to better prospects for women in the film industry. This study and its attendant findings highlight the precariousness in the film industry especially for women; creating a situation that still abounds in Kenya. As Yambo-Odotte avers, filmmakers quit the film industry for other jobs despite having experience, being competent, talented, and ambitious:

> I remember bemoaning on several occasions that I'm losing my colleagues to other sectors because the work in the industry isn't helping [since the film sector is under-funded and, lacks appropriate distribution channels among others] and they are brilliant people in that sector and then they get employed elsewhere and that's the end of that person and their career path in the film industry (Dommie Yambo-Odotte, February 20, 2018).

Perseverance seems a virtue that one needs to remain relevant in the film industry in Kenya. The challenges that beset the industry require tenacity, especially in the advent stages of one's presence in the industry. Some of the women interviewed started with simple films before advancing to more serious ones. In this regard, Mutune says that:

> I have always done it [being in the film sector] without knowing what it was. I directed childhood plays such as *Kalongo* (Jinna Mutune, February 18, 2018).

Kalongo is a child's play where children role-play family setups. Others like Kahiu received mentorship in their teenage years:

> I was interested and started searching for internships in film production houses from an early age of 16 years (Wanuri Kahiu, March 7, 2018).

All the women filmmakers in this study agree that women in the film industry not only have experience but were also competent, talented, and ambitious. Nevertheless, they have had to contend with a lack of a strong support base in the industry. Furthermore, there is a view that women in the film industry are incompetent or only fit for lesser roles in filmmaking. For

example, when Mungai went to her village to promote indigenous musicians by making a film, the male musicians did not believe that she was competent because they viewed filmmaking to be a man's job. The musicians also thought that Mungai had ulterior motives – to use them as a launching pad to join politics (Interview with Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018). Nyagah had also experienced similar treatment as she has always been mistaken for a make-up artist or assistant, roles considered the preserve of women (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018; Ellerson, 2014).

This study established that women filmmakers in Kenya are competing favourably for available spaces with men who often struggle to manage conflicting priorities due to limited capacities to multitask (Morgan, 2013). This can be exemplified by Yambo-Odotte who concluded that "women were the top three talked about filmmakers in this country in the 90s towards 2000" (Dommie Yambo-Odotte, February 20, 2018). These included Kibinge, Mungai, and herself. One would be hard-pressed to argue against this fact; even in 2020.

Yambo-Odotte further revealed that when South African Electronic Media Network Limited (MNET) began to engage with the rest of Africa in the 90s, both male and female film directors were interviewed to produce films. She was selected as she met the criteria of being talented and competent to make films in Kenya and well accomplished "in their chosen craft, even though they had all faced the same roadblocks in this male-dominated industry" as was observed at the African Women filmmakers Hub in Harare in 2016 (Institute of Creative Arts for Progressive Africa, 2013).

This competence and talent of some female Kenyan filmmakers can be further demonstrated by the fact that in 2018 out of 11 Kenyan filmmakers who qualified for the Multichoice 12-month training at the inaugural Multichoice Talent Factory Academy, four were women. They were selected based on their industry-related qualifications and skills, as well as their passion to narrate Africa's unique stories that my respondents share (Rajula, 2018). It is also instructive to note that the head of training at the Multichoice Talent Factory in Eastern Africa is a Kenyan woman filmmaker, Njoki Muhoho.[57] Even though women in Kenya have excelled and given a good account of themselves in the film industry, their number at the above-mentioned training is a step toward more equality, inclusivity, and visibility.

Another woman film producer, Dorothy Ghettuba Pala (not one of the respondents for this study) was appointed Netflix Manager for International Originals for Europe, Middle East, and

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[57] See Njoki's profile as highlighted in this Newspaper article
https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/bd/lifestyle/art/rise-of-njoki-the-filmmaker-2284212

Africa operating from the Dutch city of Amsterdam by the popular video streaming service, Netflix, a position she took up in June 2019. Ghettuba's television shows include *Sumu La Penzi* (2013), *Lies That Bind (2011)*, *Saints* (2010), and *Higher Learning (2010)* which air on Kenyan TV stations as well as on continental channels like Africa Magic. Recently, in May 2019, Ghettuba was appointed by the President of Kenya as the chairperson of KFC (Kenya Film Commission Instagram Page, 2019; Kenya Film Commission Website, 2019). Another filmmaker, Lupita Nyong'o, a renowned and award-winning Kenyan actor, is set to narrate the US version of *Serengeti*, a new natural history series by BBC and Discovery Channel (Kenya Film Commission Website, 2019; Nordyke, 2019). She rose to fame with her roles in the American blockbuster films, *12 years a slave,* and *Black Panther.* The elevation of Kenyan women in the global and local film industry clearly shows the high competence levels there are in Kenyan women filmmakers.

From the findings in this section, it can be concluded that women filmmakers in Kenya thrive in the film industry partly because they are competent to handle the pressures that abound in the industry. This competence can be attributed to the training they get in institutions both in Kenya and elsewhere. The thirst for knowledge drives them to seek training that equips them with the skills and competencies for thriving in the film industry. The next section of this data analysis looks at how women sustain their presence through different means of funding their projects as well as other forms of sustenance.

5.3: Funding for Kenyan Women Filmmakers

Presence in the film industry is sustained by film production projects. These projects may be funded through third-party funding or sometimes through one's resources. The third-party funding is in most cases done by non-Governmental organisations, the government through its agencies like the Kenya Film Commission, private entities through sponsorships, friends, acquaintances, or colleagues through collaborations, crowdfunding from well-wishers or parents, and relatives through acts of goodwill. This section interrogates how Kenyan women filmmakers utilise the above mechanisms to sustain themselves in the film industry. The key question that this section seeks to respond to is how they have been able to fund their projects and productions.

5.3.1: Funding Film Productions and Projects

Funding is key in film production and projects. It enables filmmakers to sustain themselves as filmmakers and as human beings. The ability to attract funding ranks as the top priority for Kenyan women in film. However, the lack of funding opportunities has made some Kenyan women filmmakers reengineer ways of supporting others in this quest. Tired of meeting obstacles in her search for funding for her films and with seed funding from Ford Foundation and donations from well-wishers, Judy Kibinge was able to establish Docubox, which prides itself on existing to 'enable talented, driven, focused and accountable East African artists to produce unique films that unearth new realities and cross trans-national boundaries.'[58] Thus her effort has been instrumental in supporting Kenyan filmmakers find funding for their films. As a Kenyan woman filmmaker, she avers that is it almost twice difficult for women filmmakers to find funding due to red tape and the fact that men are mostly in the seats of power and authority and thus naturally they favour their fellow men more than women. In an interview about Docubox, Judy Kibinge attested that some other international partners and financiers provide support to the fund including the UK's Doc Society and Comic Relief, the Skoll Foundation from the US, and the Dutch fund Hivos (Petkovik, (2019).

Lack of funding makes it hard for both men and women to get into filmmaking in Kenya. However, this problem affects women more than men. In an interview conducted by Betti Ellerson with Dommie Yambo-Odotte, the latter corroborated this argument by insisting that:

> It is difficult to get into African cinema for both women and men, but it is harder for women. Women have lots of ideas at the moment about how to convey their problems and concerns on the screen. The major problem remains the sources of funding (Ellerson, 2009).

Nyutho (2015) notes that many formally trained Kenyan film producers lament the lack of government support and of inappropriate policies that impede the film industry as an enterprise. In this regard, the lack of government support in terms of access to funding in Kenya's highly patriarchal society, as shown in Chapter Three of this study, makes it hard for women producers to realise their full potential in the film industry. As such, these women are forced to leave the industry or continue to survive on meagre returns from their work owing to low budgets for their works, or further still pursue commissioned projects with many development agencies (Steedman, 2019).

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[58] See the information from the Docubox website here https://www.mydocubox.org/

Nonetheless, Kahiu believes that irrespective of gender could face funding challenges in the film industry:

> …then the rest of the [film] industry there's just not enough money going around in the industry. So we are not fortunate enough to argue about women being better paid than men because we are all being badly paid, yeah. But men are being badly paid but more [though paid poorly, men are paid more than women]. It [low pay] has to do with budgets that we're getting as independent filmmakers are very low (Wanuri Kahiu, March 7, 2018).

Kahiu further admits that although there were more women in top positions in the film industry, the pay is poor for them just as it is for men because of the low budgets in the film industry. Sadly, women get paid poorer than men even in these poor remuneration schemes. This is evident in extant literature. Murumba and Mungai (2018) citing The World Economic Forum report 2017 posits that "a Kenyan woman is paid Sh55 for every Sh100 paid to a man for doing a similar job." The Human Development for Everyone report released in March 2017 and compiled based on estimates for 2015 indicated that "while Kenyan men earned an estimated gross national income (GNI) per capita for males of \$3,405 (Sh350,715) in 2015, this was far higher when compared to the \$2,357 (Sh242,771) for females" (UNDP Website, n.d). The Learning and Development Manager at NEST – a multidisciplinary group working with film, fashion, visual arts, and music – Njoki Ngumi[59] pointed out that "the general lower value ascribed to women translates everywhere, especially in the formal workplace" (Murumba and Mungai, 2018). Mukii concurs with Kahiu's sentiments:

> You know there's even an outcry about the boy child every time girls outperform boys. What you should be asking is, ok, so the standard we've accepted could have been much higher the entire time. When you uplift anyone who is marginalised in society it brings the entire standard up. So, the film industry can only benefit by uplifting women…it's not just women but filmmaking is for people who have money. Plain and simple. If you can't access money then you have a problem (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

Mukii here echoes a saying used to convince African parents to encourage their female children to attend school, just like their male children. The saying is attributed to the Ghanaian scholar Dr James Emmanuel Kwegir Aggrey, "If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family (nation)" (The STANDS4 Network, 2019). Translated to filmmaking, the import of this saying is grounded in the belief that investing in

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[59] Dr Ngumi is also the head of the HEVA Fund which is discussed in Chapter Five.

women filmmakers would reap higher social dividends as they are better at forging family and indeed by extension nationhood.

The film industry could create a space for African women to voice their ideas. However, in the absence of such space in the male-dominated economies and lack of access to resources for women in the industry African women have an especially hard time mobilising resources to make films (Nguma, 2015). This is more evident when they wish to make films that speak to their conditions and challenge the existing fictions that misrepresent and distort their realities (Mama, Badoe, and Mekuria, 2014). Access to resources for women in the Kenyan film industry is also challenged by the patriarchal and tribal system in government cycles. This is evident in the response by Yambo-Odotte:

> Then you see how the discrimination would come about because you are this tribe and *nani* [Kiswahili for he/she] is from this tribe (Dommie Yambo-Odotte, February 20, 2018).

Here Dommie Yambo-Odotte argues that tribal affiliations contribute to precarity in access to funding. Sometimes government connections and tribal affiliations determined the amount of funding that one could access from the government and vice versa. This is because political patronage is correlated with access to resources (D'Arcy & Cornell, 2016). Belonging to the "right tribe" refers to the state where individuals within a tribe emphasise strong loyalty to their community while exalting themselves as superior to the rest (Kwach, 2018). Therefore, the commitment to one's tribe results in strong negative emotions towards anyone outside the group. Kwach argues that negative tribalism or ethnicity was perpetuated by the colonialists who used the divide and rule policy as explained in Chapter Three of this study under postcolonial legacy. To rid the film industry of this vice, Yambo-Odotte offers a solution by suggesting that Kenya could borrow from the American film industry model where filmmakers have a say in the industry to attract investors.

This lack of resources, however, is not always the case. Some filmmakers like Mukii did not take an extra job or engage in other commercial ventures as they came from a comfortable position economically:

> I have the luxury that I don't have to take another job or take a nine to five job or even be able to negotiate with my clients and say I'm only going to be in charge of this work aesthetically and you won't be able to push me over, that's because I'm coming from a comfortable position. (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

Mukii suggests that economic and educational disadvantages may serve as impediments to filmmaking (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018). Therefore, we may not get to hear what their stories could be. While low pay has been blamed as one of the reasons that make a life for women filmmakers unsustainable in the film industry, it has nonetheless not hindered women from joining the film industry. Supportive families mediated the negative influences of precarity among independent filmmakers (Smiet, 2017). For example, Nyagah's first film, *Twists of Fate* (2009) mentioned earlier, was funded by her mother who took a loan from a women's group she belonged to popularly known as *Chama*, Kiswahili for welfare or investment group or table banking. These friendships by women that form support groups in Africa have been extensively theorised by Bisschoff & Van de Peer (2020) in what they call the affinities and friendships of women filmmakers. They affirm that the phenomenon of women's affinity has roots in many African societies dating back to pre-colonial moments. They conclude that:

> Women have been organising themselves politically, socially and culturally for centuries, igniting and sustaining worldwide women's liberation movements with a multitude of local manifestations in specific socio-political and cultural contexts. At the heart of these women's liberation movements lie political affinities, shared solidarities and, indeed, female friendships and networks of support and care... (p.92)

It is these solidarities that some of the women filmmakers in Kenya have rode on to cut a niche in the film industry in Kenya.

5.3.2: Funding Routes and Realigning with Donor Objectives

As seen in the above section, low pay and lack of funding have not hindered women, filmmakers, from telling their stories. In fact, some filmmakers did not initially depend on funding but relied on forming networks within the community they lived in to support their filmmaking initiatives. For example, Jinna opines that:

> The time I spent in America opened my eyes to a lot of things. While in America, I started doing small films (sic) with immigrant churches in Houston, and they were very supportive of my work. I say I am built by a village and the village of Africans has been the first primary recipient of my content and without them I don't think I would be this far. These people from the immigrant churches really believed in my musical plays which were bigger in Easter or December but they would do bake sales for me so I could raise money to do props. So am eternally grateful to them (Jinna Mutune, February 18, 2018).

Indeed, local support plays a pivotal role in the development of female filmmakers.

Filmmakers sampled for this study decried lack of funding as their greatest hindrance to realising their full potential. Lack of funding has hit most women filmmakers in African countries hard. For example, in Nigeria, Yewande Sadiki, producer of *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2014) adapted from Chimamanda's novel of the same title (Adichie, 2007), disclosed that she raised 1 billion USD dollars for an undisclosed communications company but found it difficult to raise the required 12 million US dollars for the film as investors turned her down (OloriSupergirl, 2014). Lack of funding led the filmmakers in this study to take personal initiatives to seek external or private funding (Diang'a, 2007). For example, Mungai, the first Kenyan woman to produce a feature film, received partial funding for her film *Saikati* (1991), from Friedrich Ebert Stufting Foundation (FESF), she had to source other funding from other organisations such as UNICEF. The funding from FESF was by Mungai being a teacher at the government film school, Kenya Institute of Mass Communication at that time.[60] This means that it funds projects that advance these ideals (See Saikati, 1991 in Chapter One of this study). This explains why it could be supported by FESF and UNICEF since it promotes the education and socio-economic development of the girl child. These findings show that these women filmmakers are obliged to have an entrepreneurial approach to attract funding from organisations that do not otherwise support their agenda in filmmaking. This influences the kind of content they make.

The most influential production finance providers have been western non-governmental organisations and United Nations-affiliated bodies. These funders are mostly interested in advancing their agendas and therefore, filmmakers are sometimes convinced to follow the donors' demands. What does this imply? Africa's image is not always portrayed as being close to reality. Often, owing to the scarcity of funding and government regulation, women are muzzled, and so they are not able voices to tell their stories through film. By relying on funding from international sources, women are content with telling stories from such countries. This is particularly so since donors have their areas of focus and interests which must be advanced by the recipients of their funds.

To comply, women are forced to adjust their scripts to become responsive to these requirements seeing as films are powerful tools of education. For example, Mungai, one of the respondents, revealed that she often got conditional offers for funding from sources she

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[60] The foundation supports, "socio-political and economic development in the spirit of social democracy, through civic education, research, and international cooperation" [FESF Website n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.devex.com/organizations/friedrich-ebert-stiftung-117266

requested not to name. The unnamed funders offered her citizenship and demanded that she changed her religion in exchange for funding (Interview with Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018). To this Mungai admitted that making money had not been the motivation for making films, therefore, she was not ready to be dictated to by foreign funders, but she desired to tell stories.

Advancing donors' interests buttresses the premise of the theory of intersectionality that posits that women could be discriminated against due to issues of race, religion, class, and other factors (Smiet, 2017, p.19).[61] Therefore, women face challenges as they seek funding for their work

Some of the donors are former colonial powers who still play a major role in the sustenance of filmmaking and film training in African countries. For example, in Kenya, France has helped fund the Kalasha International Film and TV Festival as seen earlier, while Germany aided in setting up the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication in 1961 training in film production, and other courses in the media like television, radio, and journalism. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) also funds One Fine Day films which was the platform upon which some renowned Kenyan films like *Nairobi Half Life* (2002) by Tosh Gitonga (Hodapp, 2014) and *Something Necessary* (2013) by one of the interviewees of this research Judy Kibinge (Ojiambo, 2017) were produced. As is always the case, these films may not be free from the obvious biases associated with foreign funding as Hodapp (2014) insinuates in his review of *Nairobi Half-life* when he notes a semblance of Tom Tykwer's style of directing in the film. Again, the story's thematic content has been raised.

At that time, the national broadcasting house, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), accorded less than 20 hours per week for local content. This shows that African content has historically been low. Although things have changed over the years, it is still clear that African content on the big screens is meagre, due to a lack of enough funding and government regulation. This is shown in the case of women telling stories in line with the objectives of donor organisations to attract funding. This is particularly true since as the saying goes, "he who pays the piper calls the tune." In the same accord, a Kiswahili proverb goes *Mwenye nguvu mpishe* [the mighty have their way]. The content communicated by women may be muzzled by donor demands. As such, it is often hard to tell African stories other than those of poverty because the international organisations and businesses, which fund most films, have

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[61] Smiet (2017), as already cited, points out that "an intersectional feminist perspective insists that gender cannot and should not be studied in isolation from race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion or other structures of power because they do not exist in isolation from one another, but instead always intersect" (P. 19).

been socialised to think that this is all there is to Africa. Mukii gave a glaring example during my interview with her:

> If you feel that we can't come out of poverty or slavery or that sort of thing then we get sort of stuck. Yeah, my only thing is that I feel like an African filmmaker, not even a female filmmaker, but as an African filmmaker, sometimes that I'm expected to talk about these things because people also don't realise that, you know there is another side to Africa. So if I make something that is not around poverty [it looks as if it is not around any social issues then it's like it doesn't feel African]. Like is this the real Africa though? Did you see that, was it two years ago? An American woman came and she was really upset because she wanted street children to be around the city, she felt like there were too few street children (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

To support Mukii, Mungai strongly felt that Kenyan women filmmakers were ready to tell their stories without being dictated to by foreign funders.

Nonetheless, even without support, women filmmakers seem not to be deterred from making movies as they seem to outnumber their male counterparts to fulfil the Kiswahili adage, *Mgaagaa na upwa hali wali mkavu*. Translated it means that a person who walks and searches thoroughly around a beach never eats rice with no fish stew. In this case, the women filmmakers will stop at nothing in fulfilling their dreams of telling stories and they often do this by seeking co-productions.

Yambo-Odotte also received partial funding from Royal Netherlands Embassy to make a documentary called *If Women Counted* (1993), which chronicles the women who participated in the first multi-party elections in Kenya in 1992 after the repeal of Section 2A of the constitution of Kenya (Dommie Yambo-Odotte, February 20, 2018; Yambo-Odotte & Munene, 1993). As such, several organisations were set up, backed by the international and local community to sensitise women and men alike and to encourage women to take up the challenge of elected positions. It was strongly felt that women's political under-representation was a major contributor to their marginal status in all aspects of life in Kenya and that only direct involvement in politics could create avenues for their advancement (Yambo-Odotte, 1994). As a result of this inclusion of women in politics, 19 women were nominated to vie for parliamentary seats and about 20 others for civic posts that year. Yambo-Odotte revealed that the presence of women in the political campaign trail addressed issues that had not been addressed for thirty years after independence such as the lack of clean water for all, inadequate health facilities, the lowering education standard, and the deteriorating agricultural sector.

Issues that some of my respondents agreed were better tackled by women. If cinema is to reflect the experiences and perspectives of various groups in society, then gender and diversity are crucial. Since women make up half of the world's population, it is inherent that their articulation of women's issues globally can be captured by female film directors (Alliance of Slum Media Organisations, 2019).

In some instances, the inability to attract international funding made it hard for women to make films at all as argued by Mukii. Some had to wait for a long duration to make another film due to a lack of funding. To this, Mukii posited that:

> Even in terms of filmmakers on an individual level accessing grants we do not have an infrastructure to sell ourselves. If it takes me one million shillings [about $9,500] to make a film, I don't have anywhere to sell it and then you are going to ask me to pay it back because it's a loan, it's not a grant. Then I am now in debt. I am not going to touch that grant am going to look for a grant outside. And again, I can access outside because am already like a middle-class person. Everyone else who can't access outside is just going to never make their film. (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

Mutune made her first feature film, *Leo* (2012) with support from Kenyan investors like Chris Kirubi who is one of Kenya's wealthiest businessmen, Bernard Wambugu, Kenyan-born, and Houston-based CEO of Lantel Systems, a tech services company, and Julian Kyula, founder of a mobile technology firm (Lyons, 2014). The film was shot by Abe Martinez, a renowned American cinematographer with credits on *Spider-Man 3 (2007)* and *Survivor (2001-2002)*.

Mukii's acclaimed animation, *Yellow Fever*, was a film school project while she was studying at the Royal College of Art in the UK and supported by BlinkInk with a £5,000 grant.[62] Mukii's other film, *Nairobi Berries* (2017)**,** a virtual reality film, was funded by Electric South in South Africa, which scouted for her and other four African animation film producers (Ng'endo Mukii Website, 2018). At the end of 2018, Mukii was raising money for the post-production of her new project called *Birika* (The Teapot).

Even though KFC was created in 2005 by the Kenyan government policy under the Ministry of Sports Culture and the Arts and should promote film as it receives regular annual government funding through the relevant ministry, as has been seen in Chapter One of this study, it was not seen as giving enough to support, promote and expose Kenyan women in film.

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[62] BlinkInk is comprised of "world-class animation specialists who create short-form video content with their partners in the advertising, music and broadcast industries" (BlinkInk, n.d)**.**

This was strongly echoed by Mutune, Kibinge, Yambo-Odotte, Kahiu, Mukii, Nyagah and Mungai. In this case, Kibinge points out that:

> They've done nothing. Maybe you can help me with this question because at least you were in government. Maybe you understand the inner workings [bureaucracy] because I'm told it's so complicated… I think we are just going to be left behind. I feel the set of the Film Commission cares about itself. It's so unfortunate, it has a budget that's pretty good. It pays its staff fantastically, but they don't do anything. They just go to festivals…I think they are just lazy, personally, I think they are just a shame. I think they should be shut down (Judy Kibinge, February 15, 2018).

Kibinge laments that bureaucracy and inefficiency at KFC could hinder progress in the film industry. Even though bureaucracy has its benefits such as "provide guidelines and standardized procedures that provide uniformity in goods or services, and when appropriately used, they can lead to fair treatment" (Mlingenbrink, 2010; Miller, 2015), on the other hand, it could undermine reason and cause people in organisations to pursue worthless goals. For instance, bureaucracy could hamper the achievement of results in time as written by Brandon Miller on GreenGarage Blog in 2015. "10 Main Advantages and Disadvantages of Bureaucracy". Sometimes delays in making decisions like appointments of senior officials such as the chief executive officer could hinder the implementation of projects since the signature of that officer is needed to approve expenditures.[63]

Nyagah concurred with Kibinge that KFC should be doing much more. She revealed that, together with others whom she did not name, "we are going to the KFC tomorrow to just present the resolutions we have and share in the industry" (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

Nyagah also revealed that she has been able to secure funding from other agencies but not from KFC:

> [We got funding from] Heinrich Böll Foundation. So, they've been supporting me for the last four years. And for them, they just don't fund films or wherever we try and find a way of how it translates to women's leadership because they have a gender component. So like if you go to these marginalised communities, where a woman can't even talk, a woman can't even be involved in decision-making and all these things, and yet they, they have things that they can say that can help the community. So, the way

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[63] KFC has had subsequent chief executives in an acting capacity since the tenure of the former chief executive, Peter Mutie which ended in 2013 (Business Daily, 2013).

that we do that is we use film for them because I believe someone can use art to express, art is very expressive and sometimes some of us are not good at public speaking but we do good writing so I will express myself through art and I will express myself through you know, I will draw something (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

Another challenge that affects women's funding that had riddled the Kenyan film industry is the patriarchal and tribal system in government cycles. This is evident in the response by Yambo-Odotte:

Then you see how the discrimination would come about because you are this tribe and *nan*i [Kiswahili for who] is from this tribe (Dommie Yambo-Odotte, February 20, 2018).

Dommie Yambo-Odotte argues tribal affiliations as mentioned earlier. contribute to precariousness in access to funding. As such, it is evident that government connections and tribal affiliations determined the amount of funding that one could access from the government and vice versa. This is because political patronage is correlated with access to resources (D'Arcy & Cornell, 2016). If one did not come from the "right" tribe, access to funding became a tall order. "Right tribe" refers to the state where individuals within a tribe emphasise strong loyalty to their community while exalting themselves as superior to the rest (Kwach, 2018). Therefore, the commitment to one's tribe results in strong negative emotions towards anyone outside the group. Kwach argues that negative tribalism or ethnicity was perpetuated by the colonialists who used the divide and rule policy as explained in Chapter Two of this study under postcolonial legacy. To rid the film industry of this vice, Yambo-Odotte offers a solution by suggesting that Kenya could borrow from the American film industry model where filmmakers had a say in the industry to attract investors.

Findings from the interviews with Kenyan women filmmakers show that it is often hard for women to succeed in the film industry since they had to wait until they got funding from foreign sources. It was hard to get local funding, seeing that loans from financial institutions such as banks and microcredit organisations were the only possible routes. With no guarantee for paying back such funding, women shied away from taking loans as has been explored in 5:3.3 of this chapter of this study.

There is a curious model of self-sustenance in funding that some Kenyan filmmakers have devised so as not to be outed by a lack of finances. Though not interviewed for this study, Dorothy Ghetubba a Kenyan woman filmmaker of repute provides an interesting model of how she has been able to survive the turbulence of lack of funding. In an interview with Catherine Jewell (2015) of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Ghettuba revealed

extensively that apart from borrowing loans from banks to finance her projects, she ensures to retain the intellectual property (IP) of her creative content so that she sells to multiple distributors and recoup more money rather than selling the IP to the production house that commission her. She calls this model, 'syndication' which assures her steady income of her content long after it has done the first run and this is how she describes it:

> There is no money in production. The only way to be profitable is through syndication, selling, and re-selling our shows to multiple broadcasters…This means retaining the intellectual property (IP) rights in our shows… So, we sold broadcasters only those rights they were going to exploit. We sold TV rights to TV networks, free-to-air rights to free-to-air stations, pay TV rights to pay TV platforms, and so on. If they wanted additional rights, they could have them but they would have to pay for them. Our ability to control our IP rights means we can maximize the value of our shows and start making money.[64]

Perhaps this could be one of the ways Kenyan women filmmakers could start making money from their films. It is instructive to note that Dorothy Ghettuba was appointed as chairperson of the board of the Kenyan Film Commission in 2019. Thereafter there has been a marked improvement in the funding of local Kenyan Films by KFC through a programme labelled Film Empowerment programme (Kenya Film Commission Website, 2021). It remains to be established whether these efforts will be sustained and create an impact on filmmaking in Kenya. It also remains to be seen if women will be equal beneficiaries of these empowerment efforts.

5.3.3: Funding Marketing and Visibility Efforts by Women Filmmakers

The film industry can be used to shape the nation's image in the international community, especially from a cultural perspective as I mentioned in Chapter One of this Study. It was also evident that little had been done to promote Kenya as a good destination for foreign filmmakers in the region. Indeed, most of the marketing undertaken overseas was aimed at marketing Kenya as an ideal tourism destination, rather than a filmmaking destination.[65]

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[64] See the interview here. Jewell, Catherine (June 2015). Valuing Africa's Creativity: An Interview With Kenyan TV Entrepreneur Dorothy Ghettuba. Retrieved from https://www.wipo.int/wipo_magazine/en/2015/03/article_0005.html

[65] Although wildlife documentaries had often provided free marketing for Kenya, tourism was the most benefiting sector (Ritchie & Crouch, 2009). Wildlife documented films created an environment where local filmmakers could learn from foreign producers on location in Kenya. As such, in January 2019 the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB) hosted the Film fare, one of the most famous Bollywood magazine, for a shoot on diverse tourism products and

KFC, in partnership with the French Embassy, has an annual three-day initiative called Kalasha Film Festival whose main objective is to showcase Kenya as a major regional hub for film and TV production, post-production, and distribution across all platforms and genres while reinforcing the uniqueness of Kenya as a shooting location. Therefore, it should offer a platform for all the players and the festival-goers from the Film and TV industry to "gather, discuss, exchange, collaborate, share stories and, develop new business opportunities" (Kenya Film Commission, 2018). The 2018 event took place from 27th to 29 March where, for the first time, cash awards were given to winners (Kenya Film Commission, 2018; "UNESCO," n.d.). The rewards which were given, which amounted to approximately $ 3,900 per award, were only given to overall winners - both male and women- in TV series and feature film categories. In this festival, two women won awards for the best short film [Davina Leonard-*Poacher*, 2017] and, best feature film, and best director [Ravneet 'Sippy' Chadha-*Subira*, 2017 (Rono-Waweru, 2019; Kwach, 2019).[66] The cash award was not enough to make substantive investments in the film industry. Thus, this may discourage women from venturing into this industry. Yambo-Odotte suggested that given about $50,000 she would tell a Kenyan story that could be accepted globally:

> But the problem here is lack of finance they have the ability. I mean give me five million today and I will tell you a story, I will tell you a Kenyan story that will suddenly help change the face of Kenya on that particular subject anywhere in the world, (Dommie Yambo-Odotte, February 20, 2018).

> Mungai concurred with Yambo-Odotte:
> I know that the biggest problem every filmmaker would say is funding (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

> This section shows that the marketing and visibility efforts undertaken by women in the Kenyan film industry are often challenged by a lack of adequate financial resources, as seen earlier, *He Who Pays the Piper Calls the Tune*. Lack of access to platforms, locally as well as internationally was also another major challenge facing women.

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experiences in the country. This presented an opportunity for filmmakers to showcase Kenya as a filming destination (Mwakio, 2019, January 22). This shows that tourism created opportunities to for women filmmakers to interact with other regional and international filmmakers.

[66] The 2019 Kalasha event saw improvement where shortlisted films were uploaded for viewing and public voting on online mobile application called StarTimes. See KFC, 2019-Whats' new-Kenya Film Commission forges partnership with StarTimes Kenya. Retrieved from http://kenyafilmcommission.com/index.php/whats-new-article

5.3.4: Foreign Funding and Co-production

Foreign organisations have played key roles in providing funding for filmmakers in Kenya. As already mentioned, filmmakers such as Kahiu secured foreign funding for her film *Rafiki*. *Rafiki* would not have been funded by KFC due to the subject matter as I have explained in Chapter Four of this study when describing government support for filmmakers. *Rafiki* was co-produced by Kahiu's Afrobubblegum [Kenya] and Steven Markovitz of Big World Cinema based in South Africa, together with foreign film companies such as MPM [France], Shortcut Films [Lebanon], Ape and Bjorn [Norway], Rinkel Film [Netherlands] and Razor Film [Germany] (CineEurpoa, 2021).

Currently, Kenyan films that travel internationally are mostly funded by European countries. This usually happens once they get noticed by potential donors as evidenced by the film *Rafiki*. In this regard, the study's findings show that there are usually more prospects for getting international funding than local. Even foreign funders who are locally based such as Ginger Ink, One Fine Day Films and Nest Collective[67] play a vital role in financing local film production. Ginger Ink is "a Kenyan-based film servicing [which provides equipment and logistical support to film makers] and production company which works all over Africa" (Ginger Ink Website, n.d). Ginger Ink provides filmmakers with valuable creative input and practical support for media projects such as commercials, documentaries, and feature films Ibid). The One Fine Day Films Company, which was founded in 2008 by German film directors Tom Tykwer and Marie Steinmann-Tykwer aims at providing an opportunity for Africans to write and produce their own stories under the mentorship of experienced filmmakers. It also helps them reach an international audience on the big cinematic screen (Creative Africa Website, 2016). The company is funded by BMZ and The Arri Group.[68]

Until now, One Fine Day Films and their Nairobi-based partner Ginger Ink successfully produced five feature films (One Fine Day Films Website, 2016). Kibinge's production, *Something Necessary* (2014) was mooted and supported at a workshop held by One Fine Day Films in partnership with Ginger Ink.

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[67] The Nest Collective was founded in 2012 and is based in Nairobi. It is a multidisciplinary arts collective which has created works in film, music, fashion, visual arts and literature The Nest Collective also founded HEVA, Africa's first creative business fund of its kind—to strengthen the livelihoods of East Africa's creative entrepreneurs (The Nest Creative Website, 2018). This creates a village society in which African filmmakers could exchange views, market their work and learn from one another. Retrieved from https://thenestcollective.co.uk/about/

[68] Arri is a global supplier of motion picture film equipment. Retrieved from https://www.arri.com/en/

An example of female filmmakers who have undertaken co-production is Carol Kioko, a Kenyan female filmmaker, producer, and director based in South Africa. She runs the 48-hour film project. Together with other independent filmmakers, she also runs a caucus of Africa-to-Africa co-productions. Each year, they do five productions. As of January 2014, she was doing two co-productions with two other Kenyans: one based in South Africa and the other in Nairobi, Kenya (Smart Monkey TV, 2014).

The Kenya Film Commission (KFC) 2017 (May 22nd to 24th) carried out the "Sherekea Israel Festival Set to Kick off in Kenya." The event, among others, incorporated a capacity-building work that brought together filmmakers. It also sparred co-production and financing facilitated by KFC and renowned filmmakers from Israel. This and other similar events create room for women filmmakers to get opportunities for co-production (Kenya Film Commission Website, 2021).

A study by Nguma (2015) titled, "*The influence of internal and external factors affecting the Kenya film industry*" sought to find out why Kenya filmmakers formed co-production partnerships. The findings of the study showed that women entered these partnerships to share financial burdens. Whereas 4% of the respondents were neutral on whether the Kenyan film industry should form co-production partners to share the financial burdens, 54% of the respondents agreed while the other 43% strongly agreed. This showed that co-production was preferred in the country for purposes of sharing financial burdens.

Apart from women filmmakers being forced to tell stories dictated by their funders and getting opportunities to form co-productions with these donors, however, these filmmakers may face other challenges in the film industry related to sexual harassment and discrimination as illuminated in the next chapter.

In conclusion, local funding would boost the morale of filmmakers who must depend on foreign producers to fund their projects. Diawara (2010) poses the question, "Should African film-makers seek production funding from western inclined multi-national organisations?" However, until African countries can provide viable mechanisms to ensure sufficient funding for their projects is availed to women, women must rely on foreign funding sources. This, in the end, would gag their ability to tell their stories without foreign influence. Sources of funding need to be opened to African professional women filmmakers who can talk about the problems of women better than anyone else (Ellerson, 2009). One way of opening funds to African professional women filmmakers is by forging collaborative efforts concerning funding which we shall see in the next section.

5.4: Collaborative Efforts

There is a Kiswahili proverb, which goes, "*Kidole kimoja hakivunji chawa.*" It means a single finger cannot kill a louse. Collaboration is a key aspect of filmmaking yet, the focus is often on individual filmmakers.

Collaboration can enhance the capacity of women to perform well in the film industry. Here I refer to institutional collaborations, government body to government body, private organisation to government organisation, and industry player to industry player collaborations and even among filmmakers. In South Africa for example, the Gauteng Film Commission advances and supports African women filmmakers. Through this partnership, it has been possible to increase women's involvement in the industry. This occurs through workshops and screenings. As a result, more than 200 women have been supported (Gauteng Film Commission Website, n.d.). The Gauteng Film Commission also launched the month-long women's month from 10th to 31st August 2020. This initiative showcased the work and efforts of women in the film and television sector in Gauteng using virtual platforms across popular social media channels (Gauteng Film Commission South Africa, 2021). In this regard, the only way for the gender disparity in the film industry to be addressed is if there was a collaborative effort in the industry. Partnerships are the way to go in the process of enhancing the participation of women in the film industry (Nguma, 2015).

Mukii believes that there is a need to work with other filmmakers because then only can one progress. Kahiu agrees with Mukii that it is imperative for filmmakers to work together on film projects, exchange ideas, support each other, and not compete since Kenyan cinema is small and releases few feature films in a year (Barlet, 2014).

To demonstrate the need for collaborative efforts in filmmaking, Zama Mkosi, the former CEO of South Africa's National Film and Video Foundation, showed that a lack of collaboration and partnerships is correlated with a lack of opportunities for women filmmakers (Mkosi, 2016). In this regard, the only way for the gender disparity in the film industry to be addressed is if there was a collaborative effort among all the stakeholders in the industry by creating opportunities where none exists to give a helping hand to those who want to join the industry. In this regard, it is evident that for Kenya as well as any other African country, partnerships are the way to go in the process of enhancing the participation of women in the film industry.

Some key ways that respondents for this study suggested that could foster collaborative efforts were first, and in agreement with Mkosi (ibid), more women not only needed to be in leadership positions but also to support other women to abate the obstacles faced by women in

the industry. Mukii revealed that she had deliberately decided to work more with women animators by offering them internships because she felt women were more focused on what they wanted to achieve. To Mukii, even if a woman did not have the prerequisite skills, it would be more valuable to work with her than with a man. Mukii further revealed that 99.5% of those who sought internships with her were men who were not even qualified and had never worked with animation but were confident and daring to apply for an internship. However, women would approach her with trepidation and most often did not realise the skills they had. Nevertheless, she would select the women. She gave an example of how she decided to select a woman intern as opposed to a man:

> Majority of the guys who have approached me online will literary ask me, 'How can you make animation without using 3D?' You know they've never even watched a film. Like one of my films is six minutes long. They don't even do research. But women who have approached me will say, 'Hey, I really liked this film. I really liked the way you combined that stuff.' (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

Secondly, when women made achievements in the industry this could inspire other women to do so. For instance, when Mungai won the UNICEF award for best projection of an African woman's image at FESPACO in 1993 in Ouagadougou for her film *Saikati* (1992), and the Association of Professional in Communication Award for best African Woman Director in Burkina Faso in 1994, she perceived that she had won them to inspire other women (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018). Therefore, Mungai believed that when women won an award they perceived to have done so on behalf of other women as a way of inspiring them. Mungai held that because *Saikati* (1992) had travelled to international screens, this opportunity had created room for the recognition of women's contribution to the film industry in Kenya. Using the story of *Saikati* (1992), as an example, women in Kenya can identify with the story of lack of access to education for women due to early marriages in different communities, female genital mutilation (FGM), or preference for educating the boy child as opposed to the girl child, thus heightening the struggle against gender oppression which cannot be analysed without considering race, ethnicity, and sexuality as advanced by Intersectionality Theory (Lorde, 2007). Therefore, one way of enhancing the collaborative effort is by women celebrating the achievements of fellow women in the film industry. To further this argument, in 2016, one of my respondents, Nyagah, while attending the International Women's Festival in Zimbabwe as a jury member, had a meeting with other African women filmmakers to discuss how they could work together as women to make movies as female artists and how to get funding. Out of this, the African Women Filmmakers Hub was born (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

Collaborative efforts can also be seen among women who run film festivals in Africa. In September 2019, a women's film festival network training was held in Kigali, Rwanda. Here, a three-day in-depth strategic training was conducted for the senior management team for Ladima Women's Film Festival Network[69] (Utian-Preston, 2019; Ladima Foundation Network, n.d). The training reviewed the current state of the film festival space. Participants then evaluated each of the film festivals to ensure that they strongly positioned themselves through a relevant and authentic vision to drive forward their specific objectives. Some of the participants in the training were Matrid Nyagah of Udada International Women's Film Festival, Kenya, Sarah Kizza Nsigaye of Celebrating Womanhood Festival, Uganda, and Cornelia Glele of International Women's Film Festival Cotonou, Benin. As a result, Nyagah revealed that Udada would be relaunching in 2020. Preston observed that this networking which brings together African women in film may lead to a strong foundation of collaboration that would drive African film festivals forward.

It is worth pointing out that as of 2020, a Kenyan woman in Films Award (WIFA) was established by a lecturer of film at Kenyatta University, Dr Susan Gitimu. Though in its nascent years, the establishment affirms the sisterhood's craving for women to support, promote, and recognise each other's efforts in film. The WIFA Awards, going under the title Beyond The Film, is an affirmation of the intrinsic need to celebrate the little milestones created and put forth by women filmmakers in Kenya. [70] Such efforts are aimed at bringing women filmmakers in Kenya together and providing a space where diversity of women's voices, stories, and creativity is equally recognised and celebrated. Since it is still in its nascent years, its impact on the film industry will be established as time goes by.

Films can communicate ideas, and ambitions, promote African culture and create awareness of social issues. It is for this reason that Mungai believes that films have more impact than politicians' words, for politicians in Kenya are known to say one thing and deny it the next day to suit their political ambitions. This realisation has made these women filmmakers start initiatives like mentoring programmes, women film festivals, and boot camps. These include Docubox where Kibinge plays a key role in "enabling talented, driven, and focused East African filmmakers, with important and unique stories to tell, to produce high impact

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[69] Ladima Women's Film Festival operates under Ladima Foundation an outfit that was founded by Lara Utian Preston, Edima Otuokon and Lydai Idekula-Sobogon to offer support for African women filmmakers from African women and women around the world. They do this by mentoring women in various roles in the film, TV and content spaces. Retrieved https://www.screenafrica.com/2019/09/12/film/business/ladima-foundation-hosts-womens-film-festival-network-training-in-rwanda/

[70] https://beyondthefilm.org/women-in-film-award-wifa/

independent documentary films that unearth new realities about worlds, identities, and people for audiences in East Africa and around the world" (Docubox Website, n.d.); Udada International Women's Film Festival where Nyagah "provides a platform for established and emerging female talent in this industry to exhibit their work, discuss, exchange, and network with each other, the public, and other stakeholders" (Udada International Women's Film Festival Website, n.d.)[71] and; Development Through Media (DTM) where Yambo Odotte, Mukii creates a forum for independent media practitioners to tell stories that are otherwise shunned by mainstream media (DTM Website, n.d.). Through these platforms, these three women filmmakers mentioned revealed in my interviews with them that they deliberately take in female interns, as they believe they are more focused on what they want to learn, to help highlight the work of women filmmakers and issues to do with gender, development, and governance.

Some of the women filmmakers had opposing views on women in leadership. They advanced that as much as women need to support each other, it should be with a purpose and not just filling up numbers for the sake of it. Yambo-Odotte suggested that there should be mechanisms that help women rally themselves in male-dominated spaces by supporting one another as well as supporting legislation aimed at advancing women's causes among other interventions. She insisted that until Kenya feels the differences that women can bring into politics and decision-making positions, only then will this trickle down to other sectors of the economy such as film as well. Efforts to pass key legislation to ensure that women get more positions in the parliament in line with constitutional provisions have repeatedly failed (BBC, 2018, December 12). In Chapter Four of this study, I have mentioned the Gender Bill failing to be passed for the fourth time by the Kenyan parliament.

Kahiu and Yambo-Odotte on the other hand, strongly believed that there were not enough women in leadership. As such creating more spaces for women should not be tantamount to giving them preferential treatment. Kahiu emphasised that:

> A woman who helps a woman helps a man. A woman who helps anybody is a woman who has the ability to help somebody. So, it is not preferential treatment. But I wish there were more preferential treatment so that there would be more women pulled up (Wanuri Kahiu, March 7, 2018).

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[71] Udada International Women's Film Festival was founded by Matrid Nyagah. Udada, Wanjiru Kinyanjui and Naomi Mwaura. However, Udada is now run solely by Matrid Nyagah. Udada, which means sisterhood, screens films from all over the world that are about women, for women and by women. Retrieved https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/magazine/udada-festival-in-second-edition--1341900

Mukii also believed that mentoring women was also not giving them preferential treatment because giving them an opportunity was giving them a chance to grow in the film industry. She notes that:

> For myself, I have decided I definitely need to work with more women animators and in terms of having internships or these sorts of opportunities where you can grow more women in the animation industry (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

This emanates from the fact that women need to be empowered as envisaged by affirmative action. This is corroborated by international protocols such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 (UN General Assembly, 1948) of which Kenya is a signatory. The need to support women through affirmative action is also envisaged by the Constitution of Kenya (Kenya Law Reform Commission Website, 2010).

Kibinge also added her voice to the discourse by saying that she believed in encouraging "our sisters." She pointed out that a lot of the best producers in the country were women. She named producers like Dorothy Ghettuba (film and TV), Appie Matere (Film and TV produced six films in six months), Emily Wanja (film and TV and in-house Docubox producer) and Krysteen Savane (*Watu Wote*, 2017 producer).

Suffice it to say then that women in leadership benefit the whole community (women, men, boys, and girls), and dismantle patriarchal systems that discriminate against women, which is what African feminism and postcolonial feminist theories advance as seen in the literature review chapter of this study.

Regrettably, women in Kenya were often seen as their nemesis which Kibinge refers to "self-hatred and self-scarring" (Judy Kibinge, January 23, 2018). This made it hard for collaborations to succeed. In the absence of an atmosphere where women could consolidate their efforts and work together towards the realisation of joint goals in the film industry, their success would be compromised. In this regard, Mungai talks of the lack of support from fellow women filmmakers when posed with the question, "do you think it [patriarchy] turns women against each other as well? To this she says:

> Yes, it does because it is very hard to see women supporting each other because even when I started *Saikati* when I was doing it, still I can see as much as it was getting this international attention, invitation, and fame I could still feel, I could come and find out even sometimes among those [women] who were fighting against what I was doing (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

Nyagah agrees with Mungai's view on women undoing each other in the industry. She revealed that her counterparts almost succeeded in taking over Udada International Women's Film Festival,[72] an outfit she founded, but donors identified Udada more with her and hence she continues to run it (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

Likewise, collaborations in the creative industry can be seen at the global level. Citing Arnold (2006), Wamalwa (2018) in a study entitled, "Language Choice, Performance Aesthetics and Quality in Selected Kenyan Films," shows that "there has emerged a trend, recently, especially among smaller nations in coming together either to pool funds, as in multinational co-productions or to pool creative resources as is the case with La femme Nikita series where collaboration between European and American money and talent has been assembled as a strategy to finance and reach a wider market for the film." International co-production strategies are vital in strengthening the film industry; this can be exampled in the case between Japan and Korea (Li 2014) and Chinese-USA cooperation (Kokas, 2012) among others.

In Kenya, on February 4, 2019, the Kenya Film Commission, in partnership with the Ministry of Information, Communications, and Technology (MICT) signed an agreement with the Chinese and Indian governments to enhance the Kenyan film industry. This would grow the Kenyan film industry by taking advantage of the China and SMART Africa markets through co-production with China (Kenya Film Commission, 2019).[73] The partnership created a platform in which screenplays and scriptwriting competitions would be held. The Kenyan Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Information Communication and Technology pointed out that the winning scripts would be co-produced by international production houses in China for screening in the Chinese and African markets. This is significant for Kenya as she would tap into the economic gain of China. A report by Deloitte forecasted that China would experience expansion by 2010 and hence overtake North America in box office revenues and moviegoers to become the largest film market in the world (Deloitte, 2017). This meant that co-production with the Chinese film market will result in a win-win situation for China and its foreign counterparts, Kenya included. The scriptwriters in the above-mentioned competition were

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[72] See footnote 25

[73] SMART Africa is an initiative that was mooted by African Heads of State and Government in 2013 in Kigali, Rwanda to accelerate sustainable socioeconomic development on the continent. This was in a bid to usher Africa into a knowledge economy through affordable access to Broadband and usage of Information and Communications Technologies (SMART AFRICA, 2019). It is envisaged that this will contribute to economic growth and job creation, some of the pillars of The Kenya film industry as discussed in Chapter One of this study. Retrieved https://www.brandsouthafrica.com/investments-immigration/south-africas-film-industry

expected to develop concepts that revolved around six themes epics, romance, science fiction, fantasy, mythical drama, and thriller (Mukara, 2019; Kenya Film Commission Instagram Page, 2019). A jury of 9 (4 women and 5 men) shortlisted 20 writers out of the 549 submissions made. Three of these writers were women, which was very low against 17 men. After making efforts to indulge KFC officials, I was unable to get data showing how many women submitted their scripts. This shows a lack of openness and transparency on the part of KFC thus making information gathered not actionable for would-be stakeholders. Therefore, it was not possible to ascertain the claim by Kibinge that there were more women writers than men in Kenya (Judy Kibinge, January 23, 2018).

Additionally, on April 17, 2019, talks were held between KFC's CEO, Timothy Owase, and an official from India's Film Festival Worldwide, Rahul Bali, to discuss collaboration between the two countries' film industry in the Indian Film Festival that was set for August 10-15, 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. The discussions also included co-production opportunities between Kenya and India; the creation of a linkage between actors and cooperation between the film commissions in the two countries (Kenya Film Commission, 2019).

These efforts could play pertinent roles in availing financial resources for women in the Kenyan film industry. In this regard, gatekeepers in the Kenyan film industry such as the KFC and Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB), among others should do their best to ensure that fruitful collaborations are instituted to enhance the success of women in the film industry. Another possibility would be in establishing an indigenous industry that women could then benefit women in the film industry. However, there was no evidence that these organisations were doing enough to realise these benefits as has been seen in the previous chapter on government support for women in the film industry.

On the other hand, even with the low numbers of women filmmakers depicted on the winning list of screenplays and scriptwriting competitions mentioned above, there is still a growing presence of women in the film industry not just directing films but also writing scripts at a global level in the industry. For example, Kahiu was set to co-write and co-direct with Nigerian Nnedi Okorafor Amazon's drama series titled *Wild Seed* based on Octavia Butler's 1980 novel (Govan, 1984). Kahiu was also directing *The Thing About Jellyfish* by Ali Benjamin and *Covers* by Flora Greeson. Kahiu and Kibinge are members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science synonymous with The Oscars (Kenya Film Commission, 2019; Mahtani, 2017).

Data from interviews also show that collaborative mechanisms should be put in place by industry gatekeepers such as KFC and KFCB to support women in film. This could be through recognising talent and helping women become visible, which could encourage more and more women to take part in film through funding, marketing of women films, international exposure through film festivals, and, nurturing young talents in colleges, among others. In support of some of these measures, Wanuri reiterated that:

> First, they [regulating bodies] should be going out to create relationships between people in the industry, bringing them together, workshops, masterclasses would be great. Advocating for co-productions [treaties] with other countries. We are never going to grow unless we are able to work with others because others are so advanced and we can learn from them. Cultural exchanges, pushing for cultural exchanges, finding ways to support the filmmakers, and choosing- and finding ways to support both male and female filmmakers so that there is an equal number of filmmakers been supported. And taking the book from the NVBF [NVFV] which is the National Video Board Foundation [National Video and Film Foundation] in South Africa which has great government support of foreign filmmakers and has become a go-to destination not only because of the rebate that they give but also because they are supporting their own. And people see that and recognise and feel that it has value. (Wanuri Kahiu, March 7, 2018).

Collaborative efforts could impact the industry immensely. Ayisi-Ahwireng (2017) carried out a study whose findings showed that collaborative efforts in the film industry bear good fruits for the countries that enter them. In Nigeria for example, collaborations under former president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's administration, Ayisi-Ahwireng (ibid) further noted, that administration resulted in "stimulation of the growth in the film sector. It also enhanced the attraction of film investors, provided incentives to film produced, and established a flexible tax regime that could permit production and co-production in Nigeria." In Kenya thus, collaborative efforts could yield similar results. The propensity of collaboration to enhance women to perform well in the film industry was supported by Kibinge who said that, in South Africa, it yielded a lot. To this, she pointed out that:

> Like you talked about the South African NFVF, which is like their commission, for a long time everywhere you go, they are writing to you, they're setting up meetings and it was always the same girl, she is the CEO of that thing, she knows every filmmaker, she is trying to reach for every collaboration, very small, very resourced but very awake (Judy Kibinge, February 15, 2018).

As shown in the preceding discourse, collaborations yield immense benefits for women in the film industry in areas such as access to funding, training, apprenticeship, cooperation with other filmmakers, logistics, and marketing.

5.5: Conclusion

This chapter set out to introspect how Kenyan women filmmakers enter the space of filmmaking and are sustained in it. It established that women filmmakers have two routes of entry into the film industry. The first is through training in colleges and universities both in Kenya and abroad. The study has found out that many women filmmakers in Kenya trained abroad for film since the Kenyan training institutions were not well equipped to provide the requisite film knowledge that they craved. Those who acquired this requisite knowledge from abroad, have selflessly disseminated this knowledge to other Kenyan filmmakers through workshops and seminars. In this instance, Matrid Nyagah and Judy Kibinge stand out. Secondly, this study has found out that some women filmmakers had on-the-job training which meant that they get into filmmaking and trained while producing films. This was the case with Judy Kibinge.

In terms of funding, which is a key component in sustaining one in the film industry, the study found out that Kenyan women filmmakers find it hard to secure funding due to various reasons. Some of them turned this hardship into a challenge by forming support mechanisms for others who were trying to find footing in the industry. In this regard, Judy Kibinge's founding of the film fund Docubox stands out. The study also sought to interrogate how collaborations have been used by Kenyan women filmmakers to sustain themselves in the industry. Here it found out that there had been mixed fortunes for women filmmakers.

Women in the film industry were faced with numerous challenges pegged to training, funding, and collaborative efforts, among others. From the onset of their careers, these women have to obtain some form of training or apprenticeship. They then passed through numerous stages, taking on numerous roles to succeed in the film industry. Sometimes, training opportunities were not readily available. The problem was compounded by a lack of financial support, unsupportive government film institutions, and a lack of good marketing opportunities for their work. However, women could overcome these challenges if gatekeepers such as KFC and KFCB created relationships between people in the industry through workshops and masterclasses as well as efforts to advocate for co-productions with other countries. Identifying and nurturing talent could also enhance the quality of the movies that women make. The next chapter presents some of these challenges in detail.

Chapter Six

INCLUSIVITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF WOMEN IN THE KENYAN FILM INDUSTRY: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS

There are opportunities even in the most difficult moments-Wangari Maathai (Unbowed 2008)

6.1: Introduction

This research has so far acknowledged that Kenyan women filmmakers have risen from the messy moments of patriarchy and colonialism to become filmmakers of global repute as producers, actresses, directors, financiers, and scriptwriters of film, and TV as well as videos by sheer competence and talent. From the findings of this study, Kenyan women in their quest for telling these stories, have suffered disappointments occasioned by lack of sufficient and proper channels of funding, lack of distribution possibilities, lack of audiences in the absence of proper cinema halls, and continuous overflow of cheap film products from foreign countries hence occasioning cultural alienation as well as other social factors like sexual harassment. I have discussed some of these challenges in the preceding chapters. However, there is a need to collate and discuss them deeply and coherently in a chapter of its drawing from the experiences of the women filmmakers interviewed for this study and the lessons they have drawn from these challenges. There is also a need to discuss new challenges not mentioned elsewhere in this study like inclusivity and lastly, discuss the responsiveness of these women to these issues that affect them.

While looking at the rise of African women filmmakers, Dovey (2012) notes that filmmaking in Africa in the postcolonial period has been seen as male-dominated with very few women directors emerging. This assertion can be easily dismissed in a nation like Kenya where women are easily visible in filmmaking. However, a keen observer will note that this statement may just be true owing to the fact of the lack of thorough ongoing studies and the non-existence of modern digital formats of works by women directors. At the turn of the century, Kenya experienced a rebirth of filmmaking and it is easily attributable to her women filmmakers including young female directors such as Wanuri Kahiu, Matrid Nyagah, Jinna Mutune, Ng'endo Mukii, Judy Kibinge, and pioneers like Anne Mungai and Dommie Yambo-Odotte. This chapter, therefore, assesses the challenges that these women in the Kenyan film industry have faced and lessons learnt, the inclusion of women in relevant sectors in the film industry and the responsiveness of these women in the film industry including the younger upcoming women filmmakers.

6.2: Barriers Women Face in the Kenyan Film Industry

African filmmakers face several difficulties ranging from socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers not excluding a lack of technical know-how of filmmaking (Orlando, 2007). Issues of competence, lack of ambition, scarcity of talent and experience and the environment provided for filmmakers were investigated to establish whether they are major impediments for women in the film industry in Kenya or not. In this study, as in similar other studies, like Hankin (2007) and Petty (1996), funding constraints, gender discrimination, patriarchal systems of the Kenyan society and societal perceptions of women are barriers women in the film industry must tackle while competency and scarcity of talent and experience are not challenges faced by Kenyan filmmakers.

6.2.1: Funding Barriers

As noted earlier, one's presence in the film industry is signified by the kind of film projects he/she successfully engages in. Film projects usually require funding which can be sourced from multiple sources. In mature film industries where there is a robust culture of film viewership at the cinema theatres, a film project can be self-sustaining; enabling the filmmaker to recoup his/her investment in the project as well as sustain his or her livelihood. In film industries where film projects are not self-sustaining like in the Kenyan case, the filmmakers suffer due to a lack of funding. They must access third-party film funding, and this becomes a major problem as has been discussed in Chapters Four and Five of this study. Economic challenges are barriers women in the film industry face, and this entails challenges in accessing funding and other resources required for the process of film making inhibiting the growth of the industry. Funding film production is a global challenge filmmakers face, (Björgvinsson, 2014) and as Falicov, (2010) points out, 'persistent cultural politics continue to plague the film funding dynamic, especially in countries in Africa and other colonial territories' In Kenya women filmmakers with both low and high budget films struggle to find funding, limiting production as Mungai states:

> I know that the biggest problem every filmmaker would say is funding but when it comes to telling stories, directing and all that we have what it takes (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

> Nyagah, reveals, as seen earlier in Chapter Five, the struggles she went through to receive funding for her first film project *Twists of Fate* (2009), as far as taking a loan through her mother's group:

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I don't even have a car, I don't even have, you know, I can't pay them they've signed a contract, they can take me to court. I then went back to, I went back home, I went to my mom, she is a businesswoman, went to her shop, then she had gotten some money from these chama cha wamama (small women microfinance groups) and they had ridiculous interest, 25% interest (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

Funding is a challenge that every filmmaker, whether man or woman, faces. However, as Yambo-Odotte and Nyagah highlight, women are doubly disadvantaged because they are still discriminated against as they seek funding:

The biggest challenge to our growth was because of resources, economic issues which discriminate against women (Dommie, February 20, 2018).

Because sometimes as a woman producer it's hard, it is twice as hard to get funding because you go to meet someone, and they just want to take advantage of you. They give you an option, it's either this or this, again it depends, I mean I've heard stories where some women had to you know, accept that but it comes to bite them later in life (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

There are some economic barriers that limit the growth of these women in the film industry as Mungai opines:

The environment is there but I won't say it's conducive because as I said our films, to make films you need money whether it is a low budget or a high budget you need at least some money (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

Since this is a global challenge, some national film industries try to alleviate the problem by creating avenues to help filmmakers. For example, the South African government has targeted the cultural and creative industries to receive government financial support ensuring the growth of the industry and intern employment opportunities in the country (Snowball, Collins, & Tarentaal, 2017).

Limited funding both locally and regionally often results in filmmakers seeking funding abroad. This has the advantage of injecting much-needed finances into the film projects. On the other hand, it has one huge disadvantage in that the financiers determine the content of films produced and exhibited (Schuhmann, Mistry, Levin, Wenner, and Von Braun, 2005). Finance and tax policies placed in the country further affect the film industry and there is a lack of movements addressing the same. A similar case can be observed in Tanzania where cultural institutions and film policies were used for cultural control and this impacted filmmaking

(Mwakalinga, 2013). As Nyagah states, production and filming in Kenya are greatly limited by such regulations:

> Now, something we are really fighting for is tax rebates because it's damn expensive to shoot in Kenya. Even Kenyan films are shot in South Africa, for how long are we going to do that? (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

6.2.2: Gender-Based Discrimination

Women in the film industry have been discriminated against, with gender being used as a factor to determine the respect accorded to women on the film set, the funding women filmmakers receive, and the recognition given to women despite the accomplishments attained. Women filmmakers face gender discrimination by their male counterparts on the film set regardless of their position. Bielby & Bielby, (1996) highlights how women writers in the film industry are disadvantaged regarding their earnings regardless of their accomplishments throughout history. Mukii and Mungai share their experiences of discrimination while on set:

> And in terms of being on set, it can be very intimidating as well because you are having a bunch of men like you have men who are much bigger than you, they are talking to each other the entire time and you are the director. I've been on set and had a crew member talk to me in a disrespectful way and then I asked him, do you remember who is actually going to pay you at the end of the day or do you want to go home? And he changed the way he was talking to me. But at that point, he was actually imitating my voice…which you wouldn't do to a male director…I was working with a sound recordist called Edna and she said, 'you know we can't shoot here because I can hear the generator for the lights…' and the guys from the lights ignored her. So, I know every time Edna is on the set the guys were ignoring her because she is a woman (Ngendo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

> I did experience that because it was like she is trying to be a woman director let's see what she can do. I have experienced that. I have also experienced when I am looking for funds to make a film. Funny even in organisations they always ask who is the man behind, who is the man behind supporting you (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

Women, more so African filmmakers, face discrimination based on the content they produce regarding expected imaging of Africa and or what an African story should be thus undermining the work and achievements of women filmmakers in Kenya. The definition of an

'authentic' African film and the critic of African films can be linked to post-colonialism (Murphy, 2000). The impact of such perception is often deceptive and indirectly may influence the specifications that initiatives like feminists need to adhere to (Lewis, 2005). Judy Kibinge, highlights how her film *Dangerous Affair* (2009) was not viewed as 'African' indicating the expectations on such filmmakers to focus on certain areas in their work. Such critics reveal western perceptions of Africa as Kibinge noted:

> I think to a certain extent even in the, like when we did *dangerous affairs* it bothered me. There was one guy who was just like 'that is not like an African film.' I find that discriminatory to imagine that just because you make films, you must be defined completely by it, and we must cover a certain area of issues. Which is crazy because America with all its struggles, don't make films showing all that…They don't make films about that. Am not saying we have to ignore it but that discrimination (Judy Kibinge, February 15, 2018).

In Africa, instead of focusing on eliminating sexism or transforming patriarchy into neutral frameworks, the focus should be on the convergence of the identities; masculinity and femininity, to align with cultural expectations and interests (Aniekwu, 2006). Gender-based discrimination imposed on African women in the film industry reveals how feminist movements fail to challenge this inequality while still providing room for various frameworks to address the inequalities and limitations that exist in the dynamic African film industry that promote women's rights interests and other gender issues.

6.2.3: Patriarchal Systems

The patriarchal system recreates a hierarchy of power in which the man is seen and conditioned to be dominant while the woman is truncated and disempowered. It assigns life skill attributes like assertiveness and authority of decision-making to men and thus leaves women on the fringes and margins of agency. In an industry that thrives on these life skills, it becomes difficult for those conditioned in patriarchy to accept that women can indeed be filmmakers. Patriarchy recognises the man as dominant in society and this greatly affects women filmmakers by defining gender roles and expected roles women should play in society. This is a global issue and not just limited to Kenya. For example, Jones and Pringle (2015) note that in New Zealand's film industry women have a price they pay for doing their dream. This is the case in Kenya where traditional household roles women play still affects their pursuit as filmmakers. Mukii gave an example of how her upbringing was different from her brother's

and her experience where a partner expected her to quit her pursuit as a film animator to have and raise children:

> So a male animator, or like I think guys in because general in the beginning when you are young you are being given like things, like I think my older brother used to pull things radios apart and then put them back together and I would sit there and think he is doing this because he is a boy…Like people will not even understand what you are doing. Why you are going on a trip to shoot in Wajir with a bunch of men, obviously someone is very backwards thinking, you know, are you a prostitute, it really very… I can't just leave the country the way I used to. I remember telling my partner that at the time, my partner at the time I said exactly this, "and I said I've realised if I want to have children, I have to make sure that I am with a partner like who will be willing to stay and take care of the children while I travel." And he turned to me and said, 'How long long   are you expecting to continue this lifestyle?' That was the question, this is someone who is also in the film industry. This is someone who knows I go outside to pitch my project and get grants. They have seen that I have received my money through this travel and now they are calling it a lifestyle. This is someone who also does exactly the same work and has to do the same things to get money. So, for me, because I'm a woman, it's a lifestyle but for him, it's a career (Ngendo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

The patriarchy in our society further affects the consumption of content by women filmmakers. Mungai demonstrates this by giving an example of a friend who was not allowed to watch her film as it was produced by a woman:

> Another lady told me that her husband told her you are going to see a film done by a woman? You are not going to leave this house to see a film done by a woman. So, she called me and told me, 'Ann I wanted to see your film but my husband is saying how can you go and see a film done by a woman?' (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

Patriarchy also contributes to division among women, causing women to turn against one another, even in the film industry. Mutune states that patriarchy confines women to a particular set standard and that should not be:

> Because a woman is a homemaker, she should not apologise for having a vision at all. And I feel the culture makes you apologise for that, again the capitalist culture makes you apologise and which the majority of Kenyan women are alive have been under. And so yeah, it turns women against each other because a woman who is a homemaker feels the woman in the office is not been true to her woman nature and vice versa. The woman who is in the office feels she is really advanced than the one who is at home.

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So, you know, it has turned women against each other (Jinna Mutune, February 18, 2018).

The perceptions of gender roles pose a barrier to women's access to the film industry. For example, Mutune highlights how a woman filmmaker is expected to be aggressive or shout to succeed. Such perceptions are propagated by patriarchal systems and undermine the potential of these filmmakers:

The value of the patriarchal system associates with the woman are not very favourable to a woman, to a woman filmmaker because she needs to be aggressive and she needs to understand negotiations, you know. She needs to put so much time in her work, all these are not necessarily what a homemaker woman value her, you know…And so when they're raised in a culture that tells them, that's humility, humility is not speaking up their issues, then you can't quite make a filmmaker (Jinna Mutune, February 18, 2018).

Here, Mutune blames the warped culture of conditioning men to be aggressive and macho as one of the reasons that make men look down upon women even in film. She argues that such socialisation encourages men to be belligerent and to possess authority as a natural right hence leaving women at the fringes of decision-making and agency. This is a global phenomenon in the film industry and is not just confined to Kenya. Kibinge concurs with Mutune when she differentiates between shouting and assertiveness. She calls out on the fallacy of patriarchy that conflates and associates boldness and decisiveness with machoism. She notes that:

And I think, as well people have a misconception that being strong means shouting, it doesn't. It just means being very…very…very clear about what you want and your crew in the sense that and they respect that. And they follow that, you know...and don't really feel the need to speak loudly and shout at everybody and have tantrums and I don't think that's useful (Judy Kibinge, 2018).

In every society, the role women play invites differing gender politics. However, women's approach to filmmaking is different; from the narratives, they tell, to how they work on set and with crews. Film is a tool through which women filmmakers seek to interrupt and defy the dominant historical representation of women. The post-colonial African feminists use film to challenge and change the normative representations of African women that do not necessarily represent them (Schuhmann et al., 2005). However, some films done on African society contribute to propagating a wrong perception of women. For example, African women in Nigerian movies are portrayed as having to constantly conform to the cultural construct of

being a good woman in their lives despite the progress made by these women across various industries (Abah, 2008).

There is another view of patriarchy and filmmaking that emerged during the research for this study. When the question of patriarchy was put forth to Judy Kibinge, she insisted that such things do not disturb her so much. She felt that it was a non-issue, especially in her career as a filmmaker. From the excerpt of the interview below, one notices that indeed, it might be helpful to rise above the limitations that women face in filmmaking:

Carol: Now, Kenya like many other African countries or even maybe in the world, the patriarchal system has kind of turned women against each other because sometimes you are forced to be a real woman

Judy: I don't, I think sometimes I live in an alternate universe

Carol: Come again

Judy: I think I live in an alternate universe as some of these questions I don't have a proper reply to because I just don't feel those things. I just and I have never felt them

Carol: Like now, for you…

Judy: I am trying to think of. I don't know how to reply. Like, I'll be making it up if I try to come up with the correct answer

Carol: Whatever you're doing, no-no-nothing stops you from what you are doing because of status and your role.

Judy: Yeah, something like that, nothing.

(Interview with Judy Kibinge, January 23, 2018).

Kibinge's response that nothing stops her from doing filmmaking, including patriarchy, is a testament that Kenyan women filmmakers can rise beyond the limitations that are placed in their filmmaking paths. It must be noted at this point that Kibinge was very dismissive of the idea of western feminism which she dismissed as looking at the issues of women in society as if in contradistinction with the men. She was dismissive of the fact of confrontational view of western feminism arguing that it is important for people just to exert themselves in every task and do their 'thing;' whether they are women or men. This is a view that is supported by Nyagah who also says that the work of the hands of women should speak for itself. When asked how discrimination can be fixed, she responds as follows:

As I said actions speak louder than words. So, if you want to be, I usually say if you want to be seen only let be heard also let your voice be speak for you. And let your

voice be the best of what you do. If you are a make-up person be the best, strive to be the best in everything you do. You know like, for me, like my prayer and my goal is to be the best sort after African woman producer and the rest of the world. People are looking for this Matrid because Matrid can make things done. Not because Matrid is young or we think Matrid is pretty or she is this this this. But then does my work translate to something? These are the things that are a plus…but then my work should speak for itself. My work is my voice coz you can go there and speak big but then your actions are … (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018)

The above response shows that Nyagah too believes, just like Judy Kibinge, that women can rise above their limitations and do a thorough job that can speak for itself. This is not to say that she does not appreciate the problems that beset women in filmmaking since elsewhere in the interview, she acknowledges and even names some of these problems as sexual harassment as has been discussed elsewhere in this study.

6.2.4: Sexual Harassment in Film Industry

Writing for Deutsche Welle (DW) news, Emmanuelle Landais (2018) noted that sexual harassment is rife in the African film scene as male filmmakers seek sexual favours from upcoming women filmmakers to include them in their projects. She recounted stories of African women filmmakers lamenting that they were either forced to give in or to quit involvement in some such projects as they could not comprise on the integrity of their work. This study also sought to inquire from the Kenyan women filmmaker if this was also the case in Kenya. It was established that indeed some of the Kenyan women filmmakers had suffered this ignominy. This was especially rife when seeking funding from their film projects as was narrated by Nyagah:

…sometimes as a woman producer it's hard, it is twice as hard to get funding because you go to meet someone, and they just want to take advantage of you [seek sexual favours]. They give you an option, it's either this or this, and again it depends. I mean I've heard stories where some women have had to you know, accept that [have a romantic relationship with those who can help them get funding from donors]… but it comes to bite them later in life. (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

Nyagah insinuates that the women who upheld integrity were likely not to receive funding. It was unclear if these women had addressed any sexual abuse, they had encountered

in the industry even as Kenya has made provision for this in the revised 2014 Sexual Offences Act section 24:1 which states that:

> Any person, who being in a position of authority, or holding a public office, who persistently makes any sexual advances or requests which he or she knows, or has reasonable grounds to know, are unwelcome, is guilty of the offence of sexual harassment and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of not less than three years or to a fine of not less than one hundred thousand shillings or to both (National Council for Law Reporting, 2014)

Regrettably, Nyagah did not mention having shared her story on other platforms such as the '#Me Too' Campaign as an avenue to address sexual harassment in the film industry in the case of this study. The '#Me Too' Campaign is a global social media platform that gives space for women to talk about the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment in the workplace, specifically in the film industry (Maryville University Website, 2021; Vagianos, 2017; The Guardian 2017). Also, there have been African initiatives such as South Africa's Sisters Working in Film and Television (SWIFT) and the continent-wide Ladima Organisations. These have provided counterpoints to the #Me Too movement in other countries.

There is a lack of empirical evidence for such invaluable support to Kenyan filmmakers through such campaigns. Also, there are problems with accessing protection under the Sexual Offence Act in Kenya. Even for those women who have a "legitimate" right [who could win court cases], their road to legal redress is not smooth. Also, with the high legal fees, ignorance, and technicality of the court process, women risk falling into foul play of the authorities who may take advantage of their vulnerability by sexually attacking them and forcing them to give bribes before they are accorded services (Kithaka, 2008). Worst still, women who are victims of sexual harassment may end up being victimised under section 24:2 (a-c) which criminalises the offence of making false allegations (National Council for Law Reporting, 2014). These may be some of the reasons that women considered and opt not to report, hence their silence on addressing sexual harassment in the film industry. Fowale (2008) calls this 'economic violence' that women in Nigeria and other parts of the world suffer silently. This compromises developmental opportunities for them as they are exploited or sexually harassed in exchange for economic favours.

6.3: Addressing the Challenges

Kenyan women filmmakers have come up with several strategies that help cushion fellow women filmmakers from the pangs of the challenges explained above. There are also commendable government efforts that help cushion them against the effects of these challenges as elaborated in the following section.

6.3.1: Quest for Inclusivity by Women in the Kenyan Film Industry

The inclusion of women in the film industry is vital as it influences the representation and portrayal of women on screen (Lauzen and Dozier, 1999). However, there has been little inclusion of women not just in Kenya but globally. For instance, in the UK where in 2015 only 20% of all directors, producers, writers, executive producers, editors and cinematographers were women (Wreyford & Cobb, 2017). This fight is particularly hard for African women more so Kenyan women because of the barriers of both patriarchy and the burden of the colonial legacy. Mutune states:

> We have great talent but it's not gonna be an overnight success because understanding not only are we fighting as women but there is also another discrimination ceiling that we have to break, because of course, the capitalist system protects the white male and then it gives, it opens more opportunities to the white female and then there is African American and then the other cultures in the west. Africans are like at the bottom of this value chain. So, you, so as an African filmmaker you are breaking all these ceilings to try to and get to the top. So, for us the journey is a bit longer than if you are just ah An American or all white (Mutune Jinna, February 18, 2018).

However, Ng'endo and Wanuri acknowledge the success the Kenyan female filmmakers are attaining globally. Similarly, Dovey (2012) acknowledges that women are at the forefront of the rebirth of filmmaking in Kenya. Additionally, Ellerson (2000) in her book *Sisters of the Screen: Women of Africa on Film, Video and* Television and film documentary *Sisters of the Screen: African Women in the Cinema* highlights the African female filmmakers, from pioneer filmmakers to women film students. Mukii observes that:

> I think in terms of you are looking at internationally and film festivals the most, at least visually present work is always Kenyan women's work, and when you are anywhere abroad Kenyan women are much more strongly represented than Kenyan men. And I think that's because we are looking at it from a more holistic approach (Ngendo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

This is a view corroborated by Kahiu when she insists that:

And in this country more than most including America have more women in the positions for power who are directors, we have a large percentage of women who are directing, who are producing, who are line producers, who are in quite big positions of power unlike other industries. So, actually for Kenya we have quite strong group of women in charge in film (Wanuri Kahiu, March 7, 2018).

Women are vital in the inclusion of other women in the film industry by creating a platform for others and should be included in the leadership of the film industry. This is similar to the finding of (Lauzen and Dozier, 1999; Bisschoff and Van de Peer, 2020) who concludes that having female executive producers exerts influence at a macro level, increasing the number of female characters and hiring female writers. Anne Mungai, acknowledges the role the former Vice-Chancellor (VC) of Kenyatta University, Olive Mugenda played in encouraging her to be a lecturer at the same institution:

I personally have been assisted by very few women I would say. Like I would say the person I even got excited to come to KU the vice-chancellor although she is no longer here Olive Mugenda, she was so excited that I as a woman had done this. She was one of the unique women who I found was happy about what I had done. Another woman was in the public service commission but those are rare cases of women who get excited and am praising this woman the former VC Olive Mugenda because she is even the one who made me want to come here (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

To this end, Kahiu avers:

I think that women should be in all positions of leadership especially because there's not enough women leaders in position, there's not enough women leaders. We need to be cognisant of that, we need to create space for that and also women need to support women in leadership positions which I think is one of our struggles (Wanuri Kahiu, March 7, 2018).

Recognition of women in the film industry is low despite the accomplishments made by female filmmakers. Globally, between 2008 and 2020 only 5.1% of best director nominations we to women while men had 94.9% of nominations (across the following 4 awards; Golden Globes, DGA Awards, Academy Awards and Critics' Choice) (Smith, Choueiti, and Pieper, 2018). Kibinge, points out how other successful filmmakers are still not given the recognition due to them:

I think the ways in which they shine are not recognised enough. Yeah. I think the way that they shine is just simply not recognised and pulled up enough and I think they need to be and if we were me I (sic) think they would be ruling the whole continent…The

film is based on Chimamanda's book [*Half of a Yellow Sun*] but the producer was a Nigerian woman [Yewande Sadiku]. And do you know finally the crowd after a long time started booing. Yeah, and at some point when she spoke people stood (clap) up and kind of gave her a standing ovation. They were just trying to tell these guys, 'do you people understand we didn't come to hear your *(sic). We came to listen to this amazing woman who has found a way to finance film and she's there and she's from a banking background from Nigeria.' So that to me was maybe the first time I realised oh my God this *(sic) is real. You know this thing of discrimination against, they didn't even let her speak, it gave me again such great respect for Njeri Karago because for her to get where she did in Hollywood, (Judy Kibinge, February 15, 2018).

6.4: Responsiveness of Women in the Kenyan Film Industry

Women filmmakers have been historically marginalised and African women in the film industry are an over-determined marginality. A positive response of women in the Kenyan film industry can be seen through the achievements made by collaboration among women in film, creation of funding opportunities, training and mentorship for younger filmmakers and the spurge in the film economy encouraging the growth of the industry not only for women but also for Kenyan men. Here are some of the ways the women filmmakers I interviewed suggested how the film industry can be responsive to their needs.

6.4.1: Collaborations

Nyagah highlights how her collaborations with other female filmmakers created an opportunity for other filmmakers to showcase their work to a larger audience through the UDADA film festival, she acknowledges having received tremendous support from female filmmakers not only in Africa but globally as well. The UDADA Film Festival seeks to develop a local and regional audience by showcasing films done by women and for women, it gives special attention to African films made by women and those films on African women (Festhome, 2014). She also highlights how the International Film Festival for Women of which she is a member started the African filmmaker's hub in Zimbabwe a first of its kind:

> There was a friend of mine, he is a Ugandan he understood French, so he was translating and translating and she runs a film festival and she was really excited about it. Because again in Africa we just had the one in Zimbabwe international film festival for women. We didn't have any in East Africa so I thought why not? I think this is something big it will be able to put women, because in Kenya most women, most producers are

women…We started err, I also just write there Zimbabwe then I can share with you even a paper that we came up with in the International Film Festival for Women, we started the African women filmmaker's hub, yeah African women filmmakers' hub (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

6.4.2: Platforms for Mentorship and Inspiration

Women have also sought to address the problems that beset their presence in the film industry by creating avenues for mentorship and inspiration. Younger women are seeking mentorship opportunities in the film industry and, as Nyagah and Mukii state, more women are seeking training in the industry, and this includes training in technical skills:

So we had the first film boot camp, and it was successful. We trained, these young girls and they did their first film and right now there is a need for more training and hands-on skills transfer and now this year we're going to have bigger one...We involve Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda it is going to be an East African film…We have more women now coming to be part of you know, of this and just by like the trainings and boot camp, we have more technical women, so someone is looking for sound women instead of always saying, because even on set, even if it's a woman doing sound, this is the sound man, you know (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

Kenyan women filmmakers have also undertaken mentorship initiatives to conduct hands-on training for upcoming female filmmakers to harness skills and increase capacity in the film industry. Such Initiatives are conducted by organisations like the Alliance of Slum Media Organisations (ASMO)[74]. In November 2019, ASMO, conducted a two-day training where the following outcomes were expected: to understand the status and the role of women in the film industry in Kenya; to raise the visibility of women filmmakers, and to contribute to the conversation about gender parity in the entertainment industry; to inspire new ideas and a plan for future collaborations, building (women friendly) filmmaking community, creating spaces for mentorship, peer networking and direct participation in filmmaking; identify ways to support and promote the work of women filmmakers to a wider audience and; enhance outreach efforts of decision-makers to connect with women directors and bring more films directed by women on the screen (Alliance of Slum Media Association, 2019). Some of the women filmmakers in this study created spaces for mentorship and peer networking. For

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[74] ASMO is a consortium established by six slum-based media organisations in 2016. It works with children, youth and their communities to give them opportunities to nurture their talents, create jobs, and communicate development messages about slum communities through film and photography. Retrieved https://asmokenya.org/women-in-film/

example, my respondents like Nyagah revealed that in 2017 she held the first female boot camp titled, "Her Lens", to train young women on the technical side of film. It was an intense two-week training. An advertisement was run to call for female applicants out of which six were selected. To show her commitment to this new project, Nyagah postponed going to the Oscars where her film *Watu Wote* (2017) had been nominated to nurture "Her Lens" (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018). Her Lens is a programme of Udada Trust (Udada Trust, n.d.).

Mungai in discussing the response to her film *Saikati* (1992) and its acceptance to international festivals indicates how this leads to more opportunities for other Kenyan women filmmakers. The film industry in Kenya is growing lucrativeness and has attracted more people to pursue opportunities in filmmaking, not only women but also men as highlighted by Kibinge,

> I had just taken it to Ouagadougou… but from Ouagadougou, it was invited to so many festivals. So, it went beyond what I had expected, and I think when people here at home realised where it was going. It was then they were taken by storm and were like ooh, we can actually make films and they can actually be recognized internationally. So we can actually do it and am happy even if people don't talk about it. It opened doors for many women and from there in Kenya. It became like it's a women thing many women wanted to do (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018).

This is a view supported by Kibinge who pays homage to the pioneer filmmakers (both men and women) and the struggles they went through to establish a film industry in Kenya. However, she feels sad that now there are not as many women attending the workshops she carries out on campuses and other places:

> What I find very interesting now that film suddenly has this economic attachment to it. Suddenly all the guys are like, (claps hands) Oh! I think that's the career for me, you know but you'll notice there were guys, people like Albert Wandago earlier and Jacob Barua but the women occupied the space like this, you know. I find now, and I find this a bit disconcerting if you go into whether it's campuses or we call a workshop, it's definitely the guys…, who are coming in with confidence and I don't know what this means. I don't know if they are learning in school, I don't understand it. But suddenly women are looking a bit squashed (Judy Kibinge, 2019).

Mukii revealed that she had deliberately decided to work more with women animators by offering them internships because she felt women were more focused on what they wanted to achieve. To Mukii, even if a woman did not have the prerequisite skills, it would be more valuable to work with her than with a man. Mukii further revealed that 99.5% of those who sought internships with her were men who were not even qualified and had never worked with

animation but were confident and daring to apply for an internship. However, women would approach her with trepidation and most often did not realise the skills they had. Nevertheless, she would select the women. She gave an example of how she decided to select a woman intern as opposed to a man:

> Majority of the guys who have approached me online will literally ask me, 'How can you make animation without using 3D?' You know they've never even watched a film. Like one of my films is six minutes long. They don't even do research. But women who have approached me will say, 'Hey, I really liked this film. I really liked the way you combined that stuff.' (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

Mukii also believed that mentoring women was also not giving them preferential treatment because giving them an opportunity was giving them a chance to grow in the film industry. She notes that:

> For myself, I have decided I definitely need to work with more women animators and in terms of having internships or these sorts of opportunities where you can grow more women in the animation industry (Ng'endo Mukii, January 24, 2018).

This emanates from the fact that women need to be empowered, as envisaged by affirmative action. This is corroborated by international protocols such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 (UN General Assembly, 1948) of which Kenya is a signatory. The need to support women through affirmative action is also envisaged by the Constitution of Kenya (Kenya Law Reform Commission Website, 2010).

Kibinge also added her voice to the discourse by saying that she believed in encouraging "our sisters." She pointed out that a lot of the best producers in the country were women and this inspired her very much. She named producers like Dorothy Ghettuba (film and TV), Appie Matere (Film and TV produced six films in six months), Emily Wanja (film and TV and in-house Docubox producer), and Krysteen Savane (*Watu Wote*, 2017 producer).

Secondly, when women make achievements in the industry, it has the potential to inspire other women to do so. For instance, when Mungai won the UNICEF award for best projection of an African woman's image at FESPACO in 1993 in Ouagadougou for her film *Saikati* (1992), and the Association of Professional in Communication Award for best African Woman Director in Burkina Faso in 1994, she perceived that she had won them to inspire other women (Anne Mungai, March 14, 2018). Therefore, Mungai believed that when women won an award they are perceived to have done so on behalf of other women as a way of inspiring them. Mungai held that since *Saikati* (1992) had travelled to international screens, it had created

room for the recognition of women's contribution to the film industry in Kenya. Using the story of *Saikati* (1992), as an example, women in Kenya can identify with the story of lack of access to education due to early marriages in different communities, or female genital mutilation (FGM), or the preference for educating the boy child as opposed to the girl child, thus heightening the struggle against gender oppression (Lorde, 2007). Therefore, one way of enhancing the collaborative effort is by women celebrating the achievements of fellow women in the film industry. To further this argument, in 2016, one of my respondents, Nyagah, while attending the International Women's Festival in Zimbabwe as a jury member, had a meeting with other African women filmmakers to discuss how they could work together as women to make movies as female artists and how to get funding. Out of this, the African Women Filmmakers Hub was born (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

Mentorship and inspiration efforts can also be seen among women who run film festivals in Africa. In September 2019, a women's film festival network training was held in Kigali, Rwanda. Here, a three-day in-depth strategic training was conducted for the senior management team for Ladima Women's Film Festival Network[75] (Utian-Preston, 2019; Ladima Foundation Network, n.d). The training reviewed the current state of the film festival space. Participants then evaluated each of the film festivals to ensure that they strongly positioned themselves through a relevant and authentic vision to drive forward their specific objectives. Some of the participants in the training were Matrid Nyagah of Udada International Women's Film Festival, Kenya, Sarah Kizza Nsigaye of Celebrating Womanhood Festival, Uganda, and Cornelia Glele of International Women's Film Festival Cotonou, Benin. As a result, Nyagah revealed that Udada would be relaunching in 2020. Preston observed that this networking which brings together African women in film may lead to a strong foundation of collaboration that would drive African film festivals forward.

It is worth pointing out that the Kenyan Women in Film Awards (WIFA) was established in 2020 by a lecturer of film at Kenyatta University, Susan Gitimu. Though in its nascent years, the establishment affirms the sisterhood's craving for women to support, promote, and recognise each other's efforts in film. The WIFA Awards, going under the title Beyond The Film, is an affirmation of the intrinsic need to celebrate the little milestones created

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[75] Ladima Women's Film Festival operates under Ladima Foundation an outfit that was founded by Lara Utian Preston, Edima Otuokon, and Lydai Idekula-Sobogon to offer support for African women filmmakers from African women and women around the world. They do this by mentoring women in various roles in the film, TV and content spaces. Retrieved https://www.screenafrica.com/2019/09/12/film/business/ladima-foundation-hosts-womens-film-festival-network-training-in-rwanda/

and put forth by women filmmakers in Kenya. [76] Such efforts are aimed at bringing women filmmakers in Kenya together and providing a space where the diversity of women voices, stories and creativity is equally recognised and celebrated. Since it is still in its nascent years, its impact on the film industry will be established as time goes by.

Films can communicate ideas, and ambitions, promote African culture and create awareness of social issues. It is for this reason that Mungai believes that films have more impact than politicians' words, for politicians in Kenya are known to say one thing and deny it the next day to suit their political ambitions. This realisation has made these women filmmakers start initiatives like mentoring programmes, women film festivals, and boot camps. These include Docubox where Kibinge plays a key role in "enabling talented, driven, and focused East African filmmakers, with important and unique stories to tell, to produce high impact independent documentary films that unearth new realities about worlds, identities, and people for audiences in East Africa and around the world" (Docubox Website, n.d.); Udada International Women's Film Festival where Nyagah "provides a platform for established and emerging female talent in this industry to exhibit their work, discuss, exchange, and network with each other, the public, and other stakeholders" (Udada International Women's Film Festival Website, n.d.)[77] and; Development Through Media (DTM) where Yambo Odotte, Mukii creates a forum for independent media practitioners to tell stories that are otherwise shunned by mainstream media (DTM Website, n.d.). Through these platforms, these three women filmmakers mentioned revealed in my interviews with them that they deliberately take in female interns, as they believe they are more focused on what they want to learn, to help highlight the work of women filmmakers and issues to do with gender, development, and governance.

6.4.3: Training for Skills and Competence

Training is one of the ways how women seek inclusion in the empowerment and decision-making that affect the film industry. As has been observed in Chapter Four of this study, women seek training so that they acquire the skills and competencies that are very necessary to stamp their presence in the film industry. In this vein, Mutune believes that her training at AFDA in Capetown, South Africa, empowered her to understand and work with a global cast. Anne

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[76] https://beyondthefilm.org/women-in-film-award-wifa/
[77] Udada International Women's Film Festival was founded by Matrid Nyagah. Udada, Wanjiru Kinyanjui and Naomi Mwaura. However, Udada is now run solely by Matrid Nyagah. Udada, which means sisterhood, screens films from all over the world that are about women, for women and by women. Retrieved https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/magazine/udada-festival-in-second-edition--1341900

Mungai noted that her training in Germany was vital for her presence in the film industry as it helped her understand the workings of film festivals and how they can be used to market films. It is from marketing her film *Saikati* (1992) at international film festivals that inspired other women filmmakers to venture into filmmaking and market them at film festivals. Therefore, it can be concluded that training is one of how women have responded to the challenges that beset them in the film industry.

6.4.4: Creation of Funding Opportunities

Kibinge revealed the hardship women filmmakers go through to fend for and sustain themselves in the film industry. She notes that the environment of unemployment does not augur well with funding for filmmaking:

> So in the face of an environment where there is no broadcasting money…there's, the cinema tickets sales are so low, you have to have government support. And on the face of that everyone is starving, everybody. I don't, I don't really can't actually separate men, women at this point. In a country with really such unemployment, it's really heart-breaking and the guys are hungry and are willing to work but there is no support. Yeah, which is why we exist and give grants (Judy Kibinge, 2019).

The 'we' that she talks about in the above excerpt is the Docubox that she established with seed funding from Ford Foundation and donations from well-wishers. As seen in Chapter Five of this study, The Docubox is a funding establishment that exists to 'enable talented, driven, focused and accountable East African artists to produce unique films that unearth new realities and cross trans-national boundaries.'[78]

Another funding opportunity that women in the Kenyan film industry are exploring is through corporate organisations. This is an avenue that Nyagah has explored to get funding for her films and film activities like running the UDADA festival. She notes that:

> Financing for film is crazy, no one just wakes up and gets the amount of money that they need to finance the film. So, we're trying now to kind of educate and make these other people who are not in the industry, but they have the money, the private sector. (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018).

Corporate support in producing a film is a worldwide phenomenon as Holt and Lee (2006) opine. They define corporate film financing as a situation where a producer seeks

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[78] See the information from the Docubox website here https://www.mydocubox.org/

financial support from an established corporate entity in return for some favour mostly recognition favour or as a corporate social responsibility. This is a phenomenon that is not so pronounced in the Kenyan film industry and yet as Nyagah opines, it can provide the much-needed film finance for independent filmmakers.

6.4.5: Government Empowerment Programmes

To address the malaise that besets women, especially at the structural level, women rely on the government to create a conducive environment for them to thrive. It is in this spirit Mutune notes that the government ought to empower women by appointing them into key decision-making organs, subsidise the cost of filmmaking, pumping seed capital into film projects, and reducing taxes on film equipment. Already, there have been efforts to appoint women into key decision-making avenues like the Kenya Film Commission where Lizzie Chongoti served as the Chief Executive Officer for over 3 years (2014-2017) and Dorothy Ghettuba has been serving as the chairperson of the board of the commission since 2019 as mentioned in Chapter Five of this study. One only hopes that their presence in these key positions serves to alleviate the presence of women in the film industry.

On the question of costs in filmmaking, Mutune suggests that the government should reduce taxation on film equipment and subsidise film training, especially for women. Lastly, she suggests that the government should nationalise cinema theatres by buying them back from private entities and refurbishing them. This would create a filmgoing culture that is important in making film self-sustainable.

6.5 Conclusion

This study sought to identify the barriers women face in the film industry in Kenya, and the inclusion and responsiveness of the Kenyan film industry to women filmmakers. Women in the Kenyan film industry continue to perform well not only locally and regionally but globally as well, with these filmmakers attaining accolades for the films directed or produced. Kenya boasts of competent, talented and experienced filmmakers however there are barriers they must overcome despite the conducive environment they are accorded. This study has established those economic constraints including the funding of both low and high-budget films and film-related tax policies, gender discrimination affecting funding allocated to women in the film industry, respect for female filmmakers on set and recognition of achievements made by women, patriarchal systems of the Kenyan society and, societal perceptions of women are barriers women in the film industry encounter.

The inclusion of women in the film industry remains low in Kenya reflective of the global case as well. The inclusion of women in leadership positions can influence the presence of women in the film industry from executive producers, directors, and writers to actors. The study concurs that is a need for recognition of the achievements of women in the film industry both locally and globally. Kenya's film industry continues to have a positive response to women filmmakers, achievements made by collaboration made among women in film, training provided to younger filmmakers and, the spurge in the film economy continues to encourage the growth of the industry.

The next chapter gives a summary of the key challenges that Kenyan women filmmakers face and also highlights prospects for the future for these women.

Chapter Seven

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I come from a culture in which women's freedom is like a bicycle: if you don't pedal, the bicycle falls over! It is a daily struggle. Marie-Clemence Andria Monta-Paes in The African Film Industry: Trade, Challenges and Opportunities (UNESCO, 2021).

7.1: Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the key arguments and discusses the issues that have emerged in this study on Kenyan women in film. Using a postcolonial feminism perspective, this study ascertained the plurality of feminisms and how they affect the theorisation of filmmaking. It sought to respond to the fundamental question relating to women and their integration into the filmmaking process and the extent to which they can express themselves as Africans and women in their films.

This study has so far also agreed with the assertion that 'women have an especially important role to play in the development of Africa.'[79] Film as a form of mass media provides a platform that can foster women's integration in this development process. Filmmaking defies the traditional roles assigned to women, society's attitude, and women's expectations for themselves. This gives women more impetus to take leading roles in the social agenda. As a result of the establishment of the key role that women play in media as storytellers and image-makers, this study advances some key arguments that will be expatiated in the next section.

7.2: Summary of Key Arguments

7.2.1: Domestication of Afro-feminism

Findings for the domestication of Afro-feminism are found in Chapter Two of this study. They meet the fifth objective of this study which was to explore postcolonial African feminism as a paradigm that gives Kenyan women filmmakers agency in their work. In terms of theory, this study concurs with Bisschoff (2009) when she notes that the Western understanding of the concept of feminism has little bearing on film production and image-making by women filmmakers of Africa. Therefore, the study had to find a theory that was amenable to analysing the presence of women of Africa in a creative industry. To this end, the study adopted a postcolonial African feminist approach. This approach concedes the gravity of the colonial

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[79] See the research report *Women and the Mass Media in Africa: Cases Studies of Sierra Leone, the Niger and Egypt* by Elma Lititia Anani, Alkaly Miriama Keita, Awatef Abdel Rahman. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, 1981. Research Series, African Training and Research Centre

legacy in the artistic terrains of former colonial spaces like Kenya and looks at these artistic spaces as contested geographies that sometimes offer alternative arguments (Nnaemeka; 2003). The theory has helped this study argue that the Kenyan situation of filmmaking, emerging from the colonial grip that shunned women, is a locational point where theory on women issues meets the practice of filmmaking. This is what Nnaemeka (2003) has rightly labelled as the third space of engagement. It is the quintessential liminal space that lies beyond the border as Homi Bhabha (2001) termed it.[80] Postcolonial African feminism understands that the global trend is a debate on who controls the images of the world and therefore the African woman must be situated, by her means of production, which is film in this case, right at the centre of this debate. It further agrees with Bisschoff's (2009) finding that filmmaking is indeed an indigenous form of postcolonial activity when she notes that:

> …the work of female African filmmakers, whether they refer to themselves as feminists or not, do indeed broadly correspond to the main preoccupations and characteristics of African feminism. p.236

However, the theorisation of the presence and contribution of women in the African film industry and especially post-colonial African feminism is something that the filmmakers interviewed for this study were not comfortable with. In fact, at some point during the interviews, many of the filmmakers seemed antagonistic to even the thought of feminism as is globally circulated. Whether by design or inadvertence, the women filmmakers seemed to understand feminism as a movement that was opposed to men and therefore provided a playground for a duel of the genders. They were categorical that they do not fight men but negotiate with them since they felt that men are part of the society that they live in (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018; and Jinna Mutune, February 18, 2018) which is in keeping with the African feminism outlined in Chapter Two of this study. Others thought that the gender divide did not matter in their work ethics and stations. They experienced the same advantages and disadvantages as men did in the film industry. They felt that the government bureaucracies were more dangerous to the pursuit of a vibrant film industry than men (Judy Kibinge, February 15, 2018). The study, therefore, established that there was tension in the use of the term 'feminism' and this tension stems from the fact that 'feminism' has certain negative connotations in many non-Western contexts. Therefore, the conflation of the meanings

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[80] Bhabha, K. H. (1994). *The Location of Culture.* London and New York: Routledge.

assigned to feminism made it hard for this study to establish exactly whether feminism in its broader sense had a strong impact on the presence of these women in the film industry or not. It can thus be concluded that the Kenyan women filmmakers were in favour of Nnaemeka's brand of feminism which she labels nego-feminism.

7.2.2 Training

This section was addressed in the fourth chapter of the study, which partly met the first objective that the study set out to achieve. It is acknowledged that women have gained ground in filmmaking in Kenya primarily due to their training and their passion and commitment to storytelling and self-expression. This study found that several film-training institutions in Kenya teach women filmmaking. Some of the respondents interviewed for this study have trained in these film-training institutions. However, the lack of proper film schools teaching requisite content that can ground women filmmakers in the techniques, business, and art of filmmaking, has contributed to many Kenyan filmmakers, particularly women, opting for training in film institutions in foreign countries. Those who have trained abroad rightly point out that this training grounded them in film and made them better filmmakers.

7.2.3: Plurality of 'Presences' of Women in the Kenyan Film Industry

This section highlights another offshoot but key findings that emerged in the second chapter of this study as I reviewed the literature on the presence of women in the Kenyan film industry. In her study of African women in film, Bisschoff (2009) delves a great deal into the works of African women directors and concludes that despite their important contribution to the film industry in Africa, these women have been severely underrepresented in cinema studies. While Bisschoff (2009) analyses the films produced and directed by these women, this study opts to rely on the interviews and words of these women on how they locate their presence within the film industry. Furthermore, this study is narrowed to a national space, that is Kenya, as a filmmaking nation, rather than the continental sweeping study that Bischoff (2009) does across Africa. Indeed, this study agrees with Bisschoff on the conclusion that African women are underrepresented in film studies despite the notable presence of women in the Kenyan Film industry and therefore the need to keep interrogating the practice of filmmaking by women in Africa.

Ellerson (2005) states that the concept of African women in film must be analysed within the context of social, political, and cultural structures in Africa. She notes that the struggles and successes of women in film in Africa are intertwined with the specific

conventions of cinematic practices that have emerged in Africa since the inception of what has come to be called African cinema (p.1). She further notes that the themes and subjects of the films by women of Africa:

> …reflect personal experiences, the search for identity, the demands of financiers, as well as the self-imposed duty to teach, to reveal injustices, and to construct positive images of women and African society in general. (p.13).

These women, as this study notes, enter the industry through training and on-job experiences. With their presence in the film industry, Kenyan women filmmakers are also transforming the film industry's politics just as other women from other national cinemas. As White (2015) notes, these women in these worlds are 'navigating institutional politics and making films that have a chance to travel and be seen.' p. 5. They are part and parcel of the film culture in Kenya although the industry itself is in dire need of assistance as an institution through a variety of resuscitative programmes including seed funding, development of cinema halls, and curbing of piracy. These women's contributions as mentors, teachers as well as practitioners of the whole spectrum of filmmaking, including theorists, have not been fully and sufficiently acknowledged. This study has sadly noted that there has been little to no government support in terms of introducing mechanisms that support women filmmakers specifically. Sadly, the lack of a government document that regulates the film industry in the form of a film policy means that gender is not mainstreamed in the film industry, data is not collected and archived, and therefore the impact and presence of women in the film industry and their contribution may not be effectively measured.

7.2.4: Tensions of Double Marginalisation

Findings of this section are contained in the sixth chapter of the study which sought to meet the fourth objective of the study. The study generally found out that there still exists tensions in the persistence of western dominance in film over African screens through funding, film festivals, and distribution of films. In film funding, these tensions manifest in the continued subtle postcolonial domination of the northern hemisphere on the countries in the southern hemisphere as well as patriarchy. This is in the funding of films that do not tackle the immediate agenda of the local community but are high on what the West perceives as the key agenda. These are some of the issues that the Zambian Economist Dambisa Moyo has vehemently disputed in her seminal volume *Dead Aid* (Moyo, 2009). Secondly, the global north, using its financial muscle, curates international festivals that serve the interests of the west rather than

Africa and still softly entices African filmmakers to screen their films there. These are soft coercive operations that leave the African filmmaker on the fringes of relevance. They are criticised if they accept top dollar to produce films with foreign interest and still showcase them abroad without showing them to their local communities. On the other hand, if they do not accept the funding their art will be rendered obsolete in a fast-changing industry. The danger of foreign funding and even festivals is that one must align to the objectives of the funding agency rather than tell the reality of the story. One is more worried about their objective rather than the story of the lived experience and interest of the local community.

More so, patriarchy manifests in very different forms. The study has argued that there are two levels of patriarchy, that is traditional, which is more overt, and modern, which is latent. The women interviewed for this study agreed that modern forms of patriarchy are evident in the film industry. They are discernible by the way women are treated by their male counterparts and the normalisation of denigrating comments against women filmmakers. It is also manifested by assigning certain film roles like makeup artists to women (Matrid Nyagah, January 11, 2018). Sekhunkhuni (2000) notes that African women must learn to confidently express themselves as filmmakers since they are coming to the film industry with very little cultural capital in terms of confidence, authority, and acquired knowledge about the image, its relationship to the viewer, and the theories of film language, understanding the eye of the camera, and the function of editing in the filmmaking process. This is true of the finding of this study since the women I interviewed had a passion for artistic expression as well as the confidence to tell the film stories.

Policy debates have tried to recentre the place of women in filmmaking because they may just be setting the stage for what Nnaemeka (2003) describes as far-reaching decisions that will affect the entire continent on how it tells its story since as Tapsoba (1995), quoted in Ellerson (2016) says, "she who doesn't speak is always ignored". Here Tapsoba asserts that by evolving from a culture of orality, African filmmakers reflect on the close links between their films' narratives and the oral tradition. This link is a testament to urging Africans to 'tell' their story; only that the oral nature of storytelling may not have a broader reach. Nnaemeka, (2003) calls for new forms of media to build on the indigenous as we negotiate for a feminism that is authentically African. Films by African women fill this lacuna. The new demands of cinema on one hand and the change of attitude of the African public towards storytelling are because of foreign images; on the other are factors that call for a new approach to storytelling. Film is the last frontier of this storytelling and African women have embraced it with all its joys and challenges. Ellerson (2016) has noted that African filmmakers complement the social function

of their films with the entertainment function and therefore the question of African identity and the alternative values it imparts to its audience are of key concern (p. 41). Inferring from Nnaemeka's (2003) treatise on Nego-feminism, filmmaking is a representational and recognitional enterprise. It is representational as it manifests the image of the subject to the world. On the other hand, it is recognitional because it reflects the fact that the author (director) is acknowledging the presence and existence of the subject being filmed.

Lastly, this study found that while Kenya's film culture is not as vibrant as many other countries of sub-Saharan Africa like South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, it still boasts of an appreciable output that has been largely propped up by the film activities of its women, which includes organising film festivals, film training and producing the films.

7.2.5: Frailties of Funding

This is yet another section that seeks to address the third objective of the study on how women enter the film industry in Kenya. It was noted in Chapter Five that funding is an important element in establishing the presence of women filmmakers in the film industry in Kenya. It was found that the film funding environment is fraught with patronising patriarchy and is sometimes restrictive and condescending. While patriarchy cancels out women's efforts at the workplace by belittling their efforts, a restrictive environment censors harshly their projects and a condescending funding environment diminishes their chances of securing funds for their projects. Women filmmakers who opt to take this route perhaps walk a tightrope of satisfying the funding requirements and conditionalities and at the same time find imaginative ways of producing films that tell the Kenyan story through the eyes of its women. Using postcolonial African feminist theory, this study concurs with Nnaemeka (2003) that filmmaking which is an act of representation by African filmmakers ought to build on the indigenous since the Kenyan filmmakers consider filmmaking an indigenous and important engagement in their lives and an authentic expression of their communities (p. 369).

The question of funding has been raised in several fora and by all the women interviewed for this study. The key argument is that funding is the engine of filmmaking since it is a heavy investment with no guarantee of monetary returns. It can be concluded that Kenyan women filmmakers have struggled in filmmaking due to a lack of funding. However, they have ingeniously found other ways of funding their work and, by extension, those of other filmmakers. A clear example has been Judy Kibinge's establishment of Docubox to help fund filmmakers within East Africa.

7.2.6: Women Friendships as Anchor in Stormy Turbulences of Film

This section contains a key finding that is explained in Chapter Five of this study under collaborative efforts as a possible solution for women filmmakers in Kenya. When Ellerson (2000) wrote about African women in cinema, she rightly titled the book and the documentary *Sisters of the Screen*.[81] The gist of the two texts (the documentary and the book) was that women in African cinema support each other not just by leaving the door open, as discussed in the next paragraph, but also by representing women in a balanced way; enabling their viewers to regard African women characters in their multiplicity and complexities rather than as monoliths. The label 'sisters of the screen' is indeed a summative definition of how women support each other in a fraternal act of supporting each other in critical moments of filmmaking.

Women are walking through the doors of filmmaking and after partaking at the table of filmmaking, they leave the door open for other women to walk through. This 'leaving the door'[82] open is manifested through mentorship and training that are geared specifically to help other women, recognition of other women through film awards that specifically target to award and reward the efforts of filmmakers, and the establishment of funding opportunities that are specifically geared towards uplifting filmmakers, (men included) as well as creating film policies that are favourable to the growth of women also in the film industry.

Furthermore, supportive family members played critical and pivotal roles emotionally and financially in the choice of filmmaking as a career as discussed in Chapter Five of this study.

7.2.7: Film Culture and the Presence of Women in the Film Industry

This section and the next contain key findings that are explained in Chapter Four of the study under the discussion of the presence of women filmmakers in the Kenyan film culture. It has established these components as being the national film culture and discourse, funding, film distribution, cinema-going culture, a culture of regulation and censorship as well as film policies. This study found that government agencies tasked with supporting filmmakers were either overwhelmed or could not support them. The national film culture was still entwined with patriarchal undertones that undervalue women and thus created an unconducive

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[81] See Ellerson, B. (2000). *Sisters of the Screen: Women of Africa in Film, Video and Television.* Amara and Trenton: Africa World Press. Inc.

[82] Leaving the door open is a term used by Dr. Mercy Mwangangi in celebration of the support women give each other by waking film awards that are specific to women filmmakers. She said this during the 2nd Awards Ceremony of WIFA on the night of 10th March 2021. Dr. Mwangangi is the Cabinet Assistant Secretary (CAS) in charge of Health. The event was beemed live on Facebook.

environment for women filmmakers. Secondly, it was established that there is a high premium placed on foreign films and this undermined the presence of women in the film industry since they compete with stronger national film cultures. Thirdly, KFCB as a government institution that regulates the film industry was seen as an impediment to women filmmakers as its strong-arm tactics were hurting women filmmakers.

Laws and policies established within the government structures that are meant to empower women have not been fully implemented and this has become an impediment to the presence of women in the film industry.

7.2.8: Marketing Channels for Films Made by Women

It is acknowledged that marketing and distribution are key cogs in any film culture. Kenya lacks a coherent film distribution network that women filmmakers can plug into. Distribution relies on aggressive marketing to ensure that the film reaches its target market. A Kenyan female filmmaker thus must do virtually everything ranging from preproduction, production, and postproduction and still find ways of getting the film to the market and viewers. The unstructured and disorganised film distribution channel in the Kenyan film industry means that women filmmakers who are more organised in their work and abhor shortcuts, end up bearing the brunt of this disorder because they cannot recover their investments through film screenings and other forms of distribution, as discussed in Chapter Four of this study.

7.3: Conclusions

Based on the above findings and arguments, this study has arrived at several conclusions. Firstly, women filmmakers in Kenya thrive in the film industry against the odds partly because they are competent to handle the pressure that abounds in the industry despite the multiple barriers they must overcome. Their success can be attributed to their power to organise themselves, and their ability to negotiate film training opportunities from institutions both in Kenya and foreign countries. Additionally, it can be attributed to their power to organise, which is an essential element because many film initiatives right from seeking funding, production, distribution, and festivals require proper and elaborate organisation. They are therefore up to the task of filmmaking, and they take pride in their place in the film industry in Kenya.

Secondly, the truncated film culture through the available film institutions (gatekeepers) in Kenya has worked towards the erasure of women filmmakers since it does not protect them through policies, funding, and screenings. The presence of women in the Kenyan

film industry has challenged a culture of dominant patriarchy and the postcolonial legacies of bestowing economic power to men. Economic constraints coupled with a patriarchal mindset continue to inhibit women's full potential in the film industry. However, women are negotiating for their space in the industry through what Anne Mungai termed as a passionate and sensitive way of telling their stories that touch on human wisdom and experiences. Women are further negotiating patriarchy by inspiring each other, mentoring each other, and supporting each other in acts of sisterhood that aim to alleviate their challenges.

Thirdly, and inversely, women in the Kenyan film industry are putting together synergies through collaborations, founding funding opportunities, mentorship, and women-specific festivals like Matrid Nyagah's Udada International Film Festival, Zippora Okoth's, Lake International Pan African Film Festival (LIPFF), and Susan Gitimu's Women in Film Awards (WIFA) to propel women into visibility and ultimately celebrate their achievements, which are rarely celebrated even in scholarship.

Fourthly, there is a need for more in-country training of women filmmakers that is thorough and fulfilling and that provides ample ground for Kenyan filmmakers to fit within the film industry and compete globally. Training equips women with the requisite knowledge and skills that help them negotiate for their space amid the challenges in the film industry.   It emerges from this study that the training of women filmmakers and its impact on the film industry is fluid, complex and multifaceted. While on one hand, it is the direct route to enter the film industry, it is complicated by the fact that what is provided in the training may not be suitable for the very industry that these women need to work in. it can be concluded that women filmmakers in Kenya thrive in the film industry partly because they are competent to handle the pressures that abound in the industry. This competence can be attributed to the training they get in institutions both in Kenya and elsewhere. The thirst for knowledge drives them to seek training that equips them with the skills and competencies for thriving in the film industry.

7.4: Prospects for the Future for Women Filmmakers in the Kenyan Film industry

Despite the challenges mentioned above, there is a strong reason to imagine that the future of women in the Kenyan film industry is bright. The appointment of women in key positions of decision-making regarding film is a boost in confidence. Kenyan women have held some key positions in film institutions and in governmental ministries focusing on culture, education, and women, where they can influence policies and make decisions on the state, continental and international levels, as was seen in Chapter Five of this study.

Secondly, there have been efforts to resuscitate the film policy through acts of parliament legislation. Already as of 2020, the film policy was undergoing final details by technocrats in the line ministry of Information, Communication, and Technology. The public has been asked to give its views (See Creative Economy Working Group [CEWG] online which was tasked with formulating the policy).

Thirdly, and as has been realised in this study, funding is the greatest challenge to women filmmakers. The establishment of funding opportunities like the Heva Fund as well as the Docubox under Judy Kibinge, bodes well for the future of women in the filmmaking industry in Kenya. These progressive efforts spell the emancipation of the woman filmmaker if they are rigorously pursued.

Fourthly, the legislation on the airing of 60% local content on Television passed in 2017 was a great boost to women filmmakers since it meant that the content they create, would find a market, particularly amongst television audiences. Although not fully implemented, one notices in this gesture the willingness of the Kenyan government to cushion Kenyan filmmakers, women included, against the flooding of foreign films and other cinematic content. One only hopes that this legislation will be fully implemented to the letter to allow Kenyan filmmakers and other content creators to enjoy the broadcasting of their content through local media stations. The establishment of the Kenya Film School to help advance the practical training of filmmakers in Kenya in the techniques, business, and art of filmmaking is a boost in the film industry since it will offer practical and industry-based training to its graduates.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questions in the Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

1. Could you talk about your background and how you became involved in filmmaking?

2. Why did you choose to get into the film industry?

3. At what level did you start?

4. Tell me about your career progression.

5. Issues such as competence, perceived lack of ambition, and scarcity of talent and experience have been mentioned as major impediments affecting women filmmakers in Kenya. Do you agree? Do you feel men compared to women have a more holistic approach to handling various roles in the film industry such as commanding large crews, directing dangerous scenes et cetera?

6. Women representation in the film industry is a global problem with the latest impact seen in Hollywood's coveted Oscar Award which has been criticised for being male-dominated and all white. Do you feel Kenyan female filmmakers are empowered enough to take on such tussles on a global scene?

7. Do you agree that women should be in leadership positions to pull more women into leadership roles? Is this suggestion that women need to "pull each other up" as a useful one, or is that inappropriate preferential treatment?

8. In the film industry, women have clearly been lowly represented, and jobs that are low paying are commonly associated with women even though feminist movements are in existence. Can such feminism be labelled "feminism of poverty"?

9. Many developed and emerging economies in the world have developed vibrant and strong film-oriented policies. These countries have allocated large fiscal and personnel resources to document and archive films both from within and without their boundaries. Do you feel Kenya has done enough in developing the film industry to warrant recognition? If yes, do you feel that women are given adequate chances and a

conducive environment to favourably compete for positions with their male
counterparts?

10. Can you name any women filmmakers and their respective films they have directed in
Kenya and Africa at large? Do you feel their work has been given prominence as
other films done by the opposite gender? Give your argument on what you feel should
be done to improve their representation in the film industry.

11. Do you feel that the Kenya Film Commission has done enough in marketing female-
directed films in Kenya? What is your opinion on what more should be done?

12. It is argued that the concept of "Real Woman" is a classic tactic that patriarchal
society like Kenya uses to turn women against each other. Do you feel that this has
made a significant contribution to the resultant low representation of women in the
film industry?

13. The Mau Mau Uprising has been viewed as an agency to the rise in feminist issues
agitated for by women. What is your take on that? Were women fighting colonialists
so that their issues can be articulated or, were they just fighting for the independence
of their country like anyone else?

14. Many people are uncomfortable with identifying with the word "feminist". Why is
that? Should we keep the word or switch it with something else, for example,
"womanist"? what are some of the issues that you feel make individuals avoid this
label?

15. How has feminism – primarily a movement for equality of all people regardless of
gender – excluded people to push forward its agenda? Have you ever experienced
other forms of discrimination such as classism, racism, homophobia, or transphobia
that have often been part of the feminist movement? How can this be fixed?

16. Research has it that African feminism is "heterosexual, prenatal and concerned with bread, butter, culture and power issues". Such issues include poverty reduction, violence prevention and health and reproductive rights which affect African women worse than men. Do you agree? Do you feel like this is a role that should be traditionally for both genders?

Appendix II: The Interviewees Profile

It must be acknowledged that most of the documented female film producers have had to combine several roles in the production of their movies. Almost all play the role of producer, director, and scriptwriter. Most have, nevertheless, exhibited excitement with their creations, which perhaps, may not have been if they had not engaged with the various roles that are essential in shaping the filmic product (National Council for Law Reporting, 2014). Some of the women filmmakers who have made a significant contribution to the growth of the film industry in Kenya are sampled below:

Wanuri Kahiu

She is part of a new generation of Kenyan and African filmmakers. Kahiu is a film director/producer, scriptwriter, and producer

Place of birth: Nairobi

Year of birth: 1980

Wanuri describes herself as the black sheep of her family. Her parents are conservative with her mother being a medical doctor while her father is a businessman. However, she has an aunt who is a famous Kenyan actress and an uncle who is a sculptor.

Education: University of California, Los Angeles, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK

Filmography: Rafiki (2018), Pumzi (2009), From a Whisper (2008), (), Ras Star () Homecoming (2013), For our Land (2009) for MNET

Awards:

1. Rafiki-Nominated for Queer Palm, Cannes, 2018
2. From A Whisper- Best Narrative, 2010, Pan African Film Festival, Los Angeles,
3. Five awards, including Best Director and Best Screenplay at the African Movie Academy Award
4. Pumzi-Best Short Film, 2010, Cannes Independent Film Festival
   -Silver, Carnage Film Festival, Tunisia
   -Citta di Venezia 2010 award, Italy
5. Wild Seed
6. The Thing about Jellyfish

Other Recognitions:

1. Creator of the Afrobubblegum genre, fun, fierce and frivolous black content that celebrates joy and hope.
2. TED Fellow in 2017
3. World Economic Forum Cultural Leader in 2018
4. Member of Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science (The Oscars)

Judy Kibinge

She is a filmmaker, writer, and producer

Place of birth: Nairobi

Year of birth: 1967

Education: Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, Kenya High School, Malvern St James Girls School

Judy describes herself as having always been a writer and storyteller but only realised this when she had her son who is the first consumer of her stories. Three of her maternal uncles are prolific Kenyan writers.

Filmography: Something Necessary (2013), Tinga Tinga Tales (2011), Peace Wanted Alive (2009), Coming of Age (2008), Killer Necklace (2008), Voice in the Dark (2005) Bless This Land (2005), Project Daddy (2004)), Dangerous Affair (2002), The Aftermath (2002)

Awards:

1. Something Necessary-Screened at Toronto International Film Festival, 2013
2. Killer Necklace-Best Director, Kalasha Awards, 2009
3. Coming of Age- Best Short Documentary, Africa Movie Academy Awards, 2009
4. Dangerous Affair-Overall Best East African Production, Zanzibar Film Festival, 2003

Other recognitions:

1. Founder of Docubox funded by Ford Foundation. Docubox helps to develop the filmmaking skills of Africans and provides funding, distribution, and production support for documentary filmmakers.

2. Member of Kwani Trust, an African Magazine based in Kenya
3. Runs own production company called Seven Productions
4. Oscar judge of Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science, documentaries, international features, and animation (The Oscars)

Matrid Nyagah

She is a filmmaker, writer, producer, actor, and choreographer

Place of birth: Nairobi

Year of birth: 1991

Education: Kenyatta University

She says others have described her as having an old soul due to her love for music from the 70s and 80s describes. However, she describes herself as bold and courageous, and speaks her mind, taking after her mother. Father is an engineer, sells music and is also a DJ. Her father bought her a guitar and a piano.

Filmography: Crazy Intent (2018), Peponi (2019) [post-production], Watu Wote (2017), Softie (2020)

Awards:

Watu Wote- Won over 35 film festival wards, for example:

1. Best Live Action Short Film, Oscar Awards, 2018
2. Best Short Film, Bermuda International Film Festival, 2018
3. Best Short Film, Biberach Film Festival, 2018
4. Best Short Film, Boulder International Film Festival, 2018
5. Best Short Film, Brooklyn International Film Festival, 2018
6. Best European Short Film, Corti Da Sogni Antonio Ricci International Short Film Festival
7. Best African Short Film, Durban International Film Festival, 2017
8. Zanzibar International Film Festival, Best East African Talent, Best East African Filmmaker, 2017

9. Best Narrative Short Gold Medal Student Academy Award, Hamburg, 2017

Other recognitions:

1. Founder Udada International Women Film Festival
2. Producer at Lightbox, Nairobi
3. Founder, Her Lens Bootcamp, is a programme for young women aged between 18-35 years. It brings women from various cultural backgrounds together with a common interest to tell their African stories. These women are trained in the technical and creative aspects of filmmaking.

Jinna Mutune

She is a scriptwriter, director, producer, and project management

Place of birth: Nairobi

Year of birth: 1981

Education: Arts Film Drama Association, Cape town, South Africa, United States of America

Jinna Mutune describes herself as a visionary, innovative, fun, and multicultural moviemaker who has a passion for telling both Kenyan and African stories, through film, to a global audience (Mahugu, 2016).

Filmography: Leo (2012), Chep The Movie (2015), A Voice 4Peace (2017)

Awards:

Her first feature film, Leo has been screened in several film festivals globally such as:

1. The Reel Life Film Festival, Melbourne, 2006
2. The Clermont Film Festival, France, 2005
3. Zanzibar Film Festival, 2005

Other recognitions:

1. Founder and Executive Director, Pegg Entertainment
2. Emerging British Airways Entrepreneurship Award, 2016

3. Speaking engagements to inspire the next generation filmmakers and entrepreneurs for UNESCO, USIU, AKILI DADA (women Forum), Infinite Possibilities Business Forum (MODE) and Canon-UK Workshop in Kenya

4. Music Video director for Kenya's official Olympic Score, 2012

5. Directed 7-minute infomercial with Graca Machel

6. Directed Mashairi video for Ukoo Fulani Artists which featured on MTV

Ng'endo Mukii

She is a film and animation director, writer, artist, and photographer

Place of birth: Nairobi

Year of birth: 1984

Education: Kent Institute of Art, UK, Rhode Island School of Design, USA

Ng'endo Mukii describes herself as an award-winning film director mostly known for *Yellow Fever*, a documentary animation exploring Western influences on African women's ideals of beauty.

Filmography: Kesho Pia Ni Siku (2021), Far From Home (2020), Kitwana's Journey (2019), Homage To Wangari Maathai (2018), Portrait of Marielle (2018), Out of Sight (2017), Libya (2017), Nairobi Berries (2017), Absorption Spectrum (2017), The Conductor (2016), Mtindo (2016), The Migrant Business (2015), Yellow Fever (2015) Desert Haze (2013)

Awards:

Her animation films, Yellow Fever, Nairobi Berries and The Migrant Business have won several film festivals globally such as:

Yellow Fever

1. Award for Vision and Originality, Lilongwe Shorts, 2015
2. Best Experimental Film, ArtCity Film Festival, Buea, Cameroon, 2014
3. Best Experimental Short Film, Black Star Film Festival, USA, 2014
4. Best Short Film, AfriKameraFilm Festival, Warsaw, Poland, 2014

Nairobi Berries

1. Immersive Encounters Grand Prix Award, Encounters Film Festival, 2017

The Migrant Business

1. Women's Prize, Festival Le Temps Presse, Paris, 2016
2. Best Animation Production, Kalasha Films Festival, 2015
3. Disruptor of the Year Award, Up Magazine, Kenya, 2015
4. Africano, d'Asia e America Latina, 2016

Other recognitions:

1. Founder and Executive Director of Ng'endo Studios
2. Design Indaba 15 Speaker
3. Commissioned by Huffing Post and Plan International to work on short animated and 360 degrees films
4. Recipient of funding grants from the New Dimensions Virtual Reality Programme (South Africa, Docubox- Kenya, Focus Features Africa First-USA)
5. Guest speaker/lecturer at workshops and digital art events

Dommie Yambo-Odotte

She is a Filmmaker and documentary, Line Producer, Producer, Production Coordinator, Script Consultant, Talent Scout and Theatrical Producer for local and international film projects

Place of birth: Nairobi

Year of birth: 1961

Education: University of Liverpool, UK, Kenya Institute of Mass Communication, Kenya

Dommie Yambo-Odotte describes herself as an efficient production coordinator and producer of African content.

Filmography: Baiskol (1997), Offence Like Assault, If Women Counted, Television Commercial for Nigerian Airlines (1989), AIDS Education Programme (1990), The Chosen One (1991), Adult in Wonderland (1992), An Inside Look (Weekly talk show) and Towards Autonomy (1993)

Awards:

1. Work of Special Merit, Tokyo Video Festival, 1993

2. United States Information Agency Voluntary Visitors' Programme Award, 1994

Other recognitions:

She coordinates film and research for international film companies in Kenya.

Anne Mungai

She is a film director, scriptwriter, producer, and editor

Place of birth: Port Bunyala, Western Kenya

Year of birth: 1957

Education: Michigan State University, USA, Cardiff University, UK, Kenya Mass Institute of Mass Communication and Kenyatta University.

Filmography: Sisters of the Screen-African women in Cinema, (2002), Tough Choices (2000), Saikati Enkabaani (1999), Usilie Mtoto wa Afrika/Don't Cry Child of Africa (1994) Root I (1994), Pongezi (1993), Saikati I (1992), Faith (1991), Productive Farmlands (1990), Wekesa at The Crossroads (1986), Together We Build (1982), The Tomorrow's Adult Citizens (1981), Nkomani Clinic (1980), The Beggar's Husband (1980)

Awards:

1. Special Jury Directors' Award, Zanzibar International Film Festival, 1999
2. Saikati, Director's Film, Plan International, 1999
3. Gabriella Mistral Award, Chile Embassy, 1996
4. Best Video Documentary Award, FESPACO, 1995
5. Special Merit Award, MNET, 1995
6. Best Woman Director, Association of Professional in Communication Award (APAC), Burkina Faso, 1993
7. Best Projection of an African Woman's Image, FESPACO-UNICEF, 1993

Other recognitions:

1. Head of State Commendation (HSC), 1994
2. Founder and Director, Shangilia Street Children's Theatre

3. Co-founder of Women in Cinema in Kenya which is affiliated with African Women in Film and Video