

Televisual cinema and social identities: the case of Nollywood and Latin American telenovelas in Eldoret, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Television in Kenya has in the recent past been dominated by Nollywood video films and Latin American telenovelas. This paper examines the social impact of these televisual cinemas on a community of young women spectators in Eldoret. I develop the argument that the televisual cinema practice not only improved young women's access to cinema but also influenced the process of young women's social identification. The paper is an ethnographic study based on narrative reflections and testimonies by Eldoret-based female audiences. My analytical approach borrows from, but also expands on, Joseph Straubhaar's [2007. *World Television: From Global to Local*. London: Sage Publications, 32–33] concept of the hybrid and multi-layered identity formations in the context of media consumption. The paper shows that the women's viewing experiences allow them to reflect on their own agency and on their perceptions and experiences of modern young womanhood and the social identifications through which this is framed.

KEYWORDS: Modernity, Nollywood video films, spectatorship, social identity, televisual cinema