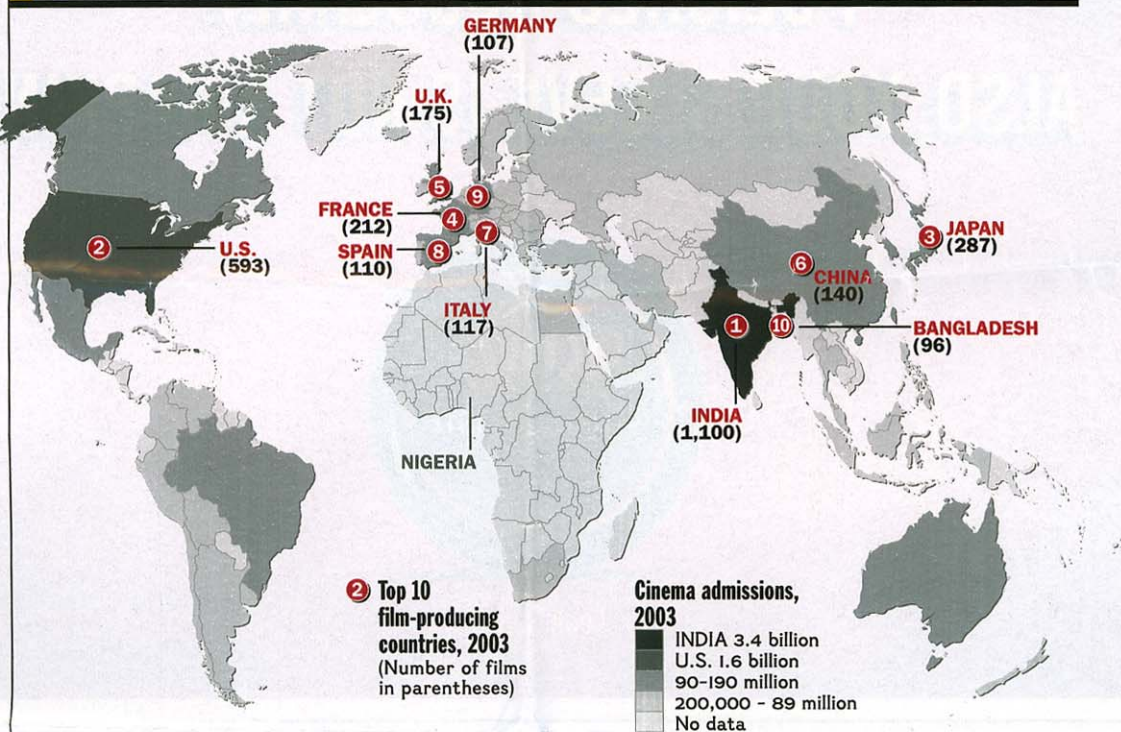


## THE GEOGRAPHY OF EVERYDAY LIFE



SOURCE: SCREEN DIGEST  
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAPS

## The Reel World

Nigerians don't go to the movies; the movies come to them. With few operating cinemas in Nigeria's largest city of Lagos, screenings often occur in local restaurants and private homes; videos are sold at market stands and sometimes hawked to motorists caught in traffic. This distribution of films from "Nollywood," as the country's ultralow-budget industry is known, may seem unusual,



NGS PHOTOGRAPHER WILLIAM ALBERT ALLARD

but it still satisfies the demand for movies—an obsession shared by people around the world.

In 2003, according to film industry source *Screen Digest*, some seven billion movie tickets were sold worldwide, earning an estimated 22 billion dollars. The greatest share of these global box-office receipts—more than 43 percent—came from U.S. theaters. Japanese theaters charged the most for tickets: Reserved seats can cost up to \$25. Though India made more films than Hollywood, it made less money from them; the price of admission to an Indian theater (left) averaged just 20 cents.

Many American blockbusters rake in more money internationally than at home. *Titanic*, the highest grossing film of all time, made two-thirds of its 1.8-billion-dollar take overseas. American

movies have long been retooled for foreign sale. In the 1930s stars such as the comedy team Laurel and Hardy reshot their films in German and other languages—coached with phonetically spelled cue cards. Now native speakers are recorded over original actors' voices with varying success. In the French version of *Star Wars*, the villain's voice is considerably less menacing, and his name's been changed to Dark Vador.

American movies may be popular abroad, but foreign concession stands still cater to local tastes. Some European audiences wash their popcorn down with beer. In China the popcorn's sweetened. Other film snack favorites there—spicy cabbage, salted plums, dried squid shreds—have a flavor all their own.

—Scott Elder