MUSIC AS SOCIAL DISCOURSE: THE CONTRIBUTION OF POPULAR MUSIC TO THE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION OF HIV/AIDS IN NAIROBI, KENYA

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Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Magister Musicae in the Faculty of Arts at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

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- for Gitonga, Mwaniki, Mumbi, Mirigo and Wahome -
The financial assistance of the Department of Research Capacity Building, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, and that of the National Arts Council are hereby acknowledged.
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DECLARATION:

In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned dissertation is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

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___________________________________________________

DATE:

___________________________________________________
DECLARATION OF ETHICS

I hereby declare that this research was conducted with full cognizance of the ethical implications thereof. Accordingly:

❖ The interviewee concerned (Addendum E) was fully informed of the nature and scope of this research, and participated in it on a voluntary basis.

❖ Despite my best efforts to do so, the owners of the rights to recordings one and four contained in the accompanying CD, Addendum F, could not be located. In the case of recording one, the artist in question is no longer alive and no living relatives could be located. Nyokha recording studio, where the recording was made, expressly denies any ownership over this material and could provide no further leads. With respect to recording four, the contact details provided on the recording were found to be invalid. All attempts to contact the artist, including attempts via producers with whom she has worked, were unsuccessful. Permission for the duplication of these recordings could therefore not be secured. However, Wycliffe Wanjohi (a member of staff at Calif Records), through a telephone conversation held on 26 June 2008, granted the author permission, on behalf of the artists, to use the song Juala for this purpose. Francis, the executive director Ogopa Deejays, through email conversation, granted the author permission to use the song Vuta Pumz for this purpose on 12 June 2008. I hereby declare that the duplications in question will not be exploited for own financial gain, and any or all persons concerned are hereby acknowledged.

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Finally, I acknowledge the artists and the production houses associated with the songs that have been used in this study. They include: Ogopa Dejays, the Longombas, Calif Records, Circute and Jo-el, Nyokha Studios, Wasike wa Musungu, Princess Jully, Oula Production, Bruce Odhiambo and Johari Clef.

May God Almighty richly bless you all.
This dissertation is a critical, theoretical study focussing on the contribution that popular music makes towards raising awareness and promoting the prevention of HIV/Aids in Nairobi, Kenya. Towards this end, an analysis of the lyrics and musical gestures of four Kenyan pop music songs is undertaken in order to highlight their communicative capabilities in this regard. These songs, namely, are *Lulumbe* by Wasike wa Musungu, *Juala* by Circute and Jo-el, *Vuta Pumz* by The Longombas, and *Dunia Mbaya Chunguze* by Princess Jully.

The context in which these musical analyses occur is provided in:

- An overview of the Kenya of today, in particular that of the diverse and hybrid ethnic, linguistic, musical and cultural practices of Nairobi, and of the various youth cultures in that city, as well as in an overview of the extent of the HIV/Aids pandemic in Kenya, especially amongst the youth of Nairobi, with some reflection on existing interventions.
- An overview of current trends in popular music analysis and an explanation of the author’s own eclectic semiotic analytical methodology within this context.

The study concludes that a repeating strategy may be discerned on the part of the composers and performers in question, namely, to first engage audiences through language and music with which they are familiar, and then to encourage audiences to confront the unknown and unfamiliar in music and language, but also ultimately in terms of their social practices. The known and the familiar is highlighted both in the lyrics and in the music itself. It includes use of commonly-spoken languages and dialects, popular musical styles typical of the particular sub-culture, and references to the day-to-day experiences of the ordinary person.
The unknown includes each song’s unique hybridization of musical and spoken languages, and especially its unashamed “naming of parts” with reference to issues such as sex, HIV/Aids and gender perceptions.

KEY WORDS

Popular Music Analysis; Kenya; Nairobi; HIV/Aids; Wasike wa Musungu; Circute and Jo-el; Longombas; Princess Jully
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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>Antenatal Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARV</td>
<td>Antiretroviral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ART</td>
<td>Antiretroviral Therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATS</td>
<td>Amphetamine-type Stimulants</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Cooporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCC</td>
<td>Behavioural Change Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAAC</td>
<td>Constituency Aids Control Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSW</td>
<td>Commercial Sex Worker(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSW</td>
<td>Female Sex Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation</td>
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<tr>
<td>HBC</td>
<td>Home-based Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immuno-deficiency Virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICASA</td>
<td>International Conference on Aids and STIs in Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICRW</td>
<td>International Centre for Research for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDUs</td>
<td>Injecting Drug Users</td>
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<tr>
<td>KDHS</td>
<td>Kenya Demographic Health Survey</td>
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<td>KNASP</td>
<td>Kenya National HIV/Aids Strategic Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSM</td>
<td>Men Who Have Sex with Men</td>
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<tr>
<td>MYSA</td>
<td>Mathare Youth Sports Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACC</td>
<td>National Aids Control Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASCOP</td>
<td>National Aids and STIs Control Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OI</td>
<td>Opportunistic Infection</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVC</td>
<td>Orphans and Vulnerable Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEP</td>
<td>Post-exposure Prophylaxis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLWHA</td>
<td>People Living with HIV and AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMCT</td>
<td>Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
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<td>STIs</td>
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<td>UKIMWI</td>
<td>Ukosefu wa Kinga Mwilini</td>
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<td>VCT</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THIS STUDY

1. THE AIM OF THIS STUDY

This dissertation is a qualitative study wherein I aim to explore the notion of music as social discourse, in particular that of popular music as the voice of the youth, thus of how such music speaks to the various issues affecting young people. My particular focus will be on the contribution that popular music makes towards raising awareness and promoting the prevention of HIV/Aids. This notion will be explored with reference to the Kenya of today, in particular to that of the diverse and hybrid ethnic, linguistic, musical and cultural practices of Nairobi, and to the various youth cultures in that city. This study will also include a survey of statistics pertaining to the spread of HIV/Aids, particularly among the youth, both globally and in Kenya itself, with some reflection on the measure of success or failure that existing intervention strategies and measures have thus far achieved.

Within the above context, four Kenyan pop music songs, each by a different composer or band from Nairobi – that are also popular in other parts of the country – will be discussed, their lyrics and musical gestures analyzed, and conclusions drawn about the semiotic universe of Kenyan popular music and the means through which it articulates the message of HIV/Aids awareness and prevention.

In this manner, this study will ultimately aim to highlight the significance of pop music as a particularly effective youth discourse, one that should inform government intervention policies and strategies in combating the spread of HIV/Aids in Kenya.
2. **RATIONALE**

Music is an integral part of any culture. Music communicates to us the beliefs, norms and values of a society, and through music these may be transmitted from one generation to another. Since the year 2001, I have involved myself in various campaigns in secondary schools across Kenya, such as those against drug abuse and also those aimed at spreading awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS. As performing musician, my greatest role in the latter regard has been to sing songs that communicate the messages of Aids awareness, warning young boys and girls about the type of behaviour that could expose them to the risk of infection. The songs carry messages of abstinence as the best way of preventing HIV/AIDS. I enjoy the liberty of being able to sing out about issues of sexuality on catchy tunes, knowing that these tunes capture the attention of my audience. It is gratifying to know that my messages are being spread, as young people sing these tunes to each other in their day-to-day communications. I am amazed at how successful such messages are when they are spread through song. These experiences have consequently excited my curiosity and inspired me to critically analyze some popular music compositions that have reference to the HIV/AIDS theme, to establish the extent to which such music has been able to engage itself in responding to the Aids crisis amongst the urban youth in Kenya.

A significant body of knowledge already exists about Kenyan pop music. Such sources include Impey 1998, Okumu 2003, Paterson 2006 and Sobania 2003. Much has also been written about those factors that make the youth a high-risk group in the spread of HIV/AIDS. They include Amuyunzu-Nyamongo 2001, Izumi 2006, NACC 2006, and the statistics and reports from the Kenya National Aids Control Council through their HIV/AIDS Data Booklet (2005). Then there are also the findings, deliberations and declarations from the numerous regional and international conferences that focus on the situation of the Aids crisis in Africa,
specifically Kenya, sponsored or hosted by United Nations system organizations such as UNESCO, UNDP, the World Bank and World Health Organizations.

However, little or no scholarly material exists that focuses on popular music’s ability to engage with the problems of Kenyan society, in this case with specific reference to the country’s Aids crisis. This oversight could be attributed to the notion most Kenyans have of pop music, namely that pop music has a bad influence on the youth. This is the result of the fact that traditionally such music focuses on topics like beer-drinking, drugs, sex, women, love, hate, etc. topics that seem to feed into the youth’s need for self-indulgent instant gratification, rather than encourage the kind of ideals that society at large would consider more worthy. More recently, however, there has been an increasing tendency in such music to address issues of greater social concern, to focus on the Aids crisis in particular, and this new tendency deserves to be critically interrogated.

Further investigation of the contribution of pop music towards creating awareness and promoting the prevention of HIV/Aids in Kenya, specifically Nairobi, is therefore paramount. Such investigation must begin with an understanding of Kenyan culture in general. This is because Kenya is very diverse. There are more than 42 ethnic groups in Kenya, each with its own unique culture and language\(^1\). Apart from this diversity of cultures, Kenya has had an opportunity to have contact with people of other cultures from all over the world and this has influenced her people in many ways. Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya, a hub of business and culture, a city with a diverse multicultural setting that has brought people of different cultures both from Kenya and other parts of the world together, and has settled them in various parts of the city, with approximately 65% of the population dwelling in slums. The hybrid styles of Kenyan pop music engage with this cultural hybridity in a very particular way.

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\(^1\) Although in some cases language difference is more a difference in dialect.
Like any other third-world country, curbing the spread of disease remains one of the greatest challenges Kenya faces. Different cultural perceptions of disease have to a large extent influenced not only the way people respond to it, but must also inform government and other disease-intervention organizations in the diverse strategies they implement in order to deal with the problem most effectively. HIV/AIDS remains one of the deadliest sexually-transmitted diseases in Kenya. Many people in Kenya have in one way or another been affected or infected by this deadly scourge. Cultural practices have played a big role in the spread of HIV/AIDS. As people move from rural areas to settle in Nairobi, for whatever reason, they bring their own cultural practices and perceptions with them. Such practices include traditional circumcision of both boys and girls, marrying off of young girls to older men, polygamy and wife inheritance, all the result of deep-rooted cultural perceptions of gender roles in society. Such practices and perceptions continue to expose people to the pandemic.

Poverty and overcrowding, mainly due to unemployment, worsen the situation in Nairobi. According to the World Summit of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, held in 2005:

In Kenya, around 12 percent of the 15-49 age groups are infected with HIV. In the capital Nairobi, 65 percent of the population live in slums. However, these slums occupy just 5 percent of the urban area. There is severe overcrowding, with people living in extremely unhygienic conditions. The inadequate water supply and lack of sanitation increase the risk of contracting serious infectious diseases. In addition, the few health services available are run by private providers and are expensive and of poor quality. Due to poverty and a lack of knowledge, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are rife and on the increase in the slums [...]. The disease spreads rapidly, with every infected person infecting a further 10-15 slum residents (MDG 6 2005).
On the other hand, practices rooted in traditional culture also have the potential to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS. In traditional societies, norms and values were communicated from one generation to the next through music, dance, narratives, poetry, architecture and various rituals. These forms of communication have not lost their power to entertain and educate, even in contemporary society, and could therefore be effectively implemented to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS. Traditional music is an integral part of traditional culture, just as pop music is an integral part of the contemporary hybrid culture of the urban youth. Thus:

> There are many different ways of contracting HIV/AIDS. There are many different ways of preventing HIV/AIDS. There are many different groups of people exposed to HIV/AIDS. There are many ways of discriminating against people living with HIV/AIDS. The why’s, how’s and who’s change from culture to culture. That is why we need a culturally appropriate response to HIV/AIDS prevention and care (UNESCO 2008).

Therefore, along with the many other interventions from the side of government and non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) to stop the spread of HIV/Aids in Kenya, we must consider the potential of culture, in particular pop music, to get the message across most effectively in the case of the youth of Nairobi.

As is the case in most other parts of the world, and as was previously described here, the lyrics of Kenyan pop music traditionally focus on such themes as beer-drinking, drugs, women, sex, love, jilted lovers, partying, etc. As a result the Kenyan establishment tends to regard pop music as a bad influence on the youth. Yet such songs are everywhere. One hears them on the Kenyan taxi cabs or matatus¹, as piped music in the banking halls, on the streets of the city, in the shopping malls, and constantly broadcast on all public media, both radio and

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¹ The term ‘matatu’ denotes a form of transport. Elsewhere, term ‘taxi’ and also the sheng term “ma three” is also used.
television. Nowadays even mobile phones can be tuned into radio stations. Pop music is therefore literally everywhere and readily available at any given time. Young people are never without it. But these are the same adventure-seeking young people, attuned to instant gratification, who are described as one of the most vulnerable groups when it comes to the risk of contracting HIV/Aids. Amuyunzu-Nyamongo (2001) writes that the vulnerability of the youth is increased especially by early sexual activities that may be due to cultural and socio-economic factors, to media influence, or to the bad influence of their peers. She adds that this problem is worsened by the inability of parents, leaders and teachers to discuss matters of sexuality with young people.

Therefore, this study sets out to establish whether this type of music – a music of the youth, by the youth and for the youth, a music that is so integral a part of their lives, and that is perceived as so powerful and influential in encouraging them to indulge in a life of drugs, sex and beer – could not be equally influential in creating an awareness and promoting the prevention of HIV/Aids. Could this influential and omnipresent phenomenon in their lives not be put to “good” use, rather than “bad”?

3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The assumption that music has the ability to influence the actions of human beings – be it for perceived good or bad – requires that the researcher interrogate its communicative capabilities. It requires that a means be formulated to disclose those elements of the musical work on which this influence rests. A methodological framework must therefore be found to uncover its semiotic layers, involving textual (both lyrics and music), intertextual, and contextual parameters.
4. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODS

The specific objectives of this study will therefore be:

- To provide a context for this study in an overview of the social, political, and traditional cultural (including traditional practices, languages, music, religion etc.) history of Kenya.

- To focus on the Kenya of today, with particular reference to:
  
  a) The hybrid socio-economic, ethnic and cultural characteristics of the Nairobi of today, and, within this context, the diversity in its youth culture, in particular its styles of pop music and its use of language;
  
  b) The problem of HIV/AIDS in Kenya, with reference to questions such as: how do Kenya’s national statistics relate to international statistics; who are the people most affected; what intervention strategies exist; what measure of success have these strategies achieved thus far, particularly in the case of the youth of Nairobi?

- To provide an overview of current trends in popular music studies, and to formulate my own theoretical position in this regard.

- To provide a critique of the selected songs in terms of the following:
  
  a) Some background of the artists themselves, within the context of the overviews provided above
  
  b) A focus on the lyrics of each song, with reference to such factors as chosen language, dialect, gender discourse, how the different issues of HIV/AIDS are addressed, etc.
c) A focus on the musical text itself (harmony, melody, rhythm, texture, timbre, etc.), with reference to such semiotic musical devices as:

- Musical rhetoric (musical gestures that illustrate and emphasise the literal meanings of the song’s lyrics)
- Identification of the different intertextual connections that exist in the song’s stylistic musical gestures (be they connections to traditional music, to other pop music works, either local or international, etc.), with particular focus on stylistic hybridity
- Consideration of the connections these musical gestures have with the intertexts and contexts provided above; how they integrate as a musical discourse that addresses the relevant social issues across barriers of language, class, gender and age, often speaking what can otherwise not be said.

To draw together conclusions arrived at from the above objectives in order to highlight popular music as a significant form of social discourse that should inform government intervention policies and strategies in their attempts to address the HIV/AIDS crisis in Kenya.

5. DELIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

This is a purely theoretical study, located within the broad underpinning that Babbie and Mouton describe as “hermeneutic”, “phenomenological” and “interpretivist” (2001: 28-33). As such it limits itself to an “interpretive understanding (Verstehen)” (Ibid: 33) in its critique of sources within the fields with which it engages, and does not purport to provide empirical evidence in support of its theoretical arguments.
6. OUTLAY OF CHAPTERS

Although they differ in some respects regarding the details of their analytical strategies, scholars are generally agreed that the analysis of popular music requires consideration of both contextual and textual features of the musical work. For this reason this study begins by providing the reader with the various political, social and musical contexts that may help to shape our understanding of Kenyan popular music.

Chapter two provides an overview of Kenyan history and culture in general, where an attempt is made to expose the diversity in its cultural, linguistic and musical practices, as well as to clarify the many hybrid manifestations that arise from its complex pre- and postcolonial political and social structures.

Chapter three interrogates the state of the HIV/Aids crisis in Kenya. In addition to providing statistics pertaining to the pandemic, it also considers the various social factors that impact on its spread as well as on the intervention measures it requires, with some reflection on the measure of success these interventions have thus far achieved. These pertain particularly to the tension between traditional lifestyles, widespread poverty, and the increasing pressure to adopt modern, urbanized ways of life. In this regard it highlights the youth as a particularly vulnerable group, often caught between these societal tensions.

Chapter four focuses on the city of Nairobi as the most immediate environment for the music that is the subject of this study. On the one hand this city may be understood as vibrant with cultural dynamism, evidenced in its many new, hybrid linguistic and musical voices, but on the other hand it also embodies the tragedy of the post-colony in its continued struggle against poverty, crime and disease.
Chapter five provides an overview of the body of literature relevant to the field of popular music studies. It provides the theoretical context against which my own analyses are ultimately conducted. The many and varied approaches within the field are considered in two broad categories: those that are inherently musicological, and those that are inherently extra-musicological. My own theoretical approach is consequently outlined, loosely derived from Joseph Kerman’s understanding of the eclectic use of theory in music criticism, and from Kofi Agawu’s suggestion for a “semantic” rather than a “syntactic” approach to musical semiotics.

Chapter six sets out my analysis of the selected musical texts themselves. Here I begin with a synchronic focus on the structural and stylistic features of each song’s lyrics and music. Drawing on Kofi Agawu’s understanding of the “semantic” semiotic approach to musical analysis, however, these synchronic textual features are subsequently interpreted against the diachronic contexts previously provided, allowing for the reading of the music in question as a conglomeration of both structural and topical signs unique to Kenyan popular music.

Chapter seven concludes this study by pointing to the extent to which the works in question may be understood as rich and hybrid intertexts that embody the voice of the Kenyan youth, a form of social discourse that has particular relevance to the management of the HIV/AIDS crisis in Kenya today.
CHAPTER TWO

THE PEOPLE OF KENYA

1. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this chapter is to provide a context for this study in an overview of the social, political, and cultural history of Kenya.

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1 This is the map of Kenya. The images have been suggested and compiled by the author herself, assisted by Paul Manan of Nairobi in June 2008.
2. **POLITICAL HISTORY**

Kenya has over 42 ethnic groups which have distinct cultures, traditions and systems of government that existed long before the period of the colonialists in the late 19th century. Most of what is known about the political histories of these groups has been preserved in the form of legends, songs and narratives. Given the diverse and dynamic nature of cultures and the customs of the people of Kenya, and keeping in mind the limited scope of this overview, it is not possible to give detailed information about the political histories of each and every tribe here. Therefore, only a few illustrations will be used to highlight the form of governance that existed in the pre-colonial period.

Ecology and economic productivity of the various ethnic groups in Kenya is seen as crucial in determining societal structures, political organizations and religious beliefs prior to colonisation. In relation to this view, Spear writes that:

> Farmers, [...] were tied to the need to obtain and maintain sufficient land to produce adequate harvest year after year. This meant that they had to settle in one place and devise a form of social organization that would ensure continuity of personnel from harvest to harvest and from generation to generation. As a consequence, farmers lived together in tightly knit groups [...]. Hunters and gatherers, on the other hand, felt no pressure to ensure continuity as they could band together with some for a specific hunt and combine with others for another activity. The hunting band was thus a much smaller and looser form of social organization. The herders had different social requirements [...] they lived in smaller and more fluid local groups than farmers, they were able to vary their composition and rapidly augment their numbers through widespread links based on kinship and age (Spear 1981: 74).
While detailing the tribal life of the Gekoyo\(^1\) people, Kenyatta (1938) highlights three governing principles without which there was no harmony in tribal activities. These principles include i) the family (*mbare or nyomba*), ii) the clan (*moherega*) and iii) the system of age-grading (*riika*). The family group brings those related by blood together. The family group includes mother, father, children and their grand- and great-grandchildren. The clan is composed of several family groups who are believed to have descended from one family group in the remote past. In other words, this group (*moherega*) knits together distant relatives and facilitates the rendering of mutual support in all important matters in the interest and welfare of the clan. Unlike the family and clan groups that seek to unify people who are related by blood, the *riika* unites and solidifies the whole tribe in all its activities. The activities of the various age groups stabilizes the Gekoyo tribal organization, including its political life line. Kenyatta adds that each of the government principles that harmonizes tribal activities have practical parts to play in the people’s government. He writes:

> The starting-point was the family unit. From the governmental point of view members of one family group were considered as forming a family council (*ndundu ya mocie*), with the father as the president. The father represented the

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\(^1\) The usual European pronunciation of the word *gekoyo* is *kikuyu*, which is wrong. The word should be pronounced as *Gîkŭyŭ*, which should be pronounced as *Gekoyo* in strict phonetics. The reader should note the discrepancies in the way different sources used in this dissertation have pronounced different *Gîkŭyŭ* terms. The reader is advised to pronounce the vowels in the words as follows:

The vowel a in a *Gîkŭyŭ* word will sound like a as used in *car*
The vowel e in a *Gîkŭyŭ* word will sound like e as used in *egg*
The vowel i in a *Gîkŭyŭ* word will sound like e as is used in *eel*
The vowel o in a *Gîkŭyŭ* word will sound like o as used in *orange*
The vowel u in a *Gîkŭyŭ* word will sound like u as used in *Jupiter*
The vowel ŭ in a *Gîkŭyŭ* word will sound like o as used in *bold*
The vowel ĭ in a *Gîkŭyŭ* word will sound like a as used in *David*

\(^2\) *Riika* refers to both boys and girls who go through initiation or circumcision together irrespective of the family group or clan. For more information cf. Kenyatta 1938: 2.
family group in the government. The next was the village council (kiama gia itora), composed of the heads of several families in the village. The senior elder acted as the president of the council and this group represented the villagers in the government. [...] The district council (kiama kia rogongo), in which all the elders of the district participated; this council was presided over by a committee (kiama kia ndundu), composed of the senior elders of the villages. Amongst these elders the one most advanced in age and wisdom was elected as the judge and the president (mothamaki or mociri). The national council was formed, composed of several councils (ndundu), representing the whole population. Among the judges, a president was elected at the meetings of the national council. All these councils were composed of men from the age of about thirty and onwards. But there was a very important council of young men known as Njama ya ita (Council of war), its members were between the age of twenty and forty. This council, apart from its military activities, represented the interests of the young people in the government (Kenyatta 1938: 194).

The first formal colonial involvement in Kenya began in 1885 with the granting of a royal charter to the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC). This move was meant to signal to other European powers the British claim to this region as part of its “sphere of influence”. This consequently staked the Europeans to various parts of the continent – a move that came to be known as the “Scramble for Africa”. The British brought with them modernization and other Western developments. However, the advancement of Western civilization and Christianity not only broke the social continuity that was, but also destroyed and buried the functions and structure of traditional societies. At the same time, Sobania explains how traditional political patterns were “reformed” to fit colonial expectations:

Principal to this [the government reformations] was the assumptions that each tribe had a “chief” and that all the colonial officials needed to do to bring about a transformation of these traditional societies was to identify that individual. With some ethnic groups this was indeed true, but in many societies the people practiced egalitarian system of rule in which the elders made decisions through consensus. Nevertheless, because the colonial authorities often insisted there had to be a chief, they found individuals willing to accept such designation. Local
chiefs were soon wielding power and authority in the name of colonial authorities and in time their place in villages came to be usual (Sobania 2003: 23).

As the struggle ensued towards independence, led by the Mau Mau Guerilla army, Kenya achieved independence (*Uhuru*) on 12 December, 1963. The Union Jack was lowered and the new red, green and black national flag – with a shield and crossed spears in the middle – was hoisted. The leader of the majority party, Kenya African National Union (KANU), Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, became prime minister. In 1964, Kenya became an independent republic. In the same year, the two opposition parties consolidated and joined KANU, giving government the votes it needed in parliament to amend the constitution, and later in that year Jomo Kenyatta became the first president of Kenya.

After the death of Kenyatta in 1978, the vice-president, Daniel Arap Moi, constitutionally became the second president of the republic. Mr. Moi ruled for 24 years and during his tenure, Kenya witnessed a lot of political changes. Regional rivalries between ethnic groups led to the formation of ethnically-based political parties. In his effort to avoid political parties based on ethnicity, Moi introduced a new constitution that made Kenya a one party state. Violent political unrest led to reinstatement of a multiparty system in the year 1991 and dozens of opposition parties contested the 1992 and 1997 general elections. However, KANU remained the majority party and Moi remained the president until December 2002 when the presidential mantle was democratically handed over to the third president of Kenya, His Excellency Emilio Mwai Kibaki.

3. **CULTURE**

Culture is the way of life of a people. In African societies in general, one would find it hard to fully understand any one aspect of a people’s culture (such as its music for example) without seeing the role thereof within the boarder context of that people’s cultural practice as a whole. This situation is also true in Kenya.
Kenya has a very rich and dynamic mosaic of cultural and ritual diversity. Its diverse population is spread all over the country and occupies different geographical areas. Over the years, norms, values, customs, taboos and cultural practices have been transmitted orally from one generation to another. This transmission, together with other factors that include modernization, industrialization and the spread of Christianity, has facilitated a lot of cultural changes and hence cultural dynamism. Therefore, it is difficult for this study to detail the culture and customs of every ethnic group in Kenya. Also, the diversity and the dynamism of culture make it impractical for this study to discuss in detail any of the ethnic groups that will be mentioned.

The cooperative nature of African communities, knit together by a web of kinship relationships and other social structures, cannot be overemphasized. To put it differently, various aspects of the life of a society contribute towards the structures that define a culture. This shared cultural heritage brings people dignity as well as material prosperity. Kenyatta writes that in the Gekoyo society, no single part is detachable; each has its contexts and is fully understandable only in relation to the whole. The uniqueness of each individual is considered secondary to the fact that she/he is first and foremost several people’s relative and several people’s contemporary. Spiritually, economically as well as biologically, an individual’s life is founded on this fact and it forms the basis of his/her sense of moral responsibility and social obligation. Personal needs are satisfied only incidentally while playing the part as member of a family group (Kenyatta 1938: 309).

This cooperative nature of Kenyan ethnic societies is reflected in various cultural practices too. Cultural practices and rituals are not just performed for fun, but are utilitarian in nature. A child does not have to go to school to acquire cultural education. The cultural rules, values and customs are socially instilled into the child through the parents, grandparents, the age-group and the society as a
whole. The curriculum advances as the child advances in age and his/her learning resources are comprised of image and ritual, the rhythms of dance and the words of the ceremonial song, which makes every stage of life unforgottably dramatic. As children reach adolescence, they begin to assume their role as responsible members of the community. At this stage, it is necessary to impress upon them exactly what is expected from them in their new station in life, and what new obligations are imposed on them by development of their sexuality, as well as of their general mental and physical growth (1938: 304).

The coming of Christianity and colonial power was characterized by the introduction of, among other things, modernization, industrialization and education. As a result, traditional cultural practices – initiation of both boys and girls and polygamy, to mention but a few – were changed and in other cases eroded. Some of the cultural practices are obviously a health risk but they are vital and sacred to the communities that practice them. Kenyatta writes of the attempts made by the influential European agencies – missionaries, sentimental pro-African, government, educational and medical authorities – to stifle some of the cultural practices during the colonial period. He says that:

In 1929, after several attempts to break down the custom, the Church of Scotland mission to Gikuyu issued an order demanding that those who wish their children to attend schools should pledge themselves that they will not in any way adhere or support [initiation rite] and that they will not let their children undergo the initiation rite. […] children of those who did not denounce the custom were debarred from attending the missionary schools. […] In 1930 the question of the custom of clitoridectomy was raised in the House of Commons and committee of Members of Parliament was appointed to investigate the matter. […] it was then agreed that the best way to tackle the problem was through education and not by force of an enactment, and that the best way was to leave the people concerned free to choose what custom was best suited to their changing customs. In 1931 a conference of African children was held in Geneva under the auspices of Save the Children Fund. […] several European delegates urged that the time was ripe when this “barbarous custom” should be abolished and that, like all other
“heathen” customs, it could be abolished at once by law (Kenyatta 1938: 130-131).

Most communities resisted European interference in these matters and were determined to defend their culture through whatever it took. After 1929, people demanded the right to establish their own schools where they could teach their children according to their customs and without outside interference. This led to the establishment of schools such as the Gekoyo Independent Schools that were entirely free from missionary influence, both in educational and religious matters.

Despite civilization and urbanization, some cultural practices are still deeply entrenched in Kenya’s ethnic communities. Mbiti attests to this by acknowledging that, notwithstanding the many changes that have taken place over time affecting cultural practices such as initiation rites, theirs will be a “long and painful death” since they are part and parcel of African identity and tradition (Mbiti 1969: 132). He attributes change to education, especially to the introduction of free primary education by the NARC government in 2003, as well as to the spread of Christianity. These changes are manifest in the modification or simplification of certain traditional practices and beliefs. Nevertheless, adherence to traditional cultural obligations remains a significant factor in contemporary Kenyan society.

However, as a famous Swahili saying goes, mwacha mila ni mtumwa, which means that “one who renounces his/her ancestry is like a slave”. The government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services, recognizes the importance of the rich cultural heritage of Kenya and has put in place programmes to safeguard, protect and develop Kenya’s cultural legacy. These include the establishment of programmes like Bomas of Kenya, Kenya Music and Cultural Festival and Permanent Presidential Music Commission. The Bomas of Kenya, established in 1971 as a subsidiary company of the Kenya Tourist Development Corporation, serves as a way of preserving, maintaining and promoting the rich and diverse cultural values of the various ethnic groups of Kenya, and also as a mouthpiece for the marketing of culture as
a tourist attraction. The annual event of *Kenya Music and Cultural Festival* is advertised as “the greatest cultural display in Africa” (Senoga-Zake 2000: 196). The event involves tens of thousands of performers at local and provincial levels, culminating each year in the final concert at Nairobi. The patron of the festival is the Head of State himself. The festival includes all kinds of people, from school children to cultural troupes from all over the country. The majority of items performed are African music and folk songs, but contemporary performances are also included. The event has been praised as offering free informal music education to the masses, both in rural and urban areas. People also get the opportunity to listen and appreciate music from other cultures. The event also gives scholars and other interested people opportunities to witness how much influence, both from within and outside of the country, there has been on the various Kenyan musical cultures. On the other hand, the festival has been criticized for facilitating faster degeneration of Kenyan culture. This has been attributed to the kinds of prejudices often displayed from the side of adjudicators. The judgments they make often prompt adjustments to authentic practices for the sake of winning competitions, since they are felt to inspire a deliberate incorporation of Western styles of performance.

4. RELIGION AND WORLDVIEW

Africans are notoriously religious, and each people has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it. [...] religion is the strongest element in traditional backgrounds and exerts probably the greatest influence upon thinking and living of the people concerned (Mbiti 1969: 1).

Mbiti’s description of the inherently religious nature of African people is certainly true of Kenyan society, and equally so in the pre- and post-colonial period. Kenyatta attests to this claim by saying that religion is integrated with the whole
of the *Agekoyo* people’s life as it is the dramatization of belief which is a matter of the social experience of those things that are most significant to human life (1938: 316). As discussed above, individuals in any African society cannot detach themselves from the religious practices of their group, for to do so is to be severed from their roots, foundation, security, kinships: in short, from all that defines their existence. Put differently, to be without religion in traditional African societies amounts to self-excommunication from society itself.

Worldview, according to Sobania (2003: 33), is the view of life or the conception of the world which provides a reasonable explanation of how different individuals are expected to behave and the rules which an individual is supposed to comply. The individual learns of these rules of a culture through enculturation and socialization. Religious beliefs of a group of people constitute part of the worldview of that particular group. It is such that an outsider may not be able to describe the beliefs of a people unless he/she understands their beliefs and worldviews. The majority of Kenyans are either Christian, Muslim, or follow traditional belief systems. These religions are spread throughout the nation and are not restricted to certain ethnic groups. For this reason a comprehensive description of the religious systems of the people of Kenya would far exceed the limitations of this overview. Instead, only some general comments will be made in this regard.

The traditional belief systems encompass belief in either one or more supernatural powers and ancestral spirits. Most ethnic groups believe in one most high God, referred to by different names in each tribe. For instance, that supernatural power is known as *Ngai* among the *Agekoyo*, *Waq* among the *Borana* people, *Enkai* among the *Maasai* and *Aakuj* among the *Turkana*. The *Agekoyo* community, for example, has a traditional belief system more or less is similar to its neighbouring tribes¹. One thing that is obvious to them and to most ethnic communities is the belief in the Supreme Being. The *Agekoyo* people

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¹ This includes the Aembu, the Ameru, people from Kirinyaga and the Mbeere.
believe that their lives are influenced by two supernatural powers, which include
the most high God, *Ngai*, who is responsible for all good fortunes and harvest,
and the devil, *Ngoma*, who is the author of disasters and misfortunes. They also
believe in ancestral spirits that visit people in different forms, such as animals
(Kenyatta 1938: 232). They believe that the highest God dwells in the sky and
also has temporary places of rest on earth, including the mountaintops. While
referring to *Ngai* who dwells in the sky, they start their prayers with the phrase
*Ngai wito we matuine* (God who art in heaven). While referring to the God who
dwells in the mountains, they say *Ngai Mwene Nyaga* (God who dwells on Mount
Kenya). They offer sacrifices to their God by taking these to sacred trees, such
as the *Mogumo* tree or the *Mokoyo* tree, where they believe God comes down to
receive them. The *Agekoyo* people also believe that God manifests himself in
many ways. For instance, thunder and lightning are perceived as signs of God’s
greatness, while the sound of thunder is also taken as His stretching as He
prepares to hit their enemy. Lightning is associated with the brandishing of the
sword as He prepares to strike (Kenyatta 1938).

When the early missionaries came to Kenya, they had only one goal in mind; to
make Kenya a ‘heavenly bound country’ through the establishment of self-
sufficient communities of faith. They considered the social and religious customs
of the local communities as heathen and as works of Satan. They therefore felt
that in order for them to attain their ‘divine mission’, they needed to spread the
light of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to ultimately destroy all the objects
associated with other ‘ungodly’ beliefs and practices. The missionaries wooed
converts to Christianity though promises of access to land, jobs and education.
The converts were forced to abandon some of their core cultural practices before
they could be baptized (Kariuki et al 2006). Some of the new converts were
forced to divorce some of their wives and keep only one. Unlike the traditional
belief systems, Christianity tells of the world to come while traditional beliefs
focus on the present world. Christianity, to a great extent, focusses on the
individual while the traditional beliefs focus is on the community. However, the
conversion of Kenyans to Christianity was also a way of converting them to a broad range of Western values, including literacy, education, medicine and social mobility (Sobania 2003).

Islam on the other hand is a belief system that is common among the Swahili towns of the coast and has also in the recent past become widespread in other parts of the country. The Kenyan coast has long been a crossroads for people and cultures of the world, for reasons such as trade and exploration. As time passed, existing cities became increasingly Islamized and new cities evolved, founded by Muslims from Arabia and neighboring countries. According to Sobania (2003), Islam was a natural consequence of the expansion and immigration of Muslims from the Indian Ocean rim to the East African coast, and also from the intermarriage of Arab, Persian and other Muslim settlers with the local population. The expansion of Islam as a religion to other parts of the country occurred at the same time as the spread of Christianity, and for more or less the same reasons, namely, to convert people. At the same time as the British authorities moved to the interior parts of Kenya, they needed subordinates, and the Swahili people of the coast fitted this job description well owing to the fact that they were from an urban environment – since the Kenyan coast had fast-growing towns. This paved the way for the spread of Islam to the interior.
5. **LANGUAGE**

Kenya has over fifty distinctive ethnic languages and dialects. The various ethno-linguistic groups are believed to have migrated from different parts of the continent, each speaking a language or dialect that makes them distinct from other Kenyans. The Cushitic-speaking people are believed to have entered Kenya from the Horn of Africa to occupy the north-eastern part. They are the *Somali*, *Borana*, *Burji*, *Gabbra*, *Orma*, *Galla*, *Rendile* and *Wa-Boni*. The Nilotic speaking people are believed to have come from the Nile Valley. They are said to have been moving southwards along the Rift Valley that favoured their cattle-raising lifestyle. They include tribes such as the Luos, who in turn include the agricultural *Luo*, *Kalenjin*, *Maasai*, the *Pokot*, *Samburu* and the *Turkana*. The Bantu speaking people were the largest group to have migrated to Kenya. They include the *Agikuyu*, the *Abaluhyia*, the *Akamba*, the *Achuka*, the *Aembu*, the *Abagusii*, *Abakuria*, *Amakonde*, *Ameru*, *Mijikenda* and the *Taita*. They are mostly agriculturalists and they occupy the fertile highlands of central, western and southern Kenya. According to Heine & Mohling\(^1\) (in Githiora 2002: 159), approximately 65% of Kenyan populations speak one Bantu language or another, 3% Cushitic, and 30% a Nilotic language. All the various ethno-linguistic groups speak a language known by the name of the particular group, termed the “mother tongue”. For instance, the mother tongue of the *Agekoyo* people is *Gekoyo* while that of *Ameru* is *Kimeru*.

English is the most important official language in Kenya. It functions as the language of education, international commerce, the judiciary, parliament debates and administration. *Swahili* is Kenya’s national language, however, spoken by

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the majority of the Kenyans after their ‘mother tongue’. It is the language of interaction and political organization. The draft constitution of 2002 enshrined it as the national and the official language of Kenya. It is taught as a subject in all levels of education. In addition to the status of the Swahili language in the nation, it is also the mother tongue of the coastal Bantu sub-families. It developed to become a common coastal language as early as the thirteenth century, greatly influenced by the Arabic, Hindi, Persian, Portuguese and English people who at one time or another had contact with the inhabitants of the coast, for reasons mostly of trade and exploration.

There are quite a few variations in the Swahili of today. Githiora writes that some variations of speaking Swahili can be traced to mother tongue interference and geographical dialects (2002: 163). Within the coastal province, Kipate, Kiamu and Kibajuni are the dialects mostly spoken by the Northern Swahili speakers. The central group dialects include Kimvita, which is mostly spoken on Mombasa Island. Kiungunja, Shirazi and Kivumba are the dialects mostly spoken by the southern group, with Kiungunja being the main dialect spoken in Zanzibar. The standard Swahili in Kenya is considered to be the dialect spoken in Zanzibar.

Away from the coastal region of Kenya, the Congo people have a Swahili dialect known as Kingwana. Githiora (2002) also mentions a social dialect of Kenyan Swahili called Shamba Swahili or Kisettla, which refers to a Swahili code that emerged from contact between European land owners - most, but not all, English speaking – and their workers, who also were not native speakers of Swahili. Heine¹ (in Githiora 2002) refers to a “pidgin Swahili” that is used as a vernacular for trade and interactions in the areas away from the coast.

Sheng is a language common amongst young people in Nairobi. It has become a basic urban language for the youth in Kenya. In fact Sheng has become so

widespread that it is not only interfering with the authenticity of the tribal languages but it is also threatening the standards of Swahili and English languages in schools, since most of the students have adopted it as a means of communication. It dominates the discourse of primary and secondary school children outside their formal classroom setting. But where did it come from? Abdulaziz and Osinde\(^1\) (in Githiora 2002: 159) claim that in part Sheng emerged from Kaloleni, a neighborhood of Nairobi, and then spread to other parts of Eastlands and the city as a whole. Githiora remotely collaborates with these claims and reckons that:

\[
\text{Sheng}\text{ is strongly identified with the Eastlands section of Nairobi and is regarded by most city residents as an ‘estate’ youth language. [...] Competing claims about Sheng’s specific origins and several variations of Sheng exist making it hard to pinpoint the specific points of diffusion within the city’s Eastlands. For example respondents from Jericho considered their version of Sheng better than that spoken in, say, neighboring Bahati or Kaloleni [...] use of Sheng is not restricted to the Eastlands but is much more widespread in the city. [...] Beyond its core speakers, Sheng has moved to permeate much of Nairobi’s social strata and its influence is felt in other towns and rural areas of Kenya. [...] At least half of the male university students interviewed reported using Sheng as their language of social interaction (Githiora 2002: 160).}
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Presently Sheng is heard everywhere: in the market places, streets and even in the homes. Local television and radio has also found plenty of space for it. It is interesting to consider the phenomenon of Sheng as a language unique to the youth of Kenya. Though there is hardly any form of data that documents the origin of this language, different variations are known to exist. Ogechi (2002) asserts that these variations depend on the wider language of communication being used in the environments where Sheng is studied. For instance, the English variety of Sheng is based on the type of English largely spoken in the Westland area of Nairobi as well as in other similar socio-economic areas of the

country. Nevertheless, why does *Sheng* step into the shoes of the many other Kenyan languages? Various researchers have pointed out several factors that may have led to the rise of *Sheng* in Kenya, at the same time describing the nature of this language, as we shall see below.

*Sheng* has been viewed as a form of a pidgin\(^1\) linked to Kenya’s colonial history. It is argued that the emergence of urban centers – which were the result of developments such as the building of the Mombasa-Uganda Railway and plantations established by the colonial settlers – attracted a steady rural-to-urban migration. Given the multiplicity of languages in those settings, people needed to communicate in a common language. Therefore, a form of a mixed code, perhaps a pidgin, may have emerged at this time (Bosire 2006: 185). In addition Mazrui\(^2\) (in Bosire 2006) suggests that *Sheng* emerged as an underground professional code way back in the colonial period. Spyropoulos\(^3\) (in Githiora 2002: 159) claims that the ethnically and linguistically diverse Kenyan workers brought together in plantations and urban centers in the colonial period, had imperfect knowledge of both English and *Swahili*. Consequently, they spoke a mixture of broken English and imperfect *Swahili* mixed with their own vernacular, and that their offspring enhanced the broken mixtures to *Sheng*. However, scholars such as Osinde\(^4\) (in Bosire 2006) refute the possibility of *Sheng* being a form of pidgin or a creole. He argues that *Sheng* is not a pidgin because it sprung up in areas where English and *Swahili* were established as *lingua franca* and therefore there was no need to compromise the medium of communication.

\(^1\) According to the Oxford Dictionary, the word ‘Pidgin’ is defined as a simplified language containing vocabulary from two or more languages and is used for communication between two people not having a common language.


Bosire (2006: 186) maintains that *Sheng* does not qualify to be termed as a creole since it is not the primary language of its speakers, and it does not draw its lexicon from one dominant language but from multiple sources. However, given the Oxford Dictionary definition of the term ‘pidgin’, given the period at which the scholars mentioned here claim may have constituted the emergence of *Sheng* as it is known today, and given the fact that, during that period, Kenyans had just started mingling for purposes other than trade, *Sheng* may as well be a pidgin in the extent to which its use has developed with time.

Other scholars have considered *Sheng* as a consequence of code switching and mixing. Myers-Scotton ¹ (in Bosire 2006) observes that code switching is a common linguistic practice in Kenya. According to Myers, the practice can be seen as the unmarked choice in communicative codes. This implies therefore that *Sheng*, which encompasses more than one language, is a form of code switch and mix between two or more languages. Bosire (2006) sees it differently. He bases his argument on the premise that code switching must only include two languages. He argues that *Sheng* creation and transmission cannot entirely be restricted to code switching and mixing because code switching requires that the speaker and hearer be fluent in both the dueling languages, which is not the case in *Sheng* – it is not established whether its speakers are fluent in *Swahili*, English or ethnic languages, since Kenyans are both bilingual and multilingual. He submits that whereas *Sheng* is an urban youth commodity, code switching is fairly common across the age, gender and regional divides.

*Sheng* has also been viewed as a dialect of *Swahili*. Githiora (2002) argues that every language has a geographical and a social vernacular. Therefore geography and social context shape dialects. She argues that *Sheng*, as an urban language, can be said to be a dialect of *Swahili* because it develops from *Swahili* as a substrate language. Bosire (2006: 188) considers *Sheng* as that

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which has been shaped by code switching and influenced by the languages in the interior of the country, away from the coastline on the Indian Ocean where Swahili is the native language.

Other social dialects of Swahili that have developed away from the native speakers of Swahili include Shamba Swahili or Kisetla, as pointed out by Scotton in Githiora (2002: 163). Therefore, as we have seen, code switching is common among the people of Kenya, especially urban areas like Nairobi. In this context Sheng is merely another available code in the language repertoire of the urban dwellers. It is particularly popular among the youth, and promulgated as such in the broadcasting media.

Sheng continues to defy definition. Researchers, some of whom are discussed above, have yet to agree on its specific nature and origin. For this reason some scholars refer to Sheng merely as a hybrid. The various languages in Kenya interact in an unstable and complex way, giving rise to the hybrid language otherwise known as Sheng. Tiffin et al (in Bosire 2006: 192) describes Sheng as a hybrid product, both a linguistic and cultural mixture, which denotes linguistic mixing without reference to intense cultural heterogeneity. Bosire (2006) also sees Sheng as a hybrid, the product of Africans coming to terms with the colonial and post-colonial situation that included rapid urbanization and complex interaction of people of different languages and cultures. As a result, the youth are caught in the transition and they become children of two worlds. The dire need to express this duality brings forth a product like Sheng. He sees Sheng as a break away from the old alliance that put particular ethnic communities in particular ‘estates’. Instead Sheng gives young people a global urban ethnicity and defines their desire for new peers, forms of dressing, socialization, behaviour, manner of speaking and language.
6. **MUSIC AND DANCE**

Music is food for the soul and plays an important role in the communication of values, norms, beliefs and customs in any given society. African music and dance have been transmitted orally from one generation to the other over a very long period of time, captured vaguely in written form in the journals of Western explorers and missionaries. These two – dance and music - are inseparable from each other; together they express the everyday lives and other cultural experiences of the African people. They also function as historical evidence of such experiences. It is difficult to find a single word in the African languages that encompasses the meaning of “music” as is the case in Western culture. This can be attributed to the fact that music in an African context is engraved and intertwined with cultural practices and rituals, and is performed simultaneously with the other forms of art that exist in African societies. These forms include drama, poetry and the like. Stone attests to the difficulty of separating the notion of music from the different ways and the contexts in which music is made:

> Honest observers are hard pressed to find a single indigenous group in Africa that has a term congruent to the usual western notion of “music.” There are terms for more specific acts like singing, playing instruments, and more broadly, performing (dance, games, and music) (Stone 1998: 7).

6.1. **TRADITIONAL MUSIC**

Kenya has a very rich and diverse musical culture and, as in many other African musical cultures, song is the characteristic musical expression, one which plays an integral part of the lives of all people (Senoga-Zake 2000: 1). In traditional societies, there is hardly any song without dancing. These two activities serve both aesthetic and utilitarian functions. They accompany the social, religious,
ritual and ceremonial lives of Kenyans. People sing from childhood and continue to sing throughout their lives. Through songs, they entertain, welcome newborns, scorn cowards, rebuke various vices (such as laziness and selfishness), educate, socialise, and also pass values and norms from one generation to another. With music and dance, they celebrate every stage in life - from birth through childhood, being a warrior, adulthood, marriage, old age and even death. Kenyatta draws our attention the role of music and dance in politics as well. He demonstrates the effectiveness of music and dance in proclaiming a new government among the Agekoyo community. He writes that:

[There was] a call for war dances to be held in every district, in order to give the population an opportunity of hearing the announcement of the new constitution. This suggestion was carried unanimously, for it was the only way through which the words, phrases and rhythmic movements of the new songs and dances, in which the laws and regulations of the new democratic government were embodied, could be introduced effectively into the life of the community. On the day appointed, war horns were sounded in all districts. [...] The ceremonial leader began to recite the constitution in form of a song; the assembly answered in chorus after each phrase. This went on until the whole version was gone through. Then people rose and started to sing and dance hilariously, for they were overcome with joy as a sign of welcoming the new constitution (Kenyatta 1938: 192).

It is also important to note that, in the African context, every person is an active participant of the song and dance being performed. However, there are songs meant to be performed by the men only, others for boys or girls only, others that only warriors are allowed to dance and sing while the rest of the community look on, and so forth. Therefore, in the traditional setting the nature of the social function of the music will dictate who the performers and the audience should be. For instance, during the circumcision ceremony (irua) among the Agekoyo ethnic group, young boys or girls achieve a very important status in the society. Music and dance form the central part of these ceremonies and they serve magico-
religious purposes. The *momboro* dance is only performed by boys to the elders while the women watch and ululate. *Thaage* is a dance performed by girls only as they prepare food for the circumcision ceremony. They join it to the *ûrígu wa kairîtu* song and dance, thereby dancing their uncircumcised state away (Senoga-Zake 2000).

Although the musics of the various ethnic groups in Kenya share some similar characteristics, they may be differentiated on the basis of the cultural background or the ethnic group from which they derive. On this basis, they may be accompanied or unaccompanied by musical instruments and may or may not involve dancing as part of the musical activity. In most cases, they have very simple, short and repetitive melodic phrases which are lively and are polyrhythmic in structure. The rhythms become even more intricate when accompanied by drums, clapping and costumes. The songs are mostly in call-and-response form, whereby the soloist sings a phrase and the chorus comes in before he/she finishes, a situation that brings an overlap of parts (Senoga-Zake 2000: 12). The answering phrases are usually a reinstatement, a continuation or an amplification of the soloist’s phrase and may also contain a melodic or rhythmic variation. In most cases they are sung in unison. These songs are also heavily embellished with ululations, shrills and whistling, thus adding more colour. In communities such as the *Maasai*, the men sing an underlying ostinato against the solo line and the answering phrase is sung in unison. As the soloist approaches the end, he or she prepares the choral group by transposing an octave above, by giving a certain word or cry, or by blowing a whistle (Kavyu 1998: 622). Examples 2.1 and 2.2 illustrate some of the characteristics of Kenyan music highlighted above.
Example 2.1. Rūĩ rwa Rūtuĩ (The Rūtuĩ River)

Example 2.2. Gūkū nĩ Kwaũ (Whose Homestead is This?)

Example 2.1 is an extract of a gekoyo folk tune known as Rūĩ rwa Rūtuĩ. The tune exhibits most of the musical characteristics described by Senoga-Zake (2000) as typical of Kenyan folk music. The tune begins with a call from the soloist which the chorus responds to in a phrase that is similar in melody and rhythm to that of the soloist. In bars 9 and 14, the soloist’s phrase is much shorter, while the responsorial phrase remains much the same as the previous response. Example 2.2 is an excerpt of another gekoyo folk tune known as Gūkū nĩ Kwaũ. In bar 1, the soloist calls in a short phrase and the chorus responds in a similarly short phrase. In bar 3, the soloist’s call becomes longer, ushering in the chorus at the end of bar 4, where the singers sing in unison till the end. These
unison phrases are much more elaborate in melody and rhythm than the initial, shorter call and response phrases\(^1\). Dance, costume, clapping and whistling (which could not be transcribed) accompany these songs, making the rhythms more complicated. Also, other tunes and melodies will normally proceed or follow these to prolong performances.

However, no culture remains the same indefinitely. Culture is always dynamic and changing. Tremendous changes have occurred in Kenyan music, both within ethnic communities and in the hybrid, urban environment. Apart from the external world’s influence on Kenyan music, the intra-ethnic streams of influence have had equal effects in shaping music to what it is today. These intra-ethnic influences include contact with neighbouring communities, long distance travel and immigration, trade, intermarriages and diffusion of cultures through the mass media. Consequently, variant styles of music begin to emerge as people incorporate aspects of other musical cultures into their own music. Senoga-Zake (2000: 12) discusses a form of music that resembles traditional music in various aspects but has been taken by what he terms as “sophisticated” young people. He argues that whereas the traditional music is sung in leader-chorus version, the neo-folk music is produced by a performer or a group of performers singing to an audience or while accompanying a dance. It consists of a three-chord accompaniment on electric guitars – lead, rhythm and bass – and a full set of drums. The singers conform to the Western style of music arrangements which has chords (mostly triads on the tonic, subdominant and the dominant), and is harmonised.

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\(^1\) The reader is referred to Senoga-Zake (2000) for more information on the characteristics of Kenyan traditional music.
6.2. **POPULAR MUSIC**

Popular music is a genre that has been greatly influenced by a number of factors, some of which have been discussed earlier in this chapter. Barz (2008\textsuperscript{1}), in his focus on *Kwaya* music as a form of emerging popular music in East Africa, sees popular music as a phenomenon that embraces more than only the musical sounds. He views pop music as a reaction to increasing urbanization and modernization, which serves as a contemporary mode of cultural cohesion, a social identity which aids in transition and adaptation to new urban environments and lifestyles. He further suggests that popular music serves as a metaphor for the creation of meanings and shared cultural ideologies on the part of the new urban classes (Barz 2008).

Paterson in Broughton *et al* (2006) describes Kenya’s pop music as one of the most diverse in Africa and one of the best-kept secrets of Africa. This diversity of musical culture has been partly attributed to the multiplicity of languages and cultures present in Kenya. There are over 40 languages in Kenya and most of the musicians are recording music in their mother tongues, while the others target urban, national and regional audiences rather than just ethnic audiences. In addition, some of the most famous pop artists are immigrants from other countries, most often from Tanzania and Zaire, and they use the Kenyan national language, *Swahili*, in their compositions. There is no single identifiable genre of Kenyan popular music, but rather a number of styles that borrow freely from various sources and fertilise each other, giving rise to the unique hybrid flavour of Kenyan pop music as a whole. According to Roberts, current trends in Kenyan contemporary music should be understood against the background of three important elements: 1) dissemination of various styles of music from other parts of the world by means of radio and phonograph; 2) the availability of Western

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\textsuperscript{1} The author dates the article by Gregory Barz as 2008, when it was accessed on the internet, because no dates of authorship were indicated in the article itself.
instruments, especially guitar; and 3) popular music trends invented by the young people which have syncretically incorporated the above two elements and more. Robert writes that:

First, what was taking place was usually disapproved of by people who might have been in a position to analyse it. Second, it was only partially documented in some of its phases by commercial phonograph records. Third, most anthropologists and musicologists regarded it until recently as disaster rather than interesting phenomenon of social change (Roberts 1972: 241).

Paterson in Broughton et al (2006) agrees that the most fundamental characteristic of Kenyan pop (as opposed to other Kenyan music) came with the introduction of the guitar and the role played by guitars and guitar solos. He adds that the cavacha rhythms popularised by the Zairean groups is another ingredient prominent in Kenyan pop. Considering the diversity of Kenyan pop today, it is difficult to focus on all the styles thereof. This study will therefore include selected musical styles that have been influential in shaping Kenyan pop as it is today, each briefly discussed below.

6.2.1. **Benga**

The musical features that characterised Kenyan music after the Second World War are still prominent in the Kenyan music of today. Most of the Kenyans who were sent to fight in Ethiopia, India and Burma were drafted to the entertainment units of the King’s African Rifles, where they acquired new musical skills. After their return to Kenya, they formed bands in which they incorporated their new skills and influenced the development of Kenyan popular music. At the same time, Congolese music and Afro-European soul music, performed by bands such as the Hodi Boys, dominated the Nairobi clubs in the late 1960s and 1970s (Paterson in Broughton et al. 2006: 175). It was during this time that the Benga style of music became popular. Benga was developed in the 1950s among the Luo people of Western Kenya, who began by adapting the traditional rhythms
and the string sounds of the *Nyatiti*\(^1\), a lyre, and the *Orutu*\(^2\), a fiddle, to acoustic guitars and later on to electric guitars. The most famous *Benga* group is the *Shirati Jazz*, led by the legendary “*Benga* wizard”, Daniel Owino Misiani, whose style has come to characterise *Benga*. This style includes soft, flowing and melodic two-part vocal harmonies, a very active pulsating bass line and drum rhythms. The guitars and the vocalist have a very interesting interplay with each other.

As the *Benga* style became popular, other regional ethnic popular groups began borrowing some of its elements, adapting them to suit their own music. Although *Benga* in these regional groups may share some characteristics with the original *Luo Benga*, which may include rhythms and instrumentation, these features overlay unique traditional elements in melodic structures, harmony and song, giving each regional *Benga* a distinct flavour. *Benga* has dominated the Kenyan recording industry since the 1960s and has remained an important force of influence on Kenyan pop.

### 6.2.2. **Rumba and Soukous**

*Soukous* is a style of music that originated in the Congo in the 1930s. The term *Soukous* refers to a folk dance or an African rumba, and is also a generic name for Congo-dance music (Ewens in Broughton *et al.* 2006: 75). *Soukous* style evolved with time to include fusions of other forms of music from other parts of the world. Other terms referring to the same genre have come up and they are named after the dances from which they sprang. These subsequent styles include *Lingala* (term used in East Africa to refer to a generic *Soukous* style and also the language spoken in the region from whence the style originated) *Ndombolo*, *Kwassa Kwassa* and African *rumba*. This style of music mostly fused

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1 *N yatiti* is a traditional eight stringed instrument of the Luo community. Cf. Senoga-Zake (2000) for details.

2 *Orutu* is a one-string fiddle of the Luo people.
Congolese and other African traditional music with Caribbean (especially Afro-Cuban) and South American sounds. Other *Soukous* artists felt the need to reduce the influence of rumba in their compositions and play a faster *Soukous*, inspired by musical genres such as rock n’ roll.

*Soukous* found its way to Kenya in the early 1940s through records and famous bands that performed Congolese music at the time. By the mid-seventies, most Congolese artists were performing in Nairobi nightclubs. Their music was characterised by the fast-paced cavacha rhythms – played on the hi-hat or the snare drum – and a dance craze that became a hallmark of Congolese sounds in Nairobi, influencing many Kenyan musicians. This characteristic style caught on in Kenya and remains a key feature in most Kenyan music today. While the East African-based Congolese bands gradually incorporated new musical elements, including *Benga*, in turn *Benga* was also adapting some Congolese musical elements, giving rise to a unique mixture of these styles.

6.2.3. **Tanzanian Rumba**

While Congolese music built its empire of pop music in Nairobi, there was a steady inflow of Tanzanian musicians visiting Kenya for various reasons, among them performance and recording. Some of these musicians, for example the founding members of the *Simba Wanyika* group, attained citizenship and settled in Kenya. In contrast to the emerging *Benga* style, and unlike the Congolese rumba, the Tanzanian rumba artists played music that had a different feel altogether. Paterson in Broughton *et al* (2006: 178) describes Tanzanian music as having a gentler feel – smoother and flowing – and some artists preferred the light rhythm, carried on congas together with claves, and a fast *cavacha*-like rhythm on the hi-hat. The rhythm guitars were active and fluid, but very light in their presence. The lead guitar came in as solo from time to time, while the saxophone was used sparingly in solos and in the elaboration of the instrumental
portions. The lyrics were also written in *Swahili*. These characteristics of Tanzanian music were taken and adapted by Congolese pop artists who suited it to their style of playing. Kenyan popular bands such as the *Maroon Commandos* climbed on the rumba wagon and incorporated elements of Congolese music, of *Benga*, of traditional ethnic musical styles, and the Tanzanian feel of rumba – a variety that seemed to diverge from the Tanzanian roots of rumba. *Swahili* rumba, a Kenyan-Tanzanian hybrid sound unique to Kenya, remains one of the popular urban sounds in Nairobi to this day, regardless of the various stylistic innovations that have since taken place.

Tanzanian and Congolese pop music share a lot of musical characteristics. One thing that is prominent in their music is that they all seem to depart on a slow-to-medium rumba which ambles through the verses, backed by a light percussion of gentle congas, snare and hi-hat. After some time, the song transcends to a higher gear with a much faster beat and most often with changing beats. The Zairean style will at this point of transition be characterised by a much faster beat, with dancers appearing, while the Tanzanian tempo remains generally slower, even in the faster sections (Paterson in Broughton *et al* 2006: 180).

### 6.2.4. **International Pop**

*Benga*, *Swahili* Rumba and the Zairean *Soukous* are not the only styles competing for Kenyan audiences. International styles, popularized in Kenya through records and disco, have also been competing for attention since the 1950s. These international pop styles have their own class of audience who prefer them above local styles. International pop is closely linked to the development of urban pop. Paterson in Broughton *et al* (2006) attributes the boom in the popularization and development of this international pop music to the rise of commercial FM radio in Kenya in the early nineties, which boosted the inflow of foreign styles such as raga, house music, dancehall, hip-hop and R&B. At the same time, computers and other forms of audio production equipment
became more affordable, enabling artists to explore the new wave of production techniques and styles.

One cannot fail to recognize the influence of international pop on the local Kenyan pop scene, especially in the urban areas. Groups have emerged combining local elements - language, rhythms, themes, melody and instrumentation - with American and European styles of music. This move has almost changed the face of popular music in Kenya. Some artists, such as Kayamba Afrika\(^1\) and the group Yunasi\(^2\), sing traditional tunes both in their original forms but also as arrangements that include contemporary rhythms and that have elements of hip-hop and the like. Other artists such as Gidi Gidi Maji Maji, a duo that came into the limelight during the general election of the year 2002 with their unmistakable hit Unbwogable, performed hip-hop blended with Luo instrumental sounds and lyrics. The piece was astounding to the extent that it enhanced the inauguration ceremony where the former president handed over office.

The young urban people of Kenya seem to have a style of music that exclusively identifies them: it is hip-hop but together with the Genge and the Kapuka styles. Other terms referring to urban hip-hop include Boomba and Gemba. These terms arose as a result of different production houses competing to find a localised name for urban hip-hop. Genge is a Swahili term for a group or mass of people. Artists such as Nonini\(^3\) (Hubert Nakitare) and Jua Cali\(^1\) (Paul Nunda), who are

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\(^1\) Kayamba Afrika is a Nairobi based a cappella group. See Paterson in Broughton et al 2006.

\(^2\) Yunasi is an Afro-fusion band from Kenya. Visit the link <http://www.yunasi.com/history.htm> for more information.

\(^3\) Nonini’s real name is Hubert Nakitare. He is signed to the Calif Records Music label. He is said to be one of the artists who popularized the Genge hip-hop genre. He came to the limelight in 2002 with a single hit Manzi wa Nairobi (Nairobi Girls). The artist continues to ride to fame in Nairobi with songs such as Keroro, Hanyaring Game, and Kuta Vitu, to mention but a few. Some of these songs are characterized by the controversy that surrounds their lyrics. The reader is referred to the link <www.manorientertainment.com> for more details about the artist.
affiliated to the Calif Records production house, spearheaded campaigns to
popularize the term *Genge* to be adapted as the common name for urban hip-hop. Songs such as *Manzi wa Nairobi* (Nairobi girl), sung by *Nonini*, and *Nipe Asali* (Give Me Some Honey) by *Jua Cali* were amongst those recorded to popularize the *Genge* style. *Kapuka* on the other hand is linked to the Ogopa Deejays production house and has been popularized through the works of artists such as the late E-Sir\(^2\) (Issah Mmari).

Despite their different names, these urban hip-hop styles display similar characteristics. What is fundamental is the fact that the ultimate influence of international urban pop styles and the intricate blend of raga, rap, R&B, dance pop and house music with local influence is unmistakable. The lyrics are sung in a mixture of languages, including *Swahili*, English, various ethnic languages and *Sheng*, a characteristic that “brands” them exclusively for young people.

### 6.2.5. *Taarab*

*Taarab* is a musical style that is popular among the *Swahili* Islamic people of the East African coast and at the Kenyan coast. Ntarangwi (2001) describes *taarab* music as a series of complexities whose characteristics reflect influences from Arabia, Africa, India, Europe and the Americas. He adds that despite the various styles of music performed by the Kenyan coastal communities, when one speaks of *Swahili* music, there is no doubt that *taarab* is a major part of that music. Even though *taarab* has many foreign influences, the lyrics are sung in *Swahili* and

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1. *Jua Cali*’s real name is Paul Nunda. He co-owns the Calif Record music production house together with his old friend Clemo. Some of his best hits include *Kamata Dame, Bidii Yangu* and *Asali* to mention but a few. See the link <www.manorientertainment.com> for more details.

2. E-Sir was a Kenyan hip-hop artist signed to the Ogopa DJs record label. He was born in the California estates of Nairobi in 1981 and he died in a road accident on March 16\(^{th}\) 2003. Some of his best hits include *Mos Mos, Boomba Train, Hamunitishi* and *Leo ni Leo*. See <www.manorientertainment.com> for more details about the artist.
various rhythmic varieties of *ngomas*’ accompany it. This characteristic makes it essentially African (Graebner in Broughton *et al* 2006: 410). *Taarab* songs are mostly performed at *Swahili* weddings to advise the bride and groom on various issues. *Taarab* has long formed a part of traditional *Swahili* poetry. *Taarab* pop artists also sing about other social and political themes. They use metaphorical and symbolic language in such a way that only those familiar with *Swahili* poetry can understand, while others might only take the meaning at face value. The lyrics are pregnant with hidden meanings, a feature that makes *taarab* a perfect tool for social criticism (Ibid).

The characteristic style of *taarab* can be heard in several pop artists and bands in Kenya who are not necessarily *Swahili* people by origin. As a matter of fact, Samba Mapangala, a pop star of Congolese origin known for his exemplary mastery of the *Soukous* style, adapted a version of the *taarab* ‘*Vidonge*’ tune that became very popular. Consequently, its success prompted other artists, such as Malika (in collaboration with the Kenyan-based international pop group, *Them Mushrooms*) and a Zairean vocalist, Moreno Batamba, to re-do the song, but adding more “flavour” to it of course (Ibid: 413). With the sale of records, *taarab* music has become widespread in both urban and rural areas and is performed at weddings and other social gatherings. The FM radios stations of Kenya have also set aside time where they only air *taarab* music, a move that has contributed greatly to the popularity of the style in Kenya.

### 6.2.6. **Gospel Music**

Gospel music has long been a popular genre of music in the spiritual lives of Kenyan Pentecostal charismatic Christians, and also serves as an expression of the urban youth in the 21st century. Gospel music in Kenya has been in existence for a long time and it has been composed in various musical styles, including choral music alone, lead vocalist with choir, or as small instrumental ensembles
like guitar bands that play songs with religious or inspirational content. The growth of the gospel music industry and its development as a popular genre could be attributed to factors such as the introduction of Christianity in Kenya, together with the use of Western instruments in churches; the general growth of the churches, social, political and economic hardships; and the liberation of airwaves that allowed for the popularization of gospel music records (Paterson in Broughton et al 2006). Just like the musical styles discussed above, gospel music in Kenya has evolved with time and has not been spared the changes to which Kenyan musical styles as a whole have been subjected. As a style, it has blended local musical styles with influences from other countries, both African and international.

7. GENDER

The term gender in common usage refers to the differences between man and woman. The Encyclopedia Britannica (2007) defines gender as an individual's self conception of being either male or female, as distinguished from actual biological sex. For most persons, gender identity and biological characteristics are the same. Gender identity is not fixed at birth. Both physiological and social factors contribute to the establishment of core identity, which is then modified and expanded by social factors as the child matures. In the traditional societies of most ethnic groups in Kenya, gender is defined by such groups as a whole, and impacts on the various perceived behavioural norms associated with masculinity or femininity respectively.

Gender identity develops by means of parental examples. Children are socialized into their gender roles from a very early age through music, oral narratives, poetry, and by spending time with either parent as they grow up. Typically the boy will spend time with the father in the fields while the girl will spend time with the mother, helping her out in various household chores. In this way boys and
girls alike are taught different life expectations and societal roles by virtue of biological difference.

In traditional societies, gender roles assigned by the various ethnic groups in Kenya may vary in different social settings. For instance, the women in the Maasai community build houses while those in the gekoyo tribe make food as the men build the houses (Kariuki et al 2006). In comparison, in contemporary urban societies, gender identities through gender roles are more flexible than in traditional societies. As much as children are aware of the biological differences that make them either male or female, their gender roles are no longer so clearly defined along those lines. This in my opinion is due to the fact that children in contemporary urban societies spend far more time away from their parents for reasons mostly of education, often involving boarding schools away from home. Other reasons include the fact that most societies are multicultural and the fact that different cultures may have different gender roles. The empowerment of women through modern education, which advocates gender equality, may be another reason for the changed understanding of gender in contemporary urban society. For instance, for a long time in the history of Kenya, being a mechanic has been associated with the men. Today, however, there are many female students pursuing courses and future careers in the field of mechanics.
CHAPTER THREE

HIV/AIDS IN KENYA

1. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this chapter is to focus on Kenya today in relation to the problem of HIV/AIDS. To achieve this objective, I will be guided by the following questions:

- How do Kenya’s national statistics relate to international statistics?
What are the factors influencing the spread of HIV/AIDS in Kenya?
Who are the people most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS in Kenya?
What are the impacts of HIV/AIDS in Kenya at national level?
What intervention strategies exist to tackle HIV/AIDS?
What measure of success have these strategies achieved thus far, particularly in the case of the youth of Nairobi?

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a health condition caused by a collection of symptoms and infections. It results from the specific damage of the immune system, caused by the human immunodeficiency virus. Though there is no concrete proof that HIV causes AIDS, it is believed to be one of the conditions that can lead to AIDS. It has claimed more lives in Sub-Saharan Africa than in any other part of the world. In Africa, HIV/AIDS is an enigma. The more it spreads the less we see it. The disease is deadly yet deniable and it hides in full view of everyone. The situation is real when you look at the HIV/AIDS situation in the African countries. This is as true in Kenya as it is anywhere else in Africa.

2. **KENYAN HIV/AIDS STATISTICS**

It has been over 25 years since the emergence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Numerous surveys on HIV/AIDS continue to be carried out worldwide. However it is important to note that the data and the figures deliberated by these surveys are not perfect and most of them can only be taken as estimates. It is also important to note that sampling an entire population is expensive and difficult, especially when the test requires blood. Therefore, in this account, data has sometimes been found as over-estimates or under-estimates of a population.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) report on global AIDS epidemic (2008) reveals that though many countries have shown a reduction in the number of AIDS deaths and new HIV infections and an increase
in the number of people who have access to effective HIV/AIDS treatment, it is estimated that 33 million people are living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most affected region as measured by HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. The epidemic level in Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounts for approximately 70 per cent of all infections worldwide (NACC¹ 2000).

Kenya has not been spared the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Since its emergence in the 1980s, Kenya has made tremendous progress in its response to the pandemic and has been cited by the recent global updates as one of the countries that have experienced a significant drop in prevalence (NACC 2005). The country’s report for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, (NACC 2006), shows that HIV prevalence in Kenya had fallen remarkably from a peak of 10 per cent in adults in the mid 1990s to seven per cent in 2003. According to this report, this decline in prevalence has been attributed to various factors, which include behavioural change as the leading contributing factor, and natural progressions as the other factor. Natural progressions are based on the assumptions that:

- As the epidemic matures, a greater number of people die of HIV related conditions, thus death rates are higher than infection rates. Hence, the total number of people living with HIV would decrease and the prevalence would drop.

- In the early stages of the epidemic, HIV spreads primarily among those people who are most at risk of acquiring and transmitting the virus, hence their deaths could cause HIV incidence to decline.

The vast majority of Kenyans living with HIV/AIDS are in the adult age group of 15-49 (NACC 2005). Trends in this age group provide the international standard for measuring HIV infection. Though there are an increasing proportion of infections occurring among those who fall outside this age group – that is either children or women and men over 50 – the number of cases of infected people

¹ See reference National AIDS Control Council in the reference list.
within the 15-49 age group remains relatively high (NACC 2008). However, the Kenya HIV/Aids Data Booklet (NACC 2005) reveals that the national HIV prevalence among these adults was estimated to be at 6.4% in 2004, which was a reduction of 0.3% from 2003. The booklet also shows that there were more women between the age of 15-49 living with the virus than the men of the same age group during the same year (see table 3.1 and 3.2 below). However, recent surveys indicate that though the HIV/Aids prevalence has declined a great deal since the 1990’s scenario, the war against the pandemic is far from over. The decline in prevalence only means that the number of people being infected is decreasing while the Aids deaths are on the increase.

**Table 3.1: Kenyan National HIV Estimates for 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevalence</th>
<th>Number HIV+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults 15-49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Range)</td>
<td>6.4% (5.7%-6.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults 50+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 0-14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,270,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Table 3.2: Prevalence Estimates for Youth Aged 15-24 in Kenya in 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevalence</th>
<th>HIV+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The NACC (2006) and NACC (2008) reports also show that urban residents have a significantly higher risk of HIV infection than rural residents. The prevalence of infected women in urban areas is seen to be higher than that of women living in the rural areas over those same years. This can be attributed to many things. Among them is the vulnerability of people living in urban areas due to factors such as financial constraints, and also the fact that most people who work in urban areas leave their spouses in the rural areas and they are more likely to enter into casual sexual relationships with people other than their spouses. In addition, the Kenya HIV/AIDS Data Booklet (NACC 2005) discloses that in 2004 the prevalence rates of different regions of Kenya differed significantly. Nairobi was rated second highest after Nyanza province, with a prevalence rate of 9% and 13.1% respectively, while the North Eastern province (3%) and the Eastern province (3.7%) had the lowest rates.

3. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS IN KENYA

3.1. PREDISPOSING FACTORS

3.1.1. Poverty

Poverty is a fertile ground for HIV/Aids: Aids feeds on poverty. Put differently, poverty does not only expose individuals to HIV infections but also plays a greater role in sustaining it. Kenya, like many other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, has to contend with the elimination of poverty if the fight against HIV/Aids is to be won. According to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper:

Kenya has one of the most unequal income distributions in the world. More than half of the population lives in poverty exacerbated by endemic corruption, the spread of HIV/Aids and ravages of recurring drought which now leaves three million people in the country heavily reliant on food relief each year. [...] presently
52% of the population live below the absolute poverty line (less than one dollar a day) and are not able to meet their basic needs (PRSP 2007).

Though the incidences of sickness are similar amongst poor and non-poor, their response to sickness is markedly different. This is as true when it comes to HIV/Aids infection. A large number of the poor people cannot afford any health care at all, let alone private health care. Poverty also contributes to their inability to manage the risk of infection. It drives women to unprotected sex, migration, malnutrition, which makes them vulnerable to diseases, and also exposes them to the risk of other harmful practices such as early marriages and wife inheritance. All these enhance the vulnerability of an individual to HIV infection.

3.1.2. **Sexually Transmitted Infections**

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are avenues for the transmission of HIV and Aids. These are infections that are spread by the transfer of organisms from one person to another during sexual contact. There are both bacterial STIs – including Gonorrhea, Syphilis, Chancroids and Chlamydia infections – and viral STIs such as HIV/Aids, genital herpes, genital warts and hepatitis B. STIs can be distinguished as either ulcerative or not ulcerative. This fact is important especially when it comes to considering the role of other STIs in the spread of HIV/Aids. Based on the fact that the common mode of transmission of both HIV/Aids and other STIs is sexual contact, measures of preventing their transmission are consequently the same. Apart from the common transmission and prevention behaviour, Matengu (2005) writes of a biological mechanism link between the two. She states that STIs facilitate HIV/Aids transmission by increasing both the HIV infectiousness, which can be explained as a higher concentration of HIV in genital secretions of an individual with an STI infection, and HIV susceptibility.
An increase in the number of people contracting sexually transmitted infections is an indication of people who are having unprotected sex. According NACC (2006), HIV prevalence for Kenya in the year 2003 was estimated to be 23% in women with an STI, 37% in women with genital ulcer STI and 22% in men with genital ulcers. The report also shows that a large percentage of people seek treatment for the STI while there are still others who do not seek medical attention. Kenya’s National AIDS Control Council (2000) cites some barriers to effective STIs management. They include: inadequacy of essential supplies and drugs, lack of trained personnel, inadequate management of specific STIs, poor referral systems and inadequate health seeking behaviour, limited specificity of syndromic approach, and reluctance of private sectors to accept the syndromic approach.

3.1.3. **Drug Abuse and Alcoholism**

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the “global epicenter” of HIV/Aids. In addition to facing the enormous burden of heterosexually transmitted HIV/AIDS, Sub-Saharan African countries are experiencing significant changes in patterns of illegal non-injection and injection drug use, which has direct implications for the potential spread of HIV (Needle *et al* 2006). Limited data exists to characterize HIV/AIDS and drug abuse in the Sub-Saharan region. In addition, this HIV vulnerable, hard-to-reach, stigmatized and hidden drug-using population is not usually included in sentinel surveillance systems (Stimson in Needle *et al* 2006: 84).

Heroin, which is both an injection and non-injection drug, is reported to be the primary drug used in Kenya. Non-injection drugs such as cannabis, cocaine (which is reported to be the second most preferred drug), alcohol, khat (miraa) and methamphetamine are also reported to be in use, especially in Mombasa and Nairobi (Needle *et al* 2006: 86). A qualitative interview conducted by Beckerleg in Deveau *et al* (2006) revealed that Malindi, a coastal town on the
Kenyan coast, reported injecting practices among drug users such as the sharing of a needle and the adoption of other high risk injection practices (for example, “flashblood”\textsuperscript{1}), the use of one needle many times by several people, and the use of the same mixture of heroin by several people. Exchange of blood in such amounts can only mean more vulnerability to HIV/Aids infection. In addition to injecting practices, most drug users have regular sex partners with whom they may not be using condoms. Needle \textit{et al} (2006) also adds that both male and female IDUs often trade or sell sex to support their drug addiction. Other drugs such as cocaine and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) can lead to high-risk sexual behaviours by inhibiting judgment and decreasing the likelihood that one will practice safe sex, both among homosexuals and heterosexuals (Deveau et al 2006: 103).

3.1.4. \textbf{Conflicts and Ethnic Wars}

Conflicts and ethnic wars are on the increase in Kenya, not to mention the most recent post-election conflicts that erupted after the disputed elections of December 2007. It has also become a common trend that Kenya’s news bulletins are characterized by reports on conflicts in various parts of the country. These bulletins include the settlement of refugees fleeing from Kenya itself or from her troubled neighbors Sudan and Somali, the \textit{Mungiki}\textsuperscript{2} unleash of terror, Mount Elgon region skirmishes and \textit{Mai Mahiu} ethnic clashes, to mention but a few. The UNAIDS report on global AIDS epidemic (2004) shows that high HIV levels among populations and regions within a country can sometimes increase during complex emergencies such as armed conflicts. The report explains several ways in which the population becomes vulnerable under such circumstances:

\textsuperscript{1} “Flashblood” injection practice is mostly used by injection drug users who cannot afford to purchase heroin. It involves injecting blood of another IDU who recently injected, in the belief that the blood contains heroin and can prevent withdrawal.

\textsuperscript{2} Mungiki refers to a quasi-political religious cult in Kenya that favours the return to indigenous African traditions.
[i] Population displacement conflicts [that] often prompts large numbers of people to flee fighting, uprooting the people from their usual areas of residence. When people move from low-prevalence to high-prevalence HIV settings, they inevitably face increased risk of HIV exposure. […] displacement frequently places people in chaotic circumstances in which access to condoms and other prevention tools may be scarce. [ii] Breakdown of traditional sexual norms: the chaotic conditions associated with conflict often lead to the disintegration of traditional values and norms regarding sexual behaviour, which contributes to an overall increase in risk of HIV exposure. [iii] Women and girls: armed conflict can create conditions of such severe deprivation that women and girls, in particular, are coerced into exchanging sex for money, food or protection. The presence of large numbers of armed men in uniforms often means a sex industry springs up, increasing HIV risk for sex workers and uniformed services personnel. [iv] Rape as a ‘weapon of war’ […] in some conflicts, young men and boys have also been targets of rape. [v] Collapse of health systems: when armed conflict triggers health system malfunction and collapse, national blood supply safety is threatened, and HIV prevention and care programmes can disintegrate. [vi] Increased substance use: to cope with chaos caused by conflicts, some individuals—including children—may seek comfort in increased alcohol consumption, or turn to other psychoactive substances, including glue and illicit drugs. Drug injecting is especially likely when conflicts disrupt supply routes of drugs that are usually ingested, sniffed or smoked. This can lead to drugs being introduced that are more likely to be injected (UNAIDS 2004).

3.2. OTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

3.2.1. Cultural Practices and Perceptions

Other contributing factors to the spread of HIV/Aids in Kenya include culture and religion, which is the way of life of a people. Every society has a way of life, value systems, traditions and beliefs which are considered important and which define
one group as distinct from another. These act as cultural references that greatly influence individuals when evaluating alternative courses of action or when making decisions on how to conduct themselves in any given situation, and this influence is often far more powerful than that of so-called ‘civilization’, levels of education or modernization and urbanization. The HIV/Aids pandemic in Africa is largely associated with culturally-determined evaluations, decisions, actions and perceptions. Some of these unfortunately lead to risky behaviour that exposes the population to the HIV infections. Umeah points out that:

HIV/Aids is a special disease. It is special because among other things, it is tied to a topic that has almost universal conflict and myth associated with it: Sexuality. One cannot discuss the issue of HIV/AIDS without considering the role of sexual attitudes as part of the problem. From an international perspective, each culture presents certain unique features but in each the burden of sexual tradition is unmistakably clear (Umeah 1997: ix).

Over 80 per cent of people who contract HIV/Aids in Kenya do so through heterosexual relationships with infected partners. Some of the cultural references that have exposed the people of Kenya to the risk of HIV infections include cultural perceptions, polygamy, traditional circumcision of males, female genital mutilation, wife sharing, wife inheritance and levirate, to mention but a few.

Cultural perceptions on matters surrounding masculinity, femininity and sex have over the years played a great role in matters pertaining to HIV/Aids in Kenya. As is the case in most other African countries, more often than not women and children are the people who bear the brunt of the continent’s misfortunes and who become the victims of wars, famine, diseases, patriarchy, gender-related oppressions, lack of rights to property, and poverty.

Onyango (2007) reckons that masculinities are great denominators in the spread of HIV/Aids in Kenya. He maintains that ideological and power structures, in most communities in Kenya, are disproportionate in their favouring of men. He admits
that women indeed are on the receiving end (compared to men) when it comes to HIV/AIDS infections and hegemonic masculinities. He establishes this fact from his interrogation of the premise that language indexes power and that it is also inextricably involved in power relations. He deconstructs masculine discursive practices and associated argumentation strategies in relevant areas of sexuality that have consequences for the spread of HIV/AIDS. For instance, in most communities, men are socialized to extol masculine symbols; especially those of tough male animals such as bulls (dume) or lions (simba). They are also encouraged to be daredevils to the end. Such attributes are instilled in men mostly during traditional ceremonies such as circumcision and other cultural rituals, in which some communities expose their candidates to painful and tough conditions through which they are expected to go without fear, since, as they say, that is what makes one a man.

Onyango notes that in many patriarchal communities of Kenya, an important quality of a Kenyan man crystallizes around sex. He reveals that in some social circles, utterances such as “a man who has not contracted a sexually transmitted disease – also referred to as a homa (flu) – is not yet man enough” are common. Such utterances can be seen to encourage even those who have contracted STIs to continue having sex since, as they say, “a bull dies with grass in its mouth”, and dawa ya moto ni moto, a proverb which literally translates as “remedy for fire is fire” (Onyango 2007). These kinds of daredevil utterances are mostly reflected in their behaviour and for this reason; they are enabling grounds for the spread of HIV/AIDS.

On sex matters, utterances such as hata paka mzee hunywa maziwa (even old cats drink milk) are common in some social circles. Although such sayings could be interpreted in various ways, in my opinion they clearly encourage men to feel free to have sex as much as they want with any women of any age, preferably younger women. Other men believe in brutal dominion of men over women through sex. They believe in rough sex as the only means to prove one’s
manhood to a woman. The Luhyia community, for instance, use the term *okhukhunda* while referring to total subjugation of women in the sexual act, where a woman is supposed to be bruised (Onyango 2007). On safe sex, statements such as “one cannot eat a banana with its peel” or “one cannot eat a sweet with its wrapper” are common in some social spheres. They insinuate that sex can only be enjoyed without a condom. This only spells out maximum pleasure for maximum risk to HIV/AIDS infection. From these utterances, it is clear that females have no control over sex matters or even safe sex in such patriarchal communities.

Widow Inheritance and levirate are other cultural practices that expose the population to HIV/AIDS infection in Kenya. In patrilineal societies such as the Luo and Nandi communities, these practices are still acceptable. Widow-inheritance involves passing of wives, children and property to brothers or family members of dead husbands. In some societies, a man can inherit more than one wife. Among the Nandi community, the widow is inherited by the younger brother of the husband or the next eldest in case of the immaturity of the younger one. Langley explains this further by saying that this custom is intended to care for widows – personal needs, family or domestic needs, and sexual and procreative needs (1979: 72). In such cases, if the deceased died of AIDS and the surviving wife happens to be HIV/AIDS positive too, it means that the inheritor will be infected, or vice versa, and consequently will infect the other spouses and their unborn children.

Polygamy is the practice of having more than one wife. It is not only a type of marriage but a value system in most African societies. A man is allowed to have as many wives as he can afford, mostly for reproduction sake. In other communities, a man is respected by virtue of the number of wives and children he has. Traditionally, if a husband felt that he needed another wife, for whatever reasons (lack of children, for example) he would seek approval from his first wife who was also known as the ‘chief wife’ (Langley 1979: 69). If she was in
agreement – for example if she needed a helping hand with the household chores – the chief wife could recommend another wife to her husband. Polygamy is still common in most ethnic groups in Kenya, such as the Luo and some of the coastal communities. In the face of the HIV/Aids pandemic, polygamy poses a great risk. If either the husband or one of the wives is infected with the HIV virus then it means all the other wives get infected and thus their unborn children.

Wife sharing is a common practice within the pastoral ethnic groups, especially the Maasai people. This custom is a form of wife-swopping where a married woman is considered ‘available’ to males in the society other than her husband. The presence of a man in her hut is shown by a spear thrust onto the ground outside the hut, signifying that she is otherwise, yet legitimately, engaged. The rationale behind this custom is to ensure numerical stability of the tribe. Among the Nandi people, a husband would offer his wife to his peers for sexual intercourse as a sign of hospitality (Langley 1979: 71). With the emergence of the Aids pandemic, this tradition has threatened such communities almost to the point of extinction.

Circumcision of both men and women was and still is a great rite of passage, whereby, at the flick of the knife, the boys and girls of various ethnic groups in Kenya culturally enter manhood and womanhood respectively. As much as HIV/Aids intervention agencies have insisted that circumcision of men lowers their risk of contracting HIV/Aids, it remains a high risk practice when carried out traditionally. Despite the campaigns against this practice in the traditional manner, and the government’s intervention against it by advocating a safer way of carrying out male circumcision in hospitals, most families continue to have their children go through the rite traditionally. This important period of life is traditionally defined by a ceremony, encompassing feasting, dancing, singing and the actual ‘cut’. In most ethnic groups, uncircumcised people are looked upon as foreigners, and cannot marry. On account of deep-rooted cultural prejudice, they
become general laughing stocks, butts for derision and contempt, and the conviction that they cannot have children follows them (Kariuki et al 2006).

It is therefore almost mandatory for a man or woman in some of the ethnic tribes in Kenya to undergo the cut in order to earn respect, pride and a place in society. In earlier days, some ethnic groups such as the Luo community had the removal of six lower teeth instead of the cut. In the Agekoyo community, the cut ceremony was followed by the piercing and the enlargement of the earlobes as a mark to distinguish the circumcised from the uncircumcised. The initiates were referred to as young warriors and they constituted the military sector of the community in question. A group of boys initiated at the same time formed an age set. Until recently, following HIV/Aids awareness campaigns amongst communities that still practice traditional circumcisions, the circumciser used one knife on several initiates, posing a high risk for HIV infection. Nowadays, this operation can be done in the hospitals but some ethnic groups have insisted on the traditional way of circumcision. After the seclusion period, the young warriors from some communities were allowed to have sex with uncircumcised girls.

Female circumcision, which is also known as female genital mutilation (FGM), is a strong long-standing tradition and custom for most communities of Africa and the Middle East. A girl is considered ready for marriage after she has undergone circumcision. According to Sobania (2003), female circumcision is seen as an accomplishment that protects the initiate and her family so that she can be properly married. Despite the fact that many Kenyans view the practice as outdated and barbaric – due to reasons of Christianity, schooling and modernization – communities such as those in North-Eastern Kenya still practice this custom. Sobania attests to the existence of the practice by considering the remarks of a woman initiate made to a scholar from the West:

It is bad that you don’t circumcise women in your country. That child which is born to such woman, is it human? We think it is bad to bear a child if the woman
is not circumcised. But you know the men like us circumcised. But they are wrong, she laughed (Sobania 2003: 151).

Others adhere to the practice as a religious obligation. Female circumcision involves cutting away all or part of the clitoris or the labia (for some communities), or actually mutilating most of the external female genitalia, as is the case mostly among the ethnic communities situated in the North Eastern part of Kenya. Langley refers to the Nandi rite as clitoridectomy (1979: 60). After cutting, the wound is dabbed with an application of ground millet dried on the loft above the fire. Though nowadays they use iodine and modern drugs to treat the wounds, not much attention is given to the hygiene of the apparatus used. By the virtue of it being a rite of passage, it equally increases the susceptibility of these young girls to HIV/Aids and other harmful infections for lack of proper hygiene. The Kenyan government has tried a number of strategies to stop the practice, including arresting parents of girls who undergo the rite, but the impact has been minimal since change to practices of such deep-rooted cultural significance can only begin with the people themselves. No public health facility is licensed to carry out such operations; therefore female circumcision is always performed at home by a traditional circumciser who in many instances uses unsterilized knives and blades on several initiates, increasing their chances of infection.

Other cultural practices that govern sex and particularly increase the risk of HIV/Aids infection include:

- Child marriage, where, especially after circumcision, the child is married off to an older man who in most cases has other wives.
- Woman-to-woman marriage, where a widow or a childless woman is allowed to marry a younger woman who will bear her children with other men, married or unmarried.
- Marriage to the house is another practice that poses a high risk. It happens in a family where only daughters have been born. The younger daughter remains at home, is visited by a man from outside and has children with him. When sons have been born, she is free to leave and get
married, leaving the ancestral land and family property to the sons (Langley 1979: 71).

3.2.2. **Religion**

Religions in Kenya have a great role to play in changing people’s views and perception towards the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Amuyunzu-Nyamongo (2001) notes that some of the religious beliefs have only contributed to the misconceptions regarding sexual and reproductive health information. Consequently, these misconceptions have created barriers in the face of HIV/AIDS. Certain religious doctrines and practices forbid the use of preventative and protective measures. For instance, Catholics and Muslims oppose the use of condoms. Other cults, such as the Mungiki sect, adhere to Agekoyo traditional beliefs and outdated cultural practices that uphold polygamy, female circumcision and wife sharing, thus putting their faithful followers and the general population at an increased risk of HIV infection.

4. **THOSE MOST VULNERABLE TO HIV/AIDS INFECTION**

Everyone is vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. However, there are some members of society who are more vulnerable than others. NACC (2006) and NACC (2008) acknowledges that the most-at-risk groups in Kenya include the injecting drug users (although in my opinion, this group should include all drug and alcohol users), men who have sex with men (MSM), truck drivers, commercial sex workers (CSW) and the youth. Children, refugees, the disabled and women are also most vulnerable. Since this study focuses on the youth, it is of particular concern here that young people are indentified as one of the most vulnerable groups to HIV/AIDS infection. The youth account for 55% of post-infancy infections worldwide. According to NACC (2005), the Kenyan prevalence rates show that most of the infections occur in people in the age bracket 15-49.
Surveys have shown that young people are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS due to factors such as early sexuality, adolescence (which is an explorative stage of human development), peer influence, and the media. Kenya has recognized the vulnerability of the youth (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo 2001; NACC 2008 and UNAIDS 2004). The Sessional Paper No 4 on AIDS in Kenya (NACC 2006) has committed itself to developing policies and interventions aimed at protecting young people from HIV/AIDS infection, by equipping them with adequate knowledge and skills. The government has also integrated an AIDS Education Programme into the existing school curriculum.

5. THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

5.1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

Kenya is a low-income country. Sector reviews suggest that Kenya’s poor economic performance has been, to a great extent, compounded by HIV/AIDS, which has increased the poverty levels of individuals and that of the nation as a whole (NACC 2006). The increase in morbidity and mortality of skilled and unskilled labour continues to be one of the major setbacks in the country’s economy.

The education sector has been affected in many ways. Kenya has a high literacy rate of 76% percent for males and 67% for females (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo 2001). But the HIV pandemic is threatening to reverse enrolment and completion rates. Firstly, children infected before birth do not live to enroll in school. Secondly, most of the children enrolled have to drop out before completion for various reasons, which include taking care of their sick relatives, being orphaned following the deaths of their parents due to AIDS, and a lack of money for their school expenses, since all finances are channeled into managing the sick back
home. Thirdly, there is a loss of experienced teachers because of Aids related sicknesses and deaths, and because of teacher absenteeism due to sickness or attendance of funerals of their dead colleagues (Ministry of Health 2001).

The health sector has been equally strained by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. According to the Ministry of Health, there is a serious strain on existing resources that includes shortage of drugs and patient care supplies to manage Aids related infections at their various levels. There is a dire need for the health sector to improve its provision of adequate diagnostic capabilities at various levels of HIV/AIDS development. This includes providing and maintaining blood screening equipment, reducing overcrowding in health facilities by putting up more health facilities, and ensuring the regular supply of testing reagents (NACC 2006; Ministry of Health 2001). This means more expenditure on the part of the government and the health sector. In addition the sector must contend with the increased rate of bed occupancy due to a high turn up of patients with opportunistic infections that need to be contained in health facilities. The sector has also not been spared the loss of its skilled manpower to HIV/AIDS.

The majority of Kenyans rely on the agricultural sector for their livelihood, which includes subsistence farming through to cash crop foreign exchange earners. The food production and commercial agriculture sector forms the backbone of the Kenyan economy. This sector has also been marked by the negative impacts of HIV/AIDS. As a result, its impact has posed a threat to the country’s food security. For instance, fertile lands remain idle due to shortage of labour caused by illnesses, by the need to care for the sick, and by deaths (NACC 2005). This has led to loss of skilled labour and consequently the sector incurs high costs in recruitment and training of new employees, pensions, terminal benefits and funeral costs. On the other hand cash crop farming is slowly being substituted with simple subsistence farming to provide for the sick (Ministry of Health 2001).
The production industries are also victims of the negative impact of HIV/AIDS. Apart from losing both skilled and unskilled employees, the sector experiences absenteeism, which has a direct impact on the amount of labour executed in a day, and expenditure on health and funeral expenses. The impact of HIV/AIDS on this sector will ultimately be crippling because the demand for many manufactured products decreases when families are spending all their money caring for their sick (NACC 2005).

The national security sector – the army and other military forces - the most important sector when it comes to the overall security of the country, has also not been spared. Worldwide, the forces have been hard hit by this pandemic due to the fact that they are largely made up of young people placed away from their families and often moved from one region to another, increasing their susceptibility to casual sex and hence exposing them to a higher risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

5.2. **ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN (OVC)**

The Ministry of Health considers an AIDS orphan as a child who has lost his/her parents to the AIDS pandemic and is under the age of 15 years (Ministry of Health 2001). The number of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) has increased tremendously as a result of AIDS (NACC 2006). These children lack the proper care and supervision they require at this critical stage of their lives. Social systems have been strained to deal with this sudden upsurge of orphans as a result of HIV/AIDS. Children are being brought up by their grandparents, who may not have the monetary means to provide the care the children deserve. In other places, children as young as 10 years are heading a home, fending for their siblings, following the loss of their parents to HIV/AIDS (NACC 2005). In such cases, the orphaned child is vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation in his/her effort to get the money needed to look after sick parents or orphaned siblings.
6. KENYAN GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS

6.1. LEADERSHIP AND CO-ORDINATION

Compared to the initial reluctance to tackle the pandemic in the 1980s, today there is a strong political will to turn around the spread of HIV/AIDS in Kenya. In the late 90’s, the government and other key political figures spoke out very strongly about their intention of fighting the pandemic. The government of Kenya, under the leadership of the former president, Daniel Moi, saw the need to establish clear policy guidelines, strategies and organizational structures that would help it deal with the pandemic. A draft national policy was submitted to parliament and approved on 24th September 1997 as the Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1997 on AIDS in Kenya. The goal of the paper was to provide a policy framework within which Aids prevention and control efforts will be undertaken for the next 15 years. The Ministry of Health (2001) outlines the specific objectives of the Sessional Paper as follows:

- Give directions on how to handle controversial issues while taking into account prevailing circumstances and social-cultural environment.
- Enable the government to play leadership role in Aids prevention and control activities. The multi-sectoral approach brought diversity of actors into the fight against the pandemic.
- Recommend an appropriate institutional framework for effective management and coordination of HIV/AIDS programme activities.

The approval of this paper signaled the government’s intentions to be in charge of effective programmes to control the spread of HIV/AIDS, to protect the human rights of those with HIV/AIDS and to provide care to those who are infected and affected by the pandemic (Ministry of Health 2001). This move was followed by the declaration of HIV/AIDS as a “national disaster” by the former president in 1999. When the current president, Mwai Kibaki, took office in 2002, one of his
first acts was to declare “Total War on AIDS”. These declarations are indicators of the government’s commitment to purge Kenya of Aids. Prominent government officials and businessmen have also spearheaded the war against the pandemic in various parts of the country. For instance, the first lady, Mrs. Lucy Kibaki, who is a role model and a prominent personality by virtue of her status, contradicted the government’s policy on condom use and HIV/Aids and other Aids activists in Kenya. The BBC news (19 May, 2006) reports a speech delivered by Mrs. Kibaki during a prize-giving ceremony at a school where she openly spoke for abstinence of school children from sex before marriage. She was reported as saying that young people had no business using condoms. As she said “ those who are in school have no business having condoms and those who are in the universities and are not married have no business having condoms in their halls of residence”. Aids activists, on the other hand, feel that condoms are the only way to prevent young people from contracting HIV/Aids infections, as most young people are sexually active at the age of fourteen. This move by leaders has gone a long way in bringing the HIV status in Kenya to where it is now as compared to some years back.

The 1999 commitment of the Office of the President against HIV/Aids led to the establishment of the National AIDS Control Council (NACC). This body was established under the State Corporations Act by Presidential Order in Legal Notice No. 170 of 26 November 1999 (NACC 2006). It was also seen as one of the reactions to the recommendations of the Sessional Paper No 4 on AIDS in Kenya. Its main duty is to spearhead the national response and to serve as the Kenyan government’s coordinating body. Its functions, which reflect most of the Sessional paper No 4 objectives, are incorporated in the 1999’s NACC mission statement which states: “To provide a policy and strategic framework for mobilizing and coordinating resources, for prevention of HIV transmission and provision of care and support to the infected and affected people in Kenya” (Ministry of Heath 2001).
There are of course many actors in the co-ordination of HIV/AIDS programmes, and this makes it difficult to co-ordinate responses to the pandemic from national level only. This led to a meeting of Aids officials from all over the world, including NGOs and the private sector, at the International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) in 2003. One of the outcomes of this meeting was that three guiding principles were agreed upon in the co-ordination of national responses to HIV/AIDS. The three principles as outlined by (NACC 2006) are:

- One agreed Aids action framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners.
- One national Aids coordinating authority, with a broad-based multi-sectoral mandate.
- One agreed country-level monitoring and evaluation system.

This move earned the NACC its rightful place as ‘one national coordinating authority’. It works within a complex web of organizations and sub-networks that together implement Kenya’s national response. In 2003, the current government decentralized the NACC to the constituency level in the form of Constituency Control Councils (CACC). This was meant to engage community action and to ease integration of national response initiatives at grass root levels.

6.2. **EXISTING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

The Kenya National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (KNASP) guidelines for prevention include sexual abstinence, delayed sexual debut, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, blood safety, injection safety, male circumcision post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), consistent condom use, reduction in number of sex partners and knowledge of HIV status (NACC 2005). There is a strong sense of ownership of these KNASP guidelines within government, civil society, UN agencies, development organizations and the co-operate sectors geared towards fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS in Kenya. Its national co-ordination is one of the
NACC’s core functions. Due to constraints of time and space, only a few intervention strategies will be highlighted here.

6.2.1. *Voluntary Counseling and Testing*

When individuals know their HIV status through testing, they are more likely to change their behaviour and respond to counseling on preventive practices. In so doing they are able to make informed choices about their sex lives and, at the same time, avoid re-infection or infecting other people. VCT facilities make possible counseling needed for individuals to make informed choices about whether to undergo the testing and post-counseling. According to the NACC (2008) report, the KNASP 2005/2006-2009/2010 target is at least two million people tested annually, comprising 500,000 at VCT sites and 1.5 million in clinical testing, to include pregnant women. The counseling and testing strategy includes PITC, VCT, mobile CT, moonlight CT, camelback CT, door-to-door CT and PCR, and early childhood diagnosis.

The VCT facilities also provide access to psychological support, care and treatment. In the recent past, there has been a rapid increase in VCT centers nationwide from 3 in the year 2000 to almost 1000 sites in 2007 (NACC 2008). Over the same period, annual VCT uptake has increased from about 1,000 to 500,000 (JAPR reports 2004/2005 in NACC 2008). This has been the result of efforts of the government, international donors and partners, non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations. The VCTs have the role of preventing HIV infections by encouraging people to know their status, and act as an entry point for care of those who are infected. However, a survey carried out by the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey in 2003 shows that in spite of the increase of VCT centers in the country, not many people have made use of the facilities. The survey shows that 13% of women and 14% of the men know their HIV status while two thirds of the respondents interviewed said they were willing to know their status. These statistics are shown in table 3.3. Therefore there is
need for the government and individuals to intensify awareness and prevention campaigns to encourage people to know their HIV status. Several reasons have been attributed to lack of maximum utilization of VCT facilities. Some of such reasons include fear of death, stigma and discrimination associated with HIV (Izumi 2006; NACC 2008; NACC 2006; NACC 2005).

Table 3.3: Population who had an HIV test and received results (%) women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Heard of VCT</th>
<th>Ever tested</th>
<th>Never tested</th>
<th>Don’t Know/missing</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Tested and received results in the past 12 months Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>With results</td>
<td>No Results</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(NACC 2006).

6.2.2. Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission

In the absence of any intervention, babies born to HIV-positive mothers have a 15 to 35 percent chance of becoming infected in the uterus, during birth, or through breastfeeding (NACC 2006). However, there are now effective methods for preventing mother-to-child transmission, which includes antiretroviral therapy, sound obstetrical management and substitution of formula for breastfeeding. In Kenya, there are currently over 1000 ANC’s offering Prevention of Mother-to-
Child Transmission (PMTCT) facilities countrywide. A survey carried out by NACC (2005) estimates that 60% of the pregnant women who visit antenatal clinics (ANC) are now being voluntarily counseled and tested for HIV/Aids. The survey also reveals that infant Nevarapine uptake is 58% (NACC 2006). Apart from administration of antiretroviral drugs, other services such as family planning services – which are entirely voluntary – are also made available to HIV-positive mothers to reduce mother-to-child transmission by preventing unwanted pregnancies.

6.2.3. **Health System Precautions and Blood Safety**

HIV/Aids transmission has been documented to occur through blood contamination, non-sterile injections and other unsafe medical practices. Blood safety is considered as a national public health priority. Policy Guidelines on Blood Transfusion in Kenya were formulated in 2001 following an increased demand for safe and sufficient blood supply (NACC 2006). This policy aims at protecting and promoting the health of the blood donors and the blood recipients. The guidelines stipulate that all donated blood must be screened for HIV, the hepatitis B virus and syphilis, among others. Only units with no infections that are transmissible by transfusion may be used.

6.2.4. **Condom Promotion**

In the face of the Aids pandemic, unprotected sex is a weapon of mass destruction. Condom use is essential in the prevention of STIs that includes HIV. In Kenya male condom distribution has increased tremendously since 2004 (NACC 2005). According to a report by NASCOP in NACC (2006), social marketing plays an important role in increasing demand for and use of all condoms. Reports also show that both male and female condoms have been made available, but the female condom only accounts for 0.5% of condom use.
Mass media campaigns have reduced the social stigma associated with condoms and consequently have facilitated their increased demand, availability and use.

6.2.5. **Treatment of Sexually Transmitted Infections**

STI’s are one of the predisposing factors to HIV infection, especially if the STI is ulcerative. Therefore, prevention, management and treatment of these infections are paramount in the war against HIV/AIDS in Kenya. According to the KDHS (2003), cited in NACC (2006), the HIV prevalence was 23% in women with an STI and 37% in women with genital ulcer disease. Prevalence was 22% in men with genital ulcers. These reports highlight the importance of the treatment and management of STI’s. As a result NASCOP provides flowcharts and training protocols that guide in managing STI’s to all public health facilities. The Ministry of Health also provides a standard drug kit for managing common STI syndrome (NACC 2006). The KNASP 2005/2006-2009/2010 target is for 40% of STI units to provide counseling and referrals to a VCT site (NACC 2006).

6.2.6. **Creating Awareness**

The government of Kenya has put a lot of effort into promoting knowledge and creating awareness about HIV/AIDS, with the ultimate goal of encouraging behavioural change. The establishment of a national BCC consortium in 2005, which is now stemming out to regional BCC’s, is a viable strategy for increasing knowledge about HIV/AIDS to all. Messages aimed at reducing the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS are also incorporated in the BCC messages.

The president of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki, takes the initiative in this regard with his motto *Pamoja Tuangamize UKIMWI*, which means, “Together we finish HIV/AIDS”. The Ministry of Education in conjunction with NACC has integrated the HIV/AIDS programme into the existing school curriculum. NACC has also
sponsored a lot of public awareness campaigns on STIs and HIV/AIDS through the local media houses and live campaigns.

Following the recent revelations that drugs and alcohol using populations are equally at high risk of HIV infections and the fact that they are knowingly or unknowingly even spreading it to other non-drug-using populations, the government of Kenya acknowledges the need for HIV prevention for drug users in their national HIV/AIDS strategic plans. For instance following the 42nd Annual Regional Health Ministers' Conference held in Mombasa, Kenya in February 2006, it was agreed that issues related to alcohol should be incorporated into the national HIV/AIDS strategies, to ensure that appropriate alcohol and HIV/AIDS policies, guidelines and programmes are in place, and to establish national and regional technical working groups to spearhead the implementation of alcohol and HIV/AIDS programmes (NACC 2006). These efforts are evidenced by the famous advertisement that hit Kenyan television saying *unvyokunywa zaidi, ndivyo unateleza zaidi* (the more you drink, the more you slide to HIV/AIDS infection). Other interventions being employed for HIV prevention among drug users include:

- Community outreach and peer based interventions to discourage sharing of injections equipment and encourage safe injecting as well as safe sex practices, and increasing of availability of commodities such as sterile injection equipment and condoms. Increasing access to important services such as VCT is critical and may require tailoring and adaptation of traditional models to meet the needs of this hard to reach population of drug users. Rapid HIV testing for example, has great potential for reaching drug users and sex workers in non-clinical settings including brothels, bathhouses, homeless shelters, street outreach locations and other avenues frequented by drug users (Needle et al 2006: 88).
6.2.7. **Treatment and Care of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)**

Provision of treatment to PLWHA has been the priority of the Kenyan government. ARVs have been delivered free of charge since 2005 (NACC 2008). According to the report on Joint AIDS Programme Review (NACC 2005), 54,000 people were on ARVs by September 2005 and Kenya aims to reach 75% of the population eligible for this treatment by 2010. The report reveals that currently all provincial hospitals and district hospitals are providing comprehensive HIV care, including core components of counseling services, prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections and antiretroviral therapy (ART). Cases of default have been reported due to the fact that, though the treatment is free of charge, users bear the cost of medical support services and transport which place an impossible financial burden on them, resulting in default. It is for this reason that the JAPR (2007) agreed on the need for a support system for ARTs to be made free (NACC 2008). NASCOP has also developed a strategy to guide pediatric treatment. Reports show that 3,500 children were on ARTs by September 2005 (NACC 2005).

People living with HIV/AIDS are vulnerable to human rights violation such as discrimination, and denial of property and inheritance rights, especially women and children (Izumi 2006; NACC 2008). PLWHA always have difficulties accessing health care, shelter, education and food. Although the Kenyan government has not put together effective intervention policies and guidelines against such rights abuses, it has enacted a non-discrimination law, the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Act, which specifies protection of marginalized groups of people. The law requires some amendments before it is fully enacted.

Promoting home-based care is another strategy that the government is promoting to ensure proper care for people living with HIV/AIDS. It is identified in the national strategic plan as a strategy to continue support to people on
treatment. HBC also entails that the family and the community work in collaboration with health workers to provide care and support to both the infected and affected. HBC is holistic in that it caters for the physical, medical, spiritual and social needs of sufferers. The Ministry of Health in conjunction with NASCOP has developed several home-based care guidelines that include guidelines on nutrition and HIV/Aids (NACC 2006).

7. VISIBLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS IN KENYA

There has been remarkable improvement in the fight against the pandemic today in Kenya as compared to fifteen years ago. The commitment of the official government leaders, starting with the presidents, to fight the pandemic has seen Kenyan political leaders, influential people in the society and also religious leaders talk more freely and openly about the kinds of sexual behaviour that pose risks for HIV/Aids infection, also about its prevention. In so doing they bring the message of awareness and prevention closer to people and consequently influence behavioural change and help to ensure less new HIV infection incidences.

The various interventions employed by the government to curb the spread of HIV/Aids have had remarkable success. For instance there is an increase in the demand for and use of condoms, the VCT centers are now available to various parts of the country and more people are getting tested. In relation to the treatment of the HIV infected persons, Kenya has witnessed a rise in the number of people under treatment in the year 2007 as compared to earlier years. Political, commercial and community leaders are speaking out about Aids and encouraging people to protect themselves much more openly than they did fifteen years ago. Amuyunzu-Nyamongo (2001) cites two specific success stories
against the HIV/AIDS situation in Kenya, which UNAIDS boasts of as the best practice collection.

The Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) that was started in 1994 and is implemented in Mathare, the largest slum in Nairobi. The project objective is to fight HIV/AIDS by promoting health living, teamwork and involvement on community improvement activities. The main activity has been training footballers to be peer educators on HIV/AIDS. The adolescents stress abstinence from sex; but for those who are sexually active, they emphasize the importance of using condom and staying faithful to one partner. The second is a community mobilization project: The Diocese of Kitui HIV/AIDS Programme. This programme is implemented in Kitui and Mwingi districts in Eastern Kenya. [...] Its main objective is to reduce the prevalence of HIV infection; and to enable people infected and affected to live positively. The main activities include pre-and post-counseling, home visits to homes of the infected, group counseling sessions with PLWHA, community education, services for people with STIs and preparing people for death (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo 2001).

8. CHALLENGES AHEAD

Kenya has made remarkable efforts in her fight against the Aids pandemic. However, the various interventions and strategies that the government have put in place to fight the spread of the pandemic are marred by continued challenges in some areas. These challenges include inadequate funding to strengthen the CACCs and grassroots communities objectives. This situation is worsened by the fact that Kenya faces hard choices over allocating scarce resources and that it depends greatly on donor funding to sustain HIV/AIDS budgetary expenditure. This all raises concerns about the sustainability of such expenditures.

Poverty on the other hand poses serious financial challenges for people living with HIV/AIDS. It is estimated that more that 50% of the population live below the poverty level line and survive on a dollar a day PRSP (2007). PLWHA are
estimated to spend three times more on health care than the general population. One wonders how someone living under such harsh financial conditions of poverty can afford extra expenses such as condoms or even ARTs support services. The government therefore has responded to such concerns by waiving user fees for ART and at the same time it hopes to waive laboratory test fees in the near future (NACC 2008).

The government, political leaders, individuals and the society as a whole have to go beyond the comfort zone of the rhetoric and well-written policy documents to actively take a leadership role in making Kenya an Aids-free country. There is need for the government and other people in leadership to recognize that people have got different needs in the face of HIV/AIDS. PLWHA will have different needs to those who are not infected. At the same time the various vulnerable groups – women, youth, children, and the disabled – have needs that are different from each other in relation to HIV/AIDS. These differences need to be addressed appropriately.

There are many parts of Kenya where VCT are not available and, in most of the places where they are available, people do not make use of them for various reasons such as stigma, discrimination and death. Therefore, the government and other agencies involved in the fight against the pandemic need to do a more rigorous promotion of VCTs countrywide. Intense awareness campaigns will be necessary to encourage people to know their HIV status early enough before running down their immune system and to avoid infecting other people. Despite its intense promotion and some encouraging signs, the effectiveness of condom use in Kenya is hampered by several factors, among them stigma, religious restrictions and cultural prejudice.

Finally, the UN millennium project (2005) notes a number of continued challenges. The project maintains that a comprehensive response to the exacerbating HIV/AIDS situation in the world must include prevention of new
infections, treatment and care for those who are already infected, and mitigation of the impact of the disease on families, communities and societies. However, although important progress has been made on several fronts, the global response, by any standards, has been ‘far too small and has come far too late’ since most of the world’s population have no access to reliable information or prevention services, let alone treatment. The world political commitment is still lacking; and resources in the developing world are woefully inadequate. In addition, the capacity of an individual to change behaviour and protect him/her self is over and over again constrained by economic circumstances, gender inequalities and by cultural norms. Hence greater efforts should be focused on addressing these broader obstacles to behaviour change that continue to put men and women at risk.

In conclusion, the above discussion shows the willingness and the efforts that the Kenyan government, international agencies, non-governmental organizations and individuals have put in place in order to end the spread of HIV pandemic in Kenya and in Africa as a whole. However, it cannot be over emphasized that HIV and Aids is a complex and a many-sided issue that requires multidimensional strategies to tackle successfully. Put differently, there are as many different ways of contracting HIV/Aids as there are different groups of people exposed to HIV and different ways of preventing it. The greatest obstacle that the individuals, the government and other agencies must seek to overcome if the war against HIV is to be won, is the role played by cultural. In other words, the population’s cultural characteristics, which include lifestyles, beliefs, cultural practices, language, to mention but a few, must be considered and implemented in the formulation of HIV/Aids interventions, strategies and policies. As the UN millennium project puts it, if the behavioural change that is expected from the various communities in Kenya in relation to reversing the HIV pandemic is to last, deep-rooted cultural norms and practices must be addressed as soon as possible. Lasting change must begin with the people themselves. Therefore, culturally appropriate strategies and policies are essential. As the famous Swahili saying goes, Fimbo
iliyo mkononi ndiyo huua nyoka (the stick in the hand is what is used to kill a snake). Expressive cultural practices such as music and other performing arts may just be the stick at hand that we can use to defeat the HIV pandemic. These cultural practices have a great potential to communicate information and affect social behaviour. As Barz (2006) puts it, these expressions have the ability to contribute to health care. For example, musical texts frequently suggest interventions that encourage medical interventions – in that people learn about the need to go for testing through music – and, at the same time, music acts as medicine which is psychologically and spiritually healing. Even when in pain, people regain a sense of dignity and joy if there is music. So music is both medicine and education. Gregory Barz evidenced this ability of music and other performing arts in Uganda. It is possible even in other countries in Africa and especially so in Kenya.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE PEOPLE OF NAIROBI

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at highlighting the hybrid socio-economic, ethnic and cultural characteristics of the Nairobi of today. In this context, the researcher aims at drawing the reader’s attention to the diversity of this city’s youth culture, in particular its styles of pop music and language, and also at describing the social challenges that affect the youth living in Nairobi today.

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1 This photo is of Nairobi CBD (Central Business District). It shows a section of the Kenyatta International Conference Centre in the foreground and the Times Tower building in the background. The photo was taken by Paul Manan in Nairobi in August 2008.
2. HISTORY OF NAIROBI

Prior to the European penetration into Kenya, the land on which Nairobi is situated was a marshland which served as a natural border between the southern agekoyo population of Kiambu and the Athi plains, and was controlled by the Masai people (Ross 1975:18). The Nairobi area is named after a water hole known by the Masai people as Enkare Nyirobi, which means cool waters. Nairobi has evolved over time from a small town to the capital city it is today. Much of Nairobi’s history can only be understood against the context of the history of Kenya. As Werlin (1974: 37) puts it, Nairobi’s history, as much as that of Kenya as a whole, can be understood not only as a typical colonial regime but rather as a settlers’ regime dominated by a European elite determined to establish a white man’s country. Nairobi town was founded in the later 1890s as a British railroad camp on the Mombasa-to-Uganda railroad. The physical characteristics of the site and its relationship to its surroundings made the British rail builders consider the area a convenient stopping place en route to Uganda. The topographical nature of the site offered some advantages: there was ample level land on the edge of the plains for tracks, sidings and other impedimenta of a railway (as the area lies just after the Athi plains terrain and just before the Rift Valley escarpments), and, close at hand was an elevated cooler area suitable for the houses of the senior officials. Also, the area was deserted and so the friction over the appropriation of land seemed minimal (Morgan1979: 100).

The railhead reached Nairobi and opened to the traveling public in 1899. Its headquarters, which were situated in Mombasa, were also shifted to Nairobi. In the same year, the government administration of Ukamba province was transferred from Machakos to Nairobi, making Nairobi both economically and administratively convenient to the Europeans. With the development of the rail road and the influx of European settlers, Nairobi continued to grow. Parallel to the railway and government administration, trading concerns were also being established. Hotels, roads, general stores, a soda water factory and a post office
were established. The soda water industry might be described as the first service industry and the hotel as the forerunner of many which form the basis of the tourist industry in Nairobi today (Morgan 1979: 100). In 1905, Nairobi replaced Mombasa as the capital of the British East Africa Protectorate, which was known as the Kenya colony. This position was firmly established after the First World War when it was used as a military base for the Tanganyika campaign against the Germans (Werlin 1974: 38). Nairobi was granted city status in 1954. It was declared a municipality in 1957. When Kenya gained independence in 1963, Nairobi remained the capital city of the new republic.

3. POPULATION AND CULTURE OF NAIROBI

Nairobi has experienced a relatively steady increase in population since Kenya became independent in 1963. Many people have settled in Nairobi for reasons of employment and a rural-urban migration. From the approximately 13,000 people living in Nairobi in 1906 (Ross 1975: 18), it is estimated that 3 to 4 million people live in Nairobi today. From the birth of the town, the population was stratified by race. The Europeans dominated the government and the larger financial institutions, though they were the minority; the Asians, many of whom came to East Africa chiefly to work on the construction of the railway, were engaged in all ranges of trade and skilled work; while the majority of population at the time were Africans who worked in the most basic occupations (Ibid).

After independence, the population of Nairobi became more diversified to encompass more Africans, and people from other parts of the world, in both skilled and non-skilled jobs. This diversification of population has made Nairobi a multicultural city. The population is ethnically distinctive. This is evidenced by the number of FM stations broadcasting in vernacular languages from Nairobi today. Ethnic uniqueness is also shown by the increasing number of cultural nights being hosted in Nairobi recently. The city is also termed a cultural centre
because most national musical and cultural festivities hold their galas and carnivals in Nairobi.

4. FUNCTIONS OF NAIROBI

4.1. ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE

Nairobi was founded to serve as an administrative centre of the government and the railway headquarters. These functions have remained essentially unchanged over the last 100 years, although they have been greatly developed and expanded. Nairobi is still Kenya’s principal economic, administrative and cultural centre, and is one of the largest and fastest growing cities in Africa. Administratively, Nairobi is the seat of the government of Kenya. It is also a local government headquarters. Nairobi is therefore not only a capital city, but it is a province and a district in itself. Nairobi province is one of the eight provinces\(^1\) in Kenya. The province shares common boundaries with Nairobi city but functions as a state unit and is headed by a provincial commissioner. Unlike other provinces in Kenya, Nairobi province is entirely urban and has one local authority and only one district, Nairobi district. The district is further divided into divisions and locations. Nairobi province, unlike other districts, has eight constituencies\(^2\) that follow the same boundaries with administrative divisions. The administrative divisions and zones of Nairobi are shown in the table 4.1 below.

---

1 The other provinces of Kenya are the Central, Eastern, North-Eastern, Coast, Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western provinces.

2 The names of some constituencies differ from their division names. Starehe constituency, for example, is also the Central Division while Lang’ata constituency is the Kibera division.
Table 4.1: Administrative Divisions and Zones of Nairobi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Zones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kasarani</td>
<td>Ruaraka, Kahawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westlands</td>
<td>Kilimani, Parklands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embakasi</td>
<td>Kayole, Dandora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagoreti</td>
<td>Riruta, Waithaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makandara</td>
<td>Buruburu, Viwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang’ata</td>
<td>Karen, Nairobi West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starehe</td>
<td>Juja Road, Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamukunji</td>
<td>Eastleigh, Bahati</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Nairobi City Website 2008).

4.2. BUSINESS AND ECONOMY CENTRE

Nairobi city is undoubtedly the heart of business and economy for East Africa and Africa as a whole. It is the home of a number of regional headquarters of several international companies and organizations, including the United Nations Office (that hosts UNEP and UN-Habitat), Coca Cola, and KenGen, to mention but a few. It is the dwelling of the Nairobi Stock Exchange (NSE), which is the fourth largest in Africa. With the permission of the London Stock Exchange, the NSE was incorporated in 1954 as an overseas stock exchange while Kenya was still a British colony (Werlin 1974). The commercial sector also covers a wide range of activities, from banking to retailing. Nairobi also contains the majority of manufacturing industries in Kenya. Goods manufactured include clothing and textiles, building materials, processed foods, beverages, cigarettes, amongst others. Several foreign companies have factories situated in Nairobi too. Such companies include General Motors and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

1 The reader is referred to the Nairobi City official website through the link <http://www.nairobicity.org/departments/default2.asp?search=education#divisions>
4.3. **TOURISM CENTRE**

Nairobi is not a major tourist destination but does have several tourist attractions. The Nairobi National Park is the only game reserve to border a capital city of this magnitude. Outside the city are other spectacular sceneries, which include the Rift Valley, the 27 meter deep 'Fourteen Falls' waterfalls in Thika, among others (Ministry of Tourism 2008). Nairobi also has several museums that include the National Museum of Kenya, Nairobi Railway Museum and the Karen Blixen\(^1\) Museum. Nairobi also has a number of tourist hotels. They include the Intercontinental Hotels, The Stanley Hotel, Safari Park, and the most recently opened, Panari Hotel. The Panari Sky Centre is home to the largest ice rink in Africa, the Solar Ice Rink, which opened in 2005. Other tourist attractions include the Jomo Kenyatta mausoleum, the Dedan Kimathi mausoleum, the Kenya National Theatre, the National Archives, the Bomas of Kenya, and the Nairobi Arboretum. Jomo Kenyatta International Airport is situated in Nairobi. Therefore, many tourists visiting other parts of Kenya have their first stop in Nairobi before connecting to their various destinations. This makes Nairobi both a tourist destination and a transport hub.

4.4. **EDUCATION CENTRE**

Nairobi is also an education centre. The education institutions range from elementary levels to higher education institutions. Nairobi proudly hosts a number of prestigious public and private universities. The public universities include University of Nairobi (UON) and Kenyatta University (KU). Nairobi University is the oldest university in Kenya. It was established in 1956 as a Royal Technical College. The college was transformed to the second university college in East Africa, under the name Royal College Nairobi in 1961. The college was renamed University College Nairobi, which was a constituent college of the inter-

\(^1\) Karen Blixen was the author of the Book “Out of Africa”. She lived in a farm house in Karen (a residential area named after Karen Blixen) between the years 1914 and 1941.
territorial Federal University of East Africa in 1964. In 1970, the University College Nairobi transformed into the first national university in Kenya and was renamed the University of Nairobi (University of Nairobi 2008).

Kenyatta University traces its history from the establishment of colonial military barracks (Templer barracks). The barracks were later converted to Kenyatta University College which was, after a while, elevated to a constituent college of the University of Nairobi. The college became a full-fledged university in 1985 and was renamed Kenyatta University (Kenyatta University 2008).

The private universities in Nairobi include Strathmore University, the United States International University (USIU), Day Star University, Aga Khan University, Catholic University and African Nazarene University. Nairobi also hosts some of the best colleges and the top national high schools in Kenya, such as Alliance Girls High School.

4.5. MEDIA CENTRE

Most of Kenya’s media organizations are headquartered in Nairobi. They include the Nation Media Group, which publishes some of the largest newspapers in East Africa, the Daily Nation, Friday Nation, Sunday Nation, The East African, Taifa Leo and Taifa Jumapili. The Nation group also operates a TV station (Nation Television) as well as a radio station (Easy FM).

Kenya Television Network (KTN) is the leading television network in Kenya according to Steadman Research Services International – Kenya (2005). The television network is part of the Standard Group, which also publishes the Standard newspaper. The station also operates a radio station, Capital FM, which is listened to throughout the world via internet.

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) was established in 1959 by the British with the objective of providing television and radio broadcasting. By an act of
parliament, KBC was nationalized to Voice of Kenya in 1964. Later, by the same act, it was changed back to KBC in 1989. Since 1996, KBC has commissioned several FM stations, which include Metro FM (which started off as a 90% music radio station) Coro FM (which transmits in the gekoyo language) and Pwani FM (which caters for the coastal region). Metro Television was commissioned in the year 2000 as a sports and entertainment channel. Other radio and television services offered by KBC include National Kiswahili Service, National English Service, Regional Eastern Service (transmitting in Somali, Borana, Rendile, Burgi and Turkana), Regional Central Service (transmitting in Meru, Embu, Masai and Kamba) and Regional Western Service (transmitting in Luo, Kisii, Kalenjin, Kuria, Teso, Luhyia, Suba and Pokot).

Other television networks in Nairobi, which broadcast to the rest of the country, include Citizen TV, Family TV, Stellavision TV, East Africa TV (EATV) – also a regional East African channel (Maina 2006). Other radio stations broadcasting from Nairobi include, Kiss FM, Citizen Radio, House of Reggae Radio, Y-FM, Kameme FM, Inooro FM, Ramogi FM, Classic FM, and Baraka FM. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of radio stations broadcasting in vernacular. However, there is no television broadcasting in vernacular.

The multiplicity of media services in Kenya offers Kenyans a wide range of choices as to which TV or radio station to tune to. Therefore, preference varies and is primarily based on programming such as the kind of music playing, or the favourite TV programme showing at any given time. However, the Steadman Research Services International – Kenya (2005) shows that the most listened FM channel in Nairobi is Kiss FM, while East Africa TV is more popular with young people as its content is mostly entertainment and music (Maina 2006).

There is also diverse newspaper coverage in Kenya. The most read papers include The Daily Nation, The Standard, The Kenya Times, Taifa Leo, The People, The Sunday Nation, The Sunday Standard, The East African and The
People on Sunday (Maina 2006). The Daily Monitor, New Vision and Bukende are published in Uganda but are also read in Kenya. Several multinational media organizations have their regional headquarters based in Nairobi. Such organizations include the BBC, CNN, Reuters, and Agence France-Presse.

4.6. **TRANSPORT HUB**

Kenya’s transport system comprises five major modes. They include the railway, roads, marine, air and pipeline. These modes of transport facilitate mobility of people and cargo to various destinations. Nairobi is undoubtedly one of the busiest cities in terms of transport in Africa. The city is served by roads, railway and airports. Nairobi was founded as a railway town and until today, the Kenya Railways (KR) headquarters are still situated in Nairobi. The railroad runs from Mombasa to Kampala. Rail services are mainly for cargo transfer but regular passenger trains connect Mombasa, Nairobi and Kisumu. The services are also used by a number of commuters from the suburbs to the city.

Road transport is the major means of transport in Nairobi. Buses and matatus\(^1\) – which fall under Public Service Vehicles and include pickups designed to carry people, Peugeots 504s and 505s, Nissans and minibuses – are the most common means of road transport (OSSREA 2007). They operate within the city and from Nairobi to towns in various parts of the country.

Nairobi is also served by Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), which is the largest in East and Central Africa. The airport serves as a transit hub for major airlines as well as the gateway for visitors to Africa’s treasured game parks, cultural heritage, scenic landscapes and business opportunities. The airport also serves as a major cargo center for both inbound and outbound goods (Kenya Airports Authority 2008). The Jomo Kenyatta International Airport is served by

\(^1\) Matatus is a term derived from a local gekoyo word “mang’otore”. It literally means “thirty cents”, which was then the standard charge for every trip made.
road services, including matatus, shuttle services and coaches. Wilson Airport is a relatively small but busy airport located to the west of Nairobi. It was originally Nairobi Aerodrome used for airmail service under the Royal Navy during the Second World War. It handles smaller aircraft that operate within Kenya and some other East African destinations. Eastleigh Airport is also situated in Nairobi. The airport now serves as a military base.

Pipeline transportation services, whose operations are managed by the Kenya Pipeline Company Limited, provides the most economical and modern way of transporting and storing petroleum products in Kenya. The pipeline system transports refined petroleum products from Mombasa to Nairobi and the Western Kenya towns of Nakuru, Kisumu and Eldoret. The central control centre for the pipeline is located at Nairobi terminal from where all pipeline operations are coordinated. There is also a petroleum storage depot situated in Nairobi (Kenya Pipeline Company Limited 2002).

4.7. **SPORTS CENTRE**

Nairobi is East Africa’s sporting centre. Moi International Sports Centre, located in the environs of Kasarani, is a premier sports facility. The facility boasts having hosted some of the major sporting activities on the continent, including the 1987 All Africa Games. Nyayo Stadium is the second largest sports ground in Nairobi. The stadium is, for the most part, used for soccer. The Nairobi City stadium is the city’s first stadium and is mostly used for football. Other sporting events held in Nairobi include cricket (which mostly takes place in the Nairobi Gymkhana), Safari Rally events, Safari Sevens – a rugby tournament – and major marathon races such as the Nairobi International Marathon, which is hosted by the Standard Chartered Bank of Kenya and is part of the Greatest Race on Earth. Football is a famous sport in Nairobi, as evidenced by its many football clubs: *Mathare* United, AFC Leopards, *Gor Mahia* and Tusker FC. Other teams are drawn from various branches of armed forces and police, as well as corporations
and government groups such as Kenya Breweries, Kenya Commercial Bank, Kenya Post and Telecommunication, and the Kenya Ports Authority (Sobania 2003). Nairobi is also a major golf destination. It is the home of some of Africa’s finest golf courses which include the Royal Nairobi Golf Club, Windsor Country Club and Muthaiga Country Club.

4.8. MUSIC, LITERATURE AND FILM CENTRE

Music plays an integral part in the lives of Kenyans. It is difficult to discuss the musical scene in Nairobi without consideration of the music industry in Kenya. Research has shown considerable development in the Kenyan music industry today. In relation to this, Impey documents that:

The first recordings in Kenya were made in 1902, shortly after the establishment of British colonial rule. Much trade in East Africa was conducted by Asian merchants and by the 1920s, 78-RPM recordings served to attract consumers into their shops. The market potential for African music was soon recognized, and by 1928, musicians were being sent to Bombay to record for the Indian branch of the British HMV label. The first genre of music to be recorded was taarab, the music of Zanzibar, and records were distributed throughout Kenya, Tanzania, Zaire and Uganda. [...] many Africans were recruited into the British forces, serving Ethiopia, India and Burma. Some coastal musicians were drafted into the Entertainment Corps, where they collaborated with musicians from other East African countries. At the end of the war (1945), the Entertainment Corps continued to operate commercially as the Rhino Bands. [...] the establishment of the East African Broadcasting Corporation enhanced the subsequent distribution of Kenyan pop, and in response to the demand for radio music, recording studios proliferated in Nairobi in the 1950s (Impey in Stone1998: 426)

Kavyu writes that the development of popular music in Kenya was primarily made possible by the development of mass media. From the settlement of freed slaves along the Kenyan coast, popular music spread in towns along the railway route up to Nyanza and Western Kenya, with people employed on railways and post
offices along the line being the first ones to own gramophones (Kavyu 1998). Music literally forms a part of the daily activities of most city dwellers as is the case in the lives of most Kenyans in other parts of the country. In a multicultural society such as Nairobi, music exists in diversified forms. Music is therefore a cultural practice that acts as a channel for expression and can be used as a rallying vehicle for enhancing a sense of patriotism for national causes (Okumu in Herbst 2003: 228). In Nairobi, music can be heard emanating from beer dens, schools, performance theaters, public transport (especially in Matatus as they compete for customers), banking halls, shopping malls and supermarkets, churches, nightclubs, and, nowadays, with the advancement of mobile technologies, people walk around with earphones in their ears. As Paterson in Broughton et al (2006) puts it, Nairobi has always been the hub of the East and Central African music industry. The thriving recording industries in Nairobi attracted artists from less fortunate countries and this stimulated record sales throughout the region. The proliferation of Congo-Zaire rumba bands in Kinshasa-Brazzaville also forced artists to search for professional opportunities in neighboring states, particularly Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (Impey in Stone 1998: 415). The deterioration of the political climate in Congo-Zaire in the 1970s saw more Congolese artists relocating to Nairobi, Kenya. With time, Nairobi established itself as a heart of Soukous music. Virgin records became aware of the popularity of the Soukous genre and signed recording contracts with several Soukous artists. This strengthened the genre’s strongholds even more.

Benga, another Kenyan genre, was also developed in Nairobi in the 1960s and has grown to become Kenya’s most characteristic pop music (Paterson in Broughton et al 2006: 175). Though Benga originally represented the Luo people of Western Kenya, its transition to a popular style of music in Kenya has seen many ethnic and regional pop groups, who play a variant of it, refer to their music as Benga. Other popular alternatives of Benga played in Nairobi incorporate aspects of country, western reggae and Zairean Soukous (Ibid). Hip-hop is a genre that is very popular among the youth in Nairobi and other parts of East
Africa. Most of hip-hop’s popular artists, such as Nonini (Hubert Nakitare), Jua Cali (Paul Nunda), the Kalamashaka, Cash Money Brother (CMB) and Prezzo, to mention but a few, are based in Nairobi, as are some of the best recording houses of this genre of music, including Blue Zebra, Ogopa Deejays and Calif records. The hip-hop genre has incorporated a wide range of foreign styles such as raga, house, dancehall and R&B. At the same time, characteristics of Benga, Soukous and some traditional ethnic music styles have also greatly been incorporated into hip-hop. Artists such as The Longombas have incorporated a lot of the Soukous style in their music, among other styles. Other Nairobi artists seek to blend rich vocal harmonies with traditional African percussion, stringed instruments, rhythms and melodies into contemporary pop music. Such groups include Kayamba Afrika, Yunasi, and Jabali Afrika. Others, such as Nairobi City Ensembles, incorporate authentic melodies and touches of traditional instruments into contemporary sound with modern instruments and guest rappers (Ibid: 183). International artists such as Shaggy, Ja Rule, and the late Lucky Dube have also toured and held major concerts in Nairobi.

Nairobi is a home and a meeting place for many African writers and filmmakers. Nairobi publishing houses have also produced the works of Kenya’s best authors, such as Mwangi Gicheru\(^1\) (Ivory Merchants) and Francis Imbuga\(^2\) (Aminata), to mention but a few (Sobania 2003: 73). Kenya has and continues to provide spectacular locations and captivating subject matter for films, but rarely is a screenplay developed from literature written by Kenyans. Instead, they draw on popular literature written by non-Kenyans (Ibid). The best known of these films is “Out of Africa” (1937), derived from a book written by Karen Blixen as an account of her living in Kenya. The story was developed into a film and directed by Sydney Pollack. The film’s popularity prompted the opening of Nairobi’s Karen Blixen Museum, located in the house where she used to live. Other local films set

\(^1\) Mwangi Gicheru’s literary work includes the ‘The Ivory Merchants’ published by Spear Books, 1976: Nairobi.

\(^2\) Francis Imbuga’s Aminata was published by East Africa Educational Publishers in 1988.
in Nairobi that have been screened by the local media include *Kayakayaya*, *Wingu la Moto*, and Project Daddy, which was produced by a Kenyan film personality, Njeri Karago.

4.9. **RESIDENTIAL AREA**

Nairobi is a habitat to four million Kenyans living and working in the city or in its suburbs. Nairobi's residential areas still reflect the city's colonial past, when residence was determined largely by race and income. Morgan (1967) highlights patterns and names of residential areas of Nairobi in the early 1990s that are evident in the Nairobi of today, but have expanded to accommodate the growing population. These are shown in figure 4.2 below and include Upper Nairobi, which is situated on the higher grounds to the west of Nairobi, and south areas such as Kileleshwa, Lavington estate, Kilimani estate, Parklands, Eastleigh; Nairobi South; Eastlands, Industrial area and Central area. Nairobi has many varied neighborhoods and suburbs. The main commercial and administrative areas are located in the city center, which is ringed by residential areas.

Though racial barriers disappeared after independence, the city's residential patterns continue to be determined by income (Mitullah 2003: 3). For instance, Nairobi's wealthier residents live in neighborhoods to the west of the city center, while the least wealthy residents live in the east. The majority of Nairobi dwellers are estimated to live in slums. These slums comprise Kibera slums, Korogocho, Mathare Valley and Kawangware, to mention but a few. They are characterized by uncontrolled spontaneous mushrooming of squatter settlements, poor drainage, sanitation and infrastructure, poor housing (mostly made of cardboards and iron sheets), crowding, violence, lack of recreational facilities, lack of tenure and cheap rent (Ibid: 8).
5. **LANGUAGE**

Nairobi is a multilingual city. It is a city that started off as a European and Asian dominated town and has expanded to accommodate more that 3 million people, drawn from the various ethnic groups in Kenya and also from people who hail from other parts of the world and settle there for various reasons, including trade, migration, and rural urban-migration. This phenomenon has given rise to a complex multi-ethnic population and very wide economic disparities. English is the official language and is mostly used as a language of business, government and a medium of instruction in schools. *Swahili* is the national language and is mostly used for inter-ethnic communications. Ethnic languages are also widely tolerated and ethnic nationalism is strong. Languages spoken in the city by Kenyan immigrants include Hindi, Gujarati, and Punjabi, to mention but a few. Another language prominent in Nairobi is *Sheng*. It is a mixed language that emerged from the complex multilingual situation of Nairobi city and is mostly...
used by the urban youth (Githiora 2002; Ogechi 2005a). Competing views of several scholars pertaining to the emergence of this language in Kenya are discussed in chapter two of this dissertation. Though there appears to be little consensus in the views brought forward by scholars about *Sheng*, it is obvious that the vernacular has borrowed a great deal from the already existing languages in the city. According to Githiora (2002), *Sheng* has several variations and is strongly identified with the Eastlands section of Nairobi. She adds that *Sheng* has moved away from its narrower base in Eastlands to permeate much of Nairobi’s social strata and its influence can be felt in other parts of the town as well as in rural areas. Bosire (2006) attests to this fact by pointing out that the young people in the rural areas now also commonly use *Sheng*, together with a sizable portion of the adult population who grew up with ‘old school’ *Sheng* – the *Sheng* of their youth. Sections of electronic and print media regularly use *Sheng* as a language of choice. Popular music and some local drama series have also used *Sheng* a great deal. Ogechi (2005a) also observes that *Sheng* has widely dominated campaigns against HIV/AIDS targeting young people, with references to sex organs and sex itself, condoms, and HIV/AIDS and its effects – through media such as music and billboards.

6. RELIGION

Christianity is the predominant religion in Kenya, among other religions such as Islam, Hinduism, and African traditional religions. This is also true in the case of the city of Nairobi. The religiosity in the city is evidenced by the presence of churches, mosques, temples and the Gurdwaras within the city. One of the groups that have held on to the African traditional ways of worship is the *Mungiki*

1 The gurdwara is a Sikh’s place of worship. The term gurdwara means “the house of Guru”. The Guru that is there is the Guru Granth Sahib. The gurdwara serves as a place of worship, school, meeting room, communal kitchen, and if needed, a place for people to sleep. For more details see <http://www.sikhs.org/gurdwara.htm>. 

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sect who worships under a tree in the city centre on a Sunday afternoon. (See chapter two of this dissertation).

7. **SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

7.1. **CRIME**

Crime is one of the major social problems that the city of Nairobi has to deal with. The city has earned its reputation as a dangerous place nicknamed as “Nairobbery”. Over the years there has been a sharp increase of violent crimes such as armed robberies, carjacking and burglaries. The United Nations International Civil Service Commission cited Nairobi as one of the most insecure cities in the world, classifying the city as status C. Terrorist acts have been common in Nairobi, for instance, the September 11th 1998 terrorist attack on the US Embassy in Nairobi (CNN.com: 13 August, 1998).

7.2. **DRUG ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM**

Drug abuse has become very common in Kenya, especially in the coastal cities and in Nairobi. Factors such as an extensive network of sea and airports (which provide the necessary infrastructure for moving drug shipments), a climate of weak regulatory and judicial controls, inadequate law enforcement resources and endemic official corruption have enabled drug users to operate “with near impunity”, and this has led to escalating drug usage in Kenya (Deveau *et al*, 2006). Nairobi, given its status as a city riddled with crime, is very susceptible to drug abuse and trafficking. Alcohol use is also common in Nairobi. The risk therein is the known relationship with the spread of HIV/Aids, both for the users themselves as for those who are directly or indirectly associated with such users.
In addition, a rapid assessment and response survey indicated that high-risk injection behaviour among heroin users was common which is a possible risk to HIV infection. Moreover, there is only one public sector facility for the treatment of addiction in Kenya, which is a fifteen-bed in-patient facility located at the Mathare Psychiatric Hospital in Nairobi. There is a dire need to increase such facilities in a city of such magnitude to cater for the increasing drug using population. Other private treatment services for substance abusers, which operate from Nairobi, include Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA). The AA has existed in Nairobi since the 1970s. The government of Kenya has put in place several strategies to help sensitize the drug and alcohol using population to the risk involved with regard to HIV/Aids, previously discussed in chapter three of this dissertation. One of the major interventions to be put in place is the use of community outreach programmes, whose main goal is to provide street-based interventions to drug users, utilizing a risk reduction approach in order to reduce HIV transmission through needle sharing and unprotected sex. The outreach workers used are often themselves former drug users engaging users with HIV/Aids and addiction care and treatment services (Deveau et al 2006).

7.3. HIV/AIDS

HIV/Aids has been one of the worst disasters that Kenya has had to deal with in recent years. Given the background to the HIV/Aids situation in Kenya discussed in chapter three, Nairobi is by no means exempt from the havoc caused by the pandemic countrywide. In fact, an adult HIV prevalence survey carried out in 2004 shows that HIV infection in Nairobi, as compared to other regions of the country, is significantly higher. Nairobi has estimated prevalence rates of 9% as compared to the Eastern and North-Eastern provinces, which have prevalence rates of 3.7% and 3% respectively. These statistics are reflected in as shown in table 4.1 below (NACC 2006).
Table 4.1: Adult HIV/AIDS Prevalence by Province in 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number HIV+</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>159,000</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>124,000</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>84,000</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Eastern</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyanza</td>
<td>292,000</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rift Valley</td>
<td>207,000</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,057,000</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
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(NACC 2006)

Factors influencing the exacerbation of HIV/AIDS in Nairobi and the impacts associated with the scourge are no different from the ones exposing the entire Kenyan population to the pandemic (see chapter three of this dissertation). Intense campaigns against the Aids pandemic, promotion of condom use and abstinence are thus as evident in Nairobi as they are elsewhere in the country. Billboards, which are erected along the streets and buildings, and the media, which encompass both electronic and print media, are the common means through which these campaigns have been carried out. Billboards carry messages such as *Pamoja tuangamize Ukimwi,* (meaning Together we finish HIV/AIDS), and cartoon logo of a yellow hand giving a 'V'sign are used to brand some of the campaigns as shown in figure 3.1. This campaign is called *Nimechill,* a Swahili-English term meaning "I have chilled" or "I am abstaining" (PSI1 Kenya

1 See reference Population Services International. PSI is a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C. that harnesses the vitality of the private sector to address the health problems of low-income and vulnerable populations in more than 60 developing countries. With programs in Malaria, reproductive health, child survival and HIV, PSI promotes products, services and healthy behaviour that enable low-income and vulnerable people to lead healthier lives.
2007). Other billboards promoting condoms mostly feature popular artists and other influential personalities such as Nameless, a.k.a. David Mathenge, with messages such as Nameless ana yake, je, una yako? Which means (Nameless has his [condom], do you?) Most of these campaigns target young people in the urban areas.

In conclusion, Werlin (1974) maintains that much of Nairobi in its context can only be understood against the background of Kenya. As compared to the other parts of the country, Nairobi dwellers have more vices to deal with. Nevertheless, the city has many resources which, if put to proper use, could be instrumental in the fight against HIV/AIDS among the young people of Kenya. Such resources include the convenience of mass media to reach the target populations by utilizing language and music to convey Aids messages.
CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL APPROACHES IN POPULAR MUSIC STUDIES

1. INTRODUCTION

Musicology is the scientific study of music characterized by procedures of research. The term music as used in most standard reference works, such as *The Harvard Dictionary of Music* and *The New Grove*, does not prescribe the style nor the genre of music that musicology should focus on. In fact, the *Britannica of Music* (1980) documents that the discipline of musicology covers a wide and heterogeneous area of research which includes European, Oriental and Folk music. From my understanding of the term heterogeneous, it should of course also include other types of music such as traditional African music and
popular music. Unfortunately, musicology has not always concerned itself with all musics mentioned above as adequately as it should have. It has long had a biased interpretation of the “wide range and heterogeneity” to mean wide scientific study of European art music. Put differently, such biased interpretation by musicology begets other notions of Western music/musicology, as that which arbitrarily conflates obvious geographic-historical discontinuities, while also excluding major musical practices, creating domains of otherness. Such conceptions create binary divisions between what may be seen as the empowered ‘Other’ and the disempowered ‘other’ in musicological circles (Qureshi 1999: 311).

Musicology’s establishment as an academic discipline was essentially positivistic\(^1\) in outlook. Its founder, Guido Adler\(^2\), as discussed in Mugglestone (1981), emphasized that an analogy exists between the methodology of the science of art and that of the natural sciences. He asserted that the actual focal point of all music-historical work should be the investigation of the laws of art of different periods, and so the historian of art must utilize the same methodology as that of the investigator of nature; that is, the inductive methodology by preference (Mugglestone 1981: 3). Other scholars such as Friedrich Chrysander\(^3\)

\(^1\) Positivism is the natural science approach to social science that arose in the 19\(^{th}\) century school of thought founded by the sociologist Auguste Comte (1798-1857). See Babbie and Mouton 2001:20.

\(^2\) Guido Adler, among others, founded the first journal of musicology, namely, the *Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft [Musical Quarterly]* in 1884. In its first edition, Guido Adler defined the scope, methods and aims of the new science, and these definitions were to become very influential in the establishment and development of musicology as an academic discipline (Mugglestone 1981: 1).

\(^3\) Friedrich Chrysander coined the term Musicology in the preface and introduction to the first of his *Jahrbücher für Musikalische Wissenschaft* (Wolf 1949:588).
and Johann Nicolaus Forkel\textsuperscript{1}, who may also be considered as ‘fathers of musicology’ in their own ways, limited the field to the study of art music. They emphasized the study of music as autonomous text (objective inner workings of music divorced from its context). Consequently, musicology’s scope, methodologies and aims failed to account for the subjectivity of meanings and feelings of people in relation to music. It crassly excluded the role of social context, values and ideologies in the conception, reception and production of music. It also ignored other important aspects such as those aligned to gender, music’s communicative ability and popular culture as important avenues of scholarship. Constraints imposed by the scope and aim of this chapter do not permit me to discuss comprehensively the extent to which musicology has sinned against itself. It is worth noting, however, that the recent postmodern turn in musicology has broadened the field of musicological enquiry considerably, opening it up to an engagement with music of all kinds as well as to a greater degree of interdisciplinary discourse. Publications on the musicological study of popular music have vastly increased since the last half of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, remarks on the unsatisfactory state of popular music studies within the discipline as a whole continue to dominate most introductory chapters in such publications. While some of the comments give musicology a pat on the back for, at least, not giving a complete cold shoulder to popular music studies, musicology remains guilty as charged for ignoring popular music as an equal resource to music scholarship, and for applying in popular music studies methodologies which were originally designed for art music analysis, without giving a thought to its unique nature. Middleton directs sharp allegations at musicology, citing that major works of musicology – theoretical or historical – act as though popular music did not exist. He adds that popular music

\textsuperscript{1} Johann Nicolaus Forkel, in his first publication, \textit{Über die Theorie der Musik, Insofern sie Liebhabern und Kennern Nothwendig und Nützlich ist} (1777), laid the foundations for a method of investigation that impacts on musicology to this day (Wolf 1949: 588).
[...] is explicitly condemned, as light, crass, banal, ephemeral, commercial or whatever; and sometimes it is patronized: all right in its way (for other people that is) but not worth serious attention. Occasionally it is admitted to academia but shuffled sideways: very important but really a matter for sociologists rather than musicologists. And now and then it is actually taken seriously but misunderstood, through the application of inappropriate criteria either negatively (Adorno) or positively (as when the Beatles are compared to Schubert [...]) (Middleton 1990: 103).

Philip Tagg also acknowledges the problem of popular music studies in musicology and attributes these hiccups to the incredibility attitudes common in any new field of study. He argues that popular music is:

[...] often confronted with an attitude of bemused suspicion implying that there is something weird about taking ‘fun’ seriously or finding ‘fun’ in ‘serious things’. Such attitudes are of considerable interest when discussing the aims and methods of popular music analysis [...] (Tagg in Middleton 2000:71).

Other scholars who have commented on the ‘bemused suspicion’ include Agawu (2003), Fink (1998) and McClary and Walser (1990). To make a long story short, Middleton summarizes the problems associated with popular musicology, as highlighted by various scholars, as follows:

(i) There is a tendency to use inappropriate or loaded terminology. Terms like ‘pandiatonic clusters’ applied to pop songs really do tend to position them alongside Stravinsky, even though it is not at all clear that anything comparable is going on there, while similarly a phrase such as ‘the primitively repetitive tune’, for example is weighed down with evaluative baggage.

(ii) There is skewed focus. Traditionally, musicology is good with pitch structures and harmony, much less good with rhythm, poor with timbre, and this hierarchy is arguably not congruent with that obtaining in most pop music.

(iii) ‘Notational centricity’ (as Philip Tagg calls it) tends to equate the music with a score. This leads to an overemphasis of features which can be notated easily (such as fixed pitches) at the expense of others which cannot (complex rhythmic detail, pitch nuance and sound qualities).
The most common aesthetic is one of abstractionism. Musical meaning is equated with an idealized image of the ‘work’, contextualized process turned into abstract product. This procedure is at its most extreme in formalist modes of analysis, which tend to reduce meaning to effects of structure, ignoring emotional and corporeal aspects.

Listening is monologic. What the analyst hears is assumed the correlate with ‘the music’, and the possibility of variable aural readings is ignored (Middleton 2000a: 4).

It goes without saying that the unique nature of popular music implies that the methodologies and analytical models of musicology – which were designed for art music analysis – cannot be one hundred percent applied to its analyses. The methodological standoff between the two scholarships has only revealed disunity within the field itself. However, Middleton asks us, as musicologists of popular music, not to be disheartened by the ‘fractured unity of the musical field’. The popular music scholar, he says:

[…] inescapably stand[s] in the midst of all this, drawn to the ‘cultivated’ side by his training, to the popular’ side by his subject-matter. Rather than pulling on one side with the traditional musicologists, or the other, with the ‘total critics’ of musicology, it will be better to look both ways, living out the tension. Given the ‘fractured unity’ of the musical field […] that is the way to a faithful reflection in one’s method of the reality of the practice and the discourse. Negatively, this avoids (potentially) capitulating to the myths and ideologies of either side; positively, standing in the margin, two sided as it is, it offers a golden opportunity to develop a critical musicology which could provide a vastly increased analytical power (Middleton 1990: 123).

Calling for a complete overhaul of musicological methodologies so as to suit popular music analysis would be both unwise and unfair, as would be the dismissal of all existing art-music analytical methodologies as ineffective. As pop musicologists, we must acknowledge that existing methodologies have actually yielded credible and highly relevant insights in analyzing art music. Instead, careful reformulation of musical scholarship and criticism to accommodate both...
art music and popular music is paramount. Such agendas could bring forth approaches broad enough so that scholars of mainstream musicology and scholars of popular music draw from a common pool of procedures, appreciating both similarities and differences in the music with which they are engaged and in the methods of analysis such music may require.

African musicology has remained largely under-developed and so has the emergence of African popular music studies. Agawu (2003) attributes such problems to what may be seen as colonial hangovers. Colonialism, as discussed in chapter two of this dissertation, brought Christianity and education systems aimed at producing civilized (to the standard of the white man), educated and ‘heavenly bound’ Africans. Neo-colonialism describes the effects of colonialism that have remained to be felt years after the colonial era. Agawu notes that such effects manifest themselves through the curriculum taught at most African schools, even after the independence of African states, one that has remained essentially that of Western education traditions. Africans who consider themselves as ‘the schooled’ and ‘the educated’ prefer taking their children to schools that do not teach African traditions, including African music. For many years institutions that attempted to teach African music not only suffered lack of trained personnel, but also saw the marginalization of some areas of study, such as popular music studies, to departments of sociology and anthropology (Agawu 2003: 120). Therefore, ambitious and competent music students who would have otherwise devoted their time in school developing models for the analysis of African music, had instead to:

Simply kiss it goodbye as they were put through the grueling and wicked tasks of trying to resolve diminished seventh chords (for reasons that could not be adequately explained by instructors), avoiding parallel fifths and octaves (when all traditional music around them gloried in parallelism), scoring keyboard minuets for small orchestra (when only a small number of them had any inkling of the sound ideal that they were ostensibly emulating), and memorizing dry facts
In this regard, Agawu advocates the strengthening of interdisciplinary links between postcolonial theory and musicology in order to “encourage self awareness and lay bare the situatedness and precariousness of various frames of knowledge construction, and ultimately to unmask the play of power that shapes music discourse in Africa” (Ibid: xvii).

Without overlooking the issues discussed above, the aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the current trends in popular music studies, to locate within them an appropriate method that can be applied to the analysis of African popular music. This can best be achieved by exploring and analyzing already existing approaches, picking from them and blending them to formulate an approach that will be useful in analyzing African popular songs and other forms of popular music too. Kerman (1985) refers to this as the critic’s need to employ an “eclectic” approach to theory, the particular eclecticism applied being determined by the critic’s own phenomenological encounter with the music, as well as by the many contexts and intertexts applicable to the music in question.

My discussion of the existing analytical approaches will be presented in two broad areas namely, Musicological and Extra-Musicological approaches.
2. MUSICOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO POPULAR MUSIC ANALYSIS

Since its inception\(^1\) mainstream musicology has tended to emphasize the study of music as *music*, that is, as autonomous discourse. It was long left to extra-musicological fields such as sociology, ethnography and cultural studies to concern themselves with studying music as a socio-cultural experience. In other words, while musicology mainly concerned itself with the musical text\(^2\), sociologists were principally troubled by the social, economic and political contexts of the music being studied. Covach adds that:

> While this distinction undoubtedly oversimplifies matters, it does capture a basic problem that exists between the fields of musicology and popular music studies: musicologists tend to ignore popular-music scholarship (after all, it is more concerned with sociological issues); and popular music scholars are only too glad that they do (after all, their methods of approaching music, mired as they are in the art-music tradition, can never really get at what is most important about popular music anyway) (Covach 1999: 455).

Previous reference was made to Middleton’s summary of the problem of popular music studies in relation to old-style musicology. Elsewhere, Middleton admits that the ‘ghosts’ of the effects of the three interlinked aspects of musicological problems, namely, terminology, methodology and ideology\(^3\), run so deep that

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\(^1\) The scope, methodologies and aims of musicology constituted by the early ‘fathers of musicology’ remain influential in musicological scholarship to the present day, regardless of the subsequent expansion of the musicological field. See Mugglestone 1981: 1-21.

\(^2\) Text in this sense refers to a written score.

\(^3\) The terminologies, methodologies and ideologies that constitute mainstream musicology and which popular music cannot wholly apply to its field are discussed in detail in Middleton 1990: 104-108.
they keep haunting works – often very useful works – of scholars sympathetic to, and knowledgeable about popular music as himself (Middleton 1990).

The inherent exceptionality of popular music from art music cannot be overemphasized. This is especially so due to the fact that, unlike art music, popular music is:

(1) conceived for mass distribution to large and often socioculturally heterogeneous groups of listeners, (2) stored and distributed in non-written form, (3) only possible in an industrial monetary economy where it becomes a commodity, and (4) in capitalist societies, [it is] subject to the laws of ‘free, enterprise, according to which it should ideally sell as much as possible of as little as possible to as many as possible (Tagg in Middleton 2000: 75).

The traditional tools of musicology cannot be totally applied to popular music studies any more than musicology can exclusively offer useful criteria to the study of popular music. Therefore pop musicologists are required

[...] not only to deconstruct the premises of their discipline and all theoretical tools they have inherited, but also to develop the tools they do need. On the one hand, the traditional obsession with pitch organisation as the essence of music has to be understood both as ideologically saturated and as extraordinarily limiting (even in classical music): concentration on pitch gives the impression of total rational control of the music, but only so long as one dismisses as irrelevant those elements that are not easily classified. [...] (McClary and Walser 1990 2811).

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2.1. **SCHENKERIAN ANALYSIS**

Schenkerian theory\(^1\) is based on the assumption that the basis of all functional-tonal music is the tonic triad. Schenker argues that all tonal music is basically the same in the background (*Ursatz*) and is only different in the manner in which it is composed-out in the musical surface or foreground. However, popular musicologists must look beyond the fact that Schenker is a pre-twentieth century product of German nationalism to acknowledge that his model can offer useful insights to the analysis of other music. Whereas some scholars of popular music have treated the Schenkerian analytical approach with suspicion and have accused it of potentially sabotaging important popular musical contexts (such as sociological and cultural contexts), scholars such as Richard Middleton, Arnold Whittall and Kofi Agawu see the matter somewhat differently. For these scholars the Schenkerian model of analysis has a lot more to offer to pop musicology, especially to pop music that is governed by functional tonal processes. At the same time, Whittall reminds us that Schenker’s commitment to the principles of autonomy\(^2\) was not the purely musical affair it may seem at first glance. Embedded or implicit in Schenker’s apparent adherence to principals of musical autonomy was in fact a great deal of social context.

Schenker’s interpretation of compositions as integrally hierarchic and organic (at least in the hands of the masters) can nevertheless be regarded not as ‘purely musical’ in the most literal sense, but as culturally determined by factors outside and beyond music itself. [...] he was committed to a far wider frame of reference than that provided by aesthetic and cultural elements – that of cosmos, no less. [...] it embraces a vision of the work of art as a counter to social fragmentation and confusion as much as religious disbelief and the inadequacies of a purely humanist philosophy. One may not like it, but it is hardly a ‘purely musical’ affair (Whittall 1999: 77).

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1 See Middleton 1990: 193. Schenkerian system analysis therefore has tendencies to linear analysis.

2 Autonomy here is the structural inner workings of music.
In terms of the aims of this study we may safely set aside the particular social context in which German theorists such as Schenker conceived the music of the ‘great masters’, since these have little or nothing to do with the popular music of today. However, this does not preclude our considering the value of the insights his theoretical approach continues to offer.

At the same time, there would be little point in attempting to present the analyses in this study as a pure exercise in Schenkerian theory. Schenker’s theory could not or should not be applied to popular music analysis to the exclusion of all other resources because popular music is not only about the internal workings of its text, but is a cultural hybrid of its (con)text too. Therefore, pop music analysis must go beyond an understanding of those inner workings of the piece, to the understanding of the piece as a product of multiple factors which includes the artist’s and the listener’s values and worldviews.

After considering the characteristics of what Schenker would call a “good piece”, Middleton writes that:

To Schenker all good pieces [are] elaborated through subsidiary harmonies and processes of voice-leading (the ‘middleground’ level of structure) and through various kinds of melodic detail and rhythmic articulation, resulting in the foreground (which we hear). Analysis therefore reverses this movement, reducing what we hear, by means of analytic notation, to increasingly abstract levels of structure. For to Schenker, grasping a piece has to do with the interplay between the details which make the piece unique and keep deep structure which it shares with many other pieces (and which, he believed, was grounded in innate characteristics of hearing, reflecting acoustic laws) (Middleton 1990: 193).

It is for this reason that he comes to the conclusion that there is no reason why Schenkerian analysis could not be applied to popular songs, especially those that are governed by functional-tonal processes. However, Middleton is also quick to note that Schenkerian ‘tonalism’ cannot be satisfactorily applied to much Afro-American and Rock music in which modal and pentatonic structures are
important and where tonal harmonic structures play a smaller role. He adds that as much as Schenker's approach may register something important about a song, it may distort or create tension to the whole structure (Ibid). For Whittall, on the other hand, the Schenkerian approach, when used critically, can be especially useful to express the interaction between formalist and hermeneutic initiatives (Whittall 1999: 82).

Agawu argues that Schenkerian analysis should not be excluded as a useful tool for the analysis of African music, although fully-fledged voice-leading graphs applicable to such music have yet to be developed. He asserts that African music, such as that among the Northern Ewe, can be conceptualized as having tonal embellishments put alongside, between, or flowing out of what may be seen as structural notes\(^1\) (Agawu 2003: 187). This notion is true to music from many African societies.

2.2. **STYLE ANALYSIS**

Guido Adler, who was one of the founders of the Musical Quarterly, advocated for a style orientated methodology in the analysis of art music. Adler’s view of the study of music was essentially positivistic in outlook and reflected much of the nineteenth century’s aesthetic concepts. His empirical style-critical method owes much to contemporary art historical writings. Even so, Adler’s systematic approach remains relevant to the study of any style of music – including the popular music of today – in a number of crucial respects. Adler asserts that analysis of form is the departure point to style critical analysis. In relation to this, he argues that:

> At the focal point are the specifically musical criteria – those of melody, tonality, harmony, polyphony, thematic material, and timbre. These are the antecedents of style-definition. From this focal point proceed the rhythmic and formal criteria.

\(^1\) This is also the *Ursatz* in Schenkerian terms.
Analysis of form, taking all these elements into considerations, is the point of departure in the style-critical process. With it is associated analysis of content, which enquires into the psychoanalysis side of music. By considering the reciprocation and correlation of the analyses of form and content we arrive at style-criticism of a higher order. If our procedure was at first analytic, it now becomes synthetic. Induction and deduction come alternatively into play (Adler 1934: 173-174).

Adler insisted that the above criteria must be taken into consideration when defining the limits of the style periods of a piece of work in respect to its time, place and its author.

Jan LaRue’s analytical scheme\(^1\) on style draws a lot from Adler’s insistence on historical definition of a piece of work before embarking on the analysis of musical text, after which must follow some reflection on the interaction of these. This is evident in the three-stage scheme comprising his ‘fundamental considerations’ for style analysis, namely, background, observation and evaluation. The background stage is diachronic in perspective and it requires that the historical context of the music being analysed be adequately established. He argues that:

\[
[...]\text{without some frame of historical reference, some ideas of the convectional procedures of similar pieces, we cannot make consistently relevant observations, for on the one hand, we might impute originality and importance to what may be a matter of common convention, or on the other hand, we may entirely overlook the skilful sophistication of an advanced technique, simply because we do not recognize its rarity in its own time (LaRue 1969: 449).}
\]

The bigger part of the background perspective of the Kenyan popular music being considered in this study has been dealt with in chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this dissertation. The observation phase requires exclusive devotion to the innate

\(^1\) See the full details of this scheme in LaRue (1969: 448-449) and also in LaRue (2001: 296-297).
musical qualities or the musical text being analysed. Consistent and relevant observation, according to LaRue, can only be possible if the proper frame of historical reference has been established. This phase is synchronic in perspective and further reference to it will be made in the following chapter. The evaluation phase of the scheme brings diachronic and synchronic perspectives together, and, as such, is contained in the case of this study in what I present at the conclusion of chapter of 6, as well as in chapter 7, the final chapter of this dissertation.

It is obvious that LaRue did not have African popular music in mind when he proposed this scheme. Nevertheless, the scheme is ‘universal’ enough in its broadest sense to incorporate a useful set of criteria that may be applicable in any given situation. Understanding the functions and interrelationships of the elements in the scheme allows an analyst to make meaningful interpretations, to identify the significant aspects of each piece in relation to its composer and the stylistic relation of each composer to his or her milieu (LaRue 2001: 296).

2.3. MULTIPARAMETER ANALYSIS

The multiparameter analysis model has at its best been illustrated by Philip Tagg. Tagg’s diagrammatic summary of this approach is reproduced here as figure 5.2. This kind of analysis is a holistic approach, which involves taking a multitude of factors into consideration. Tagg asserts that:

The most important parts of this analytical model are (1) a checklist of parameters of musical expression, (2) the establishment of musemes (minimal units of expression) and museme compounds by means of interobjective

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1 Philip Tagg has attempted to illustrate this model through the analysis of 1) the title-theme of the *Kojak* TV series (see Tagg, P. 1979. *Kojak – 50 seconds of television music*. Stenciled paper from Gothenburg University Musicology Department, no 8106, Gothenburg) and 2) in the analysis of Abba’s hit recording *Fernando* (see Tagg, P. 1981. *Fernando the Flute*. Stenciled paper from Gothenburg University Musicology Department, no 8106, Gothenburg).
comparison, (3) the establishment of figure/ground (melody/accompaniment) relationships, (4) the transformational analysis of melodic phrases, (5) the establishment of patterns of musical process and their relative congruence with eventful patterns of extra musical processes, and (6) the falsification of conclusions by means of hypothetical substitution (Tagg in Middleton 2000: 79-80).

Figure 5.2: Phillip Tagg's Methodological Paradigm for the Analysis of Affect in Popular Music.

One of the most important parts of Tagg’s analytical model is the checklist of parameters of musical expression. The checklist assists the analyst to ensure

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1 The diagram is extracted from an article by Tagg in Middleton (2000).
that all the important parameters of musical expression have been looked at and
to determine the processural structure of an analysis object (AO) (Ibid: 82). The
checklist includes:

1 *Aspects of time*: duration of AO and relation of this to any other simultaneous
forms of communication; duration of sections within the AO; pulse, tempo, metre,
periodicity; rhythmic texture and motifs.

2 *Melodic aspects*: register; pitch range; rhythmic motifs; tonal vocabulary;
contour; timbre.

3 *Orchestrational aspects*: type and number of voices, instruments, parts;
technical aspects of performance; timbre; phrasing; accentuation.

4 *Aspects of tonality and texture*: tonal centre and type of tonality (if
any); harmonic idiom; harmonic rhythm; type of harmonic change; chordal
alteration; relationships between voices, parts and instruments; compositional
texture and method.

5 *Dynamic aspects*: levels of sound strengths; accentuation; audibility of parts.

6 *Acoustical aspects*: characteristics of (re-)performance ‘venue’; degree of
reverberation; distance between sound source and listener; simultaneous
‘extraneous’ sound.

7 *Electromusical and mechanical aspects*: panning, filtering, compressing,
phasing, distortion, delay, mixing, etc.; muting pizzicato, tongue flutter, etc (see

This checklist may not be realistic to African popular music analysis if it is entirely
applied as it is, but it may be used as a guide to what aspects to look out for
when formulating a checklist for African pop analysis.

Important points to consider at the onset of an analytical process, says Tagg, are
(1) the identification of the analysis object (AO), (2) selection of an analytical
method and (3) the choice of which stage of the musical communication process
to study (Tagg in Middleton 2000: 80). The researcher’s methodological
consideration is greatly determined by the AO to be studied. At the same time,
the choice of a method is determined by the researcher’s mentality (which
includes his worldview, ideology, set of values, objective possibilities, etc.)
influenced in turn by the researcher’s and the discipline’s objective position in a
cultural, historical and social context. Tagg attributes his theoretical model to
various developments in the history of popular music in the nineteenth and
twentieth centuries, which he feels should inform all popular music discourse. He
lists these developments as:

(1) A vast increase in the share music takes in the money and time budgets of
citizens in the industrialised world; (2) shifts in class structure leading to the
advent of socioculturally definable groups, such as young people in student limbo
between childhood and adulthood, and their need for collective identity; (3)
technological advances leading to the development of new recording techniques
capable (for the first time) of accurately storing and allowing for mass distribution
of non-written music; (4) transistorization, micro-electronics and all that such
advances mean to the mass dissemination of music; (5) the development of new
musical functions in the audio-visual media (for example, films, TV and
advertising); (6) the ‘non-communication’ crisis in modern Western art music and
the stagnation of official music in historical moulds; (7) the development of a
loud, permanent, mechanical lo-fi soundscape and its reflection [… ] in electrified
music with regular pulse [… ]; (8) the general acceptance of certain Euro-and Afro-
American genres as constituting the lingua franca of musical expression in a
large number of contexts in industrialized society; (9) gradual, historical
replacement of intellectuals schooled solely in the art music tradition by those
exposed to the same tradition but at the same time brought up on Presley, the
Beatles and the Stones (Tagg in Middleton 2000: 73).

In popular music analysis, therefore, since it is easier to study the communicable
before understanding its peculiarities, the AO should firstly be that which is
conceived for and received by large, socioculturally heterogeneous groups of
listeners rather than that of the more exclusive, homogeneous groups. Secondly,
in order to avoid the musicological congeneric formalism and the difficulties
involved in the development of new types of extrageneric analysis, the AO’s clear
extramusical fields of association must be identified and singled out before the
actual analysis begins (Ibid: 80).
Another aspect of Tagg’s scheme worth mentioning is that of the interobjective comparison (IOC). This refers to the description of the AO in terms of its associations with other music, where relevant connections in style and function exist. He warns against the eternal temptation to use words to explain a nonverbal and non-denotative art like music. He writes that this temptation could be turned into an advantage if one discards the use of words as a metalanguage for music and instead replaces them with other music (Ibid). In other words, to echo Seeger’s words, music analysts must bear in mind that music is as different from language as it is like it, and treat it accordingly (Seeger 1924: 249). To escape this dilemma, Tagg emphasizes the importance of using interobjective comparison (IOC) to establish consistency of sound effects between two or more pieces of music. The analyst’s task is thus to search for comparable musical elements between works. These elements include particular musemes, motifs, and general sonorities. Correspondences between the AO and IOCM must be recognized and their relationship to extramusical forms of expression established. He writes that:

Such relationships can be established if pieces in the IOCM share any common denominators of extramusical association in the form of visual or verbal meaning. If they do then the objective correspondences established between the items of musical code in analysis object (AO/IMC) and those in (IOCM/IMC) and its extramusical fields of association (IOCM/EMFA) lead to the conclusion that there is a demonstrable state of correspondence between the items of musical code in the analysis object (AO/IMC) and the extramusical fields of association connected to the interobjective comparison material (IOCM/EMFA) – also of course between IOCM/IMC and AO/EMFA) (Tagg in Middleton 2000: 84).

Tagg also warns us of some obvious pitfalls with this method of determining musical meaning. He says that just as it would be difficult to locate two different morphemes that mean the same thing in two different languages, so would it be to locate two musemes, motifs or general sonorities in different IOCM. To

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1 The IOC process is thus nothing other than the provision of a diachronic context, explained previously by Adler and LaRue as style history.
overcome such difficulties, he suggests that the IOCM be restricted to musical
genres, functions and styles relevant to the AO (Ibid: 85).

Speaking of the counter-cultures and subcultures in developing, industrialized
societies such as Nairobi, Tagg notes that musical coding associated with such
subcultures is as yet under-developed. This has direct implications for the choice
of analytical model applicable to the popular music of the groups in question,
because biased outcomes and stereotyping can ensue in cases of unclear
musical coding (given the ‘developing’ nature of many hybrid, post-colonial
cultures). In addition to this, there is as yet no real theory that explains how the
prevailing attitudes, patterns of behaviour and ideologies of late capitalism are
encoded in the musical mainstream of popular music (Ibid: 99). Under such
circumstances, he believes, analytical models developed along the lines of his
model may or may not be of help in unmasking such problems, for which purpose
he provides the following further suggestions:

(1) Detailed genre definitions will need to be made [...]. (2) Acceptable style
criteria will need to be established on the basis the musical traits accepted
and rejected by musicians and listeners belonging to the subculture. (3) The
subcultural musical code will need to be considered as a potential carrier of
particular socialized relationships between members of the musical
subculture and the musical mainstream (this presumably reflecting
comparable extramusical relationship) rather as a carrier of quasi-
universalised attitudes and relationships towards an apparently wider and
vaguer set of general, individualized experience [...]. Such considerations
seem to imply that the model presented [by Tagg] will require some
alterations before being applied to the analysis of subcultural popular musics
(Tagg in Middleton 2000: 99-100).
2.4. PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

One of the consequences of modernist musicology’s concern with music in notated form, rather than with music in sounding form, was the relegation of musical performance to the peripheries of scholarship. Inspired by the philological advances in historical musicology, for a large part of the 20th century the only redemption for the status of performance practice studies lay in its revival of historically authentic medieval, renaissance and baroque performance traditions. However, the more recent postmodern turn in musicology has signaled a renewed emphasis on the importance of studying music in and as performance, rather than merely studying the notes on the page. Along with this has come a new understanding of the fact that the musical text is never fixed or closed. Even in the most meticulously notated music, there are always elements of its realization that are open to the interpretation of the performer. Music is thus ever contingent upon its new contexts, its new performers and its new audiences. In the broadest sense, even the analyst’s reading of a musical score may be understood as a particular kind of ‘performance’. In this regard postmodern thinking in the humanities in general, including musicology, has been largely influenced by the thinking of the literary critic, Roland Barthes.

Roland Barthes views literary text (which we may apply equally to music) as a multidimensional space in which a variety of meanings and writings blend and clash, none of which are original. In other words he perceives text as performative, one “without a father-author”, as everywhere and yet nowhere fully present. Each new performance or reading of that text imparts to it new contexts and intertexts, hence new meaning. For this reason Barthes coined the phrase, the “death of the author”. He asserts that:

Once the author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing...[instead] writing ceaselessly posits meaning, ceaselessly to evaporate it, carrying out a systematic exemption of meaning. [...]
by refusing to assign a “secret,” an ultimate meaning, to the text, liberates what may be called an anti-theological activity. [The text] traces a field without origin – or which at least, has no other origin [...] (Barthes in Harari 1979: 71-792).

Richard Taruskin (renowned historical musicologist, composer and performer) is one of the strongest advocates of a postmodern understanding of 'music as process', rather than music as a museum of fixed (notated) and closed texts. For Taruskin, therefore, true authenticity in music lies in our embracing the ever-changing contingencies of music as process, rather than pursuing futile attempts to reconstruct the past with any degree of historical accuracy.

Like all other modernistic philosophies, historical reconstructionism views the work of art, including performing art, as an autonomous object, not as a process [...] it views the internal relationships of the art work as synonymous with its content, and in the case of music it renounces all distinction between sound and substance. To realize the sound is in fact to realize the substance [...]. The aim of historical reconstruction is [...] “not turning loose of emotions, but an escape from emotion; not the expression of personality but an escape from personality”, the emotions and the personality escaped from being, of course, those of the performer as he is at the moment The artist trades in objective [and] factual knowledge, not subjective feeling. His aim is not communication with his audience, but [...] communion with Art itself, with its history, and with [...] musicology’s aid in achieving it (Taruskin 1982: 346).

In the case of popular music, the understanding of “music as process”, unfolding in and through performance, is paramount. This is because popular musics rarely exist in any other form. Very few are ever notated, and certainly none of the songs which are the subject of this study. The very process of composition itself is one where the song gradually emerges from a performative and very often also a collaborative process of “jamming”. Definitive “texts” in the case of most popular songs are precisely their performances. In live performances these “texts” take on a life of their own, often changing markedly from one performance to the next. Such changes may be put down to a number of factors, including
audience interaction. Of course most songs are fixed to some extent in the form of audio recordings, but even then one may find that such texts evolve: in cases where artists have made more than one recording of the same song it is often very noticeable how such recordings differ, how artists change lyrics or introduce new improvisations, how new technologies change the sound quality or timbre of the songs, etc. A case in point is Princess Jully’s *Dunia Mbaya*, to be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. More than two versions of this song exist, wherein a number of differences are apparent. These include differences in the improvised embellishments to the basic musical material as well as substantial changes to the lyrics in order to engage more effectively with the audience for which that particular performance was intended.

3. **EXTRA-MUSICOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO POPULAR MUSIC ANALYSIS**

3.1. **SOCIOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

Popular music has received considerable attention from scholars outside the field of musicology. In fact, musicologists such as Middleton admit that large portions of popular music academic writing have actually occurred outside of musicology itself. Such fields include sociology, psychology, philosophy and cultural studies. Whereas traditionally musicology has focused on art music and has emphasized analysis of the notated musical text, the primary concerns of the extra-musicological fields have been the relationship between music and society; investigating the effect that music has on listeners and its significance as a manifestation of different cultures and subcultures (Covach 1999: 455).
Musicologists bent on establishing reliable analytical strategies for popular music are not likely to find all their answers in this line of scholarship, however, due to the fact that social and cultural critics do not have the musical tools necessary to deal with pop music the way that musicology does. However, it is paramount that pop musicology continue to consider the insights that emanate from these fields, because so much of what we understand as pop music’s context lies outside of the musical sounds themselves. There are many extra-musical areas of study that could and should be considered in this section for the insights they bring to popular music studies, but due to the constraints of this overview, only a select few will be mentioned here, namely ethnomusicology, subculture analysis, semiotics and gender studies.

3.1.1. Ethnomusicological Approaches

Ethnomusicology refers to the study of music in culture. It entails relating musical sounds within the context of broader human practices. Unlike musicology, ethnomusicology has always concerned itself with investigating the importance of performance, cultural location and the social function of music. The traditional divide between musicology and ethnomusicology is political in nature and may once again be traced to the German ‘fathers of musicology’ – Adler in particular – who saw the autonomy of occidental music as a cultural and universal given, in no need of further explanation. In comparison, the music of the rest of the world was ‘other’, in need of cultural explanation.

Today, of course, musicology has seen the error of its ways and to a large extent this division no longer exists. Musicology embraces ethnographic methodologies as much as it concerns itself with the broadest possible range of world musics. The reader may therefore wonder why I have chosen to position a discussion of ethnomusicology under the heading of extra-musicological approaches.
Timo Leisiö observes that the two fields share the same logical rules underlying what we call scientific practice and that both have music as their main interest. But the fact of this difference still remains, located in the values which determine what researchers under each field choose to pursue (Leisiö 1994: 413). It is because of the difference in value systems that musicology continues to concern itself primarily with art music, while ethnomusicology continues to concern itself primarily with music from other musical traditions (other than art music), such as oriental music or African music. That is why it is more appropriate to discuss the contribution of ethnomusicology under the umbrella of the extra-musicological approaches than any other place in this chapter.

Some may argue that ethnomusicology has little to offer pop musicology, since its primary concern has always been with non-Western music and folk music. However, Richard Middleton believes, and I agree, that there are a number of ethnomusicology’s theoretical premises – for instance, on aspects of performance and concepts of change – that could be profitably applied in popular music studies (1990: 146-147). In addition, since ethnomusicology as a field has concerned itself with establishing a number of discourses in the field of African music studies, it is naturally one likely to yield more appropriate insights in the case of a study such as this.

3.1.2. **Subculture Analysis**

As much as the scholar of pop music cannot afford to ignore social setting and cultural context, so this study cannot purport to offer a study of Kenyan popular music whilst ignoring the social dimensions of a hybrid urban setting such as Nairobi, particularly the hybrid of cultures of the youth as discussed in chapter four of this dissertation. Sociologists, culturalists and anthropologists define subculture as a group of people with a set of practices that distinguishes them from the larger culture to which they belong. These typically include teenage,
youth, working class, and hip-hop subcultures. Subcultures are made unique by factors such as age, ethnicity, race or gender.

Hall and Whannel in Frith and Goodwin (1990) argue that a subculture comes about as a reaction to a society in transition. When speaking about the teenage subculture, they argue that:

> Teenage culture is, in part, an authentic response to [a society in transition, one that is throwing out a number of confusing signals to the teens. It is] an area of common symbols and meanings, shared in part or in whole by a generation, in which they can work out or work through […] the natural tensions of adolescence in our kind of society (Hall and Whannel in Frith and Goodwin 1990: 27).

Manifestations of such reactions are usually found in distinctive and symbolic choices. These choices are tangible – which may include dress styles, hairstyles and footwear – and intangible elements such as dialects, language slangs, music genres and gathering places (Hebdige 1979). Distinctive forms of teenage entertainment, like songs, teenage films, and comics, become very common among teens as they mirror the experiences, attitudes and sentiments affecting them. These also become an expressive field and set of symbols through which their attitudes and responses are projected (Hall and Whannel in Frith and Goodwin 1990: 27). In the case of Nairobi, for example, sagging jeans worn on big shoes and **bling-bling** are common to those who identify with the Kapuka or the **Genge** hip-hop subcultures. **Sheng**, previously described as the **lingua franca** of the young people of the city, has manifest itself differently in different parts of Nairobi and can be said to be a distinctive way in which different subcultures situated in different parts of the city choose to identify themselves. The multiplicity of tribes living in Nairobi has also stimulated the evolution of subcultures that may be distinguished on the basis of their ethnic background.

The University of Birmingham’s Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (now the Department of Cultural Studies), together with Dick Hebdige, identifies four
key facets of subcultural analysis or subcultural identity: (1) a response to the breakup of a traditional “parent” culture, (2) the analysis of style as *bricolage*, (3) the notion that subcultures present imaginary solutions to real problems, and (4) the use of signs and icons as “semiotic guerrilla warfare” (Hebdige 1990: 40). Frith and Goodwin also admit that, though subcultural analysis concerns itself less with the study of sound than it does with the analysis of style, understanding the history and function of a subculture’s pop and its interaction with style may make a significant contribution to popular musicology. In relation to this, they argue that:

> While subcultural analysis has not always said a great deal about the music of subcultural groups, this kind of analysis remains a key element in understanding pop and rock for two reasons. It is important first because it represents the first attempts to offer analysis of meanings embodied in pop music consumption. Subcultural analysis provides an alternative to quantitative methods of audience research, stressing its active role in constructing its own meaning from the field of pop. Secondly, this work remains important because pop is a visual medium every bit as much as it is an aural one; and the subcultural analysis of style is therefore central to any engagement with pop and its iconography (Frith and Goodwin 1990: 40).

However Middleton warns that focusing on pop primarily as a response to the needs of the youth and adolescents risks neglecting the material context within which such response could have meaning; that is, a context constituted by specific and variegated relationships to work, schools, leisure practices, family, community, etc. (1990: 156). He also reminds us that youth subcultures always exist within ‘parent’ cultures, where they invariably share some ‘characteristic’ experiences, problems and cultural traditions, while at the same time maintaining their distinctive ‘focal concern’ (values, material artifacts, territorial locations) (Ibid). Therefore, an analyst must strive to understand both the homology and the *bricolage* objects used in a subculture. This theoretical framework can be seen as a way, on the one hand, of “holding together a sense of the coherence of
subcultures” and, on the other hand, of bringing “awareness of the collage-like quality of their styles” (Middleton 1990: 157).

Paul Willis¹, a member of the Birmingham School, identifies three levels through which the relationship between a pop song, experiences and symbols of a subcultural group can be analyzed. They include the indexical, the homological and the integral levels. He writes that:

The **indexical level** is that [level which is] governed by quantifiable aspects: for example, which music people listen to, where, when and so on. Analysis on this level can tell us nothing about the *significance* of the listening activity; indeed, the details may, from the point of view of the listeners, be arbitrary – made up simply on what surrounds us. Nevertheless, Willis regards the ‘indexical field’ as important. It is where the ‘tyranny of the commodity form’, the ‘slow drip of convectional daily habit, supported by institutions, state of agencies and the systematic practices of others’ produce ‘one way determination of meaning’. [...] He regards it as a ‘realm of ideology’, and contrasts with it a different practice [...] in which ‘the collective activity of human groups can roll back somewhat the one-way determination of their own meaning and sensibilities’. The practice [...] operates at the **homological level**. Here we find particular types of music, ‘differentially sought out and pursued by, than rather than simply randomly proximate to, a social group’. These types can be made “to reflect, resonate and sum up crucial values, states and attitudes for the social group involved” [...] though this process is somewhat limited by the ‘objective possibilities’ inherent in the internal structure of the form and in historical influences. Particular interpretations depend on objective ‘resonance’, for potential meanings are only activated when ‘rubbed against the real life experience of a particular group’. Homological analysis is synchronic. But the relationship between group life style and cultural item comes into being, develops and (usually) ends up on a diachronic level [known as] the **integral level** (Willis in Middleton 1990: 159-160).

¹ Quoted in Middleton (1990) from; Willis, P n.d, Symbolism and practice: a theory for the social meaning of pop music, University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies: Stenciled Paper (SP) 13. Note that the abbreviations *n.d* as used in this footnote refers to not dated.
Willis’s levels of analysis solve some of the problems associated with analyzing popular music, while creating other problems as well. Middleton points out that Willis’s ‘homological level does not even show how the initial homology comes into being in the first place’ (1990: 160). His method ‘militates against understanding the wider spread of subcultural styles’ as he restricts his methodology to the subcultural explanation only. He fails to recognize the fact that as much as ‘style is politically important in showing the possibility of a revolutionary in the small, detailed and everyday’, these styles are never pure, never static and never just subcultural in complex and differentiated societies (Ibid: 164). Therefore, Middleton advocates that a semiological analysis would make a big difference in such endeavors.

In an attempt to commit to the idea of homology, Dick Hebdige’s\(^1\) writings and analysis of the Mod’s lifestyle and music takes a post-structural stance as he also displays a lot of semiological influence in the interpretation of these works. According to Middleton, ‘Hebdige comes to see subcultural styles less as expressing a group’s material position in society than as intervening in existing processes of signification’ (1990: 164).

Hebdige insists on the expressive circularity between music and subculture. He writes that as music and subcultures

\[\ldots\] assume rigid and identifiable patterns, so new subcultures are created which demand and produce corresponding mutations in musical form. These mutations in their turn occur at those moments when forms and themes imported from [traditional ethnic music styles or European music styles] break up (or ‘over determine’) the existing musical structure and force its elements into new configurations (Hebdige in Middleton 1990: 165).

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To accommodate the extent of semiotic play in musical discourse, Hebdige seeks refuge in post-structural theory and embraces the idea of polysemy. In this regard, Middleton writes that

The idea of polysemy means ‘each text is seen to generate a potentially infinite range of meanings […] making any homology, out of the most heterogeneous materials, possible. The idea of signifying practice – text not as communicating or expressing a pre-existing meaning but as ‘positioning subjects’ within a process of semiosis – changes the whole basis of creating social meaning. ‘Experience’ is constructed in the text, in ideology (so the problem of the link between ‘text’ and ‘experience’ disappears). Different subcultural strategies are identified, using different kinds of signifying practice (Middleton 1990: 165).

All in all, subculture theory may say relatively little about music as music. This is partly because the theory is grounded on cultural norms that may not give much guidance towards such endeavors. However, on these grounds, this theory is useful in the extent to which it succeeds in showing how musical functions and meanings are culturally mediated. Therefore, the onus is on musicology to brace itself to fill in the missing links and talk about ‘music as music’ in subculture.

3.2. SEMIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Though music is different from language in many ways, the analogy between the two is undeniable. Middleton notes that:

At the level of popular assumption, the belief that music produces sense, or conveys meanings, is unquestioned. And it slips very easily to the idea that there are analogies between music and language (Middleton 1990: 172).

The isomorphism that exists between linguistics and music is rooted in their respective communicative abilities. Scholars such as Middleton (1990) and Dunbar-Hall (1991) bemoan the fact that the science of music semiology has
thus far paid so little attention to popular music. Semiotics provides a number of mechanisms that may be useful in addressing the challenges of popular music analysis. Dunbar-Hall notes that:

Semiotics, because of its historical development in two broad levels similar to etic and emic levels, offers a solution to these problems [lack of semiological depth and suitable analytical methods for popular music in musicology] (Dunbar-Hall 1991: 127).

He identifies two broad semiotic styles\(^1\) of analysis which are related to coding and which are relevant to musical semiotics:

1. Analytical semiotics […] attempts to discover the innate musical workings of a piece of music, thus to arrive at a statement of the meaning of a piece of music as music. This is attempted through structuralist processes of segmentation of material, tabulation and interpretation of data. This process occurs at what is called the ‘neutral level’, one of the three levels at which, […], a work is seen to exist, one which is divorced from the composer’s intent (poietic level) and that of the works reception (aesthetic levels)[…].

2. Interpretative semiotics focuses on linking musical events to extra-musical concepts. […] in it the components of the model central to the presence of basic semiosis, the signifier and the signified, are equated with a musical event and what it represents, and music is seen as a system symbolic of something else. This is a referentialist view of music (Dunbar-Hall 1991: 128-129).

Analytical semiotics finds common ground with many other structuralist approaches to musical text, while interpretative semiotics advocates for a post-structuralist approach with a focus on meaning and context. Dunbar-Hall

\(^1\) These styles are also referred to as structural and topical signs respectively by Agawu (1991: 23). Agawu also adapts Roman Jakobson’s terminologies to refer to the same styles. They are the introversive and the extroversive signs respectively. (cf) Jakobson, R. 1971. ‘Language in Relation to Other Communication’. Selected Writings 2. The Hague: Mouton.
maintains that the former can be used to define the semiotic code that works for popular music. He argues that since the style is not based on the hierarchised traditional analysis, it offers bases for analysis that can be adapted to the prominent features of any pop song. These features include repetition, timbre and rhythm, to mention but a few.

For musical communication to occur in any context, transmission of short and longer sets of codes must occur. Umberto Eco\(^1\) defines a code as the link between the signifier and the signified – expression plane to content plane – that which imparts meaning. Middleton maintains that for codes to be perceived and conceived by a listener, issues of competence and pertinence are also crucial. He defines competence as the listener’s ability to decode the already coded music, and pertinence as the level of encoding used by the artist in a given musical piece. Hence, since listeners respond and use codes differently, it would be imperative for the analyst(s) to explore the constitution of meaning of the music as understood by the listener in order to gain insight into the polysemy of the musical moment. It is also crucial for the analyst to know that codes vary in type and strength. While some codes may be familiar and predictable, others may be ambiguous and unpredictable, especially if they are weak or newly invented. Some strict musical codes include pitch, chord structure, rhythm and timbre. Other less strict and definable codes emanate from general schemes, governing movement, gesture, rhetoric and affect (Middleton 1990: 173).

Middleton identifies nine levels of code specifically applicable to popular music. They are:

- **langue**: a general western music code, governing the territory, roughly speaking, of functional tonality (starting, that is, about the sixteenth century and still largely current today);
- **norms**: e.g. the mainstream conventions c. 1750-c.1900, or those governing the post-1900 period within these
- **sub-norms**: Victorian, jazz age, 1960s etc.; and

dialects: e.g. European, Euro-American; Afro-American; within these
styles: music hall, Tin Pan Alley, country, rock, punk, etc.; and
genres: ballad, dance-song, single, album, etc.: within many of these
sub-codes: e.g. within rock, rock ‘n’ roll, beat, rhythm and blues, progressive,
etc.; and
idiolects: associated with particular composers and performers; within these
works and performance (Middleton 1990: 174).

From the explanations he gives for each code level, it is clear that Middleton had Western pop music in mind when he formulated these. The idea of the levels is nevertheless universal enough to warrant consideration in the context of any kind of music. In the case of Kenyan pop music, for example, these levels might include:

- **Langue**: African popular music as a code characterized by its diversity, which may include Western musical influences since the time of colonization;
- **Norms**: e.g. any of the conventions governing the Kenyan music industry since 1945 till today, including inter-, intra- or extra-conventions;
- **Sub-norms**: Traditional Ethnic, Rumba, Zairean Soukous, Lingala, etc;
- **Dialects**: European dialects, Ethnic dialects, African dialects, etc;
- **Styles**: Hi-hop, Lingala, Cavacha, Soukous, Benga, Rumba, etc;
- **Sub-codes**: Variants of the above styles;
- **Ideolects**: Associated with individual composers, performers and listeners.

Gino Stefani¹ suggests a musical code hierarchy (See figure 5.3). The hierarchy entails both intra- and extra-musical levels. He designates² the intramusical levels as *Musical Techniques* (MT), *Styles* (St), *Opus* (OP) and everything subsumed in the above. These are grounded on *Social Practices* (SP). Below them is the *General Codes* (GC). The SP level comprises codes concerned with

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² The levels and the abbreviations assigned to each level are Stefani’s own.
the relationship between social practices in a culture, including those of musical life, and is open to all the members of the social group concerned. The MT is open to those who conform to the Western musicological mother tongue while the GC covers all basic categorization schemas, applying to music and other modes of symbolization: sensorial-perceptual schemas, logical schemas, and formal and textual schemas. Middleton draws a comparison between the GC and the SP in Gino's model, and the text-orientated and grammar-orientated styles suggested by Eco. In both instances, he says, there is a shared area of competence and both offer room for competence improvement (Middleton 1990: 175).

Figure 5.3: Gino Stefani's Model\(^1\) of the Musical Code Hierarchy

\(^1\) Extracted from Middleton 1990: 176.
Gino’s model can be applied both to decoding and encoding. According to Middleton, maximum effects occur when music coded on all levels is interpreted with full competence, while minimal effects are attained if interpretation is carried out on individual levels; for instance, the interpretation of a GC coding on a GC level. Gino also points out two levels of competence on which their usage often centers on specific levels of coding or specific relationships between levels. They include high competence – which is OP orientated and treats music as a highly independent practice – and popular competence – which appropriates music in a more global, heteronomous manner, focusing on the GC and the SP levels. Again this seems to suggest the text-context duality. According to Middleton, the two types of competence operate through ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approaches respectively throughout Eco’s model.

Eco, Middleton and Gino acknowledge that competence levels in popular music reception vary considerably. In this regard, Middleton writes that:

> For the popular music analyst, the variability of competence implies that the problem of pertinence be fully taken into account. This affects not only the process of segmentation – deciding which division of a piece into syntagmatic units is meaningful – but also the choice of analytic level, from the auditory surface down to the deeper structures underlying this. The argument here will be that an open-minded synthesis of the available methods is necessary (Middleton 1990: 176).

### 3.3. FEMINISM, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

Much scholarly work on feminism, gender and sexuality has occurred outside musicology, but in recent times gender studies in musicology have become increasingly prevalent. Although approaches in this field are many and varied,
they share a common agenda, namely, to contest patriarchy as a discourse of power – a discourse which is roughly equatable with Lyotard’s\(^1\) great modernist metanarrative.

Scholars such as Susan McClary continue to shed light on the state of feminism in musicology. The introductory words of her essay entitled “Of patriarchs … and matriarchs, too” (McClary 1994), metaphorically mirror the state of feminism in musicology, reflecting the challenges overcome by feminist musicology and the new places that women now increasingly occupy in the annals of music’s histories.

Other scholars such Angela McRobbie have gone ahead to challenge scholars such as Willis (1990)\(^2\) and Hebdige (1990) for devoting much of their time to exploring the construction and articulation of masculinity in youth subcultures, whereas few scholars have attempted to express the ‘girl’s’ side of story and her possible role in such subcultures (McRobbie 1990).

Gender discourse in music has looked both at music as a gendered product and at how musicology has participated in sustaining gendered perspectives. It has also concerned itself with a reading of musical texts as gendered discourse, investigating, for example, how gender perceptions within a society are represented in different musical genres – for instance the cultural representation of woman and man in the plot of an opera, in the lyrics of a song, and in the music itself. Other concerns include investigating how musical codes and structures participate in the production of gender representations and also how they predispose listeners to certain points of view. Scholars such as Nicola Dibben (1999) have sought to understand how gendered subjectivity is constructed through the particular representational system of music.


\(^2\) The article by Paul Willis is published in Frith and Goodwin (1990). The date 1978 appears below the title of the article.
Musicology has also involved itself with debates about the relevance of the sexual orientation of composers and performers in musical analysis. These debates largely center on the contentious book by Philip Brett and others, entitled *Queering the Pitch*. Some other scholars such as McClary (1991) have analyzed the visual appearances of women in music videos and in live performances, while others such as Frith and McRobbie (1990) have looked at the extent to which women demonstrate an authorial role through song writing or through the demonstration of technical mastery in performance or production.

Susan McClary acknowledges that women do enjoy a relatively higher profile in popular music and jazz studies than in classical music studies, but she feels that these women have not received the attention they deserve (McClary 1993: 404). She claims that such endeavors only use women as evidence of some important periods in the development of such genres. She also argues that sociologists who have bothered to consider popular music made by women have paid more attention to the commercial aspects of pop culture production than to the music *per se*, while others studies have pointed to the victimization of women within the pop music industry (Ibid). McClary urges musicology to desist from viewing popular music as a commodity, in the way that sociologists have done. In relation to this, she argues that popular music:

> [...] *isn’t just* a commodity but is also a public medium that helps shape our notions of self, feelings, gender, desire, pleasure, the body and much more. Thus instead of focusing exclusively on the exploitative dimensions of the industry, we also discuss what is being articulated through the performative and musical aspects of the enterprise (McClary 1993: 404).

The line of study suggested by McClary above calls for more than one way of analyzing music, and therefore the final section of this chapter will consider the

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manner in which it is possible to draw from a variety of theoretical approaches in order to develop the broadest possible basis for musical analysis, and, consequently, to select from this broad basis that which is deemed appropriate to both the textual and contextual dimensions of the music in question.

4. AN “ECLECTIC” SEMIOTIC APPROACH TO AFRICAN POPULAR MUSIC ANALYSIS

The main objective of the chapter has been to provide an overview, both within and outside of musicology, of existing trends in popular music studies, and to try and locate within them an appropriate approach for the analysis of African popular music, particularly in the case of the songs that will be discussed in this study and the attempts that will be made to expose their contribution to the awareness and prevention of HIV/Aids in Kenya.

The choice of analytical methodology is not an easy one. As Kofi Agawu notes:

[...] analysis remains a contested discipline. Within European musicology, for example, analysts are routinely attacked for their myopia, not attending sufficiently to context, employing anachronistic methods, and imposing “universalizing discourses” on heterogeneous musical objects and processes. These matters are equally pertinent to African musicology. But there are others as well. How does one define the object of analysis when there is no score, no written trace for traditional and (most) popular music? What constitutes an appropriate metalanguage? Does a coherent theory emanate from among the people themselves, and if so, should it be given priority over metropolitan theory? (Agawu 2003: 173).

After duly considering a multiplicity of possible approaches, it is Agawu’s contention that there is no wrong way or right way to analyse African music. He states:
How not to analyze African music? There is obviously no way not to analyze African music. Any and all ways are acceptable. An analysis that lacks value does not yet exist, which is not to deny that, depending on the reasons for a particular adjudication, some approaches may prove more or less useful (Ibid: 196).

In the case of the four songs to be considered in the forthcoming chapter, I would be ill advised to restrict myself exclusively to any one of the approaches discussed here, for the following reasons.

- None of these approaches directly prescribe the means to the ultimate aim of this dissertation, namely, to expose the communicative capabilities of popular music that will enable me to make judgments as to whether the music in question contributes in any way to sensitizing the young people of Nairobi about HIV/Aids.
- These approaches were formulated by scholars who did not have the uniqueness of African popular music in mind when they did so, and so none can claim to be one hundred percent suited to the required analyses.
- There are no substantial musicological works that serve as precedent for this dissertation in all respects. To the best of my knowledge no previous analytical study has set out to ascertain whether popular music – such as the music found, composed and consumed in Nairobi and for Nairobi – can be said to have made a contribution to the social concerns surrounding HIV/Aids.

Bearing these limitations in mind, and also bearing in mind the ‘danger of imposing “universalizing discourses” on heterogeneous musical objects’ (Agawu 2003: 173), I choose to celebrate the multiplicity of the existing trends in pop music analysis, to embrace what Kerman refers to as an ‘eclectic’ approach to the use of theory in music criticism (Kerman 1985: 143). Taking an eclectic route

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1 Scholarly works with such agendas may exist in other fields of study, but the musicological works are hardly there.
in the analysis of the music in question entails that I not proceed to analyse with an *a priori* commitment to the existing trends but instead eclectically pick and blend from them to formulate my own approach towards the desired end, and that the basis for my eclecticism derive from my own phenomenological encounter with these works. Kofi Agawu’s (1991) model for the semiotic reading of musical texts – one based on a “semantic” rather than a “syntactic” approach to semiotics - provides the basis upon which this eclecticism can take place.

Agawu’s brand of semiotics provides a basis upon which one may begin to solve the problem of meaning by showing, not so much what musical signs mean, but rather how those signs become meaningful; that is, how they communicate Agawu (1991: 5). Drawing from this argument, it will be true to say that if we understand how signs become meaningful and how they eventually communicate meaning, we may be able to explain or make just judgments regarding the social relevance of popular music. In other words, we may transcend hermeneutics¹ (mere understanding for explanatory purposes) to actually exemplify the emancipatory or transformative force of music in a society.

Agawu warns that the signs embodied in a piece of music interact in a complex way within and outside of themselves. In this regard, subjectivity is unavoidable. However such subjectivity can yield untold possible meanings and lead to a form of relativity where nothing can ever be certain. This is what Tagg in Middleton (2000: 77) refers to as “exegetic guess work and intuitive acrobatic reading between lines”. However, Agawu seems well aware of such problems and he advises that:

> [...] in the face of the multiplicity of potential meanings of a single work, [it seems more useful] to frame the analytical question in terms of the dimensions that

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¹ The term hermeneutics denotes an anti-positivist approach to social science that is subjective in approach, as it focuses on understanding and explaining how people create and make meaning of their social actions. See Babbie & Mouton 2001: 30.
make meanings possible; only then can we hope to reduce away the fanciful 
meaning that are likely to crop up in an unbridled discussion of the phenomenon, 
and to approach the preferred meanings dictated by both historical and 
thetical limitations (Agawu 1991: 5).

One thing that is outstanding in the various approaches highlighted in this 
chapter is their insistence on considering both the textual and the contextual 
parameters of the music being analyzed. Herein we find not only their common 
denominator but also the grounds for their potential alliance with Agawu, since 
Agawu proposes that meaning be sought and grounded in both the diachronic 
(historical/contextual) and the synchronic (theoretical/textual) dimensions. The 
historical dimensions to be considered here require a diachronic perspective of 
the (con) text of the selected compositions which, to a great extent, has been 
discussed in the second, third and fourth chapters of this dissertation. The 
sychronic dimensions – which include lyrics, rhythm, aspects of melody and 
harmony, and timbre – will be dealt with in the forthcoming chapter. The link 
between the diachronic and synchronic dimensions of meaning is established 
through considering their interaction as signs, namely, as topical and structural 
signs respectively (Ibid: 23). The topical signs, also referred to as an 
interpretative style of semiotics by Dunbar-Hall, represent a referential link of the 
text with the outside world and are dependent upon listeners’ competence. 
Agawu’s structural signs may be equated with Dunbar-Hall’s analytical semiotics, 
and these attempt to discover the innate workings of a piece of music. According 
to Dunbar-Hall, these signs look at music at a neutral level – as divorced from the 
composer’s intent and the aesthetic levels that emerge from its reception 
(Dunbar-Hall 1991: 129). Consideration of structural signs requires a synchronic 
approach to the musical text while the topical signs call for a more diachronic 
approach. Proceeding from the broad parameters outlined above, therefore, the

1 Roman Jakobson makes a similar distinction between introversive semiosis and extroversive 
semiosis respectively (See Jakobson in Agawu 2001: 23). Umberto Eco distinguishes text-
orientated and grammar-orientated styles, which also concur with Agawu’s structural signs and 
topical signs respectively (See Eco in Middleton 1990: 173).
next chapter sets out to consider more closely both textual and contextual features of the selected works.
CHAPTER SIX

READINGKENYANPOPULARMUSIC:UNPOPULAR
MESSAGEINAPOPULARSONG

1. INTRODUCTION

World wide, popular music has often been criticised for having a bad influence on young people. These criticisms mainly surround the lyrics of the songs, the dancing styles and fashion trends associated with them, which are seen as

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The picture on the introductory page to this chapter features the hip hop duo Gidi Gidi Maji Maji (a.k.a Joseph Oyoo and Julius Owino respectively). The duo’s most popular songs include the song *Unbwogable*, which was adapted as an anthem during the President Mwai Kibaki’s election campaign in 2002. The words written on the photograph read *Gidi na Maji wana yao. Je, una yako?* (Gidi and Maji have theirs. Do you have yours?). The duo is promoting the Trust condom which they are holding in their hands. The photo has been taken from East African Standard Pulse, July 30, 2004.
dissident and subversive to the established order. Finke discusses the music of Elvis Presley as a typical example of such perceived dissidence and subversion in post-World War II Western society (Finke 1998: 16). Mwaniki (2004) highlights some artists from Kenya whose songs have been blacklisted by the public and the media because of their perceived bad influence on the youth. These include songs such as Keroro and We Kamu by the artist Nonini, which are typical of Kenyan popular music (and not unlike popular music in most parts of the world) in that they focus on themes such as beer-drinking, drugs, women, sex, love, jilted lovers, partying, etc. Yet despite the disapproval of the established order, such songs are everywhere. One hears them on the Kenyan matatus\(^1\), as piped music in banking halls, on the streets of the city, in shopping malls, and constantly broadcast on all public media, both radio and television. Nowadays even mobile phones can be tuned to radio stations.

This chapter sets out to look more closely at four popular songs from Kenya, some of which have been criticized for their bad influence and offensive language, to ultimately expose the extent to which they construct the ‘polysemy’ of the ‘sub-culture’ of the youth of Nairobi (see again Hebdige in Middleton 1990: 165) and in so doing, how they engage relevant social issues in order to speak to young people about the problems they face in the light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is my contention that the efficacy of the intervention of popular music in this social crisis lies precisely in its sub-cultural status, that for this reason it is not experienced by the youth as an imposition of the hegemonic discourses of parental cultures, of teachers, or of government agencies. It is therefore uniquely placed as a potentially successful means of getting the message across.

The specific objective of this chapter is to provide an account of the selected compositions by discussing a number of the contextual and textual features that typify them. As previously discussed, the methodological approach that underlies

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\(^1\) The term *matatu* refers to the local means of road transport available in Kenya. The *matatus* are also known as *mathree* or ma3 by some *Sheng* speakers.
the discussions may best be described as an eclectic derivative from a number of the theoretical ideas set out in the previous chapter. These features are:

- The background of the artists/composers themselves within the context of the overviews discussed in chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this dissertation.
- The lyrics of each song, thus of how factors such as language, gender discourse and dialect are used to construct the sub-culture, and subsequently to address issues of sex and HIV/Aids.
- The musical texts themselves, which include synchronic musical parameters such as harmony, melody, rhythm, texture and timbre, as well as diachronic parameters associated with the music as performance. Particular reference is made to semiotic musical devices such as
  - (a) Musical rhetoric (musical gestures that illustrate and emphasize the literal meanings of the song’s lyrics)
  - (b) Identification of the different intertextual connections that exist in the song’s stylistic musical gestures (be they connections to traditional music, to other pop music works, either local or international, etc.), with particular focus on their stylistic hybridity as a syncretic and unifying social force
  - (c) Consideration of the connections these musical gestures have with the intertexts and contexts provided above, how they integrate as a musical discourse that addresses the relevant social issues across barriers of language, class, gender and age, often ‘speaking what can otherwise not be said’.

The chosen compositions were composed and recorded by four very different composers or groups, all of whom enjoy great popularity in Nairobi, Kenya. However, not all of these artists have acquired an equal degree of international or even national recognition. In some cases their acclaim is limited to the communities who understand the languages in which the song lyrics are set. However, all of these songs are regularly heard at places of social gathering such as the party and dance clubs of Nairobi that are popular to the young
people, as well as the *busaa* pubs (local beers dens). Such dens can be found all over the city with the majority situated in the various slums of Nairobi (refer to chapter 4 of this dissertation). Therefore, the songs in question are all well known to the young people who spend time in such places.

The reader should note that the four songs discussed do not exist in score form, neither have I attempted to transcribe them in full here. Notation of the music in this study is not considered of *a priori* significance. The theorists discussed in chapter 5 of this dissertation, who include Philip Tagg and Richard Middleton among others, generally agree that, in seeking to establish a ‘multi-parameter’ basis for an analysis of the songs in question, a great deal more than an analysis of their musical notation is at stake. While these theorists do not deny the possible significance of such a form of analysis, score analysis should never be an end unto itself, but rather merely a means to an end. In this case, the end is to attempt to understand the music in question as social discourse. In order to achieve this, we need to consider that they are composed and performed by African artists in a particular time and place, so that a comparative analysis of their intertextual connections with the musical styles and languages they appropriate and hybridise will tend to form a far more significant basis for their communicative and discursive abilities. For this reason the songs in their entirety are presented to the reader here as audio texts on the accompanying CD, Addendum F, in addition to which some limited transcription to notation will be included, as and when required by the nature of the discussion.

An English translation of the lyrics of each song is provided alongside its original lyrics. This translation serves two purposes. Firstly, it facilitates an understanding of the song’s message, as most readers are not likely to be familiar with the languages in question. Secondly, it provides for an opportunity to highlight a number of the social contexts in which choice of language (sometimes more than one language at a time) and idiomatic expression engages the sub-culture in question.
The following research questions underlie the analyses in this chapter.

- How have the verbal texts articulated HIV/AIDS in terms of its symptoms, characteristics, causes, and eventually its awareness and prevention?
- How have the verbal and musical texts highlighted issues of gender in relation to HIV/AIDS?
- What function has music as language played in its bid to communicate about HIV/AIDS, that is, how has the artist used rhythm, timbre, stylistic gestures, etc., to get the message across?
- How has the music been influenced by the hybridity of cultures and styles that exist in Nairobi, and how successfully does this hybridity both represent and speak to the youth of Nairobi as sub-culture?
- To what extent does our perception of these works in and as performance add to our understanding of their communicative abilities?

2. **THE ARTISTS**

2.1. **WASIKE WA MUSUNGU**

Wasiike wa Musungu was born in the mid 1930s in the Malakisi village of the Bungoma district in the Western province of Kenya, and died in the year 2000. Addendum A contains a list of his recorded albums and songs.

This artist’s claim to fame is not characterised by awards and international recognition, but by that which he has earned through his social commentary on issues that affect his people. In this regard, he continues to enjoy a certain cult status in Kenya. In their totality, the songs of Wasiike address a number of social issues. These include politics\(^1\), social vices such as adultery, laziness and theft, etc.

\(^1\) For instance, the song *Omukambisi Masinde Muliro* comments on the controversies that surrounded the death of Masinde Muliro. (Masinde Muliro was a Kenyan politician and a
as well as social issues such as HIV/AIDS. His aim was always to educate people according to the norms and values of the *baBukusu* people, the clan from which he hailed. According to Wafula Mukasa (2008), during his own lifetime Wasike commanded so much respect from his people that he could comfortably sing about things that most would prefer not to say or have heard said. In fact, says Mukasa, it was generally accepted that one dare not make a mistake or engage in ‘careless talks’ whenever Wasike was around for fear one might find oneself censured for it in his next song!

Although Wasike’s recognition has thus far been limited in national and international terms, he remains highly revered amongst his followers and his own people, even years after his death. In Nairobi, Wasike’s music is heard emanating from the *busaa* dens situated particularly in the various slums of this city. Wasike’s music is also among the favourites of the many youths all over Kenya who hail from the *Bukusu* tribe.

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renowned political fighter who campaigned for the restoration of multi-party democracy in Kenya during the later years of his life); and in the song *Enombela*, Wasike sings praises to the late Vice President Kijana Wamalwa for taking up the political shoes of his mentor, the late Dr. Frederick Masinde. The song itself echoes a speech by the late Vice President, Kijana Wamalwa, in which he praised Dr. Frederick Masinde. Michael Kijana Wamalwa was the eighth vice president of Kenya who was appointed to serve as the fist vice president of the third president of Kenya, Emilio Mwai Kibaki. He died in 2003 as a result of kidney problems. The late Dr Masinde was a former member of parliament for the Mathare constituency who died in a car crash.

^1 Wafula Mukasa is currently a student at Kenyatta University pursuing a degree an MA degree in Music. He is a great fan of Wasike wa Musungu and a *Litungu* player whose skills on the instrument is greatly inspired by his father, Anicet Wafula (also a *Litungu* player), as well as by Wasike himself. Wafula continues to echo Wasike’s songs through live performances held in Nairobi (in which he uses the Bukusu’s traditional instrument, *Litungu*, to perform just as Wasike used to do). In the absence of documented information, Wafula was a valuable source of information about Wasike in this study (see Addendum E).
2.2. CIRCUTE AND JO-EL

This group is comprised of the duo Circute (Gerald Wagana) and Jo-el (Joel Githinji). The group is also popularly referred to as Manyake, a nick-name derived from a catch phrase in their hit song, Juala. The group produced only two songs. Their first single, Juala, was produced in Nairobi by Calif Records and released in 2004. This song was immensely popular and saw the duo rise to the top of the charts. The second single, Hott Dogg, was produced and released by the same record label in 2005, but it never achieved the same degree of success. The group disbanded after their second single and each of these artists have since embarked on a solo music career.

2.3. THE LONGOMBAS

The Longombas is the name of a group comprised of twin brothers, Lovi and Christian Longomba. The duo has a rich musical background\(^1\) that can be traced to their grandfather, Vicky Longomba, who was a member of the famous TP OK Jazz\(^2\), led by the late grand master of Zairean music, Francois Luambo Makiadi\(^3\). Amongst his involvement in other groups, their father, Lovy Longomba, headed

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1 For more details, the reader may refer to Manori Entertainment on the website <http://www.manorientertainment.com/artist_profile.php>

2 The TPOK Jazz (Tout Puissant Orchestre Kinshasa), formerly known as OK Jazz, was one of the big bands of Congolese music formed in the 1950s. The band was named after the place it began, that is, the OK Bar in Leopoldville (Kinshasa). The band was led by Francois Luambo Makiadi. The band boasts having groomed most of the best Zairean artists and bands as they are known today (Ewens in Broughton, S et al 2006: 78).

3 The late Franco Luambo Makiadi, popularly known as Franco, headed the band OK Jazz (that later became TP OK Jazz) from the 1930’s till the time of his death in 1989. He was the outstanding master of Congolese music. His music career spanned almost 40 years within which time he composed more than a thousand songs and released more than a hundred and fifty albums. He was an entertainer as well as social commentator. Some of his famous songs include Mario (1986) and Attention na Sida (Beware of AIDS) released in 1987 (Ewens in Broughton, S et al 2006: 78).
the band *Super Mazembe*\(^1\), famous in the 1980s. Awilo Longomba\(^2\), who boasts to the title of “the master of popular technosoukous”, is their uncle, while their sister, Fili Longomba, was a dancer and a choreographer for the *Lingala* maestro, Papa Wemba\(^3\).

The Longombas’ musical careers began in 2002 when they signed a recording contract with one of the most famous record labels in Nairobi, the *Ogopa Deejays*. For a complete list of their recorded albums and songs, the reader is referred to the discography provided as Addendum C of this dissertation. Their most popular songs include *Dondosa, Shika More, Piga Makofi* and *Vuta pumz*. Since their formation the duo have earned themselves a considerable reputation as entertainers due to fact that their live performances are so electrifying, characterised by well choreographed and explosive stage dances.

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\(^1\) The *Orchestra Super Mazembe* was a popular band based in Kenya, but had its roots in *Super Vox*, a popular band founded in Congo in 1967. The *Orchestra Supper Mazembe* was known for popular hits such as *Bwana Nipe Pesa* and *Shauri Yako*. Lovy Longomba was a co-leader as well as one of the key vocalists of the band. He later left the band and formed other smaller groups which include *Super Lovy* and *Bana Likasi* (Afropop Worldwide 2008, <http://www.afropop.org/explore/band_info/ID/311/Super%20Mazembe/>).

\(^2\) Awilo Longomba is the son of Vicky Longomba. He is also known as the King of Technosoukous. He has won numerous regional and international awards, including Best Central Africa Artist Award (Kora Awards 1996 and 1997) and the Judges Special Award (Kora Awards 2001) (Ewens in Broughton *et al* 2006). The reader can listen to samples of Awilo’s music from the New African Production Inc. 2006, <http://www.newafricanproduction.com/ArtistPages/AwiloLongomba.htm>.

\(^3\) Papa Wemba was a member of the *Zaiko Langa Langa* band, a youthful Congolese band of the 1970s. He was one of the members who split off from the original band to spawn his own band, *Viva la Musica*, with which he released songs such as *Somo Trop* (2003) and *Po Ur Quoi tu Nés Pass Lá* (2001). He is also known for his dashing self-styled fashion which earned him the nick name ‘Pope of the Sapeurs’ (Ewens in Broughton, *S et al* 2006: 80). The reader can listen to samples of Papa Wemba’s music on the Afropop Worldwide Website <http://afropop.org/>.
They have also won numerous regional, national and international awards. In 2005, they won the award for Best East African Group at the Kora Music Awards in South Africa for their song *Vuta Pumz*. In 2006, they were named Best Group at the *Chaguo la Teeniz* Awards. In June of the same year, the group received an award for the best album in East Africa at the Kilimanjaro Music Awards held in Tanzania. In addition, the song *Vuta Pumz* earned *The Longombas* an award for Best Group, Best Song and Best Video in East Africa during the KISIMA Awards of 2006. The song also won the Social Responsibility Award during the same event. Their winning the best song category subsequently got them a deal to perform at the *Channel O Video* Awards in South Africa.

Both the multinational family musical background of this duo – Congolese/Zairean and Kenyan – as well as the fact that they themselves were born and bred in Nairobi, are factors that impact on their music. The music of *The Longombas*, sung in *Swahili* and *Sheng*, incorporates elements of Zairean music together with elements of Nairobi’s musical sounds. In terms of this family legacy, however, it may be true to say that the duo’s music has less ties with that of their Nairobi-based father and more with their Zairean-based uncle. This will be discussed in greater detail in the forthcoming sections of this chapter.

2.4. **PRINCESS JULLY**

Princess Jully is the stage name of Lillian Auma, also sometimes referred to as the acclaimed “queen of *Benga*”¹. She is the wife of the late Prince Jully (Julius Okumu), who led *The Jolly Boys Band* in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. Since her husband’s death the band has been headed by Princess Jully. The Princess’s musical carrier began in the early 1990’s as a back up vocalist for *The Jolly Boys Band*, but has gone from strength to strength since then. She has recorded and released more than twenty albums since the death of her husband.

¹ See a full explanation of the *Benga* music genre in chapter two of this dissertation.
The song *Dunia Mbaya* (The world is dreadful) ushered Princess Jully into the national lime light in 1997, and subsequent songs such as *Mbuta Duto Mag Aroko* (All Nile perch belong to Aroko), *Amayo Chuma Liet* (Amayo the rod is hot), *Jully Orito Ngimana* (Jully has taken good care of me) and *Aneno Lek* (I have a dream) have ensured that she continues to enjoy national and international acclaim. A list of some of her recorded works is provided in Addendum D.

Princess Jully is famous for her blunt messages: she does not mince words when it comes to issues of morality and other social concerns. At times she has endured a great deal of criticism for her bluntness, but still she prefers to call a spade a spade and not a big spoon. The unashamed forthrightness of her lyrics in the face of embarrassing topics and social taboos is well illustrated by the song *Dunia Mbaya Chunguze*, which will be discussed in greater detail in this chapter.
3. MUSIC AND TEXT

3.1. WASIKE WA MUSUNGU: LULUMBE

3.1.1 The Lyrics of Lulumbe (Strange Killer Disease)

Table 6.1: Wasike wa Musungu: Lyrics of Lulumbe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original lyrics in the Bukusu language</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Bona lundi nerekao nerekao.</em></td>
<td>Here I come again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kuno kumwenya kuno bA Bukusu namwe basebe.</em></td>
<td>Is this song for you Bukusu and associated people?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kumwenya kuno kwelulumbe lwakhwichilekho luyakha.</em></td>
<td>This song is about the new strange killer disease that has come to us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Abele nilwo khukhamanyikhangakho ta.</em></td>
<td>The kind that we have never known.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bali seluli ne kamalesi ta.</em></td>
<td>They say it has no medicine (no cure).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nolulolelela yaba lulumbe lwenuol.</em></td>
<td>When you look at it, this killer disease,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Luwana nga lulwabechanga lulumbe lwekhale bali lweliacho.</em></td>
<td>It looks like bewitchment of olden days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Onyala wasasukha kumibili kwosi,</em></td>
<td>You can lose your flesh;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kwawakho chinyama sio.</em></td>
<td>The whole body can lose all its flesh completely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Warama aasi nga weliacho.</em></td>
<td>You remain down like one who is bewitched.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Omumasaba ali muniafu, ali silimu.</em></td>
<td>The Omumasaaba² call it ‘skinny’ or ‘slim’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kumoyo kwaloma wamaayi we.</em></td>
<td>My heart cries out, Oh child of my mother!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Lwira buubi, luno lwira buubi.</em></td>
<td>It kills badly, this one kills badly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The reader may refer to the audio recording of this song on the accompanying CD, Addendum F, track 1.
² Omumasaaba are Bantu people inhabiting the eastern part of Uganda. They are believed to be a sub-group of the baBukusu people of Kenya who separated as a result of migration. For more information see Were, G.S 1967. A history of the Abaluhyia of Western Kenya c1500-1930. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.
Lwira buubi omukeni yaya lwira buubi.
Mbuka silimu lwafwanile lwa muniafu
Lweliacho, balimbuka.
Ekholandie khayombole Wamusungu
Lekha nilome.
James, obona orie busiro bukhukwilekho bune.
Bwebulwale bwenobwo?

(James) Orio Mr Wasike.
Bulwale buno bwamalile bwafamia sibala siosi.
Luno niyo binadamu ali, kekhale na wasiwasi.
Amanya ali butinyu bwamunyolile.
Babandu babasima kamakhuwa ako, khuli
nende bandu bele babalia siotia magendo.
Nono omundu omwene eyailisie.
Nekhaloma kamakali Wasike,
Kimilembe kioo kilikho kichila Fred Simiyu.
Maawe omukhana musekese.
Raraawe, Abey Wanyama.
Alafu nende wandaye John Wanjala.
Khukhwama Mchereng’anyi, Wycliffe
Kisiang’ani Songwa

Nekhacha kamakali ta Mr Wasike,
Endikho engania babandu babasima kamakhuwa kakhali kang’ali tawe.
Ne kane ukheselekhho Chief Nyongesa khukhwama eKabula.
Maawe omukhana Mulunda.

(Wasike)
Naloma Lwira buubi. Fred simiyu owana mkulo muala.
Baala, nabing’eng’e ewabwe mu Naitiri.
Ngobola eBung’oma, enda ya Nekesa Penina

It kills badly dear visitor, it kills badly.
I wonder at “slim” it looks like the skinny of bewitchment, I wonder at it!
What shall (must) I do? Let me tell you Oh, son of Musungu, let me speak to myself.
James, how do you see this burden that has befallen us. Of this killer disease?

(James¹) Thanks Mr Wasike.
This illness has spread to the whole world.
Now wherever a person is, he sits with worry.
He knows that a problem has come to him.
People who like things like that, them who are eating carelessly and secretly, should examine themselves now!
Before I say much Wasike,
Your greetings go to Fred Simiyu.
His mother is a girl from Musekese clan.
His father, Abey Wanyama.
Even/then with/also the brother John Wanjala who hails from Cherengany and Wycliffe Kisiangani Songwa,

Before I say more Mr. Wasike,
I am warning people who like ‘things that are not right’.
Then you will greet Chief Nyongesa from Kabula for me.
His mother is a girl from Mulunda clan.

(Wasike)
I say, it kills badly. Fred Simiyu, a child from Mkulo Muala clan.
Baala clan Nabing’eng’e, Naitiri their home.
I come back to Bungoma, the descendant of

¹ James is a fellow band member and a co-vocalist of Wasike wa Musungu.
nolle.
Omukeni omwana Muala naloma, Omukoyabe, omwana wa Wanami, yaya, omusaale wange khumanya.
Biyaaye, lwechile lwa muniafu yaya.
Biyaaye, lukendela batubi yaya Batubi Khuambana khwakila walunyoola yaya.

Lwira buubi,
Lukhali ne kamalesi tawe.
Engobola eBung’oma.
Ekhesi Dr. Marumbu yaya omumukoya.
Omwana wa Jafani naloma
Eeh, enda eya Marisia niyo,
eBung’oma, Jamini, watila niye nalola.
Omutukwiika nie omukitang’a silikwa yaya...

Nekesa, Peninah I have arrived.
A visitor, child from Muala clan, I say.
Omukayabe clan, a child of Wanami, dear my friend to know.
Oh no! It has come of making skinny.
Oh it brings forth orphans my brother, Orphans. Coming together made you get it.
It kills badly;
It is one with no medicine.
I come back to Bungoma.
I greet Dr Marumbu dear, from baMukoya clan, a child of Jafan, I tell you
Yes, the descendant of Marisia.
It is Bungoma, Jamini, Watila I turn to you.
From Mutukwiika Clan and Mukitaga Sirikwa dear....

Wasike begins the song by announcing his return to the ‘arena’ – bona lundi nerekao nerekao (here I come again). This is because Wasike is known for his social commentaries through songs. In this context, Lulumbe is introduced to his audience as yet another commentary in the tradition of the preceding ones. He makes it known at the onset that the message he has is meant for the Bukusus and the people associated to the Bukusus, like the Basebe¹.

The song Lulumbe is principally sung in the Bukusu² language, one of the many ethnic languages spoken in Nairobi (The reader is referred to the chapter two of

¹ The Basebe term used at the beginning of the song is employed in the form of a rhetorical question; in the phrase Kuno kumwenya kuno Babukusu namwe basebe (this song is for baBukusu or is it Gekoyos or whoever?) According to Mukasa (2008), Wasike mentions the baBukusu specifically because they are the people who would understand the language he is using, and at the same time he uses the Basebe to show that the song is also meant for everyone else since this is a universal message.

² Bukusu is a one of the seventeen dialects of the Luhyia Bantu language and cultural group of East Africa. It is also the language spoken by the baBukusu people who are the largest ethnic
this dissertation). It is mainly spoken by the *baBukusu* people themselves, but is also used as a recipe for code mixing in the formation of *Sheng* codes. Wasike’s choice of language for his song can firstly be attributed to the fact that it is his mother tongue. It is easier for artists to express themselves in their mother tongue. Secondly, the fact that the *baBukusu* and by extension also the *Luhyia* people are dying of HIV/AIDS prompted Wasike to address this song to them specifically in the language that they will understand best, using expressions that such people are familiar with. He not only expresses the central message of HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, but personalizes it for his people by naming individuals and clans, and by sending them his greetings. Having one’s name mentioned in the song of a celebrity like Wasike wa Musungu is a great honor for the individuals in question, as well as for the people affiliated to them. By addressing it in such personal terms, Wasike acknowledges his supporters, shows how much he respects and values them, and also rhetorically marks the significance of his message for each and every individual. He also uses his fellow singer, James, to further personalize and affirm the significance of his message. When James is called upon to give his opinion on the disease, he continues to mention the names of individual people and clans, warning them of the consequences of reckless unprotected sex.

It is important to note that Wasike does not restrict his message to a certain generation or class of people. This is evident in his constant mentioning of both ordinary people as well as those in various prestigious positions, such as Dr. Marumbu and Chief Nyongesa¹. He also uses general terms such as *omwana* (child of) and *enda eya* (descendants of) to indicate many people.

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¹ It is not clear to the author exactly who these two prestigious people are. However, the author assumes that the two must be popular and influential personalities known to the *baBukusu* people.
While entertaining his listeners, Wasike’s ultimate aim in this song is:

- To make people aware of and to warn them against this strange killer disease that has come to them. In so doing, he educates them on the nature/characteristics and the causes of the disease.
- To preach prevention against infection, and to prescribe what he thinks is necessary to stop the spread, suffering and death caused by the disease.

In order for him to achieve his goals, Wasike incorporates colloquial expression of the disease coupled with use of imagery and euphemism. The title of the song itself does not clearly say that it will be talking about HIV/AIDS even though the composer may have been well aware of the actual term to use. Gregory Barz notes that this tendency to ‘assign the virus and disease a nameless, unlabeled status’ or even an ‘invisible status’ is in fact widespread in African communities; for fear of ‘linguistic stigmatization and social isolation’ family members of the afflicted and dead prefer to ‘create social spaces within which accepted cultural responses to Aids intentionally reference the disease as unnamed or at times even unmarked’ (Barz 2006: 111-112). Thus Wasike’s reticence to call the disease by its name may be understood as a consequence of the stigma attached to the disease and the taboo surrounding sex issues that are known to cause and drive it.

In his effort to make his listeners aware of the killer disease, he likens it to what the Omumasaaba people call silimu (slim). He compares its manifestation to the muniafu lweliacho (the skinny of bewitchment). He chooses this comparison because the symptoms of Aids are well known to his listeners as the kind of afflictions associated with witchcraft and black magic, that cause its victims to lose a great deal of weight before they eventually waste away and die. Here

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1 Bewitchment is a manifestation of bewitching. The Luhyia community believes in the power of magic and witchcraft. It is manifested in its victims through weight loss and is known to cause death.
Wasike actually culturally contextualizes the disease to what people are more familiar with. This can also be seen as providing a culturally sensitive intervention in the spread of HIV/Aids. The fact that he only likens the disease to *lweliacho* (bewitchment) but does not state categorically that bewitchment causes the disease, can be viewed as a strategy to educate people and help to challenge beliefs, common to most African communities\(^1\), that such conditions are caused by witchcraft or curses.

All the same, Wasike does not hesitate to bring the real causes of the killer disease to the attention of his audience. He stresses that unprotected sex and associated sexual behaviour – including promiscuity and prostitution – are its cause. The artist chooses to use euphemism to get his message across. This choice can be attributed to the fact that HIV/Aids is tied to the topic of sex, which is deemed taboo in many African communities and cannot be discussed in public. Given these circumstances, Wasike uses the euphemism of ‘eating’ to refer to sex while he uses ‘eating carelessly and recklessly’, as used in the statement *khuli nende bandu bele balalia siotia* (people who like eating carelessly and secretly), to refer to prostitution and promiscuous acts of sex. He also uses the phrase *khuambana khwakila walunyoola* (coming together makes you have it) to describe the act of sexual intercourse. He euphemizes ‘eating’ in particular to liken sex to the psychological and physiological need for food by the body. Like eating, sex is a psychological and physiological need, but reckless and careless sex is dangerous.

Wasike also brings to his listener’s attention that HIV/Aids can infect anyone, but especially those ‘who like things like that’ (*babandu babasima kamakuwa ako*). The words ‘things like that’ could signify immoral sexual behaviour such as promiscuity, extramarital sex, prostitution and also unprotected sex. The word ‘thing’ in this context could be taken to imply sexual organs or the act of sexual

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\(^1\) Barz highlights similar circumstances in Uganda. See Barz 2006: 111.
intercourse. He urges his audience to remember that HIV/Aids has no cure (Bali seluli ne kamalesi ta).

Stating the consequences of HIV/Aids is another strategy of raising awareness that Wasike has used. According to him, the disease does not only make one slim, it also kills badly (Iwira buubi) and at the same time it brings forth orphans (lukendela bafubi). He also notes that it brings undue stress and worry to its victims. This is evident in the phrase luno niyo binadamu ali, kekhale na wasiwasi (wherever a person/human being is, he sits in worry).

On prevention, Wasike states as a matter of the greatest urgency that the killer disease only causes death to its victims, for it has no cure yet. He implores his listeners to steer clear of infection by instilling the fear of death in them. He makes it clear that the sure destiny of the disease's victims is death. He challenges his listeners to weigh the facts that he has laid out and examine their lives in relation to HIV/Aids. He compels those 'who like things like that' and who like 'eating recklessly' or 'carelessly' to examine themselves nono (now)!

Wasike also expresses frustration and desperation about the current state of affairs in relation to HIV/Aids. He describes HIV/Aids as a 'burden'. His desperation is especially apparent in the statement ekholandie khayombole wa Musungu lekha nilome (What shall (must) I do? Let me tell you Oh son of Musungu, let me speak to myself). After this, he asks his colleague/fellow performer, James, how he perceives the burden that has befallen them, and repeatedly stresses how badly it kills (Iwira buubi). The 'burden' could be viewed in the context of the impact that HIV/Aids has had on those affected, not only the infected people themselves but ultimately the country as a whole, as has been highlighted in chapter three of this dissertation. In this part of the song, one almost hears the question 'is anyone listening to me?'
Concerning matters of gender and their relation to HIV/AIDS in Kenyan society, it is clear that Wasike is out to blame neither men nor women for the spread of the pandemic. This is seen in his constant use of the words *babandu* (people), *binadamu* (human being) and *omundu* (a person), terms that generally refer to both sexes. In sending greetings to influential people of his clan and other affiliated clans in the course of this song, he mentions both men and women. Therefore, his message is meant for all and he stresses that both men and women are potential agents of the spread or the prevention of HIV/AIDS and that it is therefore the duty of all to take control of their lives and do something to stop the spread of the scourge.

### 3.1.2. The Music of Lulumbe (Strange Killer Disease)

Despite the fact that it incorporates a number of outside influences, the music of *Lulumbe* has a distinctly indigenous and traditional sound. As such, it presents an example of the kind of Kenyan pop music that Senoga-Zake has called ‘Neo-folk music’, which he describes as follows:

> Certain characteristics of traditional music are retained by sophisticated young people in what can be termed Neo-folk music. Whereas most of the indigenous folk music is sung in the style of leader and chorus, the Neo-folk music is produced by a performer or a group of performers singing to an audience or to accompany a dance. This is a three-chord rhythmic type of music. It is usually sung to the accompaniment of a guitar or guitars (Senoga-Zake 2000: 12).

In Wasike’s case the retention of ‘certain characteristics’ of African traditional music is interspersed with innovative approaches in his use of melody, rhythm, harmony and instrumentation. It is also apparent in his layering of musical textures as an innovative approach to the traditional melodic structuring of ‘leader and chorus’, which in turn has implications for audience participation in this work as musical performance. Let us look more closely at each of these.
Wasike presents his verbal message as a chant in which he incorporates dialogue between himself and James (a fellow performer). This vocal part is notable for its recitative-like declamatory speech, mostly devoid of intonation. Although unique to this artist and to this song in many respects, it also resembles the chants heard in traditional songs that accompany the Kamabeka\(^1\) dance. This chant is offset against the simple, repetitive melodic motives of the two guitars. Set in the key of D major, the motives in question may be presented in their simplest form as follows:

**Example 6.1 – Lulumbe: motive 1 on the first guitar**

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\textit{\#5}} \\
\text{\textit{\textbf{\#6}}} \\
\text{\textit{\textbf{\#7}}} \\
\text{\textit{\textbf{\#8}}} \\
\end{array}
\]

**Example 6.2 – Lulumbe: motive 2 on the second guitar**

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\textit{\#5}} \\
\text{\textit{\textbf{\#6}}} \\
\text{\textit{\textbf{\#7}}} \\
\text{\textit{\textbf{\#8}}} \\
\end{array}
\]

In the course of the song each of these motives undergoes a number of subtle variations and adornments\(^2\), but they remain essentially recognizable as the above. What is especially noticeable about these motives is the distinctive division of the octave into two halves, arranged between the upper and lower

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\(^1\) Kamabeka dance is a traditional dance found among the Babukusu people. The dancers shake their shoulders at the same time or interchangeably, with their shoulder muscles visibly vibrating to the rhythm. This can be done while kneeling, sitting (with hands on the knees) or standing.

\(^2\) Particularly noticeable is the acciacatura, which Senoga-Zake notes is common to traditional Kenyan music (2000: 10).
dominant notes and evoking the effect of a mixolydian mode\textsuperscript{1}: the lower part of the scale (scale steps 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) rises up to the dominant note in motive 1 in the harsher first guitar part, whilst the upper part of the scale descends (scale steps 8, 7, 6 and 5) to the dominant note in motive 2 in the softer second guitar part.

Harmonically, these motives are underscored with a repetitive progression I – V – IV – V. Harmonic motion directed towards the dominant chord thus emphasizes the mixolydian character of the melodic motives.

The rhythmic patterns of these melodic motives are especially interesting. The pulse of Wasike’s music has its roots in the traditional music that accompanies the Kamabeka dance. There is no doubt that Wasike draws most of his inspiration from such music. Although set in 6/8 time, it exploits the polyrhythmic character of such traditional music by juxtaposing a triple and duple division of the beat, as can be seen in examples 6.1 and 6.2 above.

The song \textit{Lulumbe} is accompanied by two guitars, the bass guitars and a drum kit. Although Wasike was a renowned player of the Kenyan traditional instrument called the Litungu, he did not entirely attempt to recreate its effect in this song. For instance, the guitar parts here use all seven notes of the diatonic scale, whereas a hexachord scale is usually used by the Litungu. On this recording, the guitar players may be using the plectrum or metal picks – which are worn on the thumb and/or the index finger – to pluck the strings. Plectrum playing is never used while playing the Litungu.

\textsuperscript{1} This emphasis on the dominant note may be a distinctly African melodic gesture. For example, Potgieter and Mazomba point to its significance in the choral music of three Xhosa composers of the Eastern Cape in South Africa. See Potgieter and Mazomba (2005: 31). The reader should note that use of the term “mixolydian” in this context is intended to refer to the range of the notes used in the guitar melodies. It does not affect the major tonality of the piece itself. Senoga-Zake points to the typically modal character of many Kenyan folk melodies (2000: 10).
Litungu is a traditional seven-string lyre used among different Luhyia sub-tribes, but mostly found among the baBukusu people. The instrument resembles a guitar except that its sound hole is found near the edge of the sound box rather than in the middle, as is the case with the guitar. The hexachord scale to which it is tuned is mostly found in the form of a diatonic major scale without the seventh scale degree. The octave is found between the first and the seventh strings. This explains why the instrument has seven strings and six notes that have different names in the scale. While the common tuning of the instrument comprises the notes d r m f s l d’, other players tune to d m f fe se le d’ (Senoga-Zake 2000: 146-149). The Litungu player uses four fingers to pluck the strings of the instrument. They include the thumb and the index fingers of both hands. The index fingers play the two outer strings while the thumbs play the middle strings to provide an ostinato to the main melody.

The guitars accompanying the Lulumbe song are played by plucking. The second guitar player plucks a repetitive melody (example 6.2) using the two-finger picking style\(^1\). This style of playing was popularized in East Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. The guitar accompanies the song throughout and its melody stands out above the bass guitar. The bass guitar emphasizes the repetitive harmonic progression of I-V-IV-V by repeating the roots of these chords – D-A-G-A – throughout.

In the rhythm section, the hi-hats mimic the fast rhythms of the luhengele traditionally used to accompany Bukusu dances. The luhengele, which is also

\(^1\) The two finger picking style was pioneered and popularized in East and Central Africa among others by a Congolese born guitar player, Mwenda Jean Bosco. Samples of Bosco’s guitar styles can be heard on the historical recordings by Hugh Tracey, entitled Origins of Guitar Music and available on the ILAM website (International Library of African Music) on URL <http://www.ilam.ru.ac.za/hr.php>. For more information on African Guitar styles (cf) Gerhard Kubik’s review of works by Schmidt (1997: 41(3) and Rycroft (1961/2: 24).
known as the *luyengela* or the *chimbengele*, is a long narrow piece of wood or board which is struck with two sticks on each hand, to provide rhythmic accompaniment to the music of the *Litungu*. Its rhythms are quite fast and consistently supply motion in quavers and semiquavers. Examples 6.3 and 6.4 below provide a comparison of a section of the repetitive hi-hat in *Lulumbe* to that of one of the various rhythms played on the *Luhengele* which traditionally accompanies the *Litungu*.

**Example 6.3. The drum hi-hat rhythm in *Lulumbe***

![Example 6.3](image)

**Example 6.4: Luhengele rhythms***

![Example 6.4](image)

3.1.3. **Performance Analysis**

During the vocal soliloquy, the instrumental accompaniment recedes to the background, calling people to pay attention to the song’s message. However, this soliloquy is deliberately interspersed with interludes where the instrumental parts (especially the first guitar) are foregrounded in order to invite audience participation through dance. In this manner Wasike succeeds in creating a call-and-response texture in his music that closely allies it with traditional music\(^1\). In addition to providing entertainment to the listener, African music is functional in communicating, educating, rebuking and praising. The function of the song

\(^1\) The significance of the call-and-response or leader and chorus structure of Kenyan traditional music was previously highlighted in chapter 2 of this dissertation. See again Senoga-Zake 2000: 12.
*Lulumbe* is to sensitize its listeners about a killer disease, and entertain them at the same time. Given that the song *Lulumbe* is written with live performance in mind, dance interludes are unavoidable in the African context, since (as discussed in chapter 2 of this dissertation) African songs are nothing without movement and dance, not overlooking the importance or the solemnity of their social purpose. This alternation of episodes of soliloquy and dance are a characteristic feature of *Bukusu* traditional music.

The volume of the instrumental parts also varies to allow the articulation of the message embodied in the lyrics. In allying itself with audience response, the prominent high register of the first guitar recedes to the background or remains completely silent during the vocal soliloquy, encouraging the audience to listen attentively to the words of the call. When the vocal call is in repose, the first guitar returns to increase the volume and register of instrumental sound, thus calling again for audience response through dance.

Further to an increase in the volume of instrumental sound in the course of the song, audience participation through dance is stressed in them by the vitality of the rhythms. The traditional *Bukusu* idiom of this song is especially located in its dance rhythms. Depending on the liking of the dancer, dances such as *kamabeka* and *kamuchenje* appropriately fit in the song. *Kamuchenje* is a *Litungu* dance style in which the dancers shake their necks and heads. The dance usually assumes a compound duple time in which the time signature 6/8 is felt. The dancers can combine the two dances in instances where the musician is hailing fans that are present in his performance, or when he calls them by their name. They would then go to the front or to the centre of the circle and shake their heads and necks in an effort to outdo the former dancer while their spectators cheer or jeer them.
3.1.4. **Social Significance of the Music and Text**

Musical syncretism in *Lulumbe* is especially present in its use of Western instruments: guitars and drum kit. Although Wasike certainly had both the means and the aptitude to accompany what sounds essentially like an ethnic *Bukusu* chant on traditional instruments, his decision to do otherwise may well be the reason why the song has succeeded in reaching out to appeal to a broader audience who do not hail from the *Bukusu* community. It is also likely one of the things that keeps the *Bukusu* youth of Nairobi listening to the song, since it is presented to them using modern instruments.

Despite the fact that Wasike is well learned in the traditional music and the instruments of his culture, he embraces the musical influences made available to him – especially the choice to use electric guitars and drum kit in the place of his traditional *Litungu* and its accompaniments – while maintaining other traditional idioms for the delivery of his message. This gives him a footing to reach a wider population who are not necessarily of his generation. In this way, the music not only celebrates the beauty of the artist’s own musical heritage but also bridges the ethnic and generation gaps that divide the people of Kenya, thus making his message accessible to all and stressing the commonality of the human condition in the face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

His reference to HIV/AIDS and issues of sex can be said to reflect the way different people perceive these topics and also the widespread stigma associated with them. Rooted in the traditional taboo that surrounds the topic, Wasike’s approach can also be said to reflect the way the older generation choose to communicate issues of sex to the younger generation without causing “embarrassment” to themselves.
The fact that he chooses to use music and dance as his medium to communicate is socially significant in that, traditionally, these two events in most African societies bring people together. At the same time, such events frequently foster immoral behaviour. In cities such as Nairobi, beer dens, clubs and discotheques – where most young people love to be – provide ample opportunities for participation in sexual immorality. This song is therefore socially significant in speaking to people even in such places about the dangers of reckless behaviour.

3.2. **CIRCUTE AND JO-EL: JUALA**

3.2.1. *The lyrics of Juala (Condom)*

Table 6.2: Circute and Jo-el (Manyake): Lyrics of Juala

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original lyrics in a mixture of languages</th>
<th>English translations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Let me see those hands, me see those hands let me see those hands let me see em’ C’mon (repeated)</td>
<td>Let me see those hands, me see those hands let me see those hands let me see em’ C’mon (repeated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah, Calif Records, Circute and Jo-el bursting up your glass, bringing breaking news…</td>
<td>Yeah, Calif Records Circute and Jo-el bursting up your glass, bringing breaking news…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chorus 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chorus 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manyake⁵…all sizes,</td>
<td>The buttocks…all sizes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manyake…kama prizes,</td>
<td>The buttocks…like prizes³ (rewards),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manyake…kaa balloon zina maji,</td>
<td>The buttocks…are like balloons with water,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juala ndo waitaji</td>
<td>A condom that’s all you need.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The reader is referred to track number 2 on the accompanying CD, Addendum F.

² Literally, *manyake* means ‘bulk of meat’, but in this context it refers to the female buttocks.

³ This connotes that the buttocks of women are available in abundance, ready to be handed out like prizes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Songverse</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ok, all right, let us talk about the buttocks;</td>
<td>Ok, all right, let us talk about the buttocks;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For a ‘good chick’ definitely not like those of an old lady.</td>
<td>For a ‘good chick’ definitely not like those of an old lady.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When she passes in front of ‘men’, this is what majority will say:</td>
<td>When she passes in front of ‘men’, this is what majority will say:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Does she have the buttocks, does she have the buttocks?”</td>
<td>“Does she have the buttocks, does she have the buttocks?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put your hands up if she has the buttocks; Make noise if she has the buttocks!”</td>
<td>Put your hands up if she has the buttocks; Make noise if she has the buttocks!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firstly, let us use protection to avoid the disease infection, injection.</td>
<td>Firstly, let us use protection to avoid the disease infection, injection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African men are obsessed, possessed, depressed with these buttocks,</td>
<td>African men are obsessed, possessed, depressed with these buttocks,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But pause! What’s up! What’s up?</td>
<td>But pause! What’s up! What’s up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have some plastic (condom); do you have some (condom)?</td>
<td>Do you have some plastic (condom); do you have some (condom)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or you will end up gawking at mortuary’s ceiling like a fool!</td>
<td>Or you will end up gawking at mortuary’s ceiling like a fool!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use protection man!</td>
<td>Use protection man!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorus 2</td>
<td>Chorus 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The buttocks…all sizes,</td>
<td>The buttocks…all sizes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The buttocks….like prizes (rewards),</td>
<td>The buttocks….like prizes (rewards),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The buttocks…are like balloons with water,</td>
<td>The buttocks…are like balloons with water,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A condom that’s all you need.</td>
<td>A condom that’s all you need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A condom costs only ten Kenyan shillings</td>
<td>A condom costs only ten Kenyan shillings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And you still fool around with your lives brothers. If the ‘buttock’ is very attractive,</td>
<td>And you still fool around with your lives brothers. If the ‘buttock’ is very attractive,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A condom is all you need.</td>
<td>A condom is all you need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes! Look at the facts and these figures,</td>
<td>Yes! Look at the facts and these figures,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five hundred people die daily.</td>
<td>Five hundred people die daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is like they are being crushed by vehicles,</td>
<td>It is like they are being crushed by vehicles,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That you want it without protection?</td>
<td>That you want it without protection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a grave digger,</td>
<td>Are you a grave digger,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Chorus 3**

 Manyake…all sizes,  
 Manyake…kama prizes,  
 Manyake…kaa balloon zina maji,  
 Juala ndo waitaji  

Eeh! Naongea kuhusu manyake na si zile za butcha,  
Manyake zikipita mtu anakula kucha,  
Si unajua zile zime fura?  
Kama zako hazijafura enda ukule mutura alafu ungojee. Pengine watu watakupiga kura,  

Manyake loh! mtu ana’eza ziworship  
Manyake. Zina fanya mtu a loose friendship.  
Ebu enda club watu wanafight kwa nini?  
Watu wanajaribu kuimpress akina nani?  
Pastor alikosana na wife kwa sababu ya nini?  
Lakini usichanganywe akili kwa sababu ya mwili,  
Tumia Juala ama uta haribu mwili.  

Without protection, I oppose.  
(Never ‘hit those things’ without the condom.  
[Just in case] actually forget about the buttocks story)\(^1\).  

Chorus 3  
The buttocks…all sizes,  
The buttocks….like prizes (rewards),  
The buttocks….are like balloons with water,  
A condom that’s all you need  

Yes! I am talking about the ‘meat in bulk\(^2\), not the ones that hang in the butchery,  
When buttocks pass, a person bites his nails.  
You know them, the ‘swollen’ ones.  
If yours are not ‘swollen’ then go and eat ‘mutura\(^3\)’ and wait. May be people (men) will vote/ give you approval.  
The buttocks man! One can worship them.  
The buttocks can make one loose his friends.  
Just go to the club, why do people fight there?  
Who are people trying to impress there?  
Why did the pastors quarrel with his wife?  
But don’t get your mind confused because of the body,  
Use the condom; otherwise you will damage your body.  

---

1. This is said in a cartoon like voice.
2. The term *Manyake* here is given the added connotation of ‘meat in bulk’ found hanging in butcheries. The artists are still referring to the women’s buttocks/bums but they use it this way at this point to emphasize the theme of the song. The term buttocks will be used interchangeably with bulk of meat in the translations.
3. *Mutura* is a Gekoyo term referring to local sausage. In this case, the artists have used it metaphorically to refer to the penis. In my opinion, this reference is made on the common notion among young people that sexual intercourse makes the women’s buttocks grow bigger.
The song *Juala* is sung in a mixture of languages: English, Swahili, Luo and Sheng\(^1\). The title of the song is derived from the Luo word, *Juala*, which literally means ‘plastic paper’, but which in this context refers more specifically to ‘condom’. The artists’ choice of languages can be attributed to two things: firstly, they are based in Nairobi which is a multilingual city, and secondly, their target listeners are the young people who are said to be more familiar with the syncretic language of Sheng, used more often than the other languages in this song. The artists begin the song by acknowledging the record house that recorded them, Calif Records\(^2\).

On its release, the song *Juala* was received with a great deal of criticism and controversy, so much so that at first it was given very limited air time on some radio stations, and completely banned by others. This criticism was largely based on the belief that the song incited immorality in young men, and that its lyrics were insulting, especially to women. This was not the kind of song parents wanted their young children to hear. Mwaniki (2004) reports on the

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\(^1\) The reader is referred to the second and fourth chapters of this dissertation for more details on Sheng and other languages used in Kenya, especially those spoken by the youth of Nairobi.

\(^2\) Calif Records is a Kenyan record label based in Nairobi’s California estate. The label is the home of the Genge genre of hip-hop, popularized by JuaCali and Jimw@t (popularly known for the song *Kumbe ni Under 18*). The reader is referred to the fourth chapter of this dissertation. For more details, see <http://www.califrecords.co.ke/>.
embarrassment experienced by many parents when their five or six-year-old children began singing along to these lewd lyrics in a matatu or supermarket, or when they publicly asked what a Juala (condom) is.

Just like Wasike wa Musungu, Circute and Jo-el have chosen to use various forms of imagery as a means of indirectly referring to HIV/AIDS and issues of sex rather than calling them by name. Actually, there is not one instance in the course of the song that the artists have referred to HIV/AIDS directly. They leave their audience to localize it in the context of manyake and manyarere (buttocks), the facts and figures of the people dying per day, and the Juala (condom). As was suggested by Barz (2006), and as was found in the case of Wasike, such efforts to colloquialise and euphemize the disease must be attributed to the social stigma and taboo that surrounds it. The fact that, for the most part, the song is sung in Sheng – its message and idiomatic expression coded in a way that only people who are Sheng speakers and who belong to the particular subculture that the artists intended to reach can make appropriate meaning out of it – suggests that Circute and Jo-el intended the youth of Nairobi as the target audience of their song.

In attempting to bring awareness of HIV/AIDS to their listeners, the artists make an effort to sensitize young men about the dangers of their obsession with women’s bodies. Such obsession leads to sexual desire, which in turn exposes them to possible infection. The artists localize this message for their target audience by resorting to the imagery of the typically African male fetish for the female buttocks, a fetish that can hypnotize them and cost them their lives. As the objects of danger and possible death, the female buttocks are described in some detail:

- They come in all sizes and they look like balloons that have water in them, as emphasized in each chorus in the line manyake kaa balloon zina maji.
- They distinguish a good ‘chick’ from an old lady, as emphasized in the
line za mchik msawa definitely not za mnyanye.

They epitomize the male fascination for watching women from the rear as they walk by, evident in the line Manyake zikipita mtu anakula kucha, si unajua zile zime fura.

The song does not attempt to urge young men to desist from such behaviour, but rather to prescribe the appropriate thing to do in order to avoid the risk of infection. This can be interpreted as issuing a prevention warning, and such prevention is to be found in the use of a Juala, the condom. The term Juala, which is a Dholuo term referring to a plastic bag, euphemizes the condom. The use of such a euphemism can again be seen as an intervention that destigmatizes the condom. One of the greatest challenges that the Kenyan government has had to overcome in promoting the condom as prevention against HIV/Aids infection is the stigma that surrounds it\(^1\). Therefore, Circute and Jo-el do not only provide an easier and less stigmatized vocabulary for young men wanting to buy a condom from the shop or to ask for one from their peers, but they have also told them that it is important for them to take the initiative to protect themselves before they engage in satisfying their sexual desires.

The lyrics of Juala highlights important issues surrounding gender perceptions in the fight against HIV/Aids in Kenya. According to this song, men are not capable of infecting women, only the reverse. In other words, women cause HIV/Aids and death. Here women are likened to the biblical Eve who tempted her husband Adam to sin, costing him the comfortable haven that God had provided for him in the Garden of Eden. Adam blames Eve for his role in accepting the forbidden fruit, but he never stops to consider the blame that is his for not resisting the temptation to eat it. The song paints a young woman as one who is made attractive by the size of her body parts (buttocks) and whose beauty is determined by her beholders (sexually active men). Her beauty is never gauged by her own personal qualities, but only in the extent to which her buttocks can

\(^{1}\) The reader is referred to chapter 3 of this dissertation.
elicit sexual fantasies from male onlookers. Regardless of her beauty, however, she is potentially poisonous as she can bring death, bodily damage, fights among male onlookers and loss of friendship among men.

With such explicit reference to the Juala and with such a demeaning representation of women, the negative reaction of Kenyan society to this song is not at all surprising. But we may understand the song’s offensiveness to women in one of two ways. On the one hand, it accepts misogynist perceptions as the reality of the society with which it engages, and attempts to address the crisis of HIV/Aids from within that social reality. In his definition of social discursive masculinities and their effects on HIV/Aids, Onyango (2007) has stressed¹ that in societies such as Kenya, it is the men that have the final say on the use of condoms, not the women. Kenyan women generally have little or no say in the matter. Therefore, there would very little point in addressing a message of this kind to women. On the other hand, in ‘saying it like it is’ one may also argue that this song acts as a successful ‘shock tactic’ that actually assists the cause of gender equality by problematising current gender perceptions, thus becoming a public indictment against traditional misogynist perceptions in African society as a whole.

The artists mince no words when stating that sex is the cause of HIV/Aids infection. They actually advocate abstinence or postponement of sex in cases where the condom is not available. This is repeatedly highlighted in the course of the song; especially in the cartoon-like voice usichape hizo vitu bila Juala (never hit those things without the condom). The act of sex is euphemized in the word chapa, a Swahili word that can literally be translated as hitting. In other words, the thrust involved during sexual intercourse is likened to hitting one object against another.

¹ The reader is referred to the chapter 3 of this dissertation.
The artists also refer to the statistics on people dying of HIV/AIDS in Kenya everyday. This is evident in the sentence *cheki hizi facts na hizi figures, wasee soh tano wanadie daily* (Look at the facts and these figures, five hundred people die daily). Such statements help to inform the listeners of the extent and the magnitude of the Aids crisis.

While advocating prevention, the artists have firmly recommended two things: the use of condoms (*Juala*) and abstinence. The stress on the use of the condom is emphasized from the first chorus of the song till the end. Abstinence is advocated in the phrase *Usi chape hizo vitu bila Juala wacheni story za manyake* (never hit those things without a condom [just in case]; actually forget about the *manyake* story). The artists even remind young men that such prevention is cheap – that condoms cost as little as ten Kenyan Shillings\(^1\) - and so there is no need for them to endanger themselves.

In their efforts to make their audience aware of the HIV/AIDS problem, the artists issue warnings in the course of the song that help to raise awareness and to compel their listeners to take control of their lives and protect themselves. Those who do not take steps to protect themselves are like fools destined to die. This is evident in the statement *uta end up ukicheki ceiling ya mortuary, kaa fala* that appears in the rap section following the first chorus. Towards the end of the song, the artists warn that obsession with the *manyake* is not worth one damaging one’s body by not using a condom. As was the case with Wasike, the artists remind their audience about death as a sure consequence of infection. Persistent reference to this fact throughout the song acts to rhetorically mark it in order to instill fear in young men, and to emphasise the urgency of precautionary measures at all times.

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\(^1\) Ten Kenyan Shillings is approximately equal to one South African Rand.
3.2.2. The Music of Juala (Condom)

Juala is greatly influenced by (predominantly American) 1980’s hip-hop, dance and pop music. These influences can be heard in the instrumentation and in the general performance and the mode of delivery of the message. Such influences have been hybridized into the Kenyan and regional musical sounds, including Benga, resulting in a syncretic musical style unique to the contemporary youth sub-culture of Nairobi.

The song begins with a kind of disc scratch, a technique mostly used by rap DJs¹ who use turntables to create and make music. The artists begin by hyping their fans, encouraging them to participate. This approach is noticeably American. Similar approaches have been used by celebrities such as Sean Paul Ryan Francis Henriques², professionally known by his first two names, and other East-coast hip-hop celebrities such as Rakim³ and Jay Z⁴. The use of party rhymes in this way can be considered as ‘old-school’ party style because they have been a common feature of rap since its inception and they remain a staple style of hip-hop. In Juala, the hype is heard as “Let me see those hands, let me see those hands, let me see those hands, let me see em, C’mon!” The vitality of its rhythmic character, notated in example 6.5 below, invites audience response.

Example 6.5. The rhythm of the opening hype to Juala

¹ DJs are also referred to as disc jockeys or deejays
² Sean Paul Ryan Francis Henriques is a Jamaican based reggae and dance hall artist.
³ Rakim’s full name is Rakim Allah, a legendary rapper and a pioneer of hip-hop.
⁴ Jay Z, also known as Shawn Corey Carter, is a New York based hip-hop artist and a music producer.
Underlying this hype is the rhythmic and harmonic instrumental pattern repeated in ostinato fashion throughout the song, as shown in example 6.6 below.

**Example 6.6. The rhythmic and harmonic ostinato in *Juala***

In the hype the artists’ voices are interspersed with unsophisticated background wavelike filtering sounds which can be heard foregrounding and receding interchangeably with the voices. Such sounds are popular with club Deejays.

The song itself is presented in a strophic chorus-verse structure whereby the choruses are delivered as sung rhymes while the verses are delivered as rap rhymes. The choruses are presented in a call and response manner. The word *manyake* sounds like the call phrase while its response, whose text varies through the course of the song, remains similar in melody and rhythm in all parts. The phrase *Juala ndo waitaji* (a condom is all you need) closes off the chorus. The chorus is rhetorically marked by having the voices predominantly intoned in unison (as opposed to the spoken lyrics of the verses), as is shown in example 6.7 below.
Example 6.7. *Juala*: An extract from the chorus

The instrumentation of the song is studio generated with the help of synthesized sounds. The song maintains the same tempo throughout, driven by the persistent and repetitive rhythmic pattern shown in example 6.6 (although subtle variations of this pattern do sometimes occur). Common time 4/4 is used, but with an ‘irregular’, percussive and harmonic accent on the quaver immediately

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1 The use of (X) shaped note heads in the vocal parts is an indication that the notated tone is approximately, but not entirely, equal to the declamatory speech-like tones the singers use at these points. See Stone (1998) for more information.
preceding beats one and three of each bar. The juxtaposition of the triplet pattern (as heard in the rap response of the chorus) on the strict 4/4 time (as heard in the solo call parts of the chorus) emphasizes the polyrhythmic and cross-rhythmic characteristics of African music (Senega-zake 2000), whose influence in this song is clearly audible. The chanted syllables of the rap verses do not necessarily fit in the rhythm or the tonality of the accompaniment. This deliberate rhythmic and tonal ‘dissonance’ is a rhetorical technique that emphasizes the expressiveness and meaning of the verbal texts.

To achieve different textures in the song, there is an occasional withdrawal of certain accompaniments at various points. For instance, the accompaniments are less active during the verse and they return to accompany the melodious choruses. Such withdrawals can be said to create variety in the course of the song and to allow pockets to stress important aspects in the lyrics. It is particularly noticeable at the words *Tumia Juala ama uta haribu mwili; Eeh! Tumia Juala ama utaharibu mwili, hiyo ndio ukweli joh!* (Use the condom; otherwise you will damage your body; Yes, use the condom otherwise you will damage your body! That is the bitter truth man!), where the ostinato pattern in the accompaniment suddenly ceases in order to emphasise the importance of the verbal message at this point.

Harmonically, *Juala* would appear to be for the most part virtually monochordal, existing in the initial hype and in the rapped verses only in the G# minor chord of the ostinato pattern shown in example 6.6. In the thicker musical textures of the choruses, however, example 6.7 shows two further interesting harmonic dimensions of the song. The accompaniment suggests a shift between the notes G#, A# and F# (as shown on the synthesizer parts). Against this shift, the vocal parts of the chorus seem to suggest an outline of A# minor and F# major, so that the overall tonality hangs between these, remaining unresolved through the
course of the song. This lack of perceived tonal and harmonic ‘resolution’¹ would appear to be a feature that might be described as typically African, distinguishing it from so-called Western music.

Harmonically, there is a constant repetition of the G# minor chord in the chorus. Usually, in the Western musical logic, harmonic motion from one chord to another is normative and this motion will be the source of a build up of tension or resolution in the music. However Nicolas (2002: 100) asserts that incessant repetition of a home chord in a song inevitably acquires an increasing degree of tension, in other words creates logic of its own which does not submit to the codified operational musical logic, and which calls for further resolution. The arrival of another chord is anticipated as a resolution of this tension. In the case of *Juala*, the persistent repetition of the essentially functional tonic chord, G# minor, is never resolved by chord change and this evokes a feeling of unresolved tonality.

Although more distinctively African in its unresolved harmonic usage, however, it should also be noted that there are examples of similar tonal approaches in Western popular music. For example, the song “Rich Girls” by Gwen Reneé Stefani – American singer, songwriter, fashion designer and actress – employs a similar chordal accompaniment.

**3.2.3. Performance Analysis**

The song *Juala* ‘performs’ its role in society at two levels. Firstly, it does this by foregrounding its lyrics in order to emphasize the importance of its message in performance. The lyrics of the song *Juala* take precedence over other musical parameters to convey the message by use of metaphorical language, rhetorical

¹ In the case of Wasike, previously discussed in section 3.1.2, this was seen in the pivotal melodic and harmonic function of the dominant.
questions, and tension-release speech devices. Together these help to arrest the attention of listeners, engaging them and clarifying the message. These tension-release speech devices, in turn, are underscored by the manner in which musical accompaniment is used: the general sense of abstinence in the accompaniment during the rapped verses creates a sense of tension, which is experienced as a release in the fuller accompaniments of the choruses.

Secondly, the song also invites audience participation through dance, particularly noticeable in the initial hype. In this sense, we may understand the need to invite audience participation as a metaphor for the broader need to elicit social engagement, not only in the musical performance of the song, but in fact in its wider social ‘performance’ by means of an implementation of the principles it wishes to impart in the lives of its audience members.

3.2.4. Social Significance of the Music and Text

Circute and Jo-el are based in Nairobi. The song Juala has syncretically drawn from the hybridity of languages, cultures and musical sounds present in Nairobi at the time that the song was composed and recorded. Clearly, the language coding used in the song shows that the artists had a specific audience in mind, which is the young people of Nairobi. The music and lyrics of Juala are socially relevant to the youth of Nairobi. The artists embrace a diversity of cultures and languages to reach as many young people as possible with their important social message. In doing so, they syncretically incorporate the popular musical sounds well-known to the majority of the young people, together with the commonly spoken languages of the city, boldly exposing the sexual fantasies of most young men as risky.

The song also exposes and problematises the cultural gender dispositions present in Kenya. Since most Kenyan communities are patriarchal, the men
dominate even on decisions involving safe sex. Women remain on the receiving end. The lyrics of the song not only make young men aware that their decision to use a condom can make them stay alive, but also insinuate that they are the only ones who have some freedom of choice in this matter, thus playing up to their power position in society, and imploring them to use their power in a responsible way. On the face of it, therefore, this song would seem to glorify misogynist perceptions, implying that women have no say in the matter, and that their beauty is determined exclusively by the extent to which their bodies (buttocks) are sexually attractive to men. Their ‘usefulness’ to men is therefore at the same time their vice, because it is in fulfilling this ‘usefulness’ to men that HIV/AIDS is spread. This is the unfortunate reality for the women of most households of Nairobi. At the same time, as previously discussed, the song also acts as a means of parodying misogyny, of exposing it to public scrutiny, and therefore hopefully also of making more people aware of the problematical assumptions that underlie gender perceptions in Kenyan society at large.

The artists’ use of euphemism and metaphor in their reference to sex and condoms is related to the reluctance of most Kenyans to discuss such topics openly. Musicians such as Circute and Jo-el (as indeed all of the artists included in this study) fulfill an extremely significant societal function in developing a metaphorical language that bridges the gap between absolute silence and absolute openness, thus beginning the social process towards what Barz recognizes as the unashamed ‘naming of parts’ (Barz 2006: 109), a process vital to the management and eventual solution of this social crisis. In so doing, such musicians pave the way for people to feel less uncomfortable in talking about issues related to sex, condoms and HIV/AIDS.
3.3. **LONGOMBAS: VUTA PUMZ**

3.3.1. **The Lyrics of Vuta Pumz (Take a Deep Breath)**

Table 6.3: Longombas: Lyrics of Vuta Pumz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chorus: (A)</th>
<th>English Translations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Hiiyyah!) Vuta pumz,</td>
<td>(Hiiyyah!) Take a deep breath;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We vuta pumz.</td>
<td>You take a deep breath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longombas wanafanya mambo,</td>
<td>Longombas are doing things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hiiyyah!) Vuta pumz</td>
<td>(Hiiyyah!) Take a deep breath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longombas wanatetemesha</td>
<td>Longombas are shaking things;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(avu avu a Vuta pumz)</td>
<td>You take, take, and take a deep breath.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse 1: (B)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jamani nisikilizeni, (eeeh) munisikilizeni</td>
<td>Listen to me people, listen to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamani nisikilizeni, (eeeh aaah!) munisikilizeni</td>
<td>Listen to me people, listen to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuna wanawake warembo,</td>
<td>There are beautiful women,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wenye marasa, (na) mapaja</td>
<td>Who have nice buttocks, nice looking thighs,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(na) weupe na ni wazuri kinyama</td>
<td>And they are brown and look good ‘meat wise’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamani nisikilizeni (eeeh aaah) munisikilizeni ye ye.</td>
<td>People listen to me. Listen to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamani nisikilizeni (eeeh aaah) munisikilizeni ye ye.</td>
<td>People listen to me, listen to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuna wanaume wengi wenye vifu,</td>
<td>There are many men with well built chests,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(na) warefu (na) wenye nguvu</td>
<td>And are tall and strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(na) ni wazuri kinyama</td>
<td>And they look good ‘meat wise’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakini tu jichunge,</td>
<td>But we must take care of ourselves,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1. The reader may refer to the recording of this song contained on the accompanying CD, Addendum F, track 3.

2. This word is a form of onomatopoeia that emulates the sounds of someone inhaling and exhaling, thus of ‘taking a deep breath’.

3. This word emulates a nod of acknowledgement in response to a given instruction. It is way of saying that you are attentive to what is being said.
**Pengine wanao mdudu,**
*(wana wana) wanatuacha, (wana wana)*
*wanago, (wana wana) wanatuacha, wana wana wanago,*

**Chorus: (A)**
*(Hiiiyaah!) Vuta Pumz,*
*we Vuta pumz*
*(Hiiiyaah!) Vuta pumz,*
*We vuta pumz*
*(Hiiiyaah!) Vuta pumz,*
*We vuta pumz*

**Verse2a: (C)**
*Usimuone amejaza nyuma,*
*Ukadhani ako poa,*
*Usimwone amerebeka,*
*ukadhani umefika*
*Usimwone ana pesa,*
*Ukadhani amefika,*
*Pengine anatuacha,*
*kesho anachora¹ (repeated)*

**Verse2b: (D)**
*Na kama unayo, si mwisho wa maisha,*
*Ni ugojwa tu kama malaria,*
*Meza dawa, piga tizi,*
*Kula vizuri utaishi fiti.*
*Maisha utayasukuma (eeeh aaah!)*
*Maisha utayasukuma (eeeh!)*
*Na mjinga usiyejua kujichunga.*

*Kila shimo unaona unadunga.*
*Hebu jichunge kijana, utakuja kufa tukuzike*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>They probably have the ‘bug’.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They may be leaving us soon, they may be going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They may be leaving us, they may be ‘going’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chorus: (A)**
*(Hiiiyaah!) Take deep breath,*
*you take a deep breath,*
*(Hiiiyaah!) take a deep breath,*
*you take deep breath*
*(Hiiiyaah!) take a deep breath,*
*You take deep breath*

**Verse 2a: (C)**
*Do not see the well built buttocks,*
*And think that she is okay,*
*Do not look at the beauty,*
*And think that you have arrived,*
*Do not look at the money,*
*And think that she/he has arrived.*
*She/he may be leaving us,*
*They may be drawing tomorrow*

**Verse 2b: (D)**
*And if you have it, it is not the end of life.*
*It just a disease just like Malaria.*
*Take your medication, eat healthily,*
*Exercise and you will live well.*
*You will push on with life; yes*  
*You will push on with life, yes.*
*You fool who does not know how to protect yourself.*
*You pierce every hole you see.*
*Just take care of yourself young man/woman*

---

¹ *Anachora* is a *Swahili* term for drawing. In this context it refers to the drawing up of a will or a death certificate.
Lang’ata.

Paja asione tu (huyo ashainua)
Kifua1 kisipite tu (huyo ashajigonga)
Tako lisipite tu (mate yashamtoka),
Tako lisipite tu (mate yashamtoka).

Chorus: (A)
Vuta pumz,
We vuta pumz,
(Hiiiyah!) Vuta pumz,
We vuta pumz.

Instrumental section (Cadenza): (E)
Aindendende, aindendende (repeated)
(Huuuwaah), vuta pumz)
Aindendende (huuuwaah²! Vuta pumz)
(repeated)

Repeat of Verse2a: (C)
Usimuone amejaza nyuma,
ukadhani ako poa,
Usimwone amerebeka,
Ukadhani umefika
Usimwone ana pesa,
Ukadhani amefika,
Pengine anatuacha,
Kesho anachora (repeated)

because you will die and we will lay you to rest
at Lang’ata cemetery.
Every time he sees a thigh, he erects
Every time you see a chest, you hit yourself
Every time you see a buttock, you salivate
Every time you see a buttock, you salivate

Chorus: (A)
Take a deep breath,
You take a deep breath
(Hiiiyah!) take a deep breath;
You take a deep breath.

Instrumental section (Cadenza): (E)
Aindendende, aindendende (repeated)
Take deep breath, huuuwaah! take a deep breath
Aindendende huuuwaah! Take a deep breath.

Repeat of Verse2a: (C)
Do not see the well built buttocks
and think that she is okay,
Do not look at the beauty
and think that you have arrived,
Do not look at the money and think that she/he
has arrived.
She/he may be leaving us,
They may be drawing tomorrow

Vuta Pumz is primarily sung in Swahili, in addition to which some Sheng words are also used. The artists’ choice of Swahili is significant because, not only is it the national language of Kenya, but it is also widely spoken in other African countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (to which the duo’s family

1 Kifua in the context of this sentence indicates its relevance to both sexes. It is understood as referring both to well-built male chests and to female breasts.

2 Huuuwaah is also a form of onomatopoeia emulating the sounds of someone taking a deep breath.
roots have been traced) and Tanzania. Therefore, with their use of *Swahili* the artists may have aspired to carry their message to as many people as possible. The added use of *Sheng* can be attributed to the fact that, since the artists are based in Nairobi, the youth of their own city will readily identify with the message if it is presented in a language that they speak and with which they can identify, a language that is such a definitive part of the sub-culture in question.

As was the case with the songs previously discussed, in this song the Longombas aspire both to entice and entertain their audience, but through such entertainment, ultimately to also instruct and educate them. Just like Wasike wa Musungu and the *Manyake* artists, here the Longombas have chosen to use imagery, euphemism and metaphor in order to communicate knowledge and prevention of HIV/AIDS. They leave their listeners to locate and contextualize HIV/AIDS in the context presented by the song. In their case, the image of *mdudu* (a pest or a bug/insect) is used to represent the disease. Barz notes that it is not uncommon in African communities to use the metaphor of an animal, insect or an element of nature as a metaphor for HIV/AIDS, again a ‘transparent linguistic veil’ used as the medium through which it becomes possible to talk more openly about health related issues, issues that they would ordinarily be too embarrassed to raise in public. In some instances, he adds, such metaphors are specifically evoked to instill fear (Barz 2006: 132). In the case of *Vuta Pumz*, the term *mdudu* remains generic; it does not refer to any particular pest or bug. The essence of the message about HIV/AIDS in this song may be summarized as follows:

- It raises awareness and teaches its audience about prevention of HIV/AIDS.
- It encourages positive living to those who are already infected and affected.
- It issues warnings to those living carelessly, those who are easily hypnotized and enticed by the looks or the material possessions of the opposite sex.
Awareness of the disease is stressed from the very outset of the song. The artists call on their listeners to listen, after which they list things that may lead to the arousal of sexual desire in both men and women, potentially putting them at risk of infection. For men, these dangers exist in women who are beautiful and brown; have well shaped and attractive buttocks and good looking thighs. Women, on the other hand, may be enticed by men with well-built chests, who are tall and strong. This is evident in the statements wanawake waremb, wenye marasa, na mapaja na weupe and kuna wanaume wengi wenye vifua, na warefu na wenye nguvu. Material possessions and money (pesa) can also be very seductive. According to the Longombas, these traits are exciting and may elicit different reactions from different people. For instance, they may become sexually erect (ashainua), ‘hit’ themselves on objects surrounding them (ashajigonga) and they may salivate (mate yashamtoka).

Prevention of the spread of the disease, in my opinion, is contained in the artists’ indirect advocation of abstinence. This is evident in their call for taking a deep breath (Vuta Pumz). Naturally, breathing provides evidence of life. Breathing is what gives life and what keeps it going. Pick (2008) asserts that breathing is a physical manifestation of our energy and our life force. The extent of our breathing indicates how much life force we will let ourselves take in. She likens the taking in of breath to our ability to take in life, while exhaling is likened to our ability to let go of everything destructive and negative. Therefore, breathing in keeps you awake, alert and alive, whilst breathing out lets go of trapped air in order to make place for the new, thus sustaining life. In the context of this song, when one breathes in life-giving air, one necessitates the breathing out of the ‘bad things’ with which one is confronted when the risk of infection arises in relation to HIV/Aids. But breathing is also about good timing. Metaphorically, taking a deep breath means that both men and women should give themselves time to make informed choices about sex before it is too late.
The Longombas also encourage positive living in the case of those who are already infected. According to them, positive attitudes, exercise, taking proper medication and following a balanced diet guarantee a good life for the sick. This is evident in the phrase, *na kama unayo, si mwisho wa maisha, ni ugojwa tu kama Malaria, meza dawa, piga tizi, kula vizuri utaishi fiti maisha utayasukuma* (and if you have it, this is not the end of life. It is a disease just like Malaria; take your medication, eat healthily, exercise and you will live well). At the same time, the artists warn the careless who do not know how to protect themselves against infection. People who erect at the mere sight of a woman’s thighs, people who hit themselves at objects at the sight of well built chests or women’s busts and who salivate at the sight of buttocks are made aware that there are no two ways about it: they either protect themselves or they end up dead and buried.

Unlike Circute and Jo-el, the Longombas do not problematise gender differences in their message about Aids awareness and prevention. They recognize the fact that both men and women are capable of stopping the spread of HIV/Aids if only they are able to take appropriate precautions. This is evident in the way that the song consistently and very deliberately seeks to address both sexes.

### 3.3.2. The Music of Vuta Pumz (Take a Deep Breath)

Wasike wa Musungu and Circute and Jo-el have delivered their message in a traditional chant and in rap and hip hop respectively. In contrast to this, the Longombas convey their message in a song full of melodies – juxtaposed and contrapuntally combined – although effective use is also made of spoken lines.

The song is presented in a strophic chorus-verse structure, although the music of each verse is never the same. In addition to this an instrumental cadenza of sorts appears towards the end, prior to the final repeat of the first part of verse 2. The form of the song may thus be represented as A – B – A – CD – A – E – C, where A is the chorus, B is verse 1, CD represents a compound second verse, and E is
the instrumental cadenza with vocals in the background. The duo has preferred presenting the song in call and response form rather than singing in unison or harmonizing with each other throughout, as would more commonly be the case in most African songs, including the Congolese or Swahili music whose influences are otherwise undeniable in this piece. The song itself is a distinct syncretic fusion of Congolese Ndombolo\textsuperscript{1} music, Swahili music and various musical sounds of Nairobi, including Benga. The influences apparent from these include the light hi-hat, the tight snare drum rolls, conga accompaniment and the vocal animations reminiscent of prominent Congolese artists such as Koffi Olomide, Awilo Longomba and Extra Musica.

The cadenza-like flourish of instrumental sounds towards the end of the song – in the bass and solo guitars especially – is commonly found in Congolese music. The flowing melodious vocals, interwoven with lead guitar and synthesized flute, with the bass adding to the texture of the music in syncopated repetitive rhythms, are all characteristic of Nairobi’s lyrical Swahili music, a music with roots in the Tanzanian rumba but which evolved with time to a hybrid blend unique to Kenya (Paterson in Broughton et al 2006). The interweaving of the guitar solo with the melody of the vocal part is an approach typical of the Paris-based Congolese artist, Kanda Bongo Man\textsuperscript{2}, who brought some structural change to the role of the Soukous guitar of his time by incorporating solo guitar at the beginning of the song and interweaving it with the vocal lines themselves, a departure from the older established Soukous style that incorporated a guitar solo at the end of each verse only. These influences were taken up by Tanzanian rumba artists and were subsequently absorbed into the hybrid styles of Swahili music in Nairobi, where

\textsuperscript{1} Ndombolo is a term used interchangeably with Soukous music, but is mainly used to refer to a much faster Soukous popularized by artists such as Wenge Musica and Awilo Longomba. The term also used to refer to a dance craze that accompanied the seben section of the Congolese bigger bands in the early 1990s. For more details, see Ewens in Broughton, S \textit{et al} (2006: 84).

\textsuperscript{2} Kanda Bongo Man is a Congolese artist who is popular for the Kwassa Kwassa dance craze made famous in the late 1980s. His most popular hit songs include Kwassa Kwassa (1989) and Isambe Monie (1990). For more detail see Ewens in Broughton, S \textit{et al} (2006: 80).
they also became an inherent part of Benga music. In addition to these influences, the song also carries traces of the disco sounds typical of Kenyan popular music.

Towards the end of the song and as background to the instrumental cadenza, the artists give a vocalized build-up, Aindendende, together with a repeat of the call for Vuta Pumz. This is also very common in the music of Kanda Bongo Man, Awilo Longomba¹ and the Extra Musica², though not to the same extent as it is encountered in this case. Such build-ups are meant to encourage people to dance as it marks the climax of the song.

The song is accompanied throughout by standard band instruments as well as various synthesized sounds. The live instruments include acoustic guitar, a drum kit, and the electric bass guitar. Other instrumental sounds, presumably synthesized, can be heard along with congas. The instrumentation exhibits some similarities with Congolese music – in particular with that of the Kenyan-based Extra Musica band and with their uncle, the technosoukous king Awilo Longomba – though by no means exclusively so. These similarities could be attributed to their family’s musical background links to Congolese sounds, in addition to the multiplicity of musical styles to which the duo have been exposed, both within and outside of Kenya.

The song is introduced by an acoustic guitar, after which the other instruments join in for two further measures before the singer is introduced. This instrumental


introduction on the guitar (notated in example 6.8 below), has a noticeably *Latino* feel, recalling the rumba band sound of Congolese and *Swahili* music.

**Example 6.8. *Vuta Pumz*: Introduction on solo guitar**

Once the other instruments join in, the acoustic guitar (now subjected to distortion effects) takes on another important theme of the song, later to be shared by the synthesized flute sound. This recurring melodic line is shown in example 6.9 below, and functions throughout as a melodic counterpoint to the voices.

**Example 6.9. *Vuta Pumz*: Recurring melodic instrumental line**

Toward the end of the song, at the point which may be seen as an instrumental cadenza, the guitar takes up a third instrumental melodic idea, shown below in example 6.10, which it carries through to the final statement of the chorus.

**Example 6.10. *Vuta Pumz*: The guitar’s cadenza melody**

The melodic ideas introduced by the voices may be divided into three distinct groups. The first of these vocal melodic ideas is the chorus, which functions as the call and to which the other two ideas later act as a response in different ways. The call is sung in a low register, and although it is presented in the course of the
song in a number of variations, it typically centers on the lower dominant and submediant notes, that recalls the use of two harmonic planes\(^1\) one wholetone apart that is inherent in much African music\(^2\). It is predominantly used to intone and rhetorically mark the most significant verbal message of the song, namely, *Vuta pumz, we vuta pumz*. The outline of this latter melodic idea is notated in example 6.11 below.

**Example 6.11. Vuta Pumz: Vocal Call**

![Example 6.11. Vuta Pumz: Vocal Call](image)

Vuta pumz we vuta pumz

In contrast to the lower register of the call in the song’s chorus, the vocal verses respond either by presenting a wealth of contrasting melodic material in the tenor register (sections B and C, verse 1 and the first part of verse 2), or by resorting to quasi hip-hop style of speech in the lower register (section D, the second part of verse 2).

In section B (verse 1) and in section C (the first part of verse 2, repeated at the end of the song), the melodic motive derived from the intonation of the words *Vuta Pumz* (see again example 6.8) continues to act as a pivotal melodic idea at the beginning and ending of melodic phrases, although now set in the tenor

\(^1\) Jaco Kruger (1989: 401) applies this term in order to describe the shift of the entire musical fabric between two harmonic planes that are one wholetone apart. What is interesting about the use of this technique here, however, is that it is only applied to a single voice within the polyphonic fabric, whereas the remainders of the parts do not take part in this shift.

\(^2\) In the choral music of Xhosa composers, this typical African harmonic gesture is described by Potgieter and Mazomba as a tendency to employ the ‘retrogression’ between the tonic and supertonic chords. See Potgieter and Mazomba 2005: 33. See further reference to this phenomenon in Dargie 1988: 79-81.
register, and offset by the two more flowing and melodious lines shown in examples 6.12 and 6.13 below:

**Example 6.12. Vuta Pumz: The contrasting melodic idea of section B (verse 1)**

Example 6.12.

Vuta Pumz

: The contrasting melodic idea of section B (verse 1)

Example 6.12.

Vuta Pumz

: The contrasting melodic idea of section B (verse 1)

Harmonically, this song is more complex than it would at first appear. Although the song's tonality constantly shifts between three different modal formations, its principle tonality is centred in the key of D major. But there is an almost Aeolian emphasis on the note B, and a cadential emphasis on the whole tone relationship between notes A and B, the dominant and submediant notes respectively, is suggested in most of the guitar and voices parts. This is particularly apparent in the main melodic motive, associated with the vocal setting of the words *vuta pumz* (see example 6.11) and in the bass guitar pattern shown in example 6.14. Contrasting with these is:

- The introductory guitar melody (example 6.8), clearly providing a sense of a dominant preparation for the key of D major.
- The Lydian outlines of the melody of section C, shown in example 6.13, ranging from G to G.
And the distinct sense of B minor provided by the lead guitar’s cadenza melody, as shown in example 6.10.


The bass guitar maintains the above ostinato pattern throughout the song, breaking out only in the instrumental cadenza to support the B minor melody of the guitar in example 6.10 with a bass line which proceeds as follows:

Example 6.15: *Vuta Pumz*: the bass line of the instrumental cadenza

The harmonic basis of this song, coupled with the distinctive melodic ideas it contains, therefore combine to provide the basis for a most interesting syncretism of musical styles. The distinctly African character of this music is yet again apparent in its reliance on the juxtaposition of two harmonic planes spaced one whole-tone apart. This is apparent both in the ostinato pattern, notes A and B at the end of each phrase of the bass guitar, but is manifest also in the frequent closure of melodic vocal phrases on the notes A - B. The contrapuntal layering of vocal and instrumental parts therefore creates a polytonal and polymodal effect that has its roots in African traditional group music making, but which takes on an ‘exotic’ character in this piece because of the *latino* sounds introduced to some of the vocal and instrumental melodies, particularly those shown in examples 6.8 to 6.15 above.
Section D – the second half of verse 2 – contrasts most strongly with the rest of the song. Here the melodious quality of the remainder of the song is put on hold. The guitar and the bass recede to the background as the congas and the drum kit take the centre stage to accompany the voices, who now resort to the lower register in a rhythmic declamation of the text reminiscent of hip hop, coupled with intoned responses where the emphasis is yet again on the melodic relationship between the notes A and B. This contrast in musical style and texture provides renewed emphasis on the text, urging those infected to live positively, and warning those who do not that death is inevitable.

The role of the percussion in this song is to provide a steady rhythmic flow – predominantly on the snare and kick drum – as a backdrop for the juxtaposition and contrapuntal combinations of melodic and harmonic ideas. In addition, it serves to articulate the different sections of the song by introducing each of them with a drum roll. The quick rhythmic patterns on the snare drum, and the syncopated response on the conga drums, are reminiscent of Congolese Lingala artists such as Awilo Longomba.

3.3.3. Performance Analysis

The composers of *Vuta Pumz* wish to entertain as much as to impart the importance of their message. One of the ways that they endeavor to make this possible is by making sure that the message disseminated by this song remains in the minds of their listeners as long as possible. The use of animated onomatopoeia – *huuuwaah* and *Hiyiyaah* – in the choruses, together with the line *Vuta Pumz*, rhetorically marks the significance of these words. At the same time these animations act as catch phrases that easily remain in the memory of their listeners long after they have heard the song. The melodies to which they are set are short and repetitive; which also makes them easier to remember. Constant repetition of this simple chorus in the course of the song further imprints it in the
memory of the audience. Familiarity then invites participation, and in no time the audience feels compelled to respond through dance.

On the spoken lines, the artists seem to issue a stern warning to this person who does not know how to protect himself. One can almost picture the artist pointing out a finger to someone in the audience while saying these words *Hebu jichunge kijana, utakuja kufa tukuzike Lang’ata* (take care of yourself young man/woman because you will die and we will lay you to rest at Lang’ata cemetery).

As we have seen in the case of the songs previously discussed, therefore, it is precisely in the performance of a song like *Vuta Pumz* through music and dance that it appropriates for itself the ability to ‘perform’ its message as social discourse.

### 3.3.4. Social Significance of the Music and the Text

Apart from providing entertainment which forms the core function of music in most African communities, the *Longombas* have endeavored to sensitize the people of Nairobi and beyond to the social problem of HIV/Aids. The song itself embraces two of the widely spoken and understood languages of Kenya, specifically Nairobi, namely *Swahili* and *Sheng*, to put the message across to as many people as possible. *Swahili* is the national language of Kenya and most people can speak and understand it regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, in addition to which it is widely spoken in many of Kenya’s neighboring countries. The dialects of *Sheng* slang may differ in users from various parts of Nairobi (Bosire 2006, Githiora 2002), but it is nevertheless a language widely understood since its vocabulary is largely based in *Swahili*. The use of traces of *Sheng* in this song therefore directs its message very specifically at the youth of Nairobi. At the same time, the musical hybridity of this song points to its engagement with a broader audience. Its appropriation of the exotic *Latino* sounds of Congolese music was previously shown to have their roots in the older Congolese music of...
the 1970’s and 1980’s. Therefore, the musical syncretism of this song is one that engages a parental musical culture with the youth sub-culture in question, in so doing stressing that HIV/Aids affects people of all ages and nationalities, but also creating a social space wherein cross-generational discourse can occur. A survey carried out by Family Health International (FHI 2006)\(^1\) revealed that cross-generation sexual relations, particularly between young girls and older men, formed in exchange for promises of luxury and financial support, have been identified as one of the major challenges in their efforts to intervene in the management of the HIV/Aids crisis in Kenya.

*Vuta Pumz* also addresses the social stigma carried by those in the community known to be HIV positive. The artists urge the community to embrace such people and not to reject them and, more importantly, they urge affected people themselves to rise above the stigma and develop a positive attitude towards life. One of the greatest impacts HIV/Aids has on its victims is psychological and emotional rather than physical in nature, caused by feelings of hopelessness and aggravated by the discrimination and rejection they experience from people around them. Positive living is the underlying rationale for the Kenyan government’s intervention strategy to promote good nutrition and to provide ARVs to the PLWHA (NACC 2006).

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3.4. PRINCESS JULLY: DUNIA MBAYA CHUNGUZEE

3.4.1. The Lyrics of Dunia Mbaya Chunguze (The world is dreadful, mind yourselves)

Table 6.4. Princess Jully: The lyrics of Dunia Mbaya Chunguze

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original lyrics in Swahili and Dholuo</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eeeh, Dunia bado mbovu bwana</td>
<td>Yes, the world is still a dreadful place man!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chunguzee chunguzee) maisha, (chunguzee, chunguzee) wazee, (chunguzee) vijana, (chunguzee), maisha (chunguzee)</td>
<td>Search yourself; search yourself, your life, Search yourself. Elderly men, Search yourselves. Young people, search yourselves, your life, search yourselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunia mbovu, Ukimwi mbaya,</td>
<td>The world is awful, HIV/AIDS is dreadful, HIV/Aids is real. Even in America, HIV/Aids is Real. Even if you go to Europe, HIV/Aids is real. Carelessness/recklessness, HIV/Aids is real, HIV/Aids is real, HIV/Aids is real.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukimwi iko, Hata America, Ukimwi iko.</td>
<td>Stop the fun. HIV/Aids is real.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wee enda Europe, Ukimwi iko.</td>
<td>You will die badly, HIV/Aids is real.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kutanga tanga, Ukimwi iko.</td>
<td>Stop the fun, HIV/Aids knows no one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukimwi iko, Ukimwi iko.</td>
<td>HIV/Aids has no mercy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wacha raha, Ukimwi iko.</td>
<td>There is no cure for HIV/Aids;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utakufa mbaya, Ukimwi iko.</td>
<td>There is no cure for HIV/Aids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wacha raha, Ukimwi haijui mtu.</td>
<td>You go to America, HIV/Aids is there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukimwi hakuna huruma. (scream)</td>
<td>You go to Europe, HIV/Aids is there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni dawa ya Ukimwi hakuna (aa).</td>
<td>Elderly men, be careful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni dawa ya Ukimwi hakuna.</td>
<td>Young women, stop the fun,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukienda America, Ukimwi iko huko.</td>
<td>The world is dreadful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wee enda Europe, Ukimwi iko huko.</td>
<td>Elderly men, stop the fun,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wazee jihadhari.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warembo wacha raha,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunia mbovu.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wazee wacha raha,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The reader may refer to the audio recording of this song on the accompanying CD, Addendum F, track 4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Swahili</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The world is dreadful.</td>
<td>Dunia mbaya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carelessness/recklessness,</td>
<td>Kutangatanga,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping outside(^1). Yes, having too many young women is dangerous</td>
<td>Mambo kulala nje. Ee wasichana wengi,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nowadays</td>
<td>Ni siku hii hatari.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having too many men is very dangerous nowadays.</td>
<td>Mambo mabwana wengi,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You will die badly, you will die like a dog.</td>
<td>Ni siku hii hatari.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You will die badly, you will leave the money,</td>
<td>Utakufa mbaya, utakufa kama mbwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You will leave your office, and you will leave it.</td>
<td>Utakufa mbaya, utawacha pesa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly men, be careful,</td>
<td>Utawacha ofisi, ni ofisi nabaki.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I mean even other Kenyans.</td>
<td>Wazee chunga sana,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please stop having reckless/careless fun,</td>
<td>Yaani watu wa Kenya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You know that Aids is dreadful,</td>
<td>Tafadhali wacha raha,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personally, I fear Aids,</td>
<td>Wajua ukimwi mbaya,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I fear Aids.</td>
<td>Ukimwi ni hatar. Ogopa Ukimwi,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should fear Aids too,</td>
<td>Mimi naogopa ukimwi, mimi naogopa ukimwi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You will die badly, you will die like a dog.</td>
<td>Wewe Ogopa Ukimwi, utakufa mbaya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are the people of Homabay?</td>
<td>Utakufa kama mbwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are the people of Homabay?</td>
<td>Homabay, ere jo Homabay,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Hosea?</td>
<td>Ere jo Homabay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Aran?</td>
<td>Aleni wuodi Ochieng, Hosea to nikune,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Steve?</td>
<td>Hosea to nikune, Aran to nikune,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Agwambo?</td>
<td>Agwambo to nikune, Steve to nikune,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Obula?</td>
<td>Obula to nikune, Majenda to nikune,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Agina?</td>
<td>Agina to nikune, Agwambo to nikune,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Agina from Oyugi?</td>
<td>Asam ja Koyugi, Asam ja Koyugi,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Ohula?</td>
<td>Jasega iting’o love,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Ohula the policeman?</td>
<td>Agaa iting’o love,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are people from Homabay, where are people from Homabay,</td>
<td>ere jo Homabay,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A good policeman, a good policeman.</td>
<td>ere jo Homabay ere jo Homabay,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Ohula?</td>
<td>Ohula to nikune, Ohula ma polisi,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A good policeman, a good policeman.</td>
<td>polisi ma mizuri, polisi ma mizuri,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Sleeping outside in this context is used to refer to having sexual relationships with men or women other than the wife, husband or a fiancée.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where is Onyango Billy? Where is Onyango Billy?</td>
<td>Wapi Onyango Billy? Wapi Onyango Billy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Tom? Where is Tom?</td>
<td>Ni Tom yuko wapi? Ni Tom yuko wapi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are people of Mombasa?</td>
<td>Wapi wa Mombasa?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are people of Mombasa?</td>
<td>Wapi wa Mombasa?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Okoyo? Where is Okoyo?</td>
<td>Okoyo yuko wapi? Okoyo yuko wapi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are people from Mombasa?</td>
<td>Wapi wa Kisumu? Wapi wa Kisumu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are they from Kisumu?</td>
<td>Ogweno yuko wapi? Ogweno yuko wapi?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is Otieno? Where is Otieno? Please stop having reckless/careless fun, you will die badly, you will die like a dog, you will die badly, please take care</td>
<td>Otieno yuko wapi, Tafadhali wacha raha, utakufa mbaya, utakufa kama mbwa, utakufa mbaya tafadhari chunguze</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wadosi (chunguzee)
Wazee (chunguzee).
Wadosi (chunguzee).
Shauri yako, shauri yako.
Ni wewe utakufa (shauri yako).
Ni kichwa nauma, (shauri yako).
Ni tumbo nauma, (shauri yako).
Baridibaridi, (shauri yako).
Ukimwi to mbaya, (shauri yako).
Ni dawa hakuna, (shauri yako).
Dawa ya Ukimwi hakuna, (shauri yako).
Dawa ya Ukimwi ni Ukimwi, (shauri yako).
Dawa ya Ukimwi ni Ukimwi, (shauri yako).
Ni wewe utakonda, (shauri yako).
Uta wacha watoto, (shauri yako).
Uwatawacha gari, (shauri yako).
Ni gari inabaki, (shauri yako).
Utwatachata manyumba, (shauri yako).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where is Evans? Where are they from Mombasa?</td>
<td>Where is Evans? Where are people from Mombasa?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are they from Kisumu? Where is Ogweno, where is Otieno? Please stop having reckless/careless fun, you will die badly, you will die like a dog, you will die badly, please take care</td>
<td>Where is Evans? Where are people from Mombasa? Where are they from Mombasa? Where are they from Kisumu, where are they from Kisumu? Where is Ogweno, where is Otieno?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rich people, (search yourselves)
Elderly men, (search yourselves)
Rich people, (search yourselves)
It is all up to you, it is all up to you.
It is you who will die; it is all up to you.
It is the headache; it is all up to you.
It is the stomach ache; it is all up to you.
The fever, it is all up to you.
Aids is dreadful, so it is all up to you.
There is no cure, so it is all up to you.
Aids has no cure, so it is all up to you.
The cure for Aids is Aids, it is up to you. The cure for Aids is Aids, it is up to you.
It is you who will slim; it is all up to you.
You will leave your children; it is all up to you.
You will leave your car; it is all up to you.
Your car will remain; it is all up to you.
You will leave your houses so it is all up to you

Use a condom man! The world is dreadful.
When you go to Nairobi, use a condom.

Kuenda Nairobi, tumia condom.
Kuenda Kisumu, tumia condom.
Kuenda America, tumia condom.
Ukipata mrembo, tumia condom.
Ukipata mdosi, tumia condom
Usisahau, tumia condom.
Wewe Jane, tumia condom.
Wewe Rebecca, tumia condom.
Wewe Gordon tumia condom.
Mweye suti tumia condom.
Akina vijana, tumia condom.
Akina wazee, tumia condom.
Corner corner, tumia condom.
Wewe Sir, tumia condom.
Wewe Sir, tumia condom.
Akina Okoth, tumia condom.
Kina Betty, tumia condom.
Watu wa bara, tumia condom.

Watoto wa shule, tumia condom.
Watoto wa shule, tumia condom.
Wasichana wa shule, tumia condom.
Ma maid wa bar, tumia condom.
Men wa bar, tumia condom.
Waiter wa bar, tumia condom.
Waiter wa hoteli, tumia condom.
Usisahau, tumia condom.
Nje to bar, tumia condom.
Usisahau, tumia condom

Akina wamama, tumia condom.
Akina malaya, tumia condom.
Kupata raha, tumia condom.
Mpenda raha, tumia condom.
Utakufa, tumia condom.
Ukimwi haina kinga,
Ukimwi haijui mtu.
Ukimwi hakuna huruma.

When you go to Kisumu, use a condom.
When you go to America, use a condom.
If you get a beautiful woman, use a condom.
When you get a rich man, use a condom.
Do not forget, use a condom.
You Jane, use a condom.
You Rebecca, use a condom.
You Gordon, use a condom.
You who is a suit, use a condom. The young men use a condom.
The elderly use a condom.
“Corner, corner (in the secret), use a condom.
Even you sir, use a condom.
Even you sir, use a condom.
Even the Okoth, use a condom.
The likes of Betty, use a condom.
People of interior Kenya, use condoms.

School children, use condoms.
School children, use condoms.
School girls, use condoms.
Bar maids, use condoms.
Bar men, use condoms.
Bar waiters, use condoms.
Hotel waiters, use condoms.
Do not forget, use condoms.
Outside the bars use condoms.
Do not forget to use condoms.

Even mothers, use condoms.
The prostitutes use condoms.
When you want ‘fun’, use condoms.
You fun lovers, use condoms.
You will die so use condoms.
Aids has no prevention,
Aids know nobody.
Aids has no mercies.
There is no cure for Aids.
White people are dying,
Indians are dying,
Rich men are dying,
Arabs are dying,
The poor are dying,
And fine beautiful women are dying.
Aids is dreadful and Aids has no mercy.
Aids has no mercy

Homabay, where are people from Homabay
Where are people from Homabay
Where are people from Homabay,
Aleni son of Ochieng, Jany son of Ochieng,
a fine boy, a fine boy,
When I was recently in trouble,
I saw Aleni, he gave one thousand, one thousand, Aleni removed something, I went to the market,
I was with Jully
We saw Aleni, Aleni assisted me,
you are a good man,
Be careful, Aleni a humble person, Luos you’ve deserted Aleni eeeeeee....

Use a condom man!
All you people of Kisumu, Nairobi, Meru,
Kikuyu, Machakos,
People from Maragoli and all people of Africa
And those in America.
Please when you get fine beautiful women,
Put on a condom. The world is dreadful.
There is still no cure of Aids.
It has defeated the white man.
Where did you come from Aids?
People are really dying.

Ni dawa ya Ukimwi hakuna,
There is no cure for Aids.
Ni wazungu nakufa,
White people are dying,
Ni wahindi nakufa,
Indians are dying,
Ni wadosi nakufa,
Rich men are dying,
ni waaraabu nakufa,
Arabs are dying,
maskini nakufa,
The poor are dying,
Ni madame nakufa
And fine beautiful women are dying.
Ukimwi mbaya, Ukimwi hakuna huruma,
Aids is dreadful and Aids has no mercy.
Ukimwi hakuna huruma.

Homabay ere jo Homabay
Homabay, where are people from Homabay
Ero jo Homabay,
Where are people from Homabay,
Ere jo Homabay.
Where are people from Homabay,
Aleni wuod Ochieng, a Jany wuod Ochieng,
Aleni son of Ochieng, Jany son of Ochieng,
Woi malong’o sana, woi malong’o sana,
a fine boy,
Kanyicha ayudo tabu,
a fine boy,
tonenaneno Aleni, Alufu mia omia, alufu mia moja,
I saw Aleni, he gave one thousand, one thousand, Aleni removed something, I went to the market,
Aleni giro ogolo,to nadhio siro to ne an kod Aleni,
I was with Jully
To nenayudo tabu, ne wan kod Jully.
We saw Aleni, Aleni assisted me,
tonenaneno Aleni, Aleni nenekonya,
you are a good man,
to in ng’amalong’o,
Be careful, Aleni a humble person, Luos you’ve deserted Aleni eeeeeee....

chunga sana, Aleni ng’amang’uon, Joluo uweyo Aleni eeeeeee
tonenaneno Aleni, Aleni nenekonya,

Joluo uweyo Aleni eeeeeee

Tumia condom bwana,
Use a condom man!
Watu wa Kisumu, wa Nairobi, watu wa Meru,
All you people of Kisumu, Nairobi, Meru,
wa Kikuyu, wa Kamba, Machakos,
Kikuyu, Machakos,
a watu wa Maragoli, watu wote wa Africa,
People from Maragoli and all people of Africa
Na wa America.
And those in America.
Tafadhali ukipata wasichana,
Please when you get fine beautiful women,
Weka condom. Dunia bado mbovu zaidi,
Put on a condom. The world is dreadful.
Dawa ya Ukimwi bado hajapatikana,
There is still no cure of Aids.
Ameshindwa hata wazungu,
It has defeated the white man.
Hii Ukimwi imetoka wapi,
Where did you come from Aids?
watu wanakufa zaidi.
People are really dying.
Watoto wamebaki tu kwa nyumba, na gari pia..... The children are being left in households, even vehicles also...

*Dunia Mbaya* is the longest of the four songs discussed in this chapter. The song is principally sung in the *Swahili* and *Dholuo* languages. The singer’s choice of *Swahili* can be accredited to the fact that *Swahili* is the national language of Kenya and so she may have aspired to reach a wider population with her message in this language. At the same time, as the saying “charity begins at home” goes, the choice to also use her mother tongue, *Dholuo*, may have been motivated by the need to bring the message of HIV/Aids closer to her own people. This impression is strengthened by the fact that when she switches to *Dholuo* language, she mentions and hails her fans and acquaintances by name, and, in the process of doing so, also reminds them of the truth that HIV/Aids is dreadful and that they are equally at risk of infection wherever they may be, and that they need to use condoms at all times. Also, the choice of the languages in the song could be ascribed to the fact that, unlike *Sheng* – with its unstable and constantly changing vocabulary, and where dialects differ greatly from one part of the city to the other (Bosire 2006, Githiora 2001) – *Swahili* and *Dholuo* are relatively stable and established languages, likely to remain relevant and usable in their current forms for a longer time.

Unlike the artists discussed thus far in this chapter, Princess Jully does not mince words in her references to HIV/Aids and its prevention. Here we encounter an unashamed and unveiled ‘naming of parts’ (Barz 2006: 109). She openly calls the condom and the HIV/Aids (*Ukimwi*) by their names. However, she does still revert to veiled references and idiomatic language when expressing issues of sex.

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1 *Ukimwi* is a *Swahili* generic acronym for HIV/Aids. In full it is *Ukosefu wa Kinga Mwilini*. 
Apart from entertaining her listeners, Princess Jully’s main objective in this song is to:

- Raise awareness about HIV/Aids and about its causes.
- Preach prevention through use of the condom.

In raising awareness, Princess Jully touches on various issues. She is candid about the existence of Aids and the various ways in which infection is spread. She openly confronts the fact that there is, as yet, no cure for the disease, and that the outcome of infection is an almost certain death. She describes the extent of the disease in some detail. *Ukimwi* is everywhere; in America, Europe and in many parts of Africa; in the big cities like Nairobi, Kisumu, and Mombasa and in small towns like Maragoli and Meru. All people are potential victims; white people, Indians, Arabs, the poor (*maskini*), the rich (*wadosi*), the beautiful (*warembo*) and the respectable ones, school children (*watoto wa shule*), bar maids (*ma-maid wa bar*), hotel maids (*ma-maid wa hoteli*), prostitutes (*malaya*) and elderly men (*wazee*).

Princes Jully highlights several factors that lead to HIV/Aids infection, including *kulala nje* (sleeping outside), which refers to having sexual affairs outside marriage or other forms of established sexual relations, and *kutanga tanga* (reckless/carelessness) which refers to fornication, promiscuity and prostitution. She highlights some of the many symptoms experienced by *Ukimwi* sufferers which includes headaches, stomach aches, fever bouts and ‘getting skinny’ as sung in the line *ni kichwa nauma, ni tumbo nauma, baridibaridi, ni wewe utakonda*.

Jully stresses the fact that there is no cure for HIV/Aids; our only protection is to abstain from risky behaviour. This is evident in the statement; *dawa ya Ukimwi hakuna, dawa ya Ukimwi ni Ukimwi shauri yako* (There is no cure for HIV/Aids, so it is all up to you. The cure of HIV/Aids is only HIV/Aids so it is all up to you).
On prevention messages, the Princess stresses that consistent use of condoms at all times by all people is the only effective way of preventing the spread of infection and ultimately managing the disease in society at large. She rises above the stigma associated with the use of condoms by also encouraging women and mothers to use them. In this regard, the message of her song is extremely contentious. Ethnic communities in Kenya are still very patriarchal; men dominate in all decision-making, including matters of sex. According to Muthondu & Njeru (2004), most women in Kenya are still not in a position to say “NO” to sex, let alone to suggest means of safer sex, or to enforce faithfulness from their partners. They would never dare speak out on such matters for fear of rejection by their partners, their family and their friends. Princess Jully rises above such fears and cultural perceptions, using her public voice to challenge misogyny and to encourage women to take charge of their fate in such matters. If not, she tells them, they will die and leave their children and relatives in danger and tears.

Jully’s advocacy of condom use is also extended to school children, by which she acknowledges their vulnerability and accedes to the fact that they are probably already sexually active. Contrary to the views of the First Lady, Lucy Kibaki, on condom use and school-going children, Jully recognises that preaching abstinence is probably an unrealistic and therefore inadequate intervention.

Princess Jully does not blame anybody for the Aids crisis. Instead she is of the opinion that everyone is to blame for its spread and that everybody is potentially able to stop its spread.

1 The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention maintains that there is not one protection that can guarantee a one hundred percent protection against STI infection, except abstinence from sex. This includes condom use. When used consistently and correctly condoms can only reduce (but never fully guarantee prevention against) the risk of infection. For more details visit the website of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention on URL, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/od/condoms.pdf>.

2 See chapter 3 of this dissertation.
3.4.2. The Music of Dunia Mbaya Chenguze

*Dunia Mbaya* is accompanied by the Jolly Boys Band, headed by Princess Jully herself. This song distinguishes itself from the music of Cir-cute and Joel and the Longombas, and is more closely aligned with the music of Wasike. Whereas the music of the former two groups have a distinctly international or cosmopolitan overall character, that of Princess Jully and Wasike are more ‘authentically’ African. On the surface of it, their similarity in this regard can be found in their use of short, repetitive melodic and harmonic phrases that invariably descend towards closure on the dominant, in their nasal singing style, in their relatively thin instrumental accompaniment presented by plucked guitars, and in their continuous rhythmic flow presented by the backdrop of percussive sounds which, on closer inspection, reveal a number of rhythmic intricacies that belie the apparent simplicity of the song as a whole. But these are only surface similarities. Whereas the music of Wasike was found to have a number of ties with the traditional music of the *babukusu*, in the case of Princess Jully and the song *Dunia Mbaya*, the roots to traditional music may rather be found in *Benga*.

The song exhibits a number of the characteristics of *Benga* music, except for the fact that the artist sings part of the song in *Swahili* and even includes some English words, which is not typical in *Benga* or its variants (Paterson in Broughton *et al* 2006). However, both the melody and the instrumentation of this song have strong *Benga* influences. *Benga* emerged in the 1950s, a time when Kenya’s popular music scene was characterized by a steady inflow of Congolese and international pop influences (Ibid). It was at this time that musicians from the *Luo* people of Kenya began adapting traditional rhythms and sounds of the *Nyatiti*¹ to acoustic guitars and later also to electric guitars. This style and term

¹ For more information on *Nyatiti*, see Senoga-Zake 2000: 150-152. The reader can also listen to audio samples of *nyatiti* sounds and rhythms on the historical recordings of Hugh Tracey, entitled *Kenyan songs and dance (Kenya 1959 & 1952)*. *Okech Okelo*, played by Joshua Mzee
was later adopted by musicians from other ethnic tribes of Kenya, who incorporated traditional idioms from their respective communities resulting in the emergence of a number of variants of the style, collectively referred to as Benga. The style has remained a hallmark of most regional and ethnic bands up to today.

The Nyatiti is an eight-string lyre traditionally found among the Luo and is popularly known by the name kamba nane. It is played horizontally with its bowl and the arm of the lyre almost resting on the ground. It is held in position by the left hand over the top of the upper arm of the instrument while the left foot holds it to the ground on the lower arm. The player accompanies himself with the ankle rattles (gara) and the ring (oduong), which helps to keep the tempo, worn on the big toe of the right foot. The player occasionally leaves opportunities for his listeners to dance as well as engaging his audience or fellow players in dialogue (Senoga-Zake 2000: 150).

The most outstanding characteristic of Benga among the Luo people, the tribe from which Princess Jully hails, is the sound and rhythms that mimic those of the Nyatiti. According to Patterson in Broughton et al (2006), Luo Benga was started by the Shirati Jazz Band under the leadership of the late Daniel Owino Misiani. This was original Benga, characterized by its active pulsating bass line (derived from the combination of Nyatiti and drum rhythms), its invigorating guitar works (where the lead guitar typically alternates with the vocals) and its two-part harmonization of melodic lines. The bass guitar imitates the sound of the lizard-skinned drum that the Nyatiti player strikes with a toe ring as well as his push and pull technique applied on the strings, whilst the snare drum reproduces the sound bells that are worn on the player’s ankles, and the lead and rhythm guitars mimic the quick syncopated melodies played on the strings of a Nyatiti.

In its style and choice of instrumentation, *Dunia Mbaya* clearly displays the above influences. The lead guitar plays all through the songs, with some quick improvised solo riffs at the end of each vocal phrase. It also interplays interestingly with the singer. In the instances where the singer sings the same melody repeatedly, the solo guitar’s solo riffs almost sound like they are playing as a response to the sung phrases. In instances where the singer is talking above the instruments, the solo guitar plays continuously in the background.

The lengthy lyrics of this song are bound together by the extreme economy of its musical material. As far as the vocal lines themselves are concerned, we note that the song is comprised of only two different melodic phrases, each supported by the harmonic ostinato I – IV - I – V (D – G – D – A) on the bass guitar. These vocal phrases are shown in examples 6.16 and 6.17 below in their definitive forms, but they are also exposed to some subtle variations in the course of the song. At times, for example, they are almost spoken rather than sung.

**Example 6.16. Dunia Mbaya Chunguze: The first vocal phrase**

![Example 6.16. Dunia Mbaya Chunguze: The first vocal phrase](image)

**Example 6.17. Dunia Mbaya Chunguze: The second vocal phrase**

![Example 6.17. Dunia Mbaya Chunguze: The second vocal phrase](image)

Although the form of the song as a whole is probably best described as through composed, it actually comprises nothing other than a constant repetition of these
two phrases, initially alternating after groups of two, three or four repetitions, but eventually allowing for as many as fourteen repetitions of one phrase before alternating to the next.

The first phrase, set in a higher register, functions as a kind of call, emphasizing the urgency of her message, whereas the second phrase descends towards closure on the dominant note, acting as a communal response. The structure of this second, response phrase is noticeably similar to the second phrase of Wasike’s song, *Lulumbe*, shown in example 6.2 of this chapter, emphasizing yet again the mixolydian use of tonality, where the dominant acts as a point of melodic and harmonic closure, as a typically African gesture. Another typically African gesture found here is the use of acciaccaturas (Senoga-Zake 2000: 10). It is the response phrase (example 6.17) that is emphasized by taking on as many as fourteen repetitions, where the male voices in the band also ultimately join in the response by harmonizing against the melody in third intervals. The response sections mainly carry the words *shauri yako* (it is all up to you) and *tumia condom* (use a condom). These words are repetitive and easy to remember and this encourages the listeners to sing along. At the same time, Princess Jully hails her fans, calling out their names in Dholuo and reminding them to protect themselves against HIV/Aids. She also mentions several names and groups of people in Swahili and follows these greetings with similar warnings.

3.4.3. **Performance Analysis**

Constant repetition of the same two melodic phrases, and the same ostinato harmonic and rhythmic instrumental accompaniment patterns, but with different lyrics, is a strategy used by the composer to make sure that the listeners feel comfortable enough to participate and also remember the messages afterwards. The solo-response parts which echo the words *shauri yako shauri yako* (it is all up to you, it is all up to you) and *tumia condom* (use a condom) are repeated a
number of times, rhetorically marking their significance. This can be seen as a strategy to welcome the listeners to answer with the response too.

The song ends by fading out while the chordal progression remains I-IV-I-V. From the point of view of Western tonal music, the dominant chord resolves to the tonic to mark a perfect cadence at the end of the musical piece. Even though the song *Dunia Mbaya* is largely African, the influence of the West cannot be denied, for instance, the use of modern instruments such as guitars that are tuned and played on conventional scales instead of using the *Nyatiti* and its modes. The fade out denies the listener musical closure “in Western musical terms” which, I believe, is an effective means of communicating a lack of social closure: that the problem of HIV/Aids is an ongoing problem whose solution is as yet out of reach\(^1\). To emphasise this, the words that Princess Jully says as the music fades are ones that highlight the lack of a known cure for HIV/Aids and the certainty of death. In my opinion, these words give a feeling of the infinity of the problem to the listener.

The artist also alternates between singing and talking. In instances where she talks, she stresses the importance of using a condom. As heard from the recording, the talking comes after a long period of repetitive melody, most likely to have incited participation through dance. The pitch of her voice is higher in this spoken section, to contrast with the repetitive dance section and to rhetorically mark the importance of her verbal message at this point. This same contrast is also evident in the bass guitar parts, as they alternate between the high and low registers in the course of the song.

The composer incorporates a wailing scream in the first verse of the song. This kind of scream is a characteristic feature of the *Luo* funeral and burial ceremonies. It is heard only once in the entire presentation, and functions as a

\(^1\) Others factors, such as personal unresolved issues in the artist's life, not discussed in this study because they are beyond its scope, may have contributed to the same.
very effective rhetorical technique, underlining the significance of the message in the song. It appears in the line *Ukimwi hakuna huruma. Ni dawa ya Ukimwi hakuna.* (HIV/AIDS has got no mercy. There is no cure for HIV/AIDS). The scream ends on the negation said in the vowels (aa), which coincides with the latter words of the above phrase.

### 3.4.4. Social Significance of the Music and Text

Apart from entertaining her audience, the princess hoped to bring a life saving message to her listeners. As has been discussed earlier, the lack of resolution in the parts of the song even at the end can be taken to signify the infinity of the Aids crisis in Kenya and in the world as a whole.

On the magnitude of the crisis, the lyrics of the song are significant because they repeatedly emphasize the universality of HIV/AIDS as a social problem. The lyrics portray the disease as one from which no person or nationality is exempt; all are equally vulnerable to infection. The lyrics also reveal that everyone is capable of steering clear of infection if only they would act responsibly and use condoms at all times.

As earlier described, the topics of HIV/AIDS, condoms and sex are social taboos, are never openly discussed in polite conversation. This song does much to deconstruct such myths and taboos. It rises above the stigma attached to the disease by mentioning it, *Ukimwi,* and the condom by name. Likening the death of an infected person to that of a dog reflects the attitudes and perceptions normally associated with HIV/AIDS in Kenyan society.

The song also boldly challenges gender perceptions in traditional Kenyan communities. While speaking about condoms, the singer encourages condom use by both women and men, and mentions individuals of both sexes by name. The fact that most communities in Kenya are patriarchal would ordinarily deny
the woman the power to negotiate safe sex. However, this song goes a long way in attempting to change that social practice, also in attempting to educate both men and women equally about the importance of practicing safe sex. The fact that the singer in this instance is herself a woman lends added weight to her message. As a celebrity, she is in the rare and privileged position of being a woman whose voice has a great deal of influence and power, a fate not likely to be shared by the millions of ‘ordinary’ women of her country. Like a modern-day diviner of sorts, she uses her privileged power position to instruct, guide and prescribe healing.

Despite such boldness, Princess Jully still stops short of overthrowing all social conventions in such matters. For example, acts of sex are not openly named in this song. Instead she resorts to the use of metaphors in order to make the lyrics more publically and socially acceptable. Listeners contextualize and understand such metaphors accordingly. These include *kupata raha* (having fun, which basically connotes having sex) and *kutanga tanga* (recklessness/carelessness, which connotes unsafe and immoral sexual practices such as promiscuity, prostitution and extra-marital sex).

4. **CONCLUSION TO THIS CHAPTER**

The four compositions discussed in this chapter reflect a number of the diverse approaches that popular music adopts in engaging with Kenyan society on the crisis of HIV/AIDS. In general, these approaches all involve the creation of a semiotic world that enables a play between the familiar and unfamiliar in its use of both topical and structural signs, a world that embraces its audiences with the known and then encourages them to confront the unknown.

In the lyrics, this play between the familiar and the unfamiliar may be summarized as follows:

- Familiarity is created by the use of languages and dialects – sometimes
even the mixture of languages and dialects – with which the target audience can identify. Social customs are obeyed which require, for example, that veiled references be made to topics not ordinarily discussed in public.

- A confrontation with the unfamiliar is encouraged in a number of ways, for example, in stressing the universality of the pandemic, in advocating the use of condoms, in challenging gender perceptions, and in demystifying the disease by encouraging the ‘naming of parts’ (Barz 2006: 109) in the broadest possible sense, including its causes, its symptoms, its prognosis, and the interventions it requires.

In the musical texts, this play between the familiar and the unfamiliar is further underscored in the following ways:

- Familiarity is created by grounding each composition in a particular and recognizable musical style, one that defines it as a discourse or set of topical signs of a particular sub-culture, be this a cosmopolitan and international discourse like rap and hip hop (Juala) or latino Congolese-influenced rumba (Vuta Pumz), or be this rooted in traditional African musical discourses like Bukusu (Lulumbe) or Benga (Dunia Mbaya). Musical familiarity within the sub-culture in question acts to facilitate communication of a verbal message that would, in all likelihood, otherwise not be well received.

- A confrontation with the unfamiliar is musically carried in the hybridity or syncretism of styles, engaging traditional rural culture with modern urban culture (Lulumbe and Dunia Mbaya), engaging local urban youth sub-culture with international youth sub-cultures like that of the Afro-American youth (Juala), or with that of parent cultures (Vuta Pumz). In so doing, musical syncretism becomes an enabling device for the opening up of a social arena wherein the commonality of the human condition is stressed in the light of the HIV/AIDS crisis.
Furthermore, this chapter has shown that it is the performative nature of popular music – the extent to which its existence *in* and *as* performance entertains and invites audience response through dance – that enables the creation of the kinds of social spaces in which the songs’ messages are appropriated and ‘performed’ into the lives of the community.
CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSION TO THIS STUDY

In the context of chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this dissertation – which briefly highlighted the social, economic, cultural and political contexts of Kenya in general and Nairobi in particular, with reference to such issues as political history, music, religion, and social problems such as crime, drug and alcohol abuse and HIV/AIDS – it goes without saying that the environment in which they find themselves impacts on the young people of Kenya in various ways. At the same time, these young people manifest a sub-culture that responds to and engages with their environment, either amongst themselves or to the wider public. This sub-culture is defined *inter alia* through language (particularly distinctive in the use of *Sheng*), fashion and music (particularly distinctive in the various forms of Kenyan pop music).

HIV/AIDS remains one of the deadliest sexually transmitted disease ever known. Like any other disease, curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS poses a challenge as different cultural perspectives largely influences the way people respond to it, a factor that should inform government and other disease intervention organizations in developing culturally-sensitive and diverse strategies in order to deal with the disease effectively. Young people in the urban areas of Kenya, particularly Nairobi, remain vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection due to a range of influences to which they are exposed. These include the media, role models, cultural perceptions and peer influence, to mention but few.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation explored various intervention strategies that the government of Kenya has put in place to deal with HIV/AIDS. Just as culture plays a big role in fuelling the spread of HIV/AIDS, it can also play a major role in curbing the spread of the same. Though the government of Kenya has made tremendous efforts to incorporate cultural interventions in the existing strategies,
the contribution of popular music (as an integral part of contemporary societies) towards such endeavors is still, in my opinion, underestimated. This can be attributed in part both to popular music’s general lack of social status amongst policy makers as well as to a general ignorance regarding the nature of popular music studies as musicological enquiry.

Chapter 6 of this study has critically engaged with the musical texts – the structural signs - of four popular songs from Kenya to locate within them their communicative capabilities as social discourse. This was done by formulating an eclectic theoretical approach, selecting analytical procedures from the many existing approaches to popular music analysis discussed in chapter 5. The basis for this eclecticism on my part was an intuitive one, deriving from my own phenomenological encounter with the songs in question. In so doing I have set out to interrogate both the synchronic (structural signs) and diachronic (topical signs) dimensions of these songs – considering textual, intertextual and contextual factors – in order to identify musical gestures or semiotic devices that disclose for us the semiotic universe of the youth of Nairobi as sub-culture.

My analysis of these songs has revealed a repeating strategy on the part of the composers and performers in question. This strategy, namely, is first to engage audiences through language and music with which they are familiar, and then to encourage audiences to confront the unknown and unfamiliar in music and language, but also ultimately in terms of their social practices. The known and the familiar in the context of these songs have been highlighted both in the lyrics and in the music itself. It includes use of commonly-spoken languages and dialects, popular musical styles typical of the particular sub-culture, references to the day-to-day experiences of the ordinary person, to mention but a few. The unknown includes each song’s unique hybridization of musical and spoken languages, and especially its unashamed “naming of parts” with reference to issues such as sex, HIV/AIDS, gender perceptions, issues that African people ordinarily prefer not to discuss in public.
Therefore, despite the general perception by the established order and parental culture that popular music is subversive and that it incites immorality in the youth, it is clear from the analyses presented in chapter 6 of this dissertation that – at least in the case of these four songs and the many others like them – the message of popular music is certainly not all bad; quite the contrary in fact.

For this reason a dissertation such as this should not be seen as the end of the road for popular music studies and HIV/AIDS research in Kenya. On the contrary, it points to the need for a much greater engagement in the field in order to explore possibilities such as the following:

- The development of programmes that reinforce messages of HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention to young people at primary, secondary and tertiary education levels through popular music with which they identify and which will enable them to reach out to one another with such messages.
- The development of campaigns to increase awareness amongst composers and performers of popular music of their influence in the lives of young people, and that they have an important role in reversing the AIDS crisis in Kenya through their music.
- The development of strategies through which the government of Kenya and the ministry of education recognize the communicative capability of music, particularly that of popular music, to strengthen its place in the curriculum as an effective means of engaging the youth in the issues affecting them.

Therefore, as was pointed out earlier in this dissertation, the efficacy of the intervention of popular music in the social crisis of HIV/AIDS lies precisely in its sub-cultural status, that for this reason it is not experienced by the youth as an imposition of the hegemonic discourses of parental cultures, of teachers, or of
government agencies. It is therefore uniquely placed as a highly successful means of communication and education, and should be appreciated and valued by all as a tool that is vital in the efforts of our societies to bring about the kinds of social changes that will make real progress on the road to ridding our planet of the scourge of HIV/AIDS.


ADDENDUM A: WASIKE WA MUSUNGU DISCOGRAPHY

The album *Lulumbe* was recorded and compiled by Nyokha Studios, Bungoma in 1998, and contains the following songs:

- Sikhula Sicha Enju
- Sibabolela
- Kumoyo Kusiuka
- Khwatima Chimbilo
- Kawele Sakamanyikha
- Ikula Mliango
- Enjala Yamakhale
- Elumboka
- Chindulandula
- Bandu Bangelekha

The album *Malakasi Jazz Band: Big G 10* was recorded and compiled by Nyokha Studio, Bungoma in 2003, and contains the following songs:

- Siyanja barende
- Litende
- Basani
- Olinabio
- Sibonekhe
- Kamakumba
- Chikura
- Khumilila kamare
- Kyayuni
The album *Enda Erera Bitina* was recorded and produced by Nyokha Studios, Bungoma in 2003, and contains the following songs:

*Enda erera bitina*

*Busomi bwa lelo*

*Lipesa liatiba*

*Nja wanana*

*Omukambisi*

*Lelo balomana*

*Bilwa Biekhubita*

*Kamasika Bubwario*

*Narebile Nola*

*Khukhwiyombakha*

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**ADDENDUM B: CIRCUTE AND JO-EL DISCOGRAPHY**

The group recorded only two singles, produced by Calif Records, Nairobi. They are:


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**ADDENDUM C: THE LONGOMBAS DISCOGRAPHY**

The song *Dondosa* was recorded and produced by Ogopa Deejays, Nairobi in 2002.

The song *Piga Makofi* was recorded and produced by Ogopa Deejays, Nairobi in 2003.

The album *Chukua* was recorded and produced by Ogopa Deejays, Nairobi in 2005, and contains the following songs:

*Chukua*

*Vuta Pumz*

*Dondosa*

*Usinihande*

*Zuruba*

*Urembo wako*

*Une amour fresh*

*Wazimu*

*Shikamore*

*Songesha*

*Piga makofi*

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ADDENDUM D: PRINCESS JULLY DISCOGRAPHY

The album *Princess Jully & Jolly Boys Band* was compiled by Oula Productions, Nairobi in 2005, and contains the following songs:

Marehemu Jully I (Princess Jully)
Marehemu Jully II (Princess Jully)
Adhis wa George (G. Dume)
Loice Nyar Shirati (A. Nyamingo)
Jashon Elisha Ochola (O Bolingo)
Ochieng Aran (Princess Jully)
Mary min Atieno (Alex)
Pamela Nyiek Olivier (S Apiyoo)
Auma Nyar J. Pamba (Davy)
Dunia Mbaya Chunguze no 2-I
Dunia Mbaya Chunguze no 2-II

The album *Princess Jully Top Hits Volume I* was compiled by Oula Productions, Nairobi in 2008, and contains the following songs:

Yuak Jully I
Yuak Jully II
Marehemu Jully I
Marehemu Jully II
Dunia Mbaya Chunguze
Dunia Mbaya No. I
Amayo Chales
Agwenge
Aroko Charles

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1 The names given in brackets indicate the composers of the songs, where these are acknowledged on the album cover.
The album **Malo Malo** was recorded by Next Level Productions, Nairobi in 1997, and it contains the following songs:

*Aroko*
*Malo Malo*
*Dunia Mbaya*
*Agwenge*
*Amayo Charles*
*Tom ja Chabera*
Question 1. Who is Wasike wa Musungu

Wasike wa Musungu was a Bukusu musician born in Bungoma district of Western Kenya in early 1930s in the Malakisi Village. He was circumcised in 1948 and belonged to an age set called Omunyange Osimikha. He unfortunately died in the year 2000.

Question 2. What type of music did Wasike sing?

Wasike mostly sang his own composed music in which he would perform live with the Litungu. With the Litungu knowledge, he transferred the same genius to the western guitar. With time he formed his own band in which he used modern band instruments to perform. In the band he included the 2 box (the two guitars play rhythm, melody and bass effects interchangeably) guitars and drum kit. He got a play mate by the name James wa Otong’oli whom they played along with the rest of his musical life.

Question 3. What generally would Wasike sing about?

Wasike’s themes were all round the life of the Bukusu people. His topics ranged from politics and politicians to educating people on the norms and values of Bukusu culture and on the importance upholding these values. In this, he served as a musician, entertainer and a leader in the community by virtue of:

- Narrating elaborate historical accounts of the community,
Outlining virtues and vices in the community for instance he would sing in rebuke of vices such as laziness, theft, fornication, and adultery.

Acting as an agent of communication.

Pushing fourth political agenda by singing politics and politicians.

Advising the community on various issues.

Acting as a source of knowledge about the community.

This explains why he sang most of his songs in Bukusu language. Through music, Wasike would also articulate various issues such as the role of different people in the society especially men and women; respect for marriage as a sanctified institution; and life and culture in general.

Wherever Wasike appeared, he observed people around him keenly as a form of research on what he could sing about next. The people were thus ever cautious whenever they were around Wasike because they could potentially fall prey of his song’s themes. He commanded so much respect such that people had to be careful about what they did or spoke about even in his absence because one could find himself being censored in his next song. He had the freedom to say what most people especially his age mates would prefer not talk about in public especially when he sang about HIV/Aids in the song Lulumbe. He has also addressed quite a number of themes including politics, where he talked about the killing of Masinde Muliro, in the song Omukambisi Masinde Muliro and Fredrick Masinde. He also sang in praise of the late Vice president Kijana Wamalwa for rising up to occupy the political shoes of his predecessor and mentor Masinde Muliro both at the community level and at the national level. This he said when he echoed Wamalwa’s speech rising in the song Enombela.
Question 4. How would you describe Wasike’s live performances?

The shows were graced by dancing and lots of entertainment. I say so because, even though Wasike had graduated from using his Litungu (in which he is exemplary good in) to using a live band, he would incorporate it once in a while in his live shows. Even in times that he never physically incorporated the instrument, his songs maintained the traditional idiom of the bukusu music in rhythm, the lyricism and in the dances that his audience incorporated. His music and the way he presented it showed high sense of poetic and oratory endowment, coupled with irresistible humor that attracted a large following of audience for himself.

Question 5. Which dances do Wasike’s audience mostly incorporate in the live shows staged by Wasike for instance in the song Lulumbe?

There are various dances that Wasike’s audience can incorporate in Wasike’s shows. But in the case of Lulumbe and also depending on the style in which the song is played, the most appropriate dance style for most people are the Kamabeka and the Kumuchenje.

Kumuchenje has the same characteristic as the rhythm that Wasike plays. That is, it assumes the compound duple time that is fluid. Just think of this in his song ta-te-ti-ta-te-ti-ta-te-ti-ta on this time 6/8 with quavers only. That is the same thing with Kumuchenje. Kumuchenje needs an accomplished Litungu player with all the expertise to play it. Myself i haven’t achieved it properly as such. It is performed at the height of a performance. That is when he player has reached his climax and now time for people to expose their dance ability. All the dancers move to the side and give individual dancers to each expose his talent. Since Kamabeka (shoulders) are tired, it is now the head neck work to take place. The head is moved side-side, front-back interchangeably, to the rhythm of the song. The dancer may equally opt to augment or diminish his dance rhythm.
depending on the level of artistry. They do this interchangeably with a lot of fun around the whole dance. The dance is performed by both men and women. The feet at this point are for mobility and not any dance movement, though one may do some patterns on the same. The position of the legs and hands are at discretion of the dancer. Kumuchenje is the most typical style in the song as per my explanation on the rhythmic characteristic above. Two, Kumuchenje is the oldest style on Litungu playing that can be explained by the elders. It is reserved for beers parties as it elicits a lot of entertainment. Three it depicts the most intricate rhythmic artistry on the Litungu. You can imagine all that Wasike’s band does on the lead, rhythm guitars is done by a single person on the Litungu Kamabeka can also be danced in Wasike’s song. Why is because, Kamabeka is done by shaking the shoulders, both of the at once, or interchangeably where one moves in front, the other moves back. The body movement maybe one stroke style or vibrato style. One may dance while standing, he may also move on his feet, he may kneel down, while standing he may hold his hands on the knees and the dance will be possible. If dancing in a group, the people will form different linear, circular, patterns depending on the arena in which they are performing, that is for the sake of space management. Kamabeka dance style may be appropriate for the song Lulumbe because of the song’s rhythm and speed, but not the song fitting in the dance. One may thus vary the dance in any way to accommodate the song. Kamabeka is danced by everyone, both men and women, in the community.

Question 6. Wafula, I know you are a Litungu player. What really inspired you to this instruments that is so unpopular among the youths in Nairobi and what even drove to the decision of echoing Wasike’s voice in this city of Nairobi

It happens that I did not grow in Nairobi. I only came to Nairobi in 1998 to join college. My source of inspiration for the instrument was my father Anicet Wafula. He is an accomplished player apart from being a music teacher, and a performer.
My father was fond of story telling in the evenings, and whenever he got to the middle of the story he could get hold of his Litungu and play a song to push fourth the theme of the story. This was so enjoyable that we couldn't resist being part of the jig. Whenever he went to work I took up the instrument and tried to imitate what he did. Every one of my six brothers and two sisters competed to outdo the other in learning how to play the instruments and this motivated us the more. My father held beer parties at his home many times and he would also invite other Litungu players to come play at these parties and this also worked to our advantage to sharpen the skills that we had acquired from our father. I perfected my skills in school where I had to play for competition during the music festival. It happens that the instrument is unpopular among the youth but I appreciate it because it gives a totally different feel of music from the common genre of rap and Kapuka musical sounds of Nairobi today. I now perform in Nairobi with the Zikiya Band and many people, both young and old, appreciate the sound a lot.

Question 7. It seems like your father was a great inspiration to you in Litungu playing. How come you have such a passion for Wasike’s music and Litungu skills?

Well I did learn from my dad how to play litungu; however, I listened to Wasike a lot when I was young!!! My dad had an LP player; where like a third of his music was for Wasike. This gave me an opportunity to listen to the music extensively. Two, I did mention that our home was fond of beer parties; during the drinking sessions, the old men could tire from listening to music and descend to discussion about the music and the musicians. From this I captured alot especially about Wasike. There was another musician (WANJALA WAMBUKHA) who was older than Wasike and was equally popular though played the accordion in the same style as Wasike. I heard alot about him too. Wasike’s influence on my playing of litungu is basically in the poetry aspect of it. I wish you
could understand Kibukusu. The guy is so poetic in his setting of lyrics, an aspect i admired most and so i borrowed a great deal from him as well.  

Does that answer your query????

ADDENDUM F: COMPACT DISC RECORDINGS

Track 1  Lulumbe: Wasike wa Musungu ..........................04:20
Track 2  Juala: Circute and Jo-el...........................................04:14
Track 3  Vuta Pumz: The Longombas .................................04:14
Track 4  Dunia Mbaya Chunguze: Princess Jully .................05:53

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