AUDIBLE PUBLICS: POPULAR MUSIC AND THE POLITICS OF PARTICIPATION

IN POSTCOLONIAL UGANDA

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This dissertation project is a historical and analytical examination of how popular music has participated in the transformation of Uganda's public sphere into a more participatory space since the early 1990s. Popular music has rendered previously marginalized publics audible and visible. By marginalized, I refer to the trivialization of the social aspirations of collectivities by the state or the dominant public. By publics, I refer to collectivities that exchange information, debate ideas, and advocate for change in physical and virtual spaces. "Marginalized publics" are thus, collectivities identified by processes of sharing information, debating ideas, and advocating for social change.

When president Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M) took over power from General Tito Okello Lutwa in 1986, he promised fundamental change. Although Museveni has tried his best, most of his promises about change have not yet been delivered. Moreover, Museveni's ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party has since the early 1990s, increasingly been hostile to the basic rights of assemblage, association and the freedom of expression. Ironically, the hostility of Museveni's government has promoted rather than prevented the rise of multiple publics that are advocating for social change in the country.

Drawing on fieldwork in Uganda's capital, Kampala, this dissertation project examines the rise of popular music in rendering five marginalized publics audible: Buganda kingdom, the LGBT collectivity, the Kampala street laborers, Besigye's "peoples' government," and Bobi Wine's "people-power" public. I argue that the rise of marginalized publics was simultaneously enhanced by the return to relative (but precarious) peace in the early 1990s, the establishment of democratic organs such as the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) to act as a watch dog against human rights violations, as well as the liberalization (and privatization) of media in the country, which promoted more public avenues of participation (such as privately-owned radio and television stations, and the internet/social media). Through a music-cultural analytical lens, my dissertation project contributes to an understanding of power and representation among emergent democracies. It enriches the growing body of regional studies about music and its dynamic creation of cultural and historical meanings within particular social-cultural contexts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

PREFACE

This dissertation project would not have been possible without the help of several people. However, I wish to first thank the Almighty God who provided me with good health throughout my double doctoral studies at the University of Pittsburgh. May His Name be praised forever.

I also want to thank my parents, Mr. Deusdedit K. Muwonge and Mrs. Susan Namusisi-Muwonge for having brought me into this wonderful world and in so doing, giving me an opportunity to share my talents with others. Dear dad and mum, I thank you so much for your moral and parental support. May God bless you.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation project is a historical and analytical examination of how popular music in Uganda has, since the early 1990s, participated in the transformation of contemporary Ugandan society into a more participatory public sphere, by mediating the social aspirations of marginalized publics. By publics, I refer to groups of people that exchange information, debate ideas and advocate for change in a variety of spaces, physical and virtual. By marginalized, I refer to the status of social groups based on ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, and politics, whose desires and aspirations have been pushed aside by the state, and in some instances, by the dominant public. Throughout this dissertation project, the term "marginalized publics" will be used to refer to groups of people pushed to the margins of Ugandan society which share information, debate ideas, and advocate for social change as a result of their marginalization.

This dissertation project belongs to a growing body of scholarship about popular music in Africa. Since the 1980s, ethnomusicologists, as well as scholars in anthropology, cultural studies, and popular music studies have demonstrated interest in the study of popular music on the continent. My study complements the work of these scholars, particularly in relation to two themes: (1) popular music and identity, as exemplified by the work of scholars including: Christopher Ballantine (2004); Christopher Waterman (1990); Eric Cherry (2012); Lee Watkins (2001); Mai Palmberg and Annemette Kirkegaard (2002); Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2002); Joel Isabirye (2008); and Alex Perullo (2005); and (2) music and politics, as exemplified by the work of Joyce Nyairo and James Ogude (2005); Alex Perullo (2012); Susan Shepler (2010); Birgit Englert (2008); and Gavin Steingo (2016, 2007). These studies and many others have provided a foundation for some of the overarching themes that concern the social conditions

under which popular music is produced, disseminated, and consumed in postcolonial Africa. As my dissertation demonstrates, publics that form around the production and consumption of popular music are also shaped by identity politics and political ideologies.

In Uganda, popular musicians shape the social aspirations of marginalized publics into symbolic material and circulate them through media and live performances. Symbolic material (in the form of popular songs) is consumed by publics in multiple spaces including informal social gatherings, restaurants, trading centers, shopping malls, homes, and at political rallies, to mention a few. As I will demonstrate throughout this dissertation, the consumption of popular songs provides a space for participation, where experiences are shared, identities forged, and alliances negotiated.

The rise of popular music in mediating marginalized publics in postcolonial Uganda is traced back to the early 1990s, about five years after current president Yoweri Museveni took over power in 1986 from General Tito Okello Lutwa. Museveni brought relative (but precarious) stability to the country and his ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party promised to introduce fundamental change that would establish democratic governance. However, in the early 1990s, his hostility to the rights of association, assemblage, and freedom of expression gave rise to fragmented publics composed of marginalized groups of people.

I analyze five marginalized publics and the intersections between them: (1) the Buganda kingdom fighting for economic and political autonomy from the state (in order to control their own laws on land ownership and economic resources within the Buganda region); (2) the Kampala street vendors fighting for improved labor conditions; (3) the emergent LGBT public fighting against discrimination on the basis of sexual identity or preference, as well as equal opportunities in politics and the economy; (4) Dr. Besgiye's "peoples' government," an

2

opposition public which is fighting for power, and (5) the emergent "people-power" public led

by musician and politician Robert Ssentamu Kyagulanyi (a.k.a. Bobi Wine), which, in a similar

way to Besigye's public, is advocating for balance in power, while foregrounding the potential of

youth in participating in leadership.

The above-mentioned social groups are not the only marginalized publics in Uganda.

There are certainly many others, such as the women's' movement, that political scientist Aili

Tripp has previously studied (2004, 2001). For this dissertation project, however, I focus on the

five aforementioned publics to demonstrate how their emergence in tandem with popular music

has enhanced political participation in contemporary Uganda. Additionally, these marginalized

publics were readily available when I conducted preliminary research field visits during the

summers of 2011, 2013 and 2014, as well as my subsequent 10-month field research in Kampala

(May 2015 to March 2016) and follow-up fieldwork in the summer of 2018. It is my contention

that these marginalized publics have contributed to the gradual process of increased civil

participation in Uganda's public sphere since the early 1990s.

The five publics discussed in this dissertation highlight some of the social and historical

formations within Uganda's public sphere, calling particular attention to the changes in civil

participation since the early1990s. However, increasing civil participation has occurred in

tandem with Museveni's autocratic policies (which produced resistance) and the privatization of

media (which produced a space for expression and assemblage), leading to the production of

"audible publics."

As an example, the establishment of Central Broadcasting Services (CBS) radio in 1993

at Bulange-Mengo, Kampala, enhanced the production, circulation, and consumption of popular

discourse (such as popular songs) that mediate the social aspirations of the Buganda public. Also,

in 2004, it was through several privatized media institutions (including print media, radio and Television) in Uganda, that the death of David Kato, the first gay man to publicly announce his sexuality came to light. Kato's death consequently stimulated the gradual rise of popular music in mediating an emergent LGBT public.

Additionally, it was through the media that the 2011 forceful eviction of about 8500 vendors from the streets of Kampala city not only attracted a public outcry, but also the attention and subsequent intervention by popular musicians, including Bobi Wine, who composed a song that spoke out against the harsh implementation of new urban reforms in Kampala.

Popular music was used by opposition political publics in the 2016 presidential elections, when opposition presidential candidate Dr. Besigye and his supporters challenged the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party. Yet, in 2017, an emergent "people power" public of youth formed around Bobi Wine and destabilized Besigye's "peoples' government" public. This movement garnered sympathy and support from the opposition and some members of the ruling party. All the above-mentioned marginalized publics exemplify the role of popular music and media in new social/historical formations. These marginalized publics have become important mechanisms through which the state is held accountable.

Commenting about the mid-1980s to the late 1990s, political scientist/feminist scholar, Aili Tripp described Uganda's style of governance as "Museveni's *de facto* system" (Tripp 2001: 103).[1] By *de facto,* Tripp meant the kind of one-party style of governance, which strictly operates at the exclusion of other organized opposition parties, similar to authoritarianism as opposed to democratic governance (see also Tripp 2004: 8). Later, moreover, Museveni's *de facto* system of

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[1] This system of governance is similar to what the French Marxist Philosopher Althusser has called the *Repressive State Apparatus* (RSA): the government, army, police, judiciary (courts), and prison system (Althusser 1971).

governance shamelessly became manipulative. For instance, in 2005, a constitutional referendum was forced upon the people of Uganda that culminated in the removal of the initial two-year presidential limit. As Ugandan retired political journalist Andrew Mwenda has observed, the removal of presidential term limits was a well-planned ploy to keep Museveni in power (Mwenda 2007: 24). Even worse, since the reinstatement of a multi-party system of governance in 2005, Museveni and his ruling NRM party has not only remained authoritarian, but also increasingly hostile to the basic rights of assemblage, association, and freedom of expression. Ironically, these were the very hostilities that inspired his participation as leader of the guerilla war which brought him to power through military means in 1986.

Tripp has noted that since "many African countries, including multi-party states, have found themselves in stalled democratic transitions or in a state of political limbo within the context of a semi-authoritarian regime, autonomy increasingly becomes very important because it determines in large measure what can and cannot be done within various political constraints" (Tripp 2001: 103-4). By autonomy, Tripp means a sense of self-governing, which, in the context of publics, renders them active in shaping their own destinies. By the same understanding, a self-governing public would not remain redundant at the receiving end, but rather, engage in initiatives that enhance their participation in shaping their destiny.

Indeed, autonomy is the way to get things done in a system characterized by such profound constraints to action. I argue that popular music has provided a relatively autonomous space of participation, where marginalized publics are rendered audible in a variety of physical and virtual spaces, since the early 1990s. The level of autonomy through which popular songs are produced, circulated and consumed is elaborated in the case studies that constitute this dissertation.

Musicians have shaped social and cultural aspirations of marginalized publics into symbolic form (such as audio and music videos) and circulated them on social media, radio, television, and the Internet. These symbolic materials are mediated through a network of actors (such as musicians, music producers and managers, music and video producers, fans, writers in print media, as well as radio and television presenters). Given the nature of Uganda's fragmented public sphere, it is my contention that popular music has become a creative arena which is crucial to the participation of civil society.

Popular music has provided a *relatively* autonomous space, where marginalized publics are taking a more active role in shaping their own destinies. Throughout this dissertation project, I employ the term "relative autonomy" to refer to the state's and dominant groups' actions of surveillance and constant interference in the operations of the popular music economy and the media. As Garofalo has noted, popular music is confronted by hegemonic forces, which, according to Gramsci (1971), rely on coercion and consent (Garofalo 1987: 89). While hegemonic practices are subduing in nature, they also work towards winning the consent of the controlled, a dynamic relationship that renders the autonomy of popular music practices relative. As an example, the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), while acting on behalf of the state has, on several occasions, censored Bobi Wine's popular songs and banned them from being aired on national or private radio or television stations on the basis of their potential to incite violence among civil society. Since Bobi Wine became a member of Parliament in 2017, the Uganda Police Force has halted or prohibited the live performance of political songs, thereby threatening the musical careers of musicians such as Bobi Wine, Nubian Li, and Bosmic Otim.

In an ironic turn of events, in January 2019 when Bobi Wine was performing in Kingston, Jamaica, Peace Mutuuzo, a female Minster of State for Gender and Culture in

Museveni's government, announced that the cabinet of ministers would come up with a new law to regulate the music economy of Uganda. This announcement was interpreted by media as an attack on Bobi Wine, whose popularity was growing among youth (as discussed in chapter 6). In a January 18, 2019 interview with Uganda's online news provider, *Eyalama*, Bobi Wine reacted to Mutuuzo's announcement stating: "The cowardly regime is bringing up new laws and regulations to gag artistes in the hope that they can kill the music. They are so scared of the arts. They don't know what else to do, except try to silence the hundreds of singers, producers, poets, comedians, cartoonists, and other entertainers who are raising voices against the oppression, suppression, and exploitation of the Ugandan people, by a small clique of individuals who rule over us . . . I have been speaking to my fellow artistes to speak up against the injustices before it is too late. . . If artists do not speak out with one voice now, it won't take long before they are forced to sing only songs in praise of the regime or be jailed like people under Mobutu in Zaire!" (*Eyalama* January 18, 2019). Wine's response outrightly rejects the proposed new regulations, as had been anticipated by the media, and calls upon Ugandan artists to resist the government.

As I will demonstrate in each of the five case studies in this dissertation, repression by the state and in some cases, the dominant culture, has promoted the rise of publics. These publics are drawing on popular music and media as relatively *autonomous* spaces of participation where their aspirations are articulated. Additionally, marginalized publics are using the Internet as well, as an additional avenue of participation which brings physical and virtual publics into conversation without worrying about the time and space constraints within which flows of information take place. In the following section, I unveil the theoretical framework that informs my conception of marginalized publics within Uganda's emerging democracy.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

The formation of emergent publics in contemporary Uganda is a result of the interaction of heterogeneous networks of social actors and cultural institutions. This means that any examination of popular music and its subsequent social relations requires an interdisciplinary framework, which takes into consideration the heterogeneity of networks and cultural institutions that render popular music a viable avenue of political participation. I contend that the mediation of publics in contemporary Uganda is a dynamically multilayered and non-linear process, which involves multiple cultural brokers and institutions. While heterogeneous cultural brokers include fans, musicians, music producers, managers, and radio and television producers/presenters, important cultural institutions include, music studios, and media (including the Internet, as well as radio, television, and print media).

On the one hand, musicians depend on the media and its resources to produce and circulate symbolic material to consumers. On the other, the media not only depends on musicians to produce symbolic forms that are significantly vital in sustaining the flow of information, and communication across society, but also to sustain those media apparatuses or industries. As such, to examine how musicians as well as their audio and visual symbolic forms mediate contemporary publics in Uganda, the media must be understood as a central component of society and culture (Hjarvard, 2008: 114).

Throughout this dissertation, I draw on a tripartite framework that takes into consideration: (i) *publics*, (ii) *media*, and (iii) *heterogeneous social networks* (of cultural brokers) to demonstrate how the production, circulation and consumption of popular music renders marginalized publics audible. I contend that the three dimensions of this framework are inseparable and work in tandem to reinforce each other. According to Nancy Fraser (1992) and

8

Michael Warner (2002), publics function in conflict, and they give rise to complex relations among them. As such, any critical analysis of the relations that popular music engenders among publics within society can be understood through an intersecting framework of publics, media, and heterogeneous actors. This framework is not only useful in rendering a critical analysis of songs and their accompanying music videos, but also in enhancing multiple interpretations of meanings among publics in simultaneous conflict and agreement with each other.

1.1.1 Publics

The notion of publics is very useful in examining the social and cultural aspirations of historically excluded groups of people that have emerged within the spheres of democracies (such as that of the US, Europe and Australia) as well as among emerging democracies in Africa and, in particular, contemporary Uganda. Through the lens of multiplicity, public sphere theory is redeemed from any reductionist claims, which at one time collapsed Europe's public sphere into a monolithic entity (Habermas 1962), and Africa's into two publics: (1) the primordial public whose groupings and sentiments determine public behavior and is moral, and (2) the civil public (or civic public) which is modeled upon colonial structuralism and is immoral (Ekeh 1975).

Ekeh's (1975) understanding of the civic public is premised upon the group of African elites whose training in education is structured through a colonial lens. It is Ekeh's perception that once these elites return home, they not only behave like colonialists, in terms of their speech, or clothing, but also in their political behavior, by promoting colonial systems of governance. Their style of politics is also shaped by rampant corruption and hunger for quick wealth; thus, the civic public in which they participate is immoral. Here, the immorality of the civic public is

9

constructed in contrast to the primordial public, which is shaped by a sense of morality in terms of social behavior, equity, and respect for authority. Summarily, the dual-structure of Africa's public that Ekeh argues for is a result of colonialism on pre-colonial Africa. While morality and immorality constitute a conceptual tool of analysis, Ekeh's argument overlooks the role of people as active agents of transformation in society. Neither does Ekeh's framework engage with new social movements, as well as changing technologies and globalization, which have rendered the study of publics more complex.

Historically, exclusion from participation is traced through systems of marginalization in a variety of places. However, marginalization creates the conditions of possibility for groups to contest those exclusionary practices; in this way, power, as French philosopher Michel Foucault (1980) has noted, is not just repressive, but also constructive and creative. Drawing on Foucault, I engage with the notion of power as an entity of relations at once capable of repression and creative resistance. This simultaneous quality of power, in Foucault's view, allows us to understand how marginalized publics strategize from the bottom up. In this way, power and marginalization are not conceived of as two ends of a pole, but rather, as a complex set of intertwining relations. These intersecting relations of power have rendered the rise of marginalized publics at particular historical times and places.

For political scientists, these publics and their actions have constituted the basis of understanding transformations within public spheres around the world. For instance, among English-speakers, public sphere theory is traced back to scholars John Dewey (1927, trans. 1954) and Hannah Arendt (1958) who were preoccupied with the distinction between the private and public realms of society. But following the 1989 English translation of Habermas's *The*

Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (1962), public sphere theory gained more attention from a range of scholars across disciplines.

Locating the emergence of a bourgeois public sphere within the public (which also constituted the state), as well as the private (which constituted economic and domestic relations), it was Habermas's thesis that the conditions of 18th Century Europe constituted a monolithic public sphere. According to Habermas, periodic presses (such as the critical journal) gave rise to the emergence of new spaces of sociability (such as salons and coffee houses). These new social spaces became avenues of rational debate among bourgeois elites who had a stake at holding the parliament accountable (Thompson 1995: 70). But the bourgeois public was exclusive because its membership was restricted to those with economic and educational capital.

Arguing that Habermas ignored the exclusive character of the bourgeoisie, scholars Edward Thompson (1963) and Christopher Hill (1975) have noted that other marginalized groups of society working in opposition to the dominant bourgeois public sphere existed. Arguing from a Marxist perspective, Hill (1975) examined signs of class struggles evident among the 1940s and 1950s public spheres that function at multiple levels of society to destabilize control by the social elite of Europe. Because conflicts and struggles were directed to the elite class, it is clear that by concentrating on the bourgeois public sphere, Habermas neglected other marginalized publics that were not part of the bourgeois public, but whose actions were vital to democratic practices.

Drawing on a feminist perspective, Joan Landes (1988) and Nancy Fraser (1992) have similarly noted that Habermas neglected marginalized counterpublics whose actions were opposed to the elite class of the bourgeoisie. Examining France between the years 1750 to 1850, Landes (1988) notes that women were excluded from participation since the public sphere was

11

always male-dominated. To the exclusion of women, Fraser (1992) identifies other working-class groups (based on race and ethnicity), as well as minorities, who constituted important social groups of 18th Century Europe (Fraser 1994: 113). For Fraser, Europe constituted "multiple counterpublics" with conflicting modes of expression (quoted in Mustapha 2012: 31).

With modernity and technological advancement, multiple forms of representation and agency developed around the globe. For example, although the Internet is becoming more exclusive, Mark Poster (1995) has recognized its contribution towards enhancing participation by millions of people. And because of its scarce accessibility in several places, the Internet, according to Pieter Boeder (2000), complicates traditional meanings of a public sphere beyond local or national boundaries. This means that by rendering previous national boundaries blurry, the Internet has generated more participation by those who were previously excluded (Mustapha 2012: 32).

Beyond the Habermasian monolithic thesis, Robert Asen and Daniel Brouwer (2001) lay the groundwork for emerging paradigms of public sphere theory. They call attention to (i) multiplicity of publics; (ii) permeability of the publics (their blurry boundaries in relation to the private); and (iii) the separatist model, which seeks to reexamine the state and its institutions as part of the public sphere. These three paradigms, according to Asen and Brouwer, are critical of the changing social relations that result from historical contingences, and in particular, advancements in technology. Similar to Boeder (2000), the paradigms presented in Asen and Brouwer's work problematize the traditional division between the public and the private. They not only illuminate the rise of publics as a result of marginalization by the state, but also show how their participation is enhanced by communication technology.

One of the most influential works about publics is Michael Warner's seminal article, *Publics and Counterpublics* (2002). Similar to Fraser (1994), Warner draws attention to simultaneity – that is, the simultaneous functioning of publics, regardless of their conflicting interests. He argues that publics come and go as they engage and disengage in what he calls "the consumption of texts," a platform on which publics negotiate cultural processes that entail the acquisition of certain normative social habits, as well as the ability to articulate them (Warner 2002: 8). This is true with popular music, whose textual capabilities provide the basis for symbolic material, with the potential to articulate the social constraints of marginalized publics, while functioning as a discursive template.

Ethnomusicologists have also drawn upon Warner's concept of publics to examine the relations that arise when collectivities engage with music as a form of expression. For example, in his study of Aboriginal music/dance, Byron Dueck (2013) employs the concept of "imaginaries" to refer to social formations that are shaped by the circulation and consumption of mass-mediated performances as well as published works. These imaginaries, according to Dueck, are similar to Warner's conception of publics as well as counterpublics, even though they bear similarity with Benedict Anderson's (1991) notion of "imagined communities." For Dueck, therefore, *imaginary publics* are constituted "as people perform and publish for unknown audiences, and especially as they acknowledge previously circulating performances and publications of others…[as such,] imaginaries emerge as performances, broadcasts, publications,

and acts of bodily discipline respond to previous ones, and anticipate others to come" (Dueck 2013: 6).[2]

Dueck (2013) further introduces two terms to frame his conception of publics among Aboriginal people. One of these terms is "intimacy," which refers to publics that engage with knowable others especially in contexts of rituals that may involve face-to-face social and musical contact (Dueck 2013: 7). The other is "public spaces," a concept employed to call to mind the nature of publicness characterized by the simultaneous sense of intimacy and strangeness. This, as Dueck argues, is seen in the simultaneous potential of performances in engaging strangers (through mass mediation), and people who physically show up for performances. "Public spaces" is thus, a unique concept for its ability to engender "intimate" and "imaginary" publics (Dueck 2013: 7).

Dueck's conception of publics as intimate and imaginary resonates well with the way I frame publics in this dissertation (as physical and virtual collectives). I am also cognizant of the potential of symbolic material in engaging both physical (or intimate) and virtual (or imaginary) publics. And in so doing, the consumption of symbolic material produces a series of complex relations between the sonic and human beings.

Part of these relations accrue from various practices of listening, as Anna Maria Ochoa Gautier has shown (2006). Approaching the study of publics from a sound studies perspective, Gautier examines how practices of sonic recontextualization by traditional musicians and the

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[2] Dueck's conception of publics as imaginaries is further developed in a book chapter which focuses on how musicians align their practices with publics. Here, Dueck (2017) examines how learning and instruction in jazz, classical art music traditions, and powwow singing and dancing engender intimate publicness as a result of the contexts through which transmission of knowledge takes place. At the same time, he notes that the practices of reproducing published works involves the training of the mind and body to orient oneself to the unseen other(s) whose musical orientation is important to the success of one's performance.

music industry during the first half of the twentieth century formed an aural modernity in Latin America. This form of aural modernity is also confronted by power struggles as the result of its mediation by two contradictory practices; first, "epistemologies of purification – which seek to provincialize sounds in order to ascribe them a place in the modern ecumene and epistemologies of transculturation – which either enact or disrupt such practices of purification" (Gautier 2006: 803). Such epistemes that shape the aural, according to Gautier, are also at the center of Latin

America's unequal modernity, which is characterized by an implied public of lettered men and women, and another aural public based on ethnicity, gender/sexuality and class, among other categories within the Latin American public sphere. As I will demonstrate in this dissertation, publics are shaped by a sense of aurality through which they are able to negotiate their identities, collectiveness, belonging, consciousness, and above all, participation within Uganda's public sphere.

Proceeding with an understanding of publics and their simultaneity (as intimate or physical, or imaginary or virtual), I acknowledge their workings in different ways, at particular places and specific times. As such, it is important to understand the cultural/historical specificity of publics, if any meanings about their nature, sense of belonging, formation, and sustainability over time are to be comprehended. It is along this line of reasoning that I present the case of publics in Uganda, whose rise is discussed in relation to forces of colonialism, post-colonialism, capitalism, and democratization. It is my understanding that colonialism prepared the way for a sense of liberalism which has enhanced the embrace of global capitalism. The free-market system welcomed modern-day technologies of production, dissemination, and consumption, enhancing participation in ways that were not possible before modern technologies of today's capital markets were introduced. A detailed examination of the nature of publics is undertaken in

the five substantial chapters (2, 3. 4, 5, and 6) of this dissertation. For now, I discuss how the concept of "public sphere" has been theorized in Africa so as to provide the backbone for my overarching argument.

1.1.2 Theorizing the Public Sphere in Postcolonial Africa

Bayo Lawuyi (2012), Achille Mbembe (2001), Karin Barber (1997) and Peter Ekeh (1975) are some of the prominent Africanist scholars whose work on conceptualizing the notion of publics in Africa has had a profound impact on the study of colonialism, post-colonialism, representation, agency, politics, democracy, and popular culture.

For instance, drawing on the history of colonialism in Nigeria, Ekeh (1975) argues that Africa is constituted by: (i) a primordial public, and (ii) a civic public. According to Ekeh, the primordial public is the native public realm whose relations (in terms of connections, ties or attitudes) influence and determine the individual's public behavior. The civic public is also a public realm, whose inheritance of colonial structures of administration and politics renders it immoral due to lack of moral linkages and obligation to public conduct (Ekeh 1975: 92). The latter is accordingly constituted by westernized elites who lead others by employing the same logical tools (ideologies) as the colonizers. And for Ekeh, it is the civic public that has led to a split in the Nigerian public sphere into two publics.

Ekeh's conception of the primordial public resonates with precolonial systems of ethnic governance that defined and shaped individual and collective behavior. Additionally, the way Ekeh's understanding of the civic public in Nigeria is similar to Uganda, since the two countries share similar colonial experiences. However, as I argue in this dissertation, the civic public has never been monolithic. As such, we cannot perceive it as an alternative to the pre-colonial

16

primordial public, which is Ekeh's basis for the bifurcation of publics. The civic public is very complex, entailing multiple marginalized groups of people not only repressed by the immoral nature of the civic public itself, but also by the conservative primordial public.

Mbembe agrees that legacies of colonialism reside in the public of Westernized elites by noting that "the postcolony is also made up of a series of corporate institutions and a political machinery that, once in place, constitute a distinctive regime of violence" (Mbembe 2001: 102). He agrees with Ekeh's analysis of the civic public as immoral, corrupt, and self-centered towards personal gains. However, Mbembe disagrees with Ekeh's partitioning of Nigeria into two publics, arguing that Nigeria is composed of multiple publics that are promoted by the failure of the state and its bureaucratic institutions to create a system of meaning directed towards a unified postcolony. In searching for avenues of participation, publics, according to Mbembe, form and end up enacting counter ideologies to those of the repressive state (Mbembe 2001: 108).

Mbembe's point is significant to my argument for its recognition of multiple groups of people and their individual as well as collective struggles. By locating the colonial legacy among Nigeria's westernized elites, and by foregrounding a certain class of elites, Mbembe is calling our attention to Ekeh's disregard for other groups. In fact, Ekeh's work here falls short, in a similar way to Habermas's initial conception of 18th Century England as a monolithic public. In reality, there are a number of groups of people, with particular constraints in relation to ethnicity, gender/sexuality, labor conditions, and politics, as discussed in the various chapters of this dissertation.

At his 2012 professorial inaugural lecture at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, Olatunde Lawuyi clarified the nature of publics by introducing a new term "sceptical public," which arose after colonialism. The sceptical public, according to Lawuyi, is a part of civil society that is

17

oppositional in its structural functioning; its ideals are directed towards opposing the state. The sceptical public, according to Lawuyi, considers any future action by the state as "late, prejudicial, sinister, incompetent and suspicious" (Lawuyi 2012: 8).

Lawuyi's work adds another dimension to my argument about multiplicity of publics. Acknowledging the sceptical public as one of many publics, he calls to mind its amoral character. By amoral, Lawuyi means the lack of any sense of morality to acknowledge what is right and wrong. With the marginalized publics described in chapters 5 and 6 in this dissertation, I employ moral and amoral characters interchangeably as a strategy to counter Museveni's regime of brutality. Of course, such an approach is based on anger and, as a result, these publics tend to base their actions on an absolute rejection of the state. Lawuyi's argument encourages us to problematize the nature and character of sceptical publics, but also to think of their complexity as a basis for their audibility.

Responding to Lawuyi's insight about the nature of publics, Nigerian philosopher Adeshina Afoloyan (2012) draws on the work of political scientist Billy Dudley (1975) to argue that as a polity, a state can only acquire political virtue in relation to actions by the sceptical public. This implies that the actions of the sceptical public, whether amoral or otherwise, are not simply in response to the state's repressive apparatus, but are the result of the complex interactions between the state and the public. And while the two may be occupying opposing views, actions by publics, according to Afoloyan, are also the basis for "moral-intellectual leadership." Thus, the sceptical public is central to meaningful participation, although "scepticism and political virtue occupy diametrically opposed conceptual poles" (Afoloyan, 2012: 62).

Lawuyi's (2012) argument about the character of the sceptical public offers great insight into understanding the nature of symbolic materials. By the sceptical character of symbolic materials, I am referring to popular songs that have been labelled as amoral, and as such, are said to have a negative influence on people. But what constitutes the amoral character of these songs is not the songs themselves, but also their appropriation and contextualization by sceptical publics that have been construed as lacking any sense of moral judgement about what is good or bad. This labelling has mostly been directed at Bobi Wine's songs which were appropriated in the context of politics. This will be further elaborated in chapter six.

As I argue throughout this dissertation, popular music renders publics audible. This means that publics appropriate popular music in meaningful ways in the construction of their collective identities. I view the publics discussed in this dissertation, in tandem with popular music, with some scepticism. Thus, as Afoloyan reminds us, the amoral character of a sceptical public is not only necessary for enhancing participation, but also understanding it.

It should be noted that media is central to the production, dissemination, and consumption of popular music. I recognize this important complimentary role throughout my dissertation by illuminating the complex processes of production, circulation, and consumption. Indeed, as I demonstrate in chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, the media and popular music support each other in shaping the nature and symbolic practices of publics. Thus, I turn to how the media plays a role in shaping my theoretical framework. Moreover, an understanding of media is central to my analysis of choreography, voice, and the body in popular music videos.

1.1.3 Mediation and Heterogenous Actors

In order to understand publics, one must understand the important role of the media in the production and circulation popular music to its various consumers. Media is also the site where heterogeneous social actors and cultural institutions interact. In this complex web of mediation characterized by overlapping roles and relations, power and consent, as well as consensus and conflict, the media, cultural brokers and symbolic material become equally important mechanisms of participation.

Scholars Lance Bennett and Robert Entman (2001), as well as Dan Nimmo and James Combs (1989), have employed the notion of *mediation* to call attention to media as both a source of information and a medium of communication. This dual functionality (as source and medium) is very important in lending its *affordability* (ways of being used) to cultural institutions. In communication and popular music studies, mediation considers how society interacts with symbolic material. Keith Negus identifies three associations of mediation: (i) intermediary action; (ii) transmission; and (iii) social relations (Negus 1996: 67-71). For Negus, intermediary action entails power relations among cultural brokers. Such relations involve decision-making, such as which song to record (in the case of studio managers); or which song to disseminate (for radio or television news producers). Those with the power to make decisions that "intervene between production and consumption" are what Negus refers to as "cultural intermediaries" (ibid).

On "transmission," Negus agrees with Bennett and Entman (2001), as well as Nimmo and Combs (1983), who associate mediation with the transmission of information through technological means. Negus notes further that through *intermediary action* and *transmission* "mediation of social relationships is implied" (Negus 1996: 69). And contrary to the classical

Marxist top-down approach of packaging and disseminating cultural commodities (such as music books), mediation, according to Negus, is complex, and involves a "range of processes, movements, relationships and power struggles that occur *between* and *across* the production of popular music [from the bottom-up]" (Negus 1996: 70). Such a process of complexity constitutes an important site for establishing relations of power. It is also where meanings are negotiated, contested, and performed in ways that enhance participation.

For its importance in enhancing circulation, consumption and participation, media is an unavoidable avenue of participation and thus, inseparable from the contemporary day-to-day operations and social relations of society (Hjarvard 2007: 114). In fact, popular musicians end up submitting to the logic of media, at most times, in order to attain their social and economic goals.

Frederick Krotz (2007); Philip Auslandar (2008); Hjarvard (2007); Winfred Schulz (2004); and Jesper Strömbäck (2008) use the term "mediatization" to refer to the process of adapting or transforming social or artistic phenomena to fit a different medium; for example, a Shakespearean play must be adapted or "mediatized" for television. Thus, in communication, a *modus operandus* guides the formatting of symbolic material in different media (Altheide and Snow 1979). To participate in the media, therefore, submission to its logic is requisite even though this comes with certain implications in terms of symbolic representation.

My fieldwork demonstrates the influence of media on production of popular songs. For instance, by drawing on social reality, music videos of several popular songs are shaped by montages from real experiences happening across time and space. Also, images of reenacted social drama are juxtaposed against real life social dramas to reinforce the narratives of the songs. Musicians mainly employ the logic of media in their music videos to present the social reality of society as a model for entertainment and education. My analysis examines the

21

aforementioned modus operandus to understand the ways that musicians communicate their messages.

My dissertation is framed by a tripartite intersection of publics, mediation, and heterogeneous networks. I employ this framework to unpack the complex relations through which the production, circulation, and consumption of popular music in postcolonial Uganda, mediates publics and enhances participation. Through the lens of mediation and heterogeneous networks, I engage with the nature of publics, as well as the politics and the networks of mediation.

1.2 Audibility: "Epistemologies of Sonic Purification and Transculturation"

In this dissertation, I employ the term "audible" not only to refer to the process of being heard, but also the various social relations and material conditions that shape ways and modes of listening. As a starting point, I draw on Gautier's work on aurality in Latin America to situate how the interaction of sonics -- local and foreign, traditional and popular -- shape ways of knowing and listening. These ways of listening to music enhance the mediation of publics, through what Gautier calls epistemologies of "sonic purification and transculturation" (Gautier 2006: 803). For example, in the case of the Buganda public (discussed in chapter 2), the songs that constitute a sense of ethnic pride among the Baganda people are identified by listening habits that tend to provincialize sounds, so as to imagine their particular place in relation to the larger public sphere. Such listening habits that relate to one's sense of belonging or identity are what Gautier refers to as "epistemologies of purification." Even if traditional musical idioms within a song are recontextualized within the realm of mass-mediated music, listeners with habits

22

based on sourcing for a sense of purification, will imagine the local or traditional, however recontextualized such idioms may sound.

On the contrary, the very songs that are crucial in the construction of a Buganda public are characterized by the recontextualization of local or traditional sounds, what Gautier calls "epistemologies of transculturation." This mode of knowing, characterized by the simultaneous distortion and reinvention of the traditional, through the means of technology, introduces to the public new experiences of sounds and textualities. The modes of knowing and listening to these sounds, depending on contexts, engender the rise of publics. Through symbolic material, listeners adopt ways of hearing sonic and textual material relating to their conditions. It is then, I argue, that the process and relations of hearing shape what I frame as publics.

In all substantial chapters of this dissertation project (2, 3, 4, 5, and 6), I discuss in detail the social and material conditions (including the prevailing economic and political climate) that have allowed people to hear voices of opposition, giving rise to the audibility of multiple publics within Uganda's public sphere. In the following section, I provide a brief history of Uganda since independence, to situate the liberalization of media and the inception of popular music as a relatively autonomous platform of participation in the country.

1.3 A Brief History of Uganda Since Independence

The early 1960s are significant in the history of the African continent because many African countries achieved independence. Uganda established its independence from the British in 1962. At the time, the kabaka (king) of Buganda, Sir Edward Mutesa II became the first president of the newly-formed Republic of Uganda. But since his government had been structured along the British style of governance, the position of president was more ceremonial

than political. Rather, the prime-minister, Milton Obote, held the most powerful office in terms of political power. Initially, while the distribution of power did not undermine that of the kabaka as the leader of the most powerful and dominant ethnic institution of the Baganda people, the Buganda kingdom suddenly met its temporary death four years later.

In 1966, Obote ordered a military coup against the Buganda kingdom. Led by one of Obote's top military generals, Idi Amin, Buganda's main palace and administrative building located at Bulange-Mengo, Kampala was destroyed. Consequently, the kabaka was forced into exile in Britain, where he was later assassinated (in November 1969). In the wake of this attack, Obote banned traditional cultural institutions in Uganda, and seized all property of the Buganda kingdom (including buildings and 9000 square miles of land). This gesture marked the start of a long history of militarism and its authoritarian system in the country. Indeed, between the years 1966 to 1986, postcolonial Uganda was to experience political turmoil and economic instability.

For example, in 1971, General Idi Amin commanded a military coup and forcefully took over power from Obote, his former commander-in-chief. Similar to Obote, General Idi Amin was authoritarian and ruthless to his critics who lived in constant fear for their lives. During the period of rampant fear that characterized Amin's governance, civil society depended on an elitist public whose membership supported the prevailing political system. Anyone who did not follow Amin's ideas and prospects for Uganda risked being killed.

Amin's reign of terror and dictatorship ended in 1979 when he was ousted by the government of Tanzania, with the help of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) led by Yusuf Lule. A well-educated man who had served in several capacities (including minister and Assistant Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat) during pre-independence, Lule was installed as president on April 13, 1979. However, he only served until June 20, 1979 (for a

total of 2 months) because of some misunderstandings within the National Consultative

Commission (NCC), a quasi-parliamentary organ that had been created to advise on matters of

governance. The NCC soon replaced Lule with Geoffrey Binaisa who ruled Uganda between

June 1979 and May 1980 when the first democratic general election since independence took

place.

In 1980, Obote returned as president after a hotly contested election won by his Uganda

Peoples' Congress (UPC) party. Obote's second time as president is commonly referred to as

Obote II. Obote II was characterized by rampant brutality and murder of civilians by the military.

In order to remove Obote II from power, Lule's Uganda Freedom Fighters (UFF) party joined

forces with Yoweri Museveni's Popular Resistance Army (PRA), which later became the

National Resistance Army (NRA). Under the leadership of Museveni, the NRA launched a

guerrilla war to contest the election of Obote as president and his undemocratic style of

governance.

In 1985, Obote was deposed by Brigadier General Bazilio Olara-Okello and General Tito

Okello Lutwa. Lutwa ruled Uganda for six months, from July 29, 1985 to January 26, 1986,

before he was ousted by Museveni on January 26, 1986. Museveni's reign would temporarily

end the long-term military maneuver for power, which had preoccupied Uganda since 1966.

Thus, between the years 1966 and 1986, Uganda experienced political turmoil and economic

instability as a result of militarism and its attending dictatorship.

1.3.1 Popular Music as an Arena of Participation

In this section, I provide a brief history of popular music and politics in postcolonial

Uganda. I pay special attention to some of the social/historical conditions that shaped modes of

expression among civil society, enabling common people to contribute to their own destinies in ways that were not possible in the past.

My brief explication of the history of Uganda since independence points out rampant political turmoil and instability, conditions that made it hard for civil society to freely participate in politics. Moreover, the only radio and television institutions at the time were monopolized by the state. Thus, civil society did not view the media as a form of political participation. This is not to say that popular musicians did not sing about politics. They did, but mostly in praise or support of the ruling regime.

Working within conditions of political instability, popular music in the 1970s and 1980s was characterized by the mixture of local, intra-African exchange, and foreign musical sounds (such as jazz). For example, the brass bands that Idi Amin popularized through his patronage were modeled upon colonial musical models. However, Congolese music travelled throughout East Africa and shaped much of the region's popular music soundscape (Kubik 1981: 86). Uganda's *Afrigo* band created *endongo ssemadongo*, a cosmopolitan style of jazz. During the1980s renowned Ugandan popular musician Philly Bongole Lutaaya became known for his important role in educating people about HIV/AIDS through his popular songs.

Those who employed textual critique did so metaphorically, as Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2002) has noted in her analysis of *kadongo kamu*, a vocal and single-guitar musical style that had been fully developed as an identifiable local Ugandan genre by the early 1950s. *Kadongo kamu* musicians were known for their metaphorical prowess and it was through this skill that they provided commentary about society and the state. For example, in her analysis of a *kadongo kamu* popular song, "Kayanda" (a paternal name) by one of Uganda's leading *kadongo kamu* musicians, Willy Mukaabya, Nannyonga-Tamusuza demonstrates how the composer employs

the metaphorical noun "Kayanda" to tactfully comment about the identity of then-president Museveni. As the narrative of the song unfolds, Museveni is described as a squatter who posed as a Ugandan citizen (although ethnically presumed Rwandan), only to end up as president in a host country. By employing a metaphorical noun to describe a gendered male whose displacement from a neighboring country offered him an opportunity for maneuvering his way into the highest political office in Uganda, Mukaabya avoided direct confrontation with Museveni.

One of the avenues that enhanced political commentary through *kadongo kamu* was the use of "deep Luganda" in a story-telling style. According to David Pier (2016), deep Luganda not only entails the choice of words or phrases with multiple meanings, but also their capacity to neatly fit into the groove of the music in a similar way that Ugandan musicians such as Paul Kafeero and Matia Luyima did.

Luganda as a metaphorical tool of critique is further emphasized by Ssewakiryanga and Isabirye who have noted that besides avoiding censorship, metaphors were relatively safer tools of avoiding repercussions, such as persecution or life imprisonment (Ssewakiryanga and Isabirye 2009: 52). This way, *kadongo kamu* enhanced the relative participation by musicians and their audiences that could decipher the hidden meanings of songs. But this form of participation was restrictive; it excluded those who could not decipher deep Luganda. This approach to social/political commentary was dictated by the harsh political instability that Uganda was struggling to recover from. In this context, people could not freely exercise their freedom of speech. Thus, employing textual metaphors in songs was the most convenient way of navigating the harsh political conditions of the time.

To communicate their ideas, *kadongo kamu* musicians initially moved from place to place in search of audiences in spaces such as taverns, shopping centers, bars, and restaurants. But with the establishment of the first state-owned radio station in the country (Radio Uganda) in 1953, the genre would become more popular than before (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005a: 50). Radio enhanced the consumption of *kadongo kamu* as listeners engaged in its discursive rhetoric and shared ideas on a privately-based arrangement as opposed to sharing in the public. The processes of sharing ideas and debating opinions emanating from listenership to *kadongo kamu* not only legitimized the songs and their messages, but also constituted a new mode of relative participation under harsh political conditions.

In a similar way, *katemba* and band music that developed in the 1980s employed metaphorical expressions to comment on the political climate of Uganda. According to Ssewakiryanga and Isabirye (2009), the term *katemba* was coined in the early 1980s to refer to urban theatrical productions that combined music, dance, and acting. Live music (with electric guitars, a drum set, synthesizer and amplified vocals) that accompanied acting was known as *katemba* music. This name *katemba* emerged from music's secondary role as a form of reinforcement of textual messages in theatrical productions. But once it attained autonomy, it later became known as band music to refer to the playing of live music instruments and vocals.

I argue that popular music in the early 1990s enhanced alternative forms of participation that were previously impossible due to state repression, and inaccessibility to technology. The gradual transition to freedom of speech, consequently leading to popular music's new modes of participation in politics, came after Museveni and his NRM party took over power in 1986. Museveni established a relatively democratic system of governance. Museveni privatized radio, television, and print media institutions, avenues where the freedom of speech was exercised.

28

Ssewakilyanga and Isabirye have noted that the "return to relative [but precarious] peace in Uganda [during the 1990s, resulted in] changes in artists' opportunities; the liberalization of the Ugandan media and the 'FM-ization' of the radio…" were central to the development of popular music in Uganda (Ssewakilyanga and Isabirye 2009: 57). The liberalization of radio in the 1990s (including privatization and the increase in band width and number of privately-owned radio stations), as well as the decline in state control and regulations, opened avenues for political participation through media and popular music.

With increasing availability of resources (such as electronics) that made it possible to produce and circulate symbolic materials, popular music was liberalized with the deregulation of radio in the 1990s. Moreover, the state relaxed its censorship of songs. In multiple urban spaces, popular musicians started to openly perform songs about society (including politics). Notable examples include Philly Bongole Lutaaya (R.I.P) whose song "Alone and Frightened" (1988) created awareness about HIV/AIDS. Also, Diplock Segawa's song "Fundamental Change" (1991) became popular in the 1990s for simultaneously praising Museveni's regime, while reminding it of its promise of fundamental change. The success of these songs and many others inspired young politically active musicians to pursue careers in popular music.

Concommitent with the liberalization of media and popular music was the establishment in 1995 of a constitutional amendment that recognized the right of association, assemblage, and freedom of expression. A year later, the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) was established as a watchdog organization against human rights violations. These democratic efforts helped to transform Uganda's public sphere into a more participatory space for civil society. As Tripp (2000) has noted, the new liberal attitude within Uganda's emergent democracy stimulated the women's movement for equal rights in society.

At the time of this writing, multiple popular songs mediate various publics including youth, laborers, women, sexual minorities, traditional cultural institutions (such as the Buganda kingdom) and people affiliated with political parties. In each case, the symbolic material is not simply consumed passively. Rather, the active consumption of popular music is employed as a template for addressing matters of concern to marginalized publics.

When people listen to symbolic material as a public, they draw on textual messages and sonic characteristics to negotiate senses of identity, articulate social aspirations, and resist restrictive political policies. They become an "audible public," and their aurality constitutes a sense of their identity. Publics hear messages in popular songs, however hidden those messages may be. Some songs become the basis of talk show discussions on radio and television which enhance participation by listeners and spectators. Others replicate symbols from popular songs in other arenas of social life as a way of articulating their allegiances. These forms of participation address freedoms such as sexual freedom, a topic that is explored further in chapter 3. And popular musicians employ popular songs to mobilize supporters during elections, which I will demonstrate in chapters 5 and 6.

1.3.2 Defining Popular Music as a Political Tool in Uganda

While I employ the term "popular" as a prefix to the term "music," I am cognizant of its historical contradictions. As Tony Bennett has previously warned us, the term "popular" is not only unclear, but also misleading, confusing, and contradictory (Bennett 1980: 18). The polyphony of contradictions in defining the term has also provided a basis for more critical understandings and constructions about the term "popular." In this dissertation, I define the term "popular" in relation to music, insofar as it applies to the social conditions of Uganda. But before

I explore what I mean by "popular music," I will highlight some of the contradictory definitions that have left the term "popular" unclear and vague up until now.

Drawing on Raymond Williams' (1983) definitions of culture, John Storey calls attention to quantification as one of the contradictions that often arise when the term "popular" is defined (2009). Under this perspective, there is a tendency to conceive what is "popular" in relation to what is liked by many people. However, there is no agreed-upon number of what constitutes the so-called "popular" or mass of consumers. If defined only in relation to numbers, quantification renders the term "popular" vague. However, this is not to say that numbers are not vital to the definition of what is considered "popular." They are, but not without considering other factors.

Further, Storey (2009) elaborates on the tendency of defining the term "popular" in relation to aesthetic quality. He states that when aesthetic quality is employed as a determinant of what is "popular," it is understood as that which is left over after some so-called "high" culture; this follows from Pierre Bourdieu's bifurcation of "high" verses "low" culture in his classic formulation of "distinction" (1983). But the line between this implied binary remains ambiguous, since, often times, symbolic material that is perceived as belonging to the "high" realm of culture simultaneously crosses over to the "low" realm, as is the case with Pavarotti (Storey 2009: 6-8). This level of ambiguity challenges any attempt to primarily or solely base one's definition of the term "popular" on aesthetic quality.

Another contradiction lies in the term's relation to mass culture and its supposedly non-discriminating, passive, and manipulated audience. Frankfurt school theorist Theodor Adorno argued that consumers of mass culture were stripped of their active agency in determining the kind of symbolic material that was meaningful to them in relation to their social conditions. This

31

Adornoian line of thought was later challenged by Birmingham School scholars who contended that mass consumers are indeed active participants, with the potential to determine what they consume, and what meanings they make from that symbolic material.

Additionally, in arguing against the Adornoian conception of the "popular" (and its manipulative capitalist authority), cultural studies scholars have attributed the "popular" to that which belongs to the people. Under this conception, rather than having culture imposed on them through capitalist authority, it is actually the people themselves who produce their own "popular" culture. But as Storey (2009) notes, it is impossible for all people to spontaneously produce so-called "popular" culture using their own raw material. At the same time, it is hard to define who this category of "the people" would include, and otherwise exclude (Story 1983: 9; Weintraub 2006). As such, the ambiguity embedded in constituting "the people" and their inability to simultaneously produce "popular" culture renders any understanding of the term "popular" and its relation to that of "the people" ambiguous.

Storey (2009) notes that cultural theorists have also drawn on Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony and its relation to politics to define the "popular" as an arena or relationship between the powerful and powerless. In this arena, the negotiation of resistance by subordinate groups and incorporation by dominant groups takes place. In terms of class, the "popular" is neither imposed from above or emergent from below, but represents the simultaneous negotiation of two domains characterized by dominant and subordinate groups. This definition of "the popular" has been articulated by Stuart Hall as "the ground upon which the transformations [of society] are worked" (1983). As I will explain, this perspective underpins my own conception of "popular" in this study. For now, I briefly turn to how the term "popular" has been applied to the study of popular music in Uganda.

In her article about the challenges of archiving Ugandan "popular music," Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2009) echoes some of the aforementioned works. She observes, for instance, a sense of detachment of the commodity from forms of consumerism when people define "popular music" as that which is consumed by many people. But, as noted before, quantification as the only determinant of "the popular" not only renders that term vague, but also misleading

(Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2009: 30). Moreover, she notes that quantification ignores the social relations that arise between cultural commodities and their consumers, which are imperative in producing the simultaneous exercise of power by both producers and consumers. I believe that any attempt to define popular music should consider this notion of simultaneity during negotiation of power.

Nannyonga-Tamusuza further notes that in defining "popular music" in Uganda, the question of who has the power to shape and circulate the so-called "popular" arises. Here, she notes that Ugandan radio stations such as *Radio One* and *Capital FM* have always exercised the autonomy, and thus, the power of deciding what is "popular" and when to disseminate it. She notes that most radio producers base their conception of the "popular" on the Billboard charts of the US and the UK. Yet, what may be perceived as popular in the US or the UK may not be that "popular" in Uganda (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2009: 31). This means that it is not the commodity itself, but the "cultural technologies" and social "instruments of power" that make the product popular.

Nannyonga-Tamusuza suggests that Uganda's popular music should be understood as "that historical music which blends Ugandan and foreign musical materials, and is produced and, in many cases, disseminated technologically although it is also performed live" (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2009: 39). While Nannyonga-Tamusuza's definition is partly right, it foregrounds an

abstract nature of symbolic material at the expense of the complex relations that arise during the processes of production, dissemination, and consumption of music. Put differently, Nannyonga-Tamusuza overemphasizes the study of musical "texts," and neglects the complex social relations that are crucial during the processes of production, dissemination, and consumption of music. It is no secret that popular music is an intermediary between social actors (such as musicians, cultural brokers, media institutions, state actors, and civil society, among others). The relations that arise out of the interactions enhanced by the consumption of popular music are not only smooth, but also rough and conflictual. I believe that these relations are vital in what constitutes "popular music," as a site of participation and struggle.

Drawing on Stuart Hall (1983), I understand popular music in Uganda not only as an amalgamation of the local and foreign, as well as technologically produced, disseminated, and consumed symbolic material, but also as that which renders its affordances as a site of struggle for and against the powerful. Following Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony, I conceive of popular music in Uganda as a form of symbolic material that enhances the simultaneous interplay of power from above and below. Thus, popular music is an arena of negotiation, where incorporation and resistance simultaneously take place. This argument is reflected in each of my substantial chapters (2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) in which I demonstrate how marginalized publics boundlessly form around similar but sometimes contrary objectives to resist oppression in order to articulate their social aspirations in society.

The struggle for civil participation is at the heart of this dissertation and, as I will demonstrate, publics draw on popular music as an alternative avenue of expression to historically exclusive avenues (such as Uganda radio and television) that were mainly under the watch of the state or an elitist public to speak out their desires. The collectivities presented in this dissertation

project reflect a polyphony of publics in Uganda and by doing so, challenge the singular monolithic sense of public that was imposed by Museveni's semi-authoritarian governance, one that was inherited from decades of military rule.

1.4 Rationale and Purpose of the Study

I have noted that since the early 1990s, the liberalization of media enhanced the proliferation of privatized radio, television and print media, creating alternative avenues of participation to previously exclusive forums of the state and its predominantly elitist public sphere. Along with this development, accessibility to advanced technology enhanced the rise of popular music production, circulation and consumption, equally creating another relatively autonomous avenue of participation in the country. By consuming popular music in a variety of physical and virtual spaces, marginalized publics identified by common social aspirations gradually emerged as audible and visible. This does not mean that these publics were not already there, but they were neither audible or visible.

According to Guidry and Sawyer, the struggle for democracy in Africa is characterized by multiple marginalized publics which constitute a state of "contentious pluralism" (Guidry and Sawyer 2003: 273). Under this notion, publics that form around common aspirations are more inclusive and flexible in contrast to elitist publics that are structured around exclusion (in a top-down formation). With contentious pluralism, publics can participate in civil society by advocating for social justice and democracy.

In the following paragraphs, I briefly highlight some of the ways that popular music has enhanced forms of participation in Africa. Examining popular music as a participatory avenue in East Africa, Perullo demonstrates how youth not only employ symbolic material to gain power,

but to articulate social issues that affect their livelihoods (Perullo 2005: 2). The power that

Perullo refers to is the freedom to determine one's own symbolic material and how to

disseminate it to consumers. For instance, during an election campaign in Kenya in 2002, the

popular song "Unbwogable" (which translates "untouchable") by Gidi Gidi Maji Maji was

employed by the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) to mobilize support for Moi Kibaki, who

was consequently elected president. Arguably, the song "Unbwogable" created negative attitudes

towards the ruling party and enticed voters to support Kibaki's candidacy (Nyairo and Ogude

2005). Similarly, during an election campaign in Sierra Leone in 2007, youth made history when

they released streams of protest songs whose messages simultaneously discredited the ruling

party, while making a strong case for the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) that consequently

won the election (Maya Christensen and Mats Utas 2008).

In each of the above-mentioned examples, popular music is not merely an avenue of

participation, but also an intermediary between social and political relations. These examples

foreground music as goal-oriented in terms of facilitating the successful election of a political

party into power (Perullo 2011); Nyairo and Ogude (2005); and Christensen and Utas (2008).

But the above-mentioned studies do not foreground the nature of publics, or the networks that

mediate them, or the social relations that accrue from their actions. They do not address how the

activities of publics (such as youth) have contributed to the transformation of the public sphere in

their respective spaces.

My dissertation seeks to fill some of the above-mentioned gaps by emphasizing the

formation and nature of publics which arise due to their active participation in the consumption

of symbolic material. This pursuit is informed by an examination of how popular music has

contributed to the reconfiguration of Uganda's public sphere from the bottom up. It is also

inspired by the historical transition of the public sphere from exclusively authoritarian regimes to an emergent democracy, with relatively inclusive possibilities.

1.5 Research Questions

This dissertation project explores three main sets of questions. First, how has popular music participated in an emerging democratic state of Uganda since the early 1990s? How have marginalized publics utilized the relatively autonomous space of popular music to participate in shaping their own destinies? In what ways has popular music made it possible for publics to demand accountability from their leaders? To what extent has popular music provided publics with avenues of overcoming implications of restricted participation?

The second set of questions concerns the social networks through which popular music in its tangible/intangible form as a commodity, mediates publics. Who are the actors involved in the network of mediation and what are their roles? What is the role of technology in this network? What is the nature of technology, physical and virtual spaces of collectives? If production, circulation, and consumption of popular music are annexed to the network of mediation, how are these functions arrived at within such a network of mediated actors? Who are the producers, circulators, and consumers? How do these networks emerge, and how are they sustained through Uganda's political uncertainties?

The third set of questions concerns the multiplicity of publics mediated by popular music, and their relationships to each other. This set of questions seeks to address the dynamic nature of publics. In so doing, I seek to find out what constitutes a public, and what cultural, social, and/or economic capital do the members of publics have? Why are such publics mediated through popular music? How are they sustained over time? What are the internal and external political

dynamics that shape publics? How do publics operate and to what extent do they succeed? To what extent are they inclusive? Do they have an open-ended tolerance for members who may switch back and forth between them? When, how and where do publics constitute? To what extent are these publics taking an active role in shaping Uganda's democracy? What is the relationship of publics to the state and other counter-publics within the state?

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this dissertation dates from the early 1990s, when Museveni's NRM government returned Uganda to relative (but precarious peace), liberalized the media, and established some basic democratic principles to encourage more political participation among Ugandan citizens. My purview extends to the current time of writing (2020). I have chosen this period of some 25-30 years because it marks a shift from rampant political instability to relative (but precarious) stability in the country. This shift has had some positive implications (in terms of relations between the state and civil society).

With the return to relative (but precarious) stability in the early 1990s, popular music in Kampala became central to the formation of multiple publics and the mediation of their social aspirations. Since then, popular music has thrived due to: (i) increasing accessibility to advanced technology, which has enhanced the production, circulation, and consumption of popular music across many strata of society; (ii) improvement in the economy, which has enhanced the commercialization of products (including popular music); and (iii) privatization of media (radio, TV, and print media), which not only created relatively autonomous spaces for broadcasting popular music, but also enhanced the potential of reaching millions of consumers.

The marginalized publics discussed in this dissertation are defined through the lens of particular social aspirations, which render their identities different from each other in several ways, while often overlapping. However, these publics are unified by their struggles to become more audible within the public sphere. This dissertation emphasizes the audibility of five Ugandan marginalized publics through popular music, an alternative arena of participation by civil society. Part of my dissertation agenda is to bring these marginalized publics into conversation so that we understand how they relate to each other even though some may have different or overlapping objectives. To be precise, I pay special attention to how these publics intersect especially through the consumption of sonic and textual material, as well as through social relations.

My analytical approach explicates the intertwining nature of popular music and society, one that not only requires the analysis of music or culture separately, but in tandem with each other. This entails a critical analysis of the sonic materialism that shapes the identity of publics, as well as a follow-up to the multiple interpretations that shape various understandings of what it means to belong.

1.7 Methodology

My dissertation employs an ethnographic approach of collecting, documenting, and analyzing how composing, recording, performing, and consuming popular music renders publics audible in postcolonial Uganda. This endeavor is an outcome of years of preoccupation with collectivities articulated through symbolic forms. In the summer of 2011, I travelled to Kampala to observe and learn about the formation of the Buganda kingdom as an ethnic public through music, media, and other forms of popular discourse. In the summer of 2013, I made another field

visit to Kampala to observe how street vendors were responding to their 2011 eviction from the streets, a scenario that prompted musician and politician Bobi Wine to compose a song that became central to the social formation of street vendors as a labor public. The following summer (2014), I went back to Kampala to observe how popular culture was shaping an emerging LGBT public. And in 2015, I travelled back to Kampala for 10 months, to observe the role of popular music in politics. This extended field visit was timely since Uganda was preparing for its 2016 general elections and I knew that popular music would occupy center stage. During each trip, I observed, participated (in some instances as performer), attended concerts and meetings, interviewed social actors, recorded performances and interviews (when permitted), wrote field notes, and analyzed social phenomena.

Although I focused on one public during each summer visit to Kampala (in 2011, 2013, and 2014, respectively), my experience was not a collection of isolated studies. Rather, during each visit, I observed multiple publics that intersected in time and space. However, I chose to focus on one public during each of my three summer visits in order to pay special attention to their existence, definition, practice, and sustainability. The experience of summer field studies exposed me to how the consumption of symbolic material is not only crucial to the formation of publics, but also to their audibility.

While the five substantial chapters of this dissertation appear as individual case studies, they share commonalities (sonically, textually, and ideologically) that make them intersectional. Because these publics exist and function simultaneously, any attempt to present them through a monolithic narrative would overlook the historical/temporal, social and material conditions that gave rise to each of these publics in the first place. As such, my decision to accord particular focus to individual publics is also my way of articulating the specific historical and material

40

conditions in Uganda. It is through such a historical lens that we can understand how a collage of intersecting marginalized publics have shaped Uganda's public sphere into a participatory arena. With this in mind, I briefly turn to the ethnomusicological scholarly lineage (in terms of production of knowledge) that informs my dissertation.

Several years before my formal education in music, I was introduced to singing and playing traditional musical instruments, especially drums of the Baganda people. I recall several times when I skipped eating a meal just because I was staring at musicians playing traditional music during ceremonies such as last funeral rites. Whenever the musicians paused to take a break, I sneaked over to some of the instruments and tried to replicate some of the music that I had heard. By the time I was in primary school, I had accumulated a good sense of traditional music styles of the Baganda people.

During my years of training as an ethnomusicologist, I learned how to transcribe and analyze data. I also read numerous articles and books during my graduate seminars, exposing me to a variety of theories and methodological approaches in ethnomusicology. This background, to a great extent, has shaped how I think about music's relation to society.

This dissertation is also informed by my experience as musician and fan of local Ugandan bands. During my early secondary schooling, I joined the Africa Stars' band, a youth band started in the early 1990s by a Roman Catholic priest. As a keyboardist in the band, it was during this time that I understood band experience as a collective endeavor rather than an individualistic enterprise. To expand my horizons, I later joined the Diplock Segawa band which was also emerging as a popular entertainment band at the time. As the substitute keyboardist, I practiced with the musicians, but I did not perform with them. Despite that, I gained valuable lessons practicing with excellent professional musicians such as Segawa. This experience contributed to

my interest in popular music and my further pursuit of music later during my undergraduate years at Makerere University in Uganda.

My ethnographic study was based in Kampala, a city that covers about 24,000 square miles (62160 kilometers) of Uganda's 236,000 square kilometers. I centered on Kampala because the city is indispensable to any successful practice of popular music in the country. The main radio and television stations, as well as the largest recording studios and concert venues are in Kampala. Kampala is home for musicians and music groups at the forefront of rendering marginalized publics audible, namely, Budo Secondary School choir, Paul Ssaaka, Jackie Chandiru, Adam Mulwana and the honorable Member of Parliament (MP) Robert Kyagulanyi (a.k.a former "ghetto president" Bobi Wine). Most notable is Wine, who is at the foreground of an emergent "people-power" public (discussed in detail in Chapter 6). Popular songs by the aforementioned popular musicians form the basis of my musical analysis in each of the five substantial chapters of this dissertation.

My fluency in Luganda (the most commonly spoken language in Kampala) and background as a keyboardist in popular music bands (such as Diplock Segawa and the Wrens and the Stars of Africa youth band) in the early 1990s linked me to a network of cultural brokers whom I have known for years, thus, according me a privileged position as a researcher in Kampala. Through the network of cultural brokers, I was able to interview a number of interlocutors including political dignitaries, cultural brokers, music fans, and musicians. In addition, my network of contacts made it easy to attend live concerts, political rallies, and meetings with political leaders.

I conducted extensive interviews with musicians Paul Ssaaka, Bobi Wine, Sarah Zawedde, and Jackie Chandiru, among others, to learn about their experiences in Uganda's

music economy, and the impact of music in the public sphere. Through interviews, musicians told me about their musical careers and explained the relation between music and democracy. Through interviews, my interlocutors shared stories about how popular songs spoke to social constraints and how this shaped their thinking and participation during the 2016 presidential elections and afterwards.

At live concerts, I observed how musicians relate to their fans. These live concerts enhanced my engagement with fieldwork, bringing me closer to the analysis of how popular music has become inextricably intertwined with politics, and as a result, how it has transformed the public sphere into a more participatory arena. While switching between being a music fan and researcher, I negotiated a position as a supporter with the ability to write and report about what was going on.

It should be noted that even though I enjoyed an advantage in terms of accessibility to social actors my relationship with both Wine and Zawedde was complicated. As one of their former teachers at Makerere, they were initially hesitant to open up to me. On a number of occasions, they kept referring to me as Doctor, which made me feel embarrassed and uncomfortable. Occasionally, they referred to me as their teacher. Also, by referring to me by my academic title, I felt that they were creating a line between us, one that made it difficult to gather data. I pleaded with Wine and Zawedde to stop referring to me by my title and they finally obliged. I appreciated that Zawedde and Wine connected me to other musicians whom I had no prior relationship with. For instance, it was through Zawedde that I was able to interview Chandiru, whose music is the focus of chapter 3.

My experiences conducting research in a recording studio exposed me to the processes and protocols of recording software, as well as the politics of music production. I recall my

experience at *Monster Studio* where I took part in the production of "One Uganda, One People," a song that would represent Dr. Besigye's 2016 candidature for presidency. While a different song was eventually selected, this experience exposed me to discussions about how publics are conceptualized by musicians in a recording studio.

I visited Central Broadcasting Services (CBS), a radio station owned by Buganda kingdom, and Metro FM Radio, which is owned by Captain Francis Edward Babu. At CBS, I interviewed presenters/producers Abu Kawenja and Ann Ssebunya. And at Metro, I interviewed radio producer Eria Bbanda. Although I was not able to visit *Kaboozi ku Bbiri* radio station as earlier anticipated, I was able to interview one its senior presenters, Kizito Ssentamu Kayiira (R.I.P) , who was working as productions manager for the Uganda National Cultural Center (UNCC) before his sudden death in September 2017.

My choice of radio stations and respondents was based on accessibility and the experience of presenters. Since these radio stations are privately owned, they provided a liberal atmosphere that is difficult to find in state-owned institutions. Moreover, state institutions have many protocols when it comes to gaining access, and this proved to be very time-consuming. However, CBS and Metro FM radio stations were very welcoming and I did not encounter any issue apart from one presenter at CBS radio who preferred not to be recorded. In interviewing radio presenters/producers, I was interested in their contributions to the dissemination of popular music songs, given their positions of power to determine what is broadcast (and what is not). I also wanted to understand the politics of how popular songs shape radio programing, as well as how presenters/producers negotiate their roles amidst strict regulations and surveillance by the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC). Most of my findings about these questions are discussed in chapter 2.

My interviews were generally open ended, which allowed an expressive and expansive dialogue about various issues I had not thought about ahead of time. In a few instances where participants did not have time to respond to on-sight interviews, I followed up with guided questionnaires or an appointment at a later date. During interviews, we talked about songs and their contribution to an understanding of Uganda's social reality. For instance, to engage in a discussion about Buganda, the prime minister of the *Nkima* (monkey) clan of Buganda, *Ow'ekitiibwa* (honorable) Andrew Kaggwa played songs composed by songwriter and musician Paul Ssaaka to recollect memories about the Buganda kingdom and its struggles. As *Ow'ekitiibwa* Kaggwa explained the centrality of popular music in rendering Buganda audible, we listened to portions of songs by focusing on the text and discussing its multiple interpretations. I also employed audio elicitation as a methodological technique in situations where my interlocutor was not well conversant with the song. However, audio elicitation was only done a few times since most of my interlocutors knew the songs and already had their own interpretations of them.

For a deeper understanding of how popular music mediates publics, I drew on archival research to enrich my theoretical, methodological, and analytical base of knowledge. I analyzed findings from books, scholarly articles, and scientific journals whose research speaks to my topic. My findings about popular music and the mediation of publics provided the backbone of my theoretical points of departure. This process was vital in pointing me to parallels, tangents, and gaps in ethnomusicological scholarship.

Drawing inspiration from studies of West African *highlife* by musicologist and theorist Kofi Agawu (2003), I have employed a musicological approach (a mixture of semiotic/musical hermeneutic/symbolism) to describe the text, instrumentation, harmonic progression (where

necessary) and song structure for each of the songs I analyze in chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. I unpack how musical idioms are packaged as signs to create logics of meanings. I examine the *modus operandi* (ways of doing things, which constitute a style), particularly the logic and structure of symbolic forms, to establish patterns through which symbolic materials are shaped. And by drawing on Western staff notation in certain instances, I transcribe selected moments from music examples to provide readers with a musical background an understanding of how idioms such as pitch, melody, and rhythm are employed in conjunction with the text of a song. I also translate the text of songs in English, and analyze them to delineate their lyrical structure and meanings.

Additionally, I analyzed music videos of songs in order to understand the logics of mediation that popular musicians and producers employ to render publics audible. Since YouTube music videos are visual representations, I emphasized how visual symbols are employed along with narratives or represented voices of publics. This was very helpful in establishing the mutual relationship of narration and visual representation.

Most importantly, I attended events where popular songs were played at large gatherings attended by people with a common sense of belonging. Some of the events I attended include the Buganda premier's visits to Nakulabye and Namungoona (suburbs of Kampala); social gatherings of members of the LGBT public; a meeting of former Kampala street vendors at Nakulabye, a suburb of Kampala; Besigye's campaign events during the 2016 presidential elections; and the 2017 bi-elections that resulted in Bobi Wine's historical victory as honorable Member of Parliament. These activities gave me information about how popular music is integral to publics; what popular music means to publics; and how publics respond to popular songs that matter to them.

The chapters that follow are based on a historical account of the rise of marginalized publics since the mid 1990s. Chapter 1 highlights the political history of Uganda, whose social conditions at once impeded civil society from participation, but later, enabled the privatization of the media and as such, the rise of popular music in enhancing participation. Discussing the historical background of the struggles of Buganda since 1966 when its main institutional palace was bombed and subsequently stripped of its relative autonomy, chapter 2 delineates how the inception of Buganda's Central Broadcasting Services (CBS) radio in 1993 enhanced the production, dissemination, and consumption of popular songs.

Chapter 3 traces the emergence of an LGBT community following David Kato's public announcement as a gay man in 2004, consequently leading to his brutal murder in 2011. By examining how the popular song "Ikumabo" by Ugandan music star Chackie Chandiru articulates an emergent LGBT public (through textual and gender abstraction), the chapter shows how same-sex loving individuals negotiate senses of belonging in Uganda, where they are regarded as second-class citizens. The chapter concludes that in the context of rampant homophobia, textual abstraction in popular songs is a safe way for articulating an emergent LGBT public.

Chapter 4 analyzes how the popular song "Tugambire ku Jennifer" (Tell Jennifer on Our Behalf) by Bobi Wine has rendered the Kampala street vendors audible, since their forceful eviction from the streets of Kampala by the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) in 2011. The chapter traces first-hand accounts of how the impact of Bobi Wine's song not only raised awareness, or a sense of consciousness about unfair labor laws, but also how it heightened a level of chaos and tension in the city, which consequently led to the relaxation of newly introduced laws in Kampala.

Chapter 5 demonstrates the inextricably intertwining nature of popular music and politics in 2016 when Uganda held its fifth presidential elections since president Museveni took over power in 1986. By analyzing "Toka kwa Barabara" (Clear the Way), a popular song by Adam Mulwana, I demonstrate how Besigye's public of opposition adopted symbols of the song and contextualized them in various ways that convincingly strengthened their political allegiances.

Chapter 6 builds on the argument of the intertwining nature of popular music and politics discussed in chapter 5 to demonstrate a shift in political allegiance from Besigye to the emergent "people-power" public started by Bobi Wine. The chapter analyzes Wine's song "Freedom" to highlight the social conditions that rendered its production. I demonstrate how the song was employed as symbolic material to influence the mindset of disenfranchised youth who have found in Bobi Wine's political cause a sense of hope for a better future.

Building on some of these overarching ideas, Chapter 7 provides a discussion of how the publics presented in this dissertation intersect with each other. The chapter also concludes by emphasizing how textuality and symbolic material are not consumed passively, but rather actively, in ways that allow groups of people to participate in shaping their destinies. I also emphasize that while the Buganda kingdom, the LGBT public, the street vendors, the Besigye supporters, and the emergent "people- power" public may be seen as different in important ways, they are related through their struggle to achieve basic rights of association, assemblage, and freedom of expression.

2.0 SINGING THE REIGN: RECOLLECTING THE PAST, NEGOTIATING AN AUTONOMOUS BUGANDA

This chapter examines how the song "Omulembe Omutebi" (The Reign of Mutebi) by Ugandan songwriter and music teacher Paul Ssaaka, mediates the social aspirations of the Baganda people (who constitute Uganda's dominant ethnic group). During my fieldwork, the song was frequently cited by my interlocutors as symbolic material that frames common perceptions about the traditional kingdom of Buganda. Through the song "Omulembe Omutebi," the Baganda people negotiate ways of hearing their oral history. This form of mediated orality is also animated by musical idioms that characterize common artistic expressions of *kiganda* music, the traditional music of the Baganda people. Moreover, the song's text, which is in Luganda, the language of the Baganda people, symbolizes belonging and intimacy for people who identify as Baganda. I argue that through the complex interaction of *kiganda* music, modes of listening and interpretation, textuality, history, knowledge, and technology, songs by Ssaaka, such as "Omulembe Omutebi," play a crucial role in the construction of a contemporary Buganda public.

Ssaaka Initially conceived his approach to song writing at Saint Balikuddembe Secondary School, Mitala-Maria (1990-1993) and later developed it at Saint Balikuddembe Secondary School, Kisoga (1998-2007) and Budo Secondary School (1999-date). It was consequently popularized at other schools by students, their families and relatives, as well as Buganda royalists and listeners of Buganda's CBS radio. These audiences and contexts in which Ssaaka's songs have been performed and disseminated have been crucial to making the Buganda public audible.

Ssaaka's approach to the "popular" is to recontextualize local Baganda musical idioms using contemporary forms of technology. Locally referred to as "Ennyimba z'amaloboozi" (songs of mixed voices), Ssaaka's songs are "popular" among Buganda royalists and their families, for their articulation of secular themes that are relevant to the history as well as cultural values and norms of the Baganda people. The songs are frequently performed by primary and secondary school students in theaters and at various occasions to celebrate Baganda ethnicity in the Buganda kingdom.

By labelling Ssaaka's songs "popular," I refer to their widespread appreciation among Baganda people. Also, many Baganda people listen to Buganda's radio station, Central Broadcasting Services (CBS), which constitutes the largest radio listenership in Uganda. Further, Ssaaka's songs are "popular" because most of my interlocutors cited them as inseparable from the contemporary discourse about Buganda. I also use the term "popular" to highlight the mass-mediation of Ssaaka's songs through radio, television, print media, and performance through live concerts as an important avenue of aurality that enhances their appreciation by the Baganda people.

I understand Ssaaka's songs as "popular" through Gautier's conceptions of "epistemologies of purification" and "epistemologies of transculturation" (2006), which I called attention to in the introduction of this dissertation. These epistemes provide the basis of a sonic aurality, whose negotiation participates in the social formation of publics. To elaborate my point, I note that the mode of listening to recontextualized traditional sounds through technology entails the negotiation of a sense of understanding of the local through the technological. When Ssaaka reconstructs the traditional, he initiates a form of sonic antagonism (a way of disrupting what is considered pure or traditional), which in turn enables listeners to link the traditional with their

50

ethnicity. It is this antagonism and how it engages listeners into forms of negotiation that constitutes part of the "popular."

I also align my conception of Ssaaka's songs as "popular" to the Birmingham school, most especially Hall's (1981) formulation of the term as a site of struggle, or the Gramscian (1971) understanding of "popular" as a battlefield between dominant and subordinate interests. Ssaaka's songs are not only "popular" because they are mass-mediated, commodified for exchange value, or marketed in similar ways to popular musics elsewhere in the world, but because they are reconfigurations of sonic antagonisms that allow listeners to negotiate ways of listening, knowing, and relating to their ethnicity. I argue that through the relations that accrue from listening to Ssaaka's songs, such as "Omulembe Omutebi," the social formation of a Buganda public "becomes audible."

Building on the structure of *kadongo kamu,* Ssaaka's songs are characterized by their narrative style, which amalgamates indigenous *kiganda* and Western musical idioms (such as Luganda song texts*,* diatonic and pentatonic scales and harmonies, *kiganda* vocal techniques and compositional processes, as well as the simulation of traditional indigenous instruments on MIDI instruments). However, it should be noted that Ssaaka's songs do not conform to conventional notions of what many people consider popular music. His songs are often longer than seven minutes; they are mainly composed to be listened to rather than danced to.

Ssaaka's songs are composed with a *baakisimba* drum and dance groove which is characterized by six eighth-note beats in each measure. Commonly, the *baakisimba* groove is simulated by MIDI instrumentation. The combination of traditional and Western or modern musical materials culminates into a sonic reconfiguration, allowing people to negotiate ways of hearing, and by doing so, forming identifications among themselves along the axis of ethnicity.

Most of Ssaaka's songs are produced for local consumption and, as such, not much effort is expended to expand their audience beyond Luganda speakers. Drawing on the Soprano-Alto-Tenor-Bass (SATB) harmonies popularized in Africa through Christian Missionaries, as well as MIDI instrumentation and simulation of indigenous instruments including the *engalabi* (long drum) and *embuutu* (big drum), Ssaaka combines parallel harmonies of fifth and octaves which distort the accompanying bass that often outlines chords commonly used in popular music (I, IV, and V). This approach to sonic recontextualization distorts while enacting the traditional, the "popular" and the Western, thereby constituting what I call sonic antagonism, a necessary process through which the negotiation of ethnic identity takes place.

Yet, even with their colonial influence in the way vocal harmonies are shaped, I conceive of Ssaaka's songs as popular because of their potential in shaping social relations among the Baganda people, the Buganda kingdom, and the central government of Uganda. Thus, the plethora of Ssaaka's songs offer an entry point to understanding the Buganda demands for the central government to return all of Buganda's property that was seized by Obote in 1966. By analyzing how musical materials (including language, narrative, harmony, rhythm, vocal style, and instrumentation) are assembled in the song, "Omulembe Omutebi," this chapter demonstrates how Ssaaka's approach to sonic recontextualization has not only become central to the articulation of Buganda's social aspirations, but also its construction as an ethnic public.

As I demonstrate in this chapter, the rise of Sssaka's songs and their popularity among Ugandan schools coincided with the reinstitution of the Buganda kingdom in 1993, the inception of Buganda's CBS radio (in the same year), and the return to relative (but precarious) peace in the country. To understand how the song, "Omulembe Omutebi" embodies an aurality that is

crucial in shaping an understanding of the Buganda public, I provide a brief history of Buganda's autonomy and show how this history has shaped Ssaaka's creative process.

2.1 The Politics and Philosophy of Autonomy in Buganda

The history of Buganda dates as far back in the fourteenth century when the kingdom emerged under its first ruler, kabaka (king) Kintu. Gaining influence and control over a large area in Central Uganda, Buganda gradually became the largest and strongest kingdom in East Africa by the beginning of the nineteenth century. As a powerful kingdom in East Africa, Buganda enjoyed autonomy over its natural, economic, and human resources. However, Buganda's sense of autonomy gradually decreased when it became a British protectorate in 1894.

Functioning with relative autonomy, the kabaka's power and that of his *lukiiko* (council of advisors) was limited since colonial administrators adjudicated important issues about the welfare of the emergent nation-state, Uganda. However, the Buganda kingdom maintained some autonomy alongside colonial governance (1894-1962): the kabaka maintained a position of power over the *bakopi* (commoners)[3]; the kabaka had the prerogative to suggest local chiefs within their *lukiiko;* and they collected *obusuulu* (a form of monetary revenue from their land). This sense of continuity in the exercise of the kabaka's power, however relative, was central to the visibility of Buganda in society.

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[3] The *bakopi* are a group of commoners who are ranked at the bottom of Buganda's social hierarchy. Historically, the *bakopi* were those who did not belong to the royal lineage and they were considered the servants of the royal family (see Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2001; Atanda 1969; Cliffe 1982).

When Uganda became independent in 1962, kabaka Muteesa II became the first president, and Milton Obote became the first Prime Minister of the newly independent nation-state of Uganda. Because the newly-formed government was part of the British Crown, the position of president was ceremonial. As such, the prime minister had more political power than the president. Four years following independence, Obote commanded a military coup against the president and kabaka of Buganda, Muteesa II. Led by General Idi Amin, the military bombed Buganda's main administrative palace (*Bulange*), forcing the president/kabaka into exile in Britain, where he was subsequently assassinated in November 1969. Obote's action not only led to the dismantling of the Buganda kingdom, but also the temporary end of traditional leadership in the country.

When Museveni took over power in 1986, one of his priorities was to establish a democratic system of governance. Seven years later, he reinstated traditionally non-democratic institutions in the country, starting with the Buganda kingdom. On July 31, 1993, his Majesty Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, son of kabaka Mutesa II, was crowned Buganda's 36th king at Naggalabi, Budo, Buganda's historical site of coronation. Museveni's gesture not only served as a project of cultural revival, but also a mobilization strategy in support of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party.

Museveni's gesture signified his appreciation to the Buganda kingdom for its contribution (in terms of human and economic resources) during the guerrilla war. However, since its reinstatement, the kingdom of Buganda has not regained its relative autonomy. Neither has Buganda reacquired most of its property, including 9000 miles of land that was seized by Obote's government in 1966. According to my interlocutors, the state's refusal to return all of

Buganda's property and accord the kingdom its political and economic autonomy has prompted the rise of a separatist public to govern its political affairs and control its own economy.

Between June 2015 and February 2016, I interviewed several stakeholders in Buganda, including administrators, royalists (a group of elite Baganda who are also very loyal to their kabaka), as well as *bakopi* (a group of common people in Buganda). The *bakopi* include children of mixed relationships between Baganda men and women of other ethnicities. Respondents from mixed families identified as Baganda, since their fathers were Baganda men. Others testified that having grown up in Buganda, they felt a stronger sense of identity as Baganda rather than the ethnicities of their mothers.

In expressing a variety of mixed feelings about the Buganda, respondents drew attention to issues of power (particularly the kabaka's power), *ebyaffe* (assets and values of the Buganda kingdom), as well as *federo* (a localized/*Kiganda* word for federalism, a system of decentralized governance). Commenting on the notion of power, *Ow'ekitiibwa* (honourable) Andrew Kaggwa noted: "reinstating the kabaka without power does not make sense. A kabaka is historically entitled to full authority to lead the Baganda people. By denying kabaka Mutebi II power, the central government has rather transformed our heritage into puppetry" (pers. comm., Andrew Kaggwa, November 1, 2015). Additionally, Bobi Wine, Ugandan politician and popular music star noted: "the kabaka means a lot to the Baganda people. However, without the power to make important decisions pertaining to his kingdom, Buganda is meaningless" (pers. comm., Bobi Wine, July 16, 2015).

As Kaggwa and Wine point out, contemporary Buganda is only a theatrical enactment of past monarchies, which were characterized by powerful kings. By theatrical, Kaggwa refers to a puppet government and a lack of power, which accrues from the lack of kabaka Mutebi II's

power to exercise his full authority over the Baganda people. This restriction is enforced by a group of military personnel assigned by the central government to guard the kabaka. Through these military men, the central government maintains full-time surveillance over all activities of Buganda. For the Baganda people, a powerless kabaka marginalizes Buganda.

During my fieldwork, I discovered that the Buganda kingdom wants a federalist movement (*federo*), which, according to Paul Ssaaka, refers to a "decentralized system of governance where power is shared according to regions" (pers. comm., December 5, 2015). However, the Uganda government does not want to grant it. Buganda's federalist movement coincided with the 1990s resurgence of traditional institutions and the need to share power between newly formed modern states and the revived traditional kingdoms. However, the attempt to hybridize state and Buganda power structures transformed Buganda from Museveni's ally to a political enemy (Goodfellow and Lindemman 2013: 4).

For many Buganda royalists, power is embodied in the notion of *federo,* as noted by Ssaaka:

> It is very important for Uganda to have a fair distribution of power so that the kabaka accesses full authority to administer his kingdom. This can be achieved by granting Buganda *federo*. I believe that *federo* is a fair demand, which realistically defines Buganda's ancestry. Once Buganda is granted *federo,* this would end all controversies that have come to occupy the center stage of today's Uganda (pers. comm., December 5, 2015).

Accordingly, the notion of *federo* remains a very controversial issue today because the Baganda people, according to Ssaaka, have been denied what is their due. Asked why it is so hard for the state to consider hybridizing modern and traditional instruments of power, Ssaaka added that the "central government is conscious about the possibility of Buganda's secession if granted autonomy." If granted *federo,* Buganda could incapacitate the central government because the capital city of Kampala belongs to Buganda.

On the surface, the rejection of federalism may be read as an impediment to the kabaka's access to power as some respondents have pointed out. However, the issue is much more complex. Some Buganda loyalists noted that without a *federo* system of governance, Buganda will remain economically weak. As *Ow'ekitiibwa* Kaggwa stated, "Without *federo*, the kabaka has limited power over Buganda's resources, such as land. Yet, the kabaka needs economic autonomy to sustain his kingdom; but since 1966, the kabaka has been powerless and I do not understand why" (pers. comm., November 1, 2015).

Robert Kalibbala, a Muganda[4] and electrical engineer, noted that, "Buganda has the potential to develop and sustain a vibrant economy through its resources. Unfortunately, the kabaka has no power to maximize economic vibrancy. Look at the land that Buganda has, but has not been put to exploitation for economic reward. I imagine that if Buganda is granted *federo*, it would develop its own economic base not only to the advantage of the Baganda people, but also to that of the people of Uganda at large" (pers. comm., November 16, 2015).

Adding to the potential of Buganda's economic vibrancy, Innocent Banda, a senior radio producer and presenter at Metro FM in Kampala, noted: "Frankly, it seems a very hard task for the central government to monitor tax returns given that it has yet to develop an effective system. Maybe *federo* would enhance effective monitoring and accountability at various grassroots levels. Since the Baganda are loyal to their kabaka, they would not disobey him if called upon to contribute to the economic vibrancy of their kingdom" (pers. comm. December 2015).

Bobi Wine added that, "morale among today's average worker is too low because of most political leaders whose selfish priority, once in office, is to accumulate personal wealth. In fact,

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[4] *Muganda* refers to a person who identifies as belonging to the kingdom of Buganda.

many workers escape from paying their taxes, causing loss to the economy. Yet, *federo* would

enhance effective accountability from grassroots levels, especially if people know that they are

contributing towards the development of their kingdom. You see, people believe in their

traditional leaders more than other political figures" (pers. comm., December 2015). Wine, like

Banda, calls attention to the highly significant element of loyalty as an identity marker in the

Buganda kingdom. Also, for many Baganda people, loyalty to a reigning kabaka is a way of

respecting their ethnic ancestry and their history.

Loyalty is also historically vested in *federo,* a system of governance that automatically

empowers any reigning kabaka with full authority to adjudicate over matters that pertain to the

Buganda kingodm. Julius Katabaazi, a business entrepreneur in Kampala and loyalist to the

kabaka stated, "As a *Muganda*, I strongly believe in the kabaka of Buganda as my leader as

opposed to most politicians who are fond of telling lies and giving unfulfilled promises. If my

kabaka were to ask me to contribute to the prosperity of Buganda, I would comply without

hesitation, knowing that loyalty to my kabaka defines who I am. Otherwise, I do not owe any

loyalty to the central government which has marginalized Buganda and robbed it of its chance to

economic vibrancy" (pers. comm., September 14, 2015). As with Banda and Wine, loyalty, for

Katabaazi is central to the identity of the Baganda people. But such loyalty is intertwined with

power that is embodied in *federo,* a system that automatically guarantees the kabaka's autonomy

to lead without interference from the central government.

As Nsibambi notes, *federo* would enhance accountability and sharing of power (Isabirye

2004, 76). Once granted *federo,* the kabaka would assume full power of adjudicating on matters

pertaining to the Buganda kingdom. Thus, contention over Buganda's autonomy is the main

cause of conflict between Buganda and the central government since Museveni reinstated the

kingship in 1993. To regain their historical identity, the Baganda people demand the return of *ebyaffe*, a philosophical ideology for what belongs to Buganda. However, failure of the central government to meet Buganda's demands, such as granting a *federo* system of governance as well as the return of *ebyaffe*, has rendered the kingdom marginalized since 1966. Such social constraints have stimulated popular forms of expression through which information is produced, circulated, and consumed by the Buganda public. In this regard, Buganda's Central Broadcasting Services (CBS) radio station has played a significant role in the mediation and construction of a Buganda public sphere since the mid 1990s (Brisset-Foucault 2013). Amidst a wake of censorship, CBS remains a very strong avenue for mediating the desires, aspirations, and interests of the Buganda kingdom in Uganda.

2.2 Buganda as an Audible Public

The mediation of Buganda as a traditional institution in Uganda coincided with the privatization of media in the mid 1990s. Before then, the state monopolized the media for its own interests. In 1996, an elite group of educated Baganda men and women, while acting on behalf of the Buganda kingdom, started CBS radio to reach out to the public, and educate it about the history and priorities of Buganda. Most importantly, CBS radio was established as a way to link the kabaka of with his subjects (Mayiga 2009: 174; see also Brisset-Foucault 2013: 74).

In 2000, a private radio station, Radio One, introduced a political talk show genre known as *Ekimeeza* (The Round Table), which would later influence other radio and television stations. Broadcast from a club called *Obligato* (in Kampala) every Saturday, *Ekimeeza* attracted many participants who could afford to buy drinks and food during the talk show. From its inception, the host/moderator of *Ekimeeza* was Anne Ssekandi, who: (i) chose the topic of discussion based

on the most contentious issues of the week; (ii) closely monitored the time for each participant during the talk show; (iii) made sure that everyone participated; (iv) kept the discussion on topic; and (v) made sure that no one insulted each other during the talk show. Participants off the site were also welcome to call in and contribute their views about the topic. This talk show opened up a new way of participating in discussions about current events, and became very popular.

Adopting similar media logic as that of *Ekimeeza,* CBS radio introduced *Gakyaali Mabaga* (It is only the Beginning), *Paliyamenti Yaffe* (Our Parliament), and *Mambo Bado* (Things Are Still). Started in July 2002, *Mambo Bado,* became a very popular talk show on CBS radio because of its high caliber of participants (including notable members of Parliament), as well as its wide listenership in Buganda. *Mambo Bado* was aired on Saturday afternoons at "Mambo Bado" bar and restaurant at *Bulange* (Kampala), near Buganda's main administrative center. Its producer, radio journalist Jerome Ssozi Kaddumukasa, became popular for being a strong devotee of the kabaka and an opponent of the state. Kaddumukasa's popularity later won him a two-term service as the *Mityana* South Member of Parliament (2006 to 2016).

Mambo Bado featured outspoken Buganda elites such as Betty Nambooze (member of Parliament for the Mukono district since 2010), Medard Sseggona (member of Parliament for the Busiro East since 2011), Moses Kasibante (CBS presenter) and Ibrahim Semujju Nganda, among others. The three aforementioned members of Parliament also spearheaded the formation of *Suubi* (Hope), a Buganda royalist pressure group that called upon an emergent Buganda public to advocate for Buganda's autonomy. As a cardinal rule, this task of mobilization included the call for unity in Buganda and loyalty to the kabaka as the leader of the Baganda people (Brisset-Foucault 2013).

Indeed, *Ekimeeza* was central to the introduction of new spaces of popular participation in Uganda since 2000. Once CBS radio adopted such a talk show format, it changed the structure of media institutions, from journalist-centered to participant-centered (Nassanga 2008: 653). Rather than foregrounding the views of a presenter, CBS radio encouraged more participants to emulate the kind of democratic participation Buganda kingdom was advocating for in the first place.

On CBS's talk show *Mambo Bado* (Things Are Still) participants were required to acknowledge the kabaka as the only leader of the people in Buganda before they presented their views (Brisset-Foucault 2013). This requirement, however, not only contravened the constitution of Uganda, which recognizes the president as the sole political leader of the Ugandan population, but also gave rise to misunderstandings of power between Buganda kingdom and the state. Thus, in September 2009, the state, as a way of responding to the provocative *Mambo Bado* radio talk show, stopped the kabaka from visiting *Bugerere,* a region in the *Kayunga* district in Buganda, predominantly occupied by the *Banyala* people.[5] This scenario coincided with the *Banyala's* resistance to the kabaka as their leader despite the fact that Bugerere is located in a Buganda region. However, this was not the end of the tensions between Buganda and the state but rather, the beginning of a series of riots in Buganda.

The temporary ban of the kabaka from visiting *Bugerere* consequently led to a series of protests. As the *Banyala* celebrated the state's action against the kabaka*,* the Baganda contested it. Buganda royalists such as Sseggona and Nambooze expressed strong sentiments against the treatment of their kabaka. They even used talk shows on CBS radio as platforms for mobilizing

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[5] The *Banyala* people*,* a Bantu ethnic group, which includes people of mixed marriages between the Baganda of Central Uganda and the Banyoro people of Eastern Uganda.

the Baganda to resist the state's decision. Following this, organized demonstrations against the state turned violent as the police brutalized protestors. According to Uganda's local print media, the *Daily Monitor* (of September 11, 2009); and the *New Vision* (of September 11, 2009) about 40 people were killed by the police (Brisset-Foucault 2013: 79). And shortly thereafter, four local radio stations, CBS, Sapientia, Ssuubi, as well as *Akaboozi* were shut down by the Uganda Broadcasting Commission (UBC) on the premise that they incited the public into rioting against the government.

Following accumulated pressure from the public, president Museveni allowed CBS radio to reopen in 2010. However, this directive came with certain conditions that would prevent the repeat of violent incidents. Under these conditions, radio presenters were cautioned against inciting the public. Also, they were cautioned not to overly politicize their talk shows.[6] In response, Buganda royalists resisted these conditions on the premise that as a media institution, CBS radio had the right to exercise its constitutional mandate of disseminating information.

Since its reopening in 2010, CBS radio has been central to the construction of a Buganda public sphere, where the political and economic aspirations of the kingdom are articulated. By promoting programs that educate the Baganda about their ancestry and the need to be loyal to their *kabaka*, CBS radio continues to be an important avenue of participation in the construction of Baganda's identity.

As an important platform for promoting discourse about Buganda, CBS radio has also been central to the dissemination of popular music. It is at CBS radio that Ssaaka's songs about

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[6] The state also argued that since CBS radio belongs to a cultural institution, Buganda, the law prohibits it from participating in politics.

Buganda gained the attention of the Baganda people, consequently becoming an important mouthpiece for the kingdom. "Omulembe Omutebi" (The Reign of Mutebi), composed in 1990, was the prelude to most of Buganda's CBS radio discussions about the kingdom. It was also one of the most popular songs about Buganda in the late 1990s. Further, the song featured prominently in my conversations with interlocutors. Whenever I asked about any relation between music and Buganda, most interlocutors recalled "Omulembe Omutebi," mentioning how the song shaped their understanding of who they are, where they have come from, and where they are heading as a Buganda public.

2.3 Paul Ssaaka and His Musical Career

Paul Ssaaka's musical career began to flourish in the early 1990s while at St. Balikuddembe Senior Secondary School Mitala-Maria where he acquired a secondary school education. Located on Kampala-Masaka road, Mitala-Maria was where Ssaaka started his initial mixed choral ensemble (for both boys and girls). In 1990, Ssaaka composed and recorded his first album, "Mu Nsi Eno Nkozeemu Ki?" (What Have I Done in this World?), which enjoyed airplay on *Radio Uganda* and Uganda National Television during the early 1990s.[7]

Making St. Balikuddembe Mitala-Maria the first school in Uganda to record an album, Ssaaka's "Mu Nsi Eno Nkozeemu Ki" not only popularized the school, but also marketed its choral music ensemble through frequent airplay on radio and television stations. Shortly after the release of the album "Mu Nsi Eno Nkozeemu Ki," the Mitala-Maria choral ensemble toured the

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[7] These two media institutions were (and are, at this writing) state-owned, and have been merged and rebranded as National Broadcasting Services (NBS).

country, performing to the astonishment of audiences in Kampala, Masaka, and Jinja. These audiences mainly constituted parents and relatives of some of the musicians, children of parents, as well as other well-wishers, including Buganda officials in the various places that the choir travelled. I argue that Ssaaka's songs became popular among Luganda speakers because they started to envision themselves as members of a Buganda public.

As Mitala-Maria's choral ensemble gained popularity within Buganda, theater managers in Kampala scrambled to host performances by the choristers. Bookings for performances were made through the patron of the ensemble, Charles Ssebunnya, the Headteacher of the school at the time. Ssebunya envisioned that Ssaaka's songs could be consumed commercially just like any other popular songs, and marketed them on radio, television, and in print media. The ensemble and its music were marketed, commodified, and consumed in ways that were similar to other forms of popular music.

Ssaaka's first album introduced new features to the popular music styles of early 1990s Uganda. These included the use of pentatonic call phrases and harmonized mixed vocals (soprano, alto, tenor and bass [SATB]). But Ssaaka's approach to the call/response format foregrounded the interplay of indigenous *Kiganda* vocal techniques and Western melodic/ harmonic vocabulary. The vocal techniques in the call phrases predominantly incorporate micro-tonal inflections. However, the responsorial phrases contained a blend of melodic hymnody and indigenous *Kiganda* harmonies of parallel fifths and octaves. Additionally, a synthesizer and a set of baakisimba drums accompanied all of the six songs on the album. Besides the song, "Ensimbi Eleese Amaanyi" (Money Has Complicated Things), whose rhythm was composed in compound meter, and with a baakisimba dance groove, the other five songs were composed in

simple meter, which is reminiscent of the indigenous *Kiganda ebiggu* groove (which has two beats per measure).

As my analysis of "Omulembe Omutebi" reveals, Ssaaka's stylistic approach to songwriting stems from his first album of 1990 in which he experimented with the idea of blending pentatonic calls and harmonized responses, especially in "Ensimbe Eleese Amaanyi." Once this approach gained popularity among listeners, Ssaaka started to explore themes about the social constraints and aspirations of Buganda (including the demand for a federal system of governance that would enhance Buganda's autonomy, as well as the return of all Buganda's property that was seized by Milton Obote).

2.4 The Musical Anatomy of "Omulembe Omutebi"

Before I introduce some of the nuances that shape the anatomy of "Omulembe Omutebi," it should be noted that I draw on Western staff notation as a means of providing the reader with a rough idea of some of the structural components that constitute the sonic character of the song. Since the song features MIDI accompaniment which is roughly tuned to the Western tempered scale, the notated pitches represent pitches as heard. Also, Western staff notation is employed to demonstrate the relationship between phrases that are constructed based on a set of pitches in the diatonic tuning system. Additionally, I employ Western staff notation to demonstrate how instruments interact with each other in shaping the constituent texture of the song. With this in mind, I turn to the idiomatic nuances of "Omulembe Omutebi."

As with most of his popular songs, Ssaaka blends *kadongo kamu* and Western musical elements in "Omulembe Omutebi." Notable among the *kadongo kamu* stylistic elements in the song is the use of a very long narrative split into various sections. Also, the song simulates

several indigenous musical idioms of Buganda, including, *amadinda* (a set of 12-keyed xylophones),[8] *endingidi* (a one-stringed fiddle), and the groove of *embuutu* (big drum) on a synthesized electronic track. Another *kadongo kamu* trait is Ssaaka's predominant use of *egono,* a *kiganda* vocal technique with tonal inflections that are smaller than the Western semitone and as such, do not fit into the Western tonal paradigm which seems to be the driving force behind the responding vocal harmonies. Moreover, Ssaaka blends an equi-pentatonically tuned *endingidi* (one-stringed fiddle) with the Western tempered tuning system of the song's track as a way to bring the two musical worlds into conversation.

Unlike most popular songs whose duration spans between 3 to 4 minutes, "Omulembe Omutebi" is 10 minutes and 36 seconds long. Ssaaka attributes such length to the need to unpack and reflect on the historical background of Buganda in order to understand the conditions under which the traditional kingdom aspires for autonomy (through federalism), as well as the return of its assets. Accordingly, "Omulembe Omutebi" takes an attentive listener through the history of Buganda's colonial encounter since the reign of kabaka Mutesa I, the abolition of kingship, and its subsequent reinstatement in 1993 by president Museveni.

Composed in F# major, "Omulembe Omutebi"[9] opens with the gradual buildup of an instrumental texture which announces the sound world of the song (see figure 1, mm.1-17). Beginning with a fiddle call and response phrase, the accompanying track joins with its harmonic blocks of IV-V-I starting in m. 3 (figure 1). The shakers (played electronically) join the gradually built texture in measure nine. This is followed by the electronic pedal, which emphasizes the first

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[8] Traditionally, *amadinda* are tuned based on an equi-pentatonic scale, which, according to Klaus Wachsmann contains five pitches, each separated from the other by a distance of about 240 cents (Wachsmann 1950). Also, see Gerhard Kubik 1969: 27-28.

[9] The music and video of "Omulembe Omutebi" can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AR7IrL59Q-Y> (accessed April 9, 2020)

and second beat of each measure in mm.13 through 17 (figure 1). The bass, which simulates the

baakisimba music and dance groove joins lastly, expanding the texture of the song (see figure 1,

mm.14).

By employing the gradual construction of texture at the introduction of "Omulembe

Omutebi," Ssaaka demonstrates his music background in traditional *kiganda* music. Moreover,

such a gradual construction of texture in the song is like the traditional folk singing styles of

Buganda, which are often introduced with a vocal call and response, followed by hand clapping,

and lastly, the drums.

Figure 1: Instrumental introduction of "Omulembe Omutebi"

The instrumental introduction of "Omulembe Omutebi" is further expanded by a vocal call and response (figure 2), as well as a brief refrain, which is also call and response in structure (figure 3). This introductory call/response refrain, however, does not reoccur. The unusually long introduction of "Omulembe Omutebi" functions well in setting up the song's stylistic approach to the dialogic relationship of the vocals and the accompanying track, as well as the harmonic vocabulary and the juxtaposition of pentatonicism in the fiddle, and diatonicism in the MIDI instrumentation.

Figure 2: Vocal introduction of "Omulembe Omutebi"

Figure 3: The introductory call and response refrain

In "Omulembe Omutebi," pentatonicism is introduced by the call-phrase of the fiddle (in measures 1 and 2). This call is responded to by the IV-V-I harmonies of the synthesizer in measures 3, 4 and 5 (see figure 1).[10] This dialogic relationship that sets up the sound of the song is consequently applied to the vocal character as well. With a few exceptions, while the call phrases are predominantly pentatonic (embellished with indigenous *kiganda* microtonality), the responding phrases (of SATB) are based on the Western diatonic scale, as exemplified in the introductory call/response (figure 2), as well as the call/response refrain (figure 3). However, an exception to the application of pentatonic calls is applied in sections 2 and 4, during which a subdominant note is introduced to the initial pentatonic vocabulary of the call phrases. In the call phrase of section 2, Ssaaka uses a B natural (fourth degree of the Western diatonic scale) in measure 78 (figure 4).

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[10] Note that the pentatonic call of the fiddle I am referring to here has no relationship with the Western equidistant pentatonic scale. As such, the notation of the fiddle is only to represent a rough idea of the *Kiganda* equidistant pentatonicization.

The B note is then lengthened when it reappears in the call phrase of section 4, measures 208 and 209 (figure 5). In each of the two cases, the newly-introduced B note is resolved by a descent to A, as if to conform to the Western traditional norm of resolving a tendency tone.

Figure 4: Call phrase of section 2

Figure 5: Call phrase of section 4

In addition to juxtaposing pentatonicism and diatonicism, Ssaaka employs *egono* pitch inflections, which are common in *Kiganda* traditional music. These vocal embellishments are employed at the end of each call phrase (see beat 2 of m. 78, figure 4). Meanwhile, the responding SATB phrases are based on Western harmonic conventions. Ssaaka creatively interweaves two vocal approaches/modalities – *egono*/pentatonicism and SATB/diatonicism – that reveal a dialogue between two sound worlds. For many Baganda people, the juxtaposition of sound worlds which constitutes what I call sonic antagonism, provides the means of negotiating self-hood and collectivity. These sonically antagonistic sound worlds forge a sense of revival that is not rooted in traditional power before colonialism, or suppression by the current state, but rather, a platform that liberates them from chains of political bondage. These two sound worlds are predominantly employed in the six sections of the song, whose mapping is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Structual sections of "Omulembe Omutebi"

Section	Musical Elements
1 [Introduction]	Instrumental opening, followed by an introductory vocal call/response
BRIDGE	Melodic Call and harmonized response
2	Call/response
BRIDGE	Melodic call and harmonized response
3	Call/response
4	Call/response
5	Superimposed call over a repetitively harmonized vocal chorus
6	Superimposed call over a repetitively harmonized vocal chorus

Structurally, "Omulembe Omutebi" is partitioned into six sections (including its lengthy introduction). Unlike most Ugandan popular songs, which are based on formulae (generally, an intro, three verses with intervening refrains, and sometimes a bridge to the final verse and the closing outro), "Omulembe Omutebi" is through-composed. Its introduction, as well as sections 2, 3, and 4 are call and response, with familiar rhythmic material and a steady tempo that sustains a baakisimba danceable groove.[11] In addition to foregrounding an SATB chorus (without a call), section 3 is characterized by a short moment of temporal modulation from compound to simple meter.

In sections 2 and 3, Ssaaka employs call/response bridge passages as a strategy of forward motion. However, the cadential approach in the responding phrases of the two cases

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[11] A *baakisimba* music and dance groove predominantly has a feel of six eighth-notes in each measure (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005).

differs. In the response of the bridge to the second section, Ssaaka employs a cadential six-four chord that progresses to the dominant, and finally, to the tonic chord (see mm. 71-72; and mm. 75-76 as shown in figure 6). However, the responding phrase of the bridge to the third section of the song has an unorthodox cadence, which progresses from a cadential six-four chord to the tonic chord (see mm. 152-153 as shown in figure 7). This way of ending a phrase sentence speaks to one of the ways Ssaaka attempts to indigenize Western harmonic conventions. In this particular case, he disregards the cadential six-four as a dominant preparatory chord and rather skips straight to the tonic. Yet, in common practice, the cadential six-four commonly precedes a dominant chord in root position, before making its final way to the tonic chord.

Figure 6: Bridge passage to section 2

Figure 7: Bridge passage to section 3

An exception to the application of Western standardized harmonic function in the song is the third section in which parallel octaves are applied between tenor and bass in measures 155 to156, and 159 to 160 (figure 8). Additionally, parallel octaves between alto and tenor voices are applied from the end of the second beat of measure 158 to the first beat of measure 159 (figure 8). The use of octaves in "Omulembe Omutebi" reflects a common practice in *kiganda* traditional music. Unlike western harmonic functions in common time, where parallel fifths and octaves are avoided, these intervals form the basis of *kiganda* harmonic vocabulary, especially in instrumental music of *amadinda* (xylophone) music. Thus, these indigenous harmonies of fifths and octaves articulate Ssaaka's familiarity with *kiganda* harmonic vocabulary.

Figure 8: An SATB phrase of section 3

Structurally, the final section of the song (section 6) has a superimposed melody over an SATB repetitive phrase. The superimposed melodic line (which is subdivided into two short phrases), both of which are characterized by a minor third (between A# to C#) followed by a stepwise descent (B to A# to G) (figure 9, mm.250 to 253). Unlike previous sections in which harmonized SATB phrases responded to melodic calls, the repetitive SATB phrase in section six takes the lead by repeating three times. However, soon before the end of its third repeat, a melodic phrase is superimposed on top of the SATB. This dialogue (between the superimposed melody and the repetitive SATB) goes on until the song gradually fades out to the end.

Figure 9: Section 5

This far, I have demonstrated how the musical anatomy of "Omulembe Omutebi" articulates the interplay of indigenous *Kiganda* and Western musical idioms. As I have discussed, the song draws from a number of *kadongo kamu* musical traits including the use of a long and dense narrative, the simulation of the *baaksimba* music and dance groove, as well as *kiganda* musical instruments (such as *endingidi, amadinda* and *engoma* [drums]).

The vocal calls of the song employ ¾ microtonal qualities that are reminiscent of the *eggono* vocal style of Buganda. However, the responses are treated with Western harmonies, but sometimes juxtaposed with parallel fifths and octaves that are common in *Kiganda* folk singing styles. Rather than creating a dissonant feel, blending *endingidi* (with its equidistant pentatonic

sound) with an electronically-produced Western tempered tuning articulates two smoothly

blended sound worlds. I now turn to the Luganda text of the song.

2.4.1 The Plot and Its Construction of a Buganda Public

The rather long and dense narrative of "Omulembe Omutebi" recollects the history of

Buganda (as a kingdom) since the reign of kabaka Mutesa II (1856 and 1884). Organized into

five sections with two bridge passages (first, after section one, and second, following section

two), the predominantly call/responsorial narrative narrates Buganda's past in chronological

order (figure 10). However, not all historical phenomena or events of the kingdom are captured.

Only the most important moments, which according to Ssaaka, were central in shaping the

historical foundation of Buganda (as a kingdom and autonomous country), are foregrounded in

the song. These historical moments are not simply for the sake of recollecting the history of the

kingdom, but they form the foundation on which the Baganda people base their advocacy for

autonomy.

Figure 10 is a transcription and translation of the text of "Omulembe Omutebi." The

capitalized letter "C" represents a call phrase, and the "R" represents a response phrase. The

English translation is in italics in the right-hand column.

Section 1

Emirembe gino abange ngalo	*Reigns of kings are different*
Bwe baatugamba, bali abasooka	*As told by our forefathers*
Emirembe gya ba Ssekabaka abasooka sigigaya	*I am not disguising the previous reigns of kings*
Wabula ntenda gun'oMutebi	*But I praise the reign of Mutebi II*
(Call): Yadde e gy'akulembera nga gaylimu e Birungi	*Even though initial reigns had some good things*
(Response): Ntenda gun'Omutebi)	*I praise the reign of Mutebi II*
(C):Yadde gy'atetenkanya ne gituwa omusingi	*Even though initial reigns laid a strong foundation*
(R): Ntenda gun'Omutebi)	*I praise the reign of Mutebi II*

(C):Mazima nsoose ggerageranya ne mmanya ekituufu	*Truthfully, I compared before arriving to this conclusion*
(R): Ntenda gun'Omutebi; Kale	*I praise the reign of Mutebi II; Okay*

Section 2

(R): Guno, guno, mazima ntenda gun'Omutebi	*This reign, this reign, I truly praise this reign*
(C): Ssebo	*Sir*
(R):Guno, guno, mazima ntenda gun'Omutebi	*This reign, this reign, I truly praise this reign*
(C) Omulemba gwa Mutesa wanu gwatusendera eby'okuyiga	*The reign of Mutesa I was provocatively educative*
(R): (Nagwo gwali mulembe)	*It was also a legitimate reign*
(C) Ogwa Sekabaka Mwanga ne gujjula entalo ez'eddiini	*That of Mwanga was characterized by religious wars*
(R): (Ddala nagwo gwali mulembe)	*But it was similarly a legitimate reign*
(C):Ogwa Sekabaka Chwa ne beegabanira erya mayiro	*The reign of king Chwa was a scramble for land*
(R): (Nagwo gwali mulembe)	*It was also a legitimate reign*
(C): Lyali ssanyu jjereere elyalimu okkuba n'embuutu	*It was joyful and full of drumming*
(R): (Ddala nagwo gwali mulembe)	*But it was similarly a legitimate reign*
(C) Omulembe gwa Sir Edward gwalimu e ssanyu n'amaziga	*The reign of Sir Edward was full of joy and sorrow*
(R): (Nagwo gwali mulembe)	*It was also a legitimate reign*
(C): Gwali kasobeza nga ow'ekiwalaata atudde mulyango	*It evolved like a bald-headed man seated in the doorway*
(R): Ddala nagwo gwali mulembe)	*But it was similarly a legitimate reign*

Bridge

(C): Omulembe gwa Ssekabaka Mutesa ow'okubiri	*The reign of grand king Mutesa II*
(R): Gwalimu ebiwonvu, gwalimu ensozi	*Was characterized by ups and downs*
(C): Emitendera egyegolola nagyo tegyabulamu	*Remarkable moments were also present*
(R): Ka ngwogereko nga bina ojje olabe	*Let me talk about them so that you know*

Section 3

(C): Gwalimu okunyiiga n'okwetamwa; (R: Laba)	*It was characterized by anger and disgust (see)*
(C): Ng'abaganda ba wano beediimudde; (R: Nyumya)	*Following protests by the Baganda people (narrate)*
(R): Nga baagala kwe sunsulira pamba (R: Laba).	*They wanted to process their cotton (see)*
(C) Baleme kujeezebwanga ba kyeruppe (R: Nyumya)	*So that they are not undermined by foreigners (narrate)*
(R): Nga eby'obusuubuzi babimaamidde (R: Laba?)	*Who had monopolized the economy (see?)*
(C) Ngamba abayindi abeefuula egyano (R: Nyumya)	*I mean Indians, who had become a problem (narrate)*
(R): Obwediimo bwa ddiringana nnyo (R: Laba)	*There were a series of protests (see)*
(C): Nnamba munaana kaanyeenye ensi (R: Nyumya)	*The eighth protest destabilized the country (narrate)*
(R): Ne nnamba mwenda kwe ggobelera ate (R: Laba)	*The ninth protest also followed shortly (see)*
(C): Nti kyali kijobi mikwano gyange (R: Nyumya)	*That it was a nasty experience my dear friends (narrate)*
(R): Leka nnyimbe nga mbibuukira ate (R: Laba)	*Let me now sing with joy (see)*
(C) Olw'enkyuukakyuuka ezaasukka (R: Nyumya)	*Because of the change that followed (narrate)*
(R): Ssemakula Mulumba ajjukirwa nnyo (R: Laba)	*Ssemakula Mulumba is so remembered (see)*
(C): Olwa kye baayita bataka bbu (R: Nyumya)	*Because of the "Bataka Bbu" Movement (narrate)*
(C): Beekunga wamu abataka bonna (R: Laba)	*Together, they mobilized all chiefs (see)*
(C): Bateeseza nsi Uganda yetwale (R: Nyumya)	*To advocate for Buganda's independence (narrate)*

(C): Weewaawo baaguma ne bakituusa (R: Laba)	*Alas! They took heart and achieved success (see)*
(C): Wabula kuva mu maziga netudda mu maziga ate (R: Nyumya)	*Involving the shedding of tears after tears (narrate)*
(C) Ate munnengere bwe zinzizaayo (R: Laba)	*Look, history is recalling (see)*
(C): Nzijje mbalojjere ebyo mu ataano (R: Nyumya)	*Let me reveal the 1950s (narrate)*
(C) Mu ataano mwesatu twekyawaa nnyo (R: Laba)	*In 1953, we hated ourselves a lot (see)*
(C): Olwa gavana eyekyankuula (R: Nyumya)	*Because of the Governor's heavy-handedness (narrate)*
(C): Najja awangaangusa Magulu nnyondo (R: Laba)	*He forced the king into exile (see)*
(C): Mbu olwokuba ssebo yamujeemedde (R: Nyumya)	*Claiming that the king had disobeyed him (narrate)*
(C): Abaganda twalaba ekitalabwa nga (R: Laba)	*The Baganda were shocked by such an incident (see)*
(C): Olw'okumutwala Kabaka waffe (R: Nyumya)	*Of forcing the king out of his own kingdom (narrate)*
(C): Ataano mu etaano zawanula engoma (R: Laba)	*In 1955 the king returned to his throne (see)*
(C): Ng'omusango ssebo tuguwuuse buva (R: Nyumya)	*Following Buganda's victory in court (narrate)*
(C): Bwatyo gavana ne gumusinga (R: Laba)	*Eventually, the governor lost the case (see)*
(C): Kyali kikyamu yeemonkoola (R: Nyumya)	*It was wrong to be disrespectful (narrate)*
(C): Najja awa'ngangusa Magulu Nnyondo (R: Laba)	*To the extent of forcing the king into exile (see)*
(C): Omwa w'engoma atagambibwako (R: Nyumya)	*Beholder of the throne, who is never criticized (narrate)*
(C): Nazzibwa ssebo Kabaka waffe (R: Laba)	*Our king was consequently returned (see)*
(C) Ne tuddamu okkuba engalabi zaffe (R: Nyumya)	*We resumed our jubilations (narrate)*
(C): Abaganda twagira ne tumuyimba (R: Laba)	*The Baganda mocked him through song (see)*
(C): Ng'olwo tuyimba Cohen eyekyankuula (R:Nyumya)	*Mocking Cohen for his hostility (narrate)*
(C): Nkugambye tweekumaakuma ne tumuyeeya (R: Laba)	*We even mobilized to mock him (see)*
(C): Ng'olwo tuyeeya Cohen eyasingibwa essango; (R: Leka tubayimbiremu)	*Mocking Cohen for having lost the case (Let us sample for you)*

Bridge 2

Olutalo kasiggu omutali bitta	*What a bloody war without weapons*
Olutalo kasiggu omutali mmundu	*What a bloody war without firearms*
Kata tuswakire tuddire abalabe tubawemmente	*We almost charged at our enemies and ate them alive*
Kata tuswakire tuddire Cohen tumubaage bute	*We almost charged at Cohen and tore him apart*
Teyalina buyinza ku mwana w'abandi	*He had no authority over someone's child*
Teyalina buyinza ku mwana wa Daudi Chwa	*He had no authority over Daudi Chwa's son*
Teyalina buyinza ku mwana wa Druciller	*He had no authority over Druciller's son*
Teyalina buyinza endagaano bw'egamba (C: kale)	*He had no authority according to the agreement (okay)*
Kata tuswakiire tuddire abalabe tubawemmente	*We almost charged and fought our enemies to death*
Kata tuswakiire tuddire Cohen tumuswanyuule	*Anger almost tempted us into beating Cohen*
Kata tuswakiire tuddire Cohen tumubaage bute	*Anger almost tempted us into murdering Cohen*

Section 4

(C): Omulembe Omutesa gwali kasobeza	*The reign of Mutesa dragged on*
(R): Nga ow'ekiwalaata atudde ddala mu mulyango	*Similar to a bald-headed man seated in the doorway*
(C): Omuntu omukyaamu n'asensera mpola	*A wrong character gradually emerged*
(R) Najja akyankalanya Obuganda bwonna	*And disorganized the entire Buganda kingdom*
(C): Ne wajja wabaawo akalulu ka paalamenti	*There was even a referendum in parliament*
(R) Tetwakapapira tumale keetegereza	*We took our time to study the referendum carefully*

(C): Tusoke tumanye ekifo kya Buganda yattu	*So that we establish the position of Buganda*
(R): Tulyoke tulonde bye tutegeera	*In order to vote from an informed perspective*
(C): Enfuga ya federo yaweebwa Buganda yaffe	*Buganda was granted federalism*
(R): Ne tuzimba Buganda ku mbiro za yiriyiri	*And we rapidly developed the Buganda kingdom*
(C): Okuzimba Obuganda kwafa mpola mpola	*Developing of Buganda gradually died out*
(R): Kasita zaleeta kawenkene oli	*Once another enemy showed up*
(C): Eyajja aseka laba bwajja atufuukira engo	*One who came laughing but later turned into a lion*
(R): Twejjusa bingi naye nga twayiga	*We regret many things, but also learned a lesson*
(C): Yakyogera mu lwaatu nti Omuganda omulungi,	*He said it in the public, that a good muganda,*
(C): Yaaba amaze okufuuka omulambo	*Is only a dead one*
(R): Ekyasembayo kwe kwangaanga nakuba Mengo	*His final move was to bomb Mengo*
(C): Naayokya luno olubiri lw'olaba	*And burnt down the king's palace you see, to ashes*
(R): Najja agoba Kabaka twasula tukungubaga	*He forced the king into exile and we shed tears*
(C): Wamma, kwe ku ggulira omusaayi okuyiika	*Thus, opening up a series of bloodshed*
(R): Baatamwa Obote abaganda b'amukyayira ddala	*The Baganda got fed up with Obote, indeed*
(C): Tebali musonyiwa ne bwe buliba ddi	*They will never, ever, forgive him*
(R): Yatukaabya nnyo nga eno aseka	*He made us cry while he laughed*
(C): Ayitibwa Omuganda ateekwa butweekwa okukyaawa Omuteego	*Whoever is called a muganda has to automatically hate such an enemy forever*

Section 5

(R): Oh, laba omulembe; Oh laba omulembe	*Oh, see this reign; Oh, see this reign*
(C): Guli Omutebi gwajja bwe guti,	*That of Mutebi II began like this*
(C): Omulembe Omutebi gwajja bwe guti	*The reign of Mutebi II began like this*
(C): Gwa tebuka abalabe sibatendera,	*It performed best to the surprise of its enemies*
(C): Ne gusoolooba ku gyaliwo wano	*It performed better than all previous reigns*
(C): Kulwanyisa ffuga bbi eyo mu nsiko,	*It fought against dictatorship during the guerilla war*
(C): Anti mutabani wa Kaguta y'akulembera oluwenda	*With Kaguta's son leading the liberation struggle*
(C): N'abaana ba kintu ne bamwegattako	*And the sons of Kintu backed him up*
(C): Olw'akabaka waabwe eyali omuto ddala	*On behalf of their youthful king*
(R): Oh, laba omulembe; Oh laba omulembe	*Oh, see this reign; Oh, see this reign*
(R): Obwa kabaka buba bwaffe bwa'abakopi ffe tulwaana	*The Kingdom belongs to commoners, we protect it*
(C): Baakuba emmundu emyaaka gyawera etaano ddu	*It took the liberators five years fighting with guns*
(C): Banoonyeza Uganda eddembe ly'olaba	*Securing for Uganda peace you can bear witness to*
(C): Beeliiranga muddo mazima laba	*They used to feed on grass; imagine that!*
(C): Bikuta bya miti ssebo nga bye balya	*On tree leaves, they fed*
(C): Ne balwana olutalo nga bwe battibwa!	*They fought amidst enduring death*
(C): Ensi egula milambo	*The world is sought through death*
[(R): Oh, laba omulembe (C): Laba omulembe guno;	*Oh, see this reign; See this reign;*
(R): Oh laba omulembe	*Oh see this reign*
(C): Omulembe Omutebi n'entebe ya Chwa bwe bituukiridde	*The reigns of Mutebi and Chwa are a dream come true*
(C): Yagamba obwa Kabaka waliwo abalijja ne babujjawo	*He anticipated the overthrow of the Buganda kingdom*
(C): Mutebi muzzukulu eyegisa	*Mutebi the proud grandson*
(C): Ne mutabano wa Kagutu e bugwa njuba	*Together with the grandson of Kaguta from the west*
(C): Nga balwanyiza ffuga bbi ely'akawenkene	*Fighting against the ill of dictatorship*
(C): Ebintu okugenda okuggwa nga ali mu Zambiya	*By the turn of events he was exiled in Zambia*
(C): Laba omulembe guno	*See this reign*
(C): Ebyo olwaggwa abataka baawano mu Buganda	*Following those events, chiefs from Buganda*

(C): Baakulembelwa Ndugwa Katende, Ssemakula Omugave	*Led by Ndugwa Katende Ssemakula of the pangolin clan*
(R): Oh laba omulembe; Oh laba omulembe	*Oh see this reign; oh see this reign*
(C): Bolekera Ntebe ewa munywaanyi waabwe Museveni	*Headed to Entebbe to meet their friend Museveni*
(C): Nti ojjukira bulungi bazukulu baffe bali	*That you remember those grand children*
(C): Bakwegatako e luweero, okugoba Obote e Businge	*They joined you in Luwero to fight Obote at Businge*
(C): Eky'abatwalayo kulwana kuzza bwa kabaka	*Their mission was to fight and restore kingship*
(C): Ne nnamusa we gwanga Buganda	*And the greeting-style of Buganda*
(R): Oh laba omulembe; Oh laba omulembe	*Oh see this reign; oh see this reign*
(C): Muwenda teyasanga bw'akabaka okwawukana ne bali abamusooka	*Muwenda did not experience his reign different from his predecessors*
(C): Yafungisa nnyo nnyo n'amala okulwaana	*He was so tough a fighter*
(C): Bw'atudde mu ntebe nakola ebikulu	*Once on his throne, he performed excellently*
(C): Twewunyisa amagezi ago'mutanda waffe	*We are shocked by our king's wisdom*
(C): Naffe abakyaala n'abavubuka	*Even women and the youth*
(C): Ssebo bba ffe n'otusitula	*Our dear king, you have empowered us*
(C): Wuuyo otuwadde obwami	*You have appointed us chiefs*
(C): Otuwadde n'obukulu obwa minisita	*You have even appointed us as ministers*
(C): Tweyanzizza ekitiibwa, tweyanzizza nnyo bba ffe	*We thank you for such an honor, we thank you our king*
(R): Oh, laba omulembe	*Oh see this reign*
(C): Wokota wokota ssabalongo	*Long live, long live, father of twins*
(R): Oh, laba omulembe, oh laba omulembe guno	*Oh see this reign; oh see this reign*
(C): Wokota wokota ssabalongo	*Long live, long live, father of twins*
(R): Oh, laba omulembe, oh laba omulembe guno	*Oh see this reign; oh see this reign*
(C): Ekilala kye ky'omusajja gwe walonda ateemotyamotya	*The other issue is the hardworking man you appointed*
(C): Mulwaanya gwe yazaala naayala	*Mulwanya whom you gave birth to and he grew up*
(C): Ndugwa Katende nazzukuza	*Ndugwa Katende then played the grandfather role*
(C): Ye Mulwaanyammuli Ssemwogerere asaanira	*It's Mulwaanyammuli Ssemwogerere, he is worthy*
(C): Tabadde mubi obuganda bwonna abuggasse wamu	*He has not performed badly, he has united Buganda*
(C): Ekilala kyakola alwanilira nnyo enfuga gye twalina wano	*Also, he fought hard for a system of governance we had*
(C): Ekigambo kya federo kimukyamusa okukamala	*He gets excited when it comes to federalism*
(C): Nga bali wamu ne Museveni Kaguta	*Together with Museveni Kaguta*
(C): Mukwano wa Buganda, omuzira nte	*Friend of Buganda, of the cow clan*
(R): Oh laba omulembe; Oh guno omulembe	*Oh, see this reign; oh, see this reign*
(C): Oteesezza ssabasajja	*You have advocated well our dear king*
(C): Ebyaali bizaaye baabituddiza	*What was seized was returned*
(C): N'ebisigaddeyo bijja kujja	*And all the remaining will come too*
(C): Mutabani wa Kaguta waffe wa mu nju	*The son of Kaguta is our own son*
(C): Bita bi koonagana naye tebyaatika	*Gourds can knock each other but will never burst*
(C): Laba omulembe guno	*See this reign*
(R): Oh, guno omulembe; Oh, guno omulembe	*Oh, see this reign; oh, see this reign*
(C): Gira ogereke maama, ssabasajja owangaale	*Guide us dear mother queen; Long live your Majesty*
(C): Luwangula bwavu mu bantu	*Conqueror of poverty among people*
(C): Luwangula butamanya ye Muwenda	*Conqueror of ignorance is Muwenda*
(C): Guno Omutebi gukira egy'asooka	*Mutebi's reign is superior to all previous reigns*

Figure 10: The text and translation of "Omulembe Omutebi" (translation by Charles Lwanga)

Of all the reigns highlighted in the narrative, that of kabaka Mutebi II (1993-) is foregrounded as the most successful. This is because of its notable achievements that include successful negotiations with the central government, which culminated in the repossession of some of Buganda's property that had been seized by Obote. The reign of Mutebi II is also credited for empowering women as participants in the public sphere. Most notable is their involvement in the service of the kabaka, as ministers or members of the king's *lukiiko* (council). However, these achievements are employed as a backdrop for articulating the struggles that Buganda is still enduring. As explicitly stated in the song, these struggles stem from the refusal of the central government to share power with the Buganda kingdom.

To mediate the history of Buganda, the narrative of "Omulembe Omutebi" highlights some of the important events that characterized past reigns since colonial contact. For instance, in the first section, the narrative states: "Omulembe gwa Mutesa I gwatusendera eby'okuyiga" meaning that the reign of kabaka Mutesa I is remembered for its educative role in shaping the social values of the kingdom. The second line of the first section then recollects the reign of kabaka Mwanga II (1884-1888 and 1889-1897) for its rampant religious wars. The same section expresses that while kabaka Chwa's reign (1897-1939) was characterized by massive loss of Buganda's *mailo* (mile) land to colonial power, the reign of kabaka Sir Edward Mutesa II (1939-1953 and 1955-1966) was characterized by moments of joy and tears.[12]

Following section one, "Omulembe Omutebi" progresses to a short bridge passage that restates the intertwining complexities of joy and tears that characterized the reign of kabaka

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[12] According to Uganda's *Daily Monitor* (of March 11, 2014), the land lawyer, Peter Walubiri explains that following the 1900 Buganda agreement, *mailo* (mile) land may refer to land that was temporarily allocated to office bearers or the official land of the kabaka, which is passed on from generation to generation. While the kabaka officially owned 350 square miles of land, other office bearers only held 8 square miles, which, automatically transferred to the next office bearer or reign, in the case of the kabaka.

Mutebi II. These moments, according to Ssaaka's expression "Ka ngwogereko nga bino ojje olabe" (Let me talk about this reign so that you get to know), are not only central to the history of Buganda, but also to its continuity as a kingdom. Ssaaka implies that despite the ups and downs that Buganda went through during the reign of Mutesa II, the kingdom endured to the end.

In the second section, some of the tensions that ensued during kabaka Mutesa II's reign are stated. These, according to the narrative, were in response to social inequality in Buganda during colonialism. Foregrounded in the song is an emergent labor movement, the "Bataka Bbu" (heads of clans), which advocated for self-sustenance through a cotton ginnery business. To the members of the "Bataka Bbu" movement at the time, such a self-sustaining project would end any form of exploitation by foreigners, especially Indian merchants who had monopolized local businesses in Buganda. Additionally, the narrative of the second section praises Ssemakula Mulumba for having spearheaded the "Bataka Bbu" movement, which advocated for unity and federalism in Buganda.

The ideology of an independent Buganda, however, was also a source of controversy in the history of the kingdom. The last half of the second section of "Omulembe Omutebi" shows how, in 1952, the newly appointed Governor, Sir Andrew Cohen deposed kabaka Mutesa II and ordered him into exile in London for having advocated for Buganda's secession. It is also noted that Cohen's heavy-handed action against the kabaka in particular, and Buganda at large, led to a storm of multiple protests until 1955 when kabaka Mutesa II, amid pressure from the Baganda people, returned to Uganda and regained his rightful position as king (Pratt 1955). The narrative singles out two successive protests (the eighth and ninth), which, according to Ssaaka, were the most intense of all demonstrations by the Baganda people in support of their kabaka (pers. comm., Ssaaka. December 5, 2015).

In a bridge passage which also constitutes the third section of the song, textual commentary mocks Governor Cohen as a foreigner without any authority over the kabaka and Buganda. The narrative contests the deposition of the kabaka, and blames Cohen for having overstepped the boundaries of his powers as Governor. During an interview with Sssaka, he mentioned that the Baganda were hostile to Governor Cohen because of their strong commitment and sense of loyalty to their kabaka. Ssaaka's text states "[Cohen] teyalina buyinza ku mwana wa Daudi Chwa," which translates "Governor Cohen had no right over kabaka David Chwa's son [kabaka Mutesa II]." In the same section, "Kata tuswaakire tuddire Cohen tumubaaage bute" (We were tempted to kill Governor Cohen)" since insulting a kabaka is "never a joking subject." To foreground these sentiments against Governor Cohen, this bridge/section three of the song is written in simple meter.

The ensuing conflict and tensions between the Baganda people and Governor Cohen were not the only tense moments during the reign of kabaka Mutesa II. In the fourth section which modulates back to compound meter (to signify a baakisimba dance groove), the narrative points to Obote as yet another enemy of Buganda during the reign of kabaka Mutesa II. According to the narrative in section four, Obote's presence became visible at a time Uganda had regained independence (in 1962). At the time, the parliament had voted in favor of Buganda's autonomy; however, when Obote commanded the brutal attack on Buganda's main palace in 1966, forcing the kabaka into exile, autonomy never happened. This was an extremely difficult time for Buganda, as narrated in the song, as it took the monarchy 27 years to reinstate its status. Given that the death of kabaka Mutesa II is linked to the 1966 events in Buganda, Obote is represented as the most hostile figure in the history of the Baganda.

"Omulembe Omutebi" mediates (in symbolic form) the history of the Buganda kingdom, through the lens of royal reigns. From the reign of kabaka Mwanga II, which was characterized by rampant religious wars and that of kabaka Chwa, which is remembered for massive loss of land, to the reign of Mutesa II, the narrative of the song speaks to the struggles and achievements of Buganda kings. On one hand, notable setbacks for Buganda during colonialism include the deposition of kabaka Mutesa II by Governor Cohen in 1953, as well as the abolition of kingship by Obote in 1966. On the other hand, notable achievements include the defeat of Cohen's act against kabaka Mutesa II, as well as the attainment of a federal system of governance that would enhance economic development in Buganda (Pratt 1955).

In the fifth and sixth sections of "Omulembe Omutebi," the history of Buganda as narrated from sections two to four is used as a template for Ssaaka's thesis – that despite some challenges Buganda has yet to address, the reign of kabaka Mutebi II is considered by far the most successful. This is partly due to multiple avenues for educating the Baganda people about their history (including radio, television, and popular music), as well as their cultural values and norms. Additionally, the song applauds kabaka Mutebi II for empowering women to take up important positions of leadership in the public sphere. The final section of the song also praises the current reign of kabaka Mitebi II for having established a relatively smooth space for dialogue with the central government. Much attention in this dialogue is drawn towards the return of all infrastructure (and property) that once belonged to the Buganda kingdom. Most of my interlocutors believe that the success of this dialogue will consequently enhance the revival of Buganda's historical glory as a cultural institution.

The final section of the song praises the Buganda kingdom for its participation and endurance during the five-year liberation war that took place between 1981 and 1986. As the song clearly states, this war came at a time when the country yearned for liberation from Obote's and Idi Amin's ruthless dictatorial rules. It is mentioned that many Baganda people joined Museveni and his NRA rebel group (as they were known) to participate in the liberation war that culminated in victory in 1986. This relationship between Buganda and Museveni is echoed as a backdrop of the ensuing negotiations regarding the return of Buganda's *ebyaffe*, including 9000 square miles of land as well as several buildings in Kampala city. At the forefront of these negotiations was Joseph Mulwanyammuli Ssemwongerere, who served as *katikkiro* (prime minister) of Buganda from 1994 to 2006.

Peculiar to the reign of kabaka Mutebi II is the empowerment of women in a male-dominated society. Ssaaka noted that this was a very important achievement in the kingdom of Buganda, which liberated women from servitude and gave them more visibility in the public sphere. He stated: "I could not miss capturing this achievement in such an important song because it is one avenue that our kabaka's reign scores high. The appointing of women to serve as ministers in kabaka Mutebi II's government clearly demonstrates his respect for an equal rights society in this contemporary era. Moreover, having been raised in the United Kingdom, I expected nothing less from my kabaka" (pers. comm., Paul Ssaaka. December, 2015).

2.4.2 Multiple Interpretations of "Omulembe Omutebi"

Since its release in 1997, "Omulembe Omutebi" has been central to the mediation of Buganda as a public. On CBS radio, the song is (at this writing) still used as the prelude for programs that discuss the history and future of the kingdom. Also, each of Buganda's twenty

counties shares a chance of leading the annual birthday celebrations of kabaka Mutebi II, during which "Omulembe Omutebi" among other songs by Ssaaka is played as the *bakopi* and members of the royal family await the arrival of the king and the queen. Present at these ceremonies are school choral ensembles that perform to recorded studio accompaniments of songs by Ssaaka.

Some of my interlocutors who identified as Buganda royalists said that they listen to "Omulembe Omutebi" and many other songs written by Sssaaka on their phones, radios, television or DVD players at home or with friends. This way, "Omulembe Omutebi" has maintained a sense of audibility within the public sphere. Since the song embodies the historical struggles of Buganda, its growing popularity within the public sphere in Uganda creates a sense of ethnic awareness and unity among the Baganda people, without necessarily being a threat to the state. This is why the song has not been censored. However, it has not been aired that much on other radios stations other than CBS radio station of Buganda, which has the largest listenership in the country.

While contemporary market forces of high demand and correspondingly high supply have led to an influx of popular songs in Uganda, most of them fade out of memory quickly. However, Ssaaka's songs, such as "Omulembe Omutebi," have maintained a special place within Buganda discourse and continue to resonate with the kingdom's historical vision within the larger public sphere. Also, the song negotiates a special place of awareness, understanding, appreciation, loyalty, and unity in the hearts of the Baganda people who believe in its educative role. *Ow'ekitiibwa* Andrew Kaggwa stated:

> "Omulembe Omutebi" clearly articulates the rich history of Buganda. The song leaves one yearning for more because of its richness in language and knowledge. By the time the song comes to its end, you feel educated about who you are" (pers. comm., Andrew Kaggwa. December 6, 2015).

Foregrounding the educative role of "Omulembe Omutebi," Kaggwa points to the recollection of Buganda's past in the present. But even more important is the song's role in creating a sense of awareness and self-understanding. As Kaggwa pointed out, it seems that he came to a better understanding of himself as a *Muganda,* whose historical heritage forms part of the narrative of the song. Thus, to many Baganda people, "Omulembe Omutebi," negotiates a sense of continuity for Buganda; the historical episteme in the narrative serves as the basis for continuing a past tradition in present-day Uganda.

Ssaaka owes the predominant employment of repetitive materials (such as melodic phrases, harmonies, and textual expressions) in "Omulembe Omutebi" to textual comprehension:

> I purposely employed repetition in call and response phrases because of their effectiveness in stimulating curiosity. I remember my mother narrating *engero* (traditional stories) when I was young. These had repetitive call and response phrases that aroused curiosity in me. I even recall the stories up to now. This is why I am convinced that repetition is central to comprehension. I believe that repetition in "Omulembe Omutebi" stimulates the feeling of wanting to hear more (pers. comm., December 6, 2015).

Indeed, Sssaaka intentionally employed repetition as a way to honor his ancestors and to emphasize certain parts of the narrative. At the same time, repetition as a compositional process in Ssaaka's song seems to have been employed as a mechanism for evoking a sense of curiosity, like the composer's experience when his mother narrated *engero* (traditional stories). I believe that by delaying some of the parts that constitute the whole, as the case in the opening section (figure 1), Ssaaka's approach to repetition creates tension and thus, the sense of longing for what comes next. Such tension has an impact on listeners of the song, tempting them to remain in constant search for what is yet to come.

For John Mutebi, a retired civil servant at the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), "Omulembe Omutebi" renewed his loyalty to the kabaka of Buganda and his ancestry. Commenting about the importance of tradition in society, Mutebi noted that:

> Listening to "Omulembe Omutebi," I not only discovered more about Buganda, but also the importance of tradition. I believe that tradition is the backbone of my ethnicity and its survival to this day. "Omulembe Omutebi" not only reminds me of who I am as a *muganda,* but also my obligation to my kabaka as a *mukopi* (pers. comm., March 6, 2016).

Mutebi's experience with "Omulembe Omutebi" speaks to the potential of popular music in linking the Baganda to their historical ancestry and creating intimate relations. The narrative of the song links Mutebi to a lineage of royal reigns since kabaka Mutesa II. This legitimizes listeners' ethnicity, as well as their position in the social hierarchy, and their obligation and loyalty to Buganda.

Additionally, Mutebi's understanding of tradition as the backbone of his ethnicity aligns with Buganda's vision of continuity. Since the reinstatement of kingship in 1993, the notion of *ebyennono* (traditional values) has occupied center stage in Buganda's quest for a contemporary presence. "Omulembe Omutebi" portrays Buganda as a historically powerful kingdom. This is an image for Buganda whose struggles are centered on its continuity.

In order to compose the text, Ssaaka initially read books about the history of Buganda. He also consulted several senior officials in the government of Buganda who advised him accordingly:

> Adding to what I had read about Buganda, the senior officials I spoke to confirmed that the glory of Buganda lies in its autonomy. Once this came into the picture, I felt compelled to capture such information to portray a good sense of Buganda's past and present. But to do this, I had to spend some time describing what Buganda was, and what it is today (pers. comm., Ssaaka. December 6, 2015).

By "loss of power," Ssaaka refers to the loss of Buganda's autonomy through which the kabaka had full power over the Baganda people. This level of autonomy also allowed Buganda to control its own economy. To further explain power in Buganda, Ssaaka's "Omulembe Omutebi" narrates a labor movement in 1952, which protested foreign merchants, particularly of Indian descent, who had monopolized local business. By itself, the act of protesting the harsh labor system at the time "is a call for the Baganda to stand to their ground against any form of encounter that threatens their existence" (pers. comm., Ssaaka. December, 2015).

2.4.3 Visual Symbols in "Omulembe Omutebi"

The music video of "Omulembe Omutebi" was produced in 2007, shortly after the release of its audio recording toward the end of 2006. However, it made its first appearance on YouTube in 2012. The title of this song comes from the fourth and last of Ssaaka's albums with the Budo Secondary School ensemble. When asked why "Omulembe Omutebi" was the last of his albums, Ssaaka said that he was responding to the forces of Uganda's music economy, whose demand for new songs (rather than albums) was rising at a much faster pace than he could satisfy. Thus, Ssaaka decided to resort to singles and he has maintained this strategy to the present day (2020). He estimates that he has composed songs for about one hundred schools (both primary and secondary). In fact, in March 2020, a music festival was scheduled to take place at Freedom City, an urban entertainment center in Kampala, in honor of Ssaaka's contribution to Uganda's music industry in general, and Buganda in particular.

The music video of "Omulembe Omutebi" opens with a montage of interwoven images that reinforce the narrative.[13] For instance, kabaka Mutebi II's head and eye gestures are initially shown (at 0.04 of the music video). At 0.10, we see a montage of a crowd of people and Budo musicians playing traditional *kiganda* instruments. The crowd of people is difficult to discern, until kabaka Mutebi II is shown waving (presumably at the crowd) at 0.11. Standing next to the kabaka is his former *katikkiro* (prime minister) Joseph Mulwanyammuli Ssemwogerere who watches as his king waves to the people. The rest of the introduction (0.14 to 0.23) focuses on the musicians who seem to be in a state of jubilation. Generally, what comes to mind is the celebration of kabaka Mutebi II, whose reign is being applauded in the song for its significant achievements in contemporary Buganda.

Introducing the reigning kabaka Mutebi II by foregrounding his head articulates the way he is conceived of in Buganda. In the social structure of Buganda, the kabaka is regarded as the *mutwe* (head) of the Baganda. He is also their ruler and a symbol of authority. As a song that celebrates the reign of kabaka Mutebi II while drawing on the history of Buganda kingdom, it is fitting that "Omulembe Omutebi" articulates such an important relation between the kabaka and his people.

Some of the values in Buganda, such as dress code, are illuminated in the music video. For example, the kabaka is shown dressed in traditional *kiganda* attire, which consists of a *kanzu* (a long white robe) and a black jacket (at 0.40) Similarly, some male Budo musicians in the music video are dressed in *kanzu* and blue jackets. Also, most female musicians are dressed in a

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[13] "See "Omulembe Omutebi" at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AR7IrL59Q-Y (accessed April 9, 2020).

traditional *gomesi* (long dress) design, and a few in *bitambaala* (cloth) designs that signify the

Baganda people. Ssaaka told me the dress code in the music video was carefully chosen to depict

that *kiganda* dressing styles of respecting the privacy of one's body by covering it: "You cannot

talk about values in Buganda if you are not being an example. We had to dress the musicians

traditionally to reflect the values of the song" (pers. comm., Ssaaka. December, 2015).

The reigns of kabaka Mwanga II and kabaka Chwa II are mediated with some pictures

to stress characteristic traits that defined them. For example, kabaka Mwanga's unclear picture

and that of some Ugandan martyrs that he burnt to death reinforce the textual narration of the

historical event. For kabaka Chwa II, an unclear picture of the king and sections of land that

were stolen from Buganda under his watch are shown. Also, textual narration of the attack on

Buganda's palace is reinforced visually. According to Ssaaka "these were very tense moments in

the history of Buganda and as such, I had to ask my producer to look for some images that would

reinforce the story so that they sink in the minds of the Baganda" (ibid).

While the use of images is limited to a few scenarios so as not to obstruct the flow of

the story, as told by the singers, the final part captures some of the images that were recorded

during the coronation of kabaka Mutebi II as king of Buganda in 1993. At this point, these

images reaffirm the kabaka as the only legitimate ruler of Buganda. As *Ow'ekitiibwa* Kaggwa

pointed out: "When a kabaka is crowned, he becomes the ruler of the Baganda without question.

From that moment on, the kabaka, if called in the public is a call for his recognition as symbol of

Buganda" (pers. comm., November 1, 2015). This symbolism is articulated in the final part of

"Omulembe Omutebi's" narrative, which foregrounds kabaka Mutebi II in his kingship red robe

amidst cheers from the crowd that is present.

2.5 Conclusion

Although Ssaaka's Mitala-Maria music group enjoyed popularity during the early 1990s, its preoccupation with frequent tours and concerts in the country became controversial. In 1991, some parents of participating members of the ensemble complained in that their children were spending more time in the music business than studying. As a result, some students left the ensemble following advice from their parents and relatives. By 1993 when I joined as a student and keyboardist in the *Ssaakarian* music group, concerts were restricted to school holidays and a few exceptional state functions.

Additionally, the controversy that surrounded remuneration was devastating for Ssaaka, and he became depressed. Members of the *Ssaakarian* group, including Ssaaka, could not be paid since they were students. However, they enjoyed some privileges, such as frequent picnics and treats to special foods during school terms. But this did not make sense for Ssaaka because he wanted to be paid as composer and director of the music. In the end, he abandoned his Mitara-Maria *Ssaakarian* music group shortly after the release of his first album.

After experiencing a period of 4 years of depression, he returned to teaching between 1996 and 1998, when he simultaneously taught Luganda at St. Peters Senior Secondary School, Nkokonjeru, while directing a music group at St. Balikuddembe Senior Secondary School, Kisoga; the two schools were in close proximity. Ssaaka's efforts to start a music group at Nkokonjeru were futile since the head teacher was not interested in the idea. However, at Kisoga, Ssaaka was given an opportunity to make a fresh start at his career. Within one year, Kisoga released its first album, "Ntambula Ngaludde" (I Walk Consciously), which became popular in the same way as the *Ssaakarians* of Mitara-Maria.

Owing to the rising popularity of the Kisoga school's music group, Ssaaka regained media attention. For instance, on April 13, 2009, under the title "A Famous Career Without Stardom," Uganda's print media, *Daily Monitor,* published an article about Ssaaka's humble career, welcoming him back into the music business. Shortly thereafter, the head teacher of Budo Senior Secondary School offered Ssaaka a position as music director, which he gladly accepted. After the release of Budo's first popular music album, "Emitima Gya Baganda" (The Hearts of the Baganda), the school became famous for adopting the Mitara-Maria *Ssaakarian* style of making music. This album signaled a special place for popular music in Buganda, as many Baganda people started sharing a sense of belonging through the consumption of Ssaaka's songs.

The musical style that characterizes Ssaaka's songs have since 1993 been crucial to the construction of a Buganda public. This public is negotiated through the recontextualization of indigenous musical materials as urbanized sounds using studio music software. Once indigenous and Western musical idioms are combined to form an interactive sonic world, as the case is with Ssaaka's songs, the outcome represents what Gautier has called, "sonic transculturation," an episteme that enacts or disrupts "sonic purification" (Gautier 2006: 803). In the case of Buganda, when Sssaka blends traditional and foreign musical idioms, he simultaneously enacts (through simulation) traditional sounds, while at the same time disrupting a sense of their authentic aesthetic quality. This simultaneous attending feature of the process of sonic recontextualization is what I frame as sonic antagonism, an episteme that allows listeners to negotiate ways of listening to Ssaaka. During my fieldwork, I recall that even when sounds produced on indigenous instruments were mass-mediated, listeners were able to negotiate a sense of familiarity to them. I contend that it is this sense of familiarity that enables listeners to understand their ethnicity,

acquire a sense of belonging, and consequently negotiate bonds of shared political interests as an ethnic public.

According to Abu Kawenja, a senior presenter/producer on CBS radio, "Ssaaka is celebrated for pioneering the rise of popular secular songs among primary and secondary schools in Uganda. Ssaaka's songs educate masses about Buganda's cultural heritage, an initiative that is the first of its kind in schools" (pers. comm., Kawenja, February 17, 2016). Kawenja's observation underscores the significance of Ssaaka's songs in educating young Baganda people about their cultural heritage. As I have demonstrated, "Omulembe Omutebi" recollects the past to negotiate the present and the future.

Ssaaka's project has given young women and men a chance to participate in the production, dissemination, and consumption of symbolic material around issues that are central to the Buganda kingdom. His creative thoughts and processes about indigenous cultural history and values are symbolic of Buganda's visibility within Uganda's public sphere. By embodying cultural history and values, Ssaaka's repertoire constitutes of an episteme that simultaneously enacts the past and present and engenders sonic antagonism. As I have argued, it is this form of sonic antagonism that articulates the virtues of Buganda as well as its history and social aspirations, and by doing so, renders the kingdom an audible public.

3.0 "HANG THEM!" POPULAR MUSIC AND THE POLITICS OF BELONGING IN HOMOPHOBIC UGANDA

On February 24, 2014, president Museveni signed the Uganda "Anti-Homosexuality Act 2014" into law. Similar to the earlier "Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2009," the 2014 Act prohibited the practice of homosexuality in Uganda; however, instead of punishing homosexuality with the death penalty, the 2014 Act called for a sentence of life imprisonment. Also, according to the Act, landlords found guilty of concealing knowledge about homosexual tenants would be criminalized. The criminalization of landlords was particularly important because some of them were known to be supportive of the LGBT community.

Despite president Museveni's support, the "Anti-Homosexuality Act 2014" was rejected by the court of Appeal/Constitutional court in 2014 because it contradicts the 1995 constitution that guarantees basic human rights of assemblage, association, and freedom of expression. However, at this writing, members of the LGBT community continue to live in fear for their lives. Due to rampant homophobia in political and cultural institutions, practices of same-sexuality are conceived as counter to the predominantly heteronormative culture of Uganda. The dominant ideology of heteronormativity as "good," and any other sexual behavior as "bad," in Uganda, has left many sexual minorities fearing for their lives.

In this chapter, I explore the ways in which popular music discourses and practices articulate an emergent LGBT community that aim to create a sense of belonging within state conditions that criminalize same-sex loving men, women, and transgender people.

Supporters of the Anti-Homosexuality Act conceive homosexuality as an amoral sexual practice in Uganda, whose goal is to contaminate what has historically and culturally been

normalized as acceptable ways of behaving and acting sexually in society. They claim that practices of same-sexuality have the potential to subvert historically and culturally rooted relations of gender, patriarchy, and power in Uganda. They view the LGBT community as a counter-public to conservative cultural norms, Christian beliefs, and state ideology. Moreover, anti-gay proponents constitute the dominant voice within the public sphere when it comes to social morals. Their discourse is taken seriously and unfairly used as a template against which sexual minorities are judged. To fully understand what is at stake when it comes to living in the homophobic nation-state of Uganda, I retrospectively present a conversation I had with some faculty on one of Makerere University's social media platform, WhatsApp. This conversation illustrates the intolerance and discrimination against same-sex loving individuals.

On April 16, four weeks after I had returned to the U.S. from fieldwork in Kampala, I received a message from a Makerere University *WhatsApp* social media group whose identity I will conceal for purposes of my own safety and that of my colleagues. In one message, a faculty member claimed that discourses of homosexuality in the form of books and videos (with gay cartoon characters) were being circulated in schools, and that children below the age of consent were being offered cash gifts to perform acts of homosexuality. The message condemned homosexuality and called for unified action against the spread of these practices in Ugandan schools. I responded that if such a rumor was indeed proven true, it was wrong to engage children who are under age. But I also added that if two consenting adults were engaged in homosexual acts, I would have no problem with it. My response initiated a series of attacks on me that went on for about five days.

Responding to my view, a faculty member argued that homosexuality is immoral and unacceptable in Uganda: "It does not matter whether members are of consenting age,

homosexuality is just immoral in our society." This faculty member continued that practices of same sexuality breach both cultural and some religious (Christian) norms. Another member in the group blamed me for disrespecting cultural values that foreground heterosexuality as the only moral avenue of procreation. And another asked: "How dare you defend those *basiyazi* (same-sex loving individuals) as if you are defending your own sexuality? Are you a pro-gay advocate?"

Since most of the discussants on the *WhatsApp* group expressed religious sentiments, I argued that same-sex loving individuals are our brothers and sisters, and that none of us had the moral authority to condemn them. I even quoted Pope Francis' popular quote: "Who am I to judge," expecting that the Holy Father's own words would generate sympathy. But I was wrong. Rather, the conversation turned bitter when a member of the group mocked me for being paid large sums of American dollars (as a graduate student in music) to popularize the "vice" of homosexuality in Uganda. I did not respond to this accusation in fear that it could intensify the attacks on me.

To sustain a more rational discussion, I resorted to a new strategy of drawing on facts. I argued that there is an enormous amount of scholarship that describes the existence of minority sexualities in Africa during pre-colonial times. I wanted to counter the common belief that homosexuality was alien to Africa, as some members of the *WhatsApp* intellectual fraternity believed. But no sooner had I sent this message than one participant on the platform asked: "who are you to lecture us about sexuality? Are you trying to show that you are smarter than us?" At this moment, I decided not to respond further, after realizing that my factual arguments would not be accepted by those whose social and cultural beliefs were so deeply entrenched.

The *WhatsApp* group conversations privilege morality as one of the most controversial issues in a society that criminalizes homosexuality. Most of my interlocutors claimed that practices of same sexuality are immoral, and not acceptable in society. This attitude against sexual minorities is also held by those who claim that the political rights of the LGBT community are "unrealistic." Yet, same-sex loving individuals are human beings and deserve to be treated as such under the law. Social constructions of what is "reasonably acceptable" under the law constitute multiple dimensions of understanding the struggles of an emergent LGBT community in Uganda.

Not surprisingly, there are very few mainstream mass-mediated songs about the aspirations and anxieties of the LGBT community in Uganda. Most of my interlocutors attributed this absence to the fear of musicians being perceived as pro-gay. In fact, I interviewed popular musicians who told me they have not composed songs that support LGBT issues because they do not want to be perceived as pro-gay. Based on the history of violence against homosexuals, being perceived as pro-gay is potentially dangerous and may decrease their record sales and business prospects. Moreover, many musicians are homophobic and, as such, they do not want to associate themselves with homosexuality.

Despite the absence of mainstream songs, there is a growing popular culture around LGBT social issues, including music. In this chapter, I analyze a song by Ugandan music star Jackie Chandiru called "Ikumabo" that reflects the aspirations and anxieties of same-sex loving individuals in Uganda. I analyze the way that Chandiru employs textual and visual ambiguity to negotiate a musical landscape for an emergent LGBT public. This public is emerging in the sense that it is relatively new within the public sphere and only recently undergoing a formative process of making itself more audible, visible, and potentially acceptable in Uganda's

predominantly heterosexual society. I demonstrate how Chandiru's song "Ikumabo" and its accompanying music video open the possibility for new meanings about conventional gender boundaries and contest the historical, political, and cultural roots of heteronormativity in Uganda.

3.1 Contestations Over Same-Sexuality in Postcolonial Uganda

Today's so-called postcolonial era has not only reinforced, but has in many ways reconstructed an "African culture" that foregrounds heteronormativity and its corresponding power relations of male dominance.[14] Evangelic missions in Uganda have demonized same-sex relationships, labeling them as immoral in society. Yet, the repressive reinforcement of heteronormativity through the state, Christian institutions (particularly the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Uganda, and most Pentecostal Evangelists), as well as media, educational, and cultural institutions, has given rise to an emergent LGBT community that demands social justice.

Despite claims that homosexuality was introduced by the British through colonialism, scholars have shown that same-sex practices existed in pre-colonial Africa but they went unnoticed or undocumented by scholars whose research agenda was driven by colonial interests (Murray and Roscoe 1998; Riddinger 1995; Kendall 1996; and Parrinder 1980). Epprecht argues that homosexuality and heterosexual marriages existed in pre-colonial Africa (2008).

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[14] I refer to postcoloniality as "so-called" in order to highlight the idea that today's society is not free of colonial ideas and practices (see Mbembe 2001 and Agawu 2003, among others).

Nannyonga-Tamusuza argues that the murder of some of the first twenty-two Christian converts in Uganda was partly because of their refusal to submit to kabaka Mwanga's "homosexual" advances (2005). Epprecht (2008) notes that scholars whose intentions were driven by colonial interests strategically erased any knowledge about sexual minorities from the history of African nations. Also, Dlamini (1996) and Swiddler (1993) contend that colonial masters did not introduce homosexuality; rather, they popularized its intolerance through institutions, such as the teachings of Christianity that define homosexuality as a sin, and the colonial school curriculum, which left no space for discussing sexual minorities.

Thabo Msibi (2011) has argued that homophobia and the claim of homosexuality as un-African are simply ways of reinforcing patriarchy and its forms of hegemony. Stella Nyanzi (2013a, 2014) notes that homophobia is a way of "othering" groups of minority sexuality. By conceiving of homosexuality as alien to Africa, homophobia denies the community of same-sex loving individuals a place within the social/cultural realms of the public sphere. Rampant social injustice forces same-sex loving individuals into closeted lives, rendering them invisible. However, a public of same-sex loving individuals has emerged since 2003 in response to these practices, and music is central to their identity and politics.

3.2 The Emergent LGBT Public in Uganda

In 1998, the late David Kato broke the silence about homosexuality by publicly announcing his sexuality as a gay man. Before then, homosexuality was unspoken in Uganda's public sphere. Kato, considered the father of Uganda's gay rights movement, had just returned from South Africa, where he worked as a teacher. Kato's outspokenness attracted public outcry against minority sexual practices. Cultural and religious critics then argued that homosexuality

impedes procreation, a cultural project that instills the continuity of family lineages among most Ugandan ethnic groups. Until his tragic murder in 2011, Kato was at the forefront of advocacy for the rights of same-sex loving individuals in contemporary Uganda. A postmortem report revealed that Kato was brutally murdered with a metal rod, which struck the back of his head. On the one hand, Kato was a martyr whose death drew attention to gay rights and empowered the people to talk about it. On the other, Kato's death intensified homophobia and hostility against same-sex loving individuals, forcing many in the closet, in fear for their lives.[15]

The gay rights movement in Uganda dates to 2004, when Victor Mukasa founded Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG), a non-governmental organization that would, together with the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC), champion the fight against homophobia and negotiate for the protection and rights of same-sex loving individuals. In 2010, the Ugandan-based newspaper *Rolling Stone* published a list of one hundred names of suspected same-sex loving individuals.[16] Under the title, "Hang Them!" the article incited the public to kill all homosexuals whose names had been published. In response, members of SMUG (including the late Kato and Kesha Nabagesera) petitioned the Ugandan High court to issue an injunction against the circulation of *Rolling Stone's* article. SMUG's petition was successful. *Rolling Stone* was ordered to pay all court costs that SMUG had incurred. And because the print media did not satisfy all standards required of print media institutions in Uganda, *Rolling Stone* was subsequently closed, marking a victory for the LGBT public.

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[15] Kato's murder has attracted the attention of scholars such as Kristen Cheney (2012: 78); Thabo Msibi (2011: 59);, Susan Dicklitch, et. ela., (2012: 463); and Tavia Nyongo (2010: 60) among others. It was also covered by major media institutions around the world, including the BBC (January 27, 2011). This coverage can be accessed at: ww.bbc.co.uk/new/world-africa-12295718

[16] The Ugandan-based newspaper *Rolling Stone* had a circulation of about 2000 and was not affiliated with the U.S.-based entertainment magazine *Rolling Stone*.

In 2010, David Bahati, a youth parliamentarian at the time (and currently a cabinet minister of state for finance and planning in the Museveni government), introduced "Bahati's Bill" that sought to punish homosexuality with death. Further, anyone proven guilty for not reporting or for aiding a suspected homosexual would serve jail time. Although most religious institutions do not condone same-sex loving relationships, they advocated for lighter sentences other than the death penalty. SMUG was very active in countering Bahati's Bill. Additionally, pressure mounted from human rights organizations (within and outside Uganda), and several national and internationally government-related donors. Consequently, the bill was briefly tabled. However, once parliamentarians agreed to substitute life imprisonment for the death penalty, the bill was reintroduced in parliament and subsequently passed in December 2013.

In 2014, president Museveni signed into law what was then called the Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2014 causing tension and unrest in the country.[17] By signing the bill, and ensuring that same sexuality was illegal, President Museveni's act sent a strong message to Ugandans. Despite increasing threats from some donor countries to withdraw their funding if the president did not reconsider his position, the status quo remained in force until August 2014 when the court of Appeal, which also serves as the constitutional court, overturned the anti-homosexuality law for having passed through an insufficient parliamentary quorum. However, with their anti-LGBT attitude already in place, the state and other cultural institutions accelerated rampant homophobic sentiments against same-sex loving individuals. At this writing, many

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[17]As a result of Museveni's action, some members of the LGBT public mistakenly believed that the proposed anti-homosexuality bill was synonymous with mob justice against them and as such, those whose names were published in the *Rolling Stone* went into hiding in fear for their lives. Also, there was growing fear of unemployment for same-sex loving individuals who publicly announced their sexuality, prompting the self-preservation of many others in the closet.

same-sex loving individuals continue to live in the closet because it is the only way of keeping safe and negotiating a sense of belonging.

Similar to other publics that are critical of president Museveni and his ruling NRM party, the LGBT community is marginalized by media institutions, which work under strict instructions (and threats) from the state to submerge oppositional groups. Uganda's main print media outlets, New *Vision* and *Daily Monitor*, are at the forefront of exacerbating homophobia in the country. As Sarah Namusoga (2016) has noted, these two print media institutions have always framed homosexuality through a moral or religious lens, which portrays the community of same-sex loving individuals as counter to the dominant heteronormative culture in Uganda.[18]

Accordingly, any discussion of sexual minority issues in Uganda's media is restricted to a single homophobic writer (if in print media), or host or guest (if on radio or television), whose input focuses on countering homosexuality on the basis of morality. Because the media logic is structured in a way that submerges any deeper engagement with the social aspirations of the LGBT community, queer narratives and experiences are rendered inaudible and invisible on mainstream radio, television, and print media.[19] However, the LGBT community has responded to this form of marginalization by mainstream media institutions in creative ways.

For instance, in 2014, Kasha Nabagesera, a self-identified sexual minority, journalist, and distinguished LGBT human rights advocate introduced an alternative online media forum called

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[18] Namusoga adds that rather than opening an inclusive discursive space, *New Vision* and *Daily Monitor* restrict sexual minority stories to an elite class, leaving out the readership and views of lower classes (Namusoga 2016).

[19] Occasionally, people call in during radio or television programs to share views about homosexuality. Others upload televised programs on social media, such as YouTube, so that they can watch and contribute to programs that they have missed. For instance, the "Morning Breeze" talk show (about homosexuality) of December 18, 2012, hosted by Simon Njala's National Broadcasting Service (NBS), was uploaded on YouTube on December 20, 2102. Many people responded with comments within a short time. (see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKP-PUAI96U&t=408s) (accessed May 12, 2020).

"Kuchu Times: Our Voices, Our Stories, Our Lives."[20] The subtitle of the forum underscores its

centrality in providing an unbiased avenue of advocating for equality, creating awareness, and

above all, articulating same-sexuality by publishing about the lives and experiences of same-sex

loving individuals in Uganda. The forum also links Uganda's members of the LGBT community

to other same-sex loving individuals and sympathizers in the diaspora.

At this writing, "Kuchu Times" has hosted four editions of a free online journal called

Bombastic. The first issue was published in 2014; the second in 2015, the third in 2017, and the

fourth in 2019. In each of these issues, selected members of the LGBT community share their

stories and experiences of what it means to live as *kuchu* in homophobic Uganda. Members that

are featured in the journal have the freedom to disclose or conceal their identities as they may

wish. My interlocutors praised *Bombastic* for creating an alternative participatory avenue for the

LGBT community whose visibility had been erased by mainstream media.

Other initiatives that have enhanced the visibility of Uganda's LGBT public include an

online twitter forum "Freedom and Roam Uganda" (FARUG), which was also started by

Nabagesera, in 2011. Doubling as an organization, FARUG mainly provides free HIV testing as

well as counseling and care for women in Uganda who identify as sexual minorities.

Additionally, in 2012, American film directors Malika Zouhali-Worrall and Katherine Wright

directed a documentary called "Call me Kuchu," which explores the murder of David Kato and

the struggles of the emergent LGBT public in Uganda. The documentary won the 2014 Gay and

Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) media award, which recognizes outstanding

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[20] In Uganda, the term *kuchu* is used to refer to people who identity as same-sex loving individuals, as I will discuss further.

representations of members of the LGBT communities around the world.[21]

3.3 Queer Terminologies and Their Usage

In this study, I use the acronym "LGBT" (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) to describe same-sex loving individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. I did not come across any individual that identified as intersex. However, since practices of same-sexuality are considered counter to heteronormativity, it is very common for members of the LGBT community to be referred to as "queers" by some Pentecostal pastors and members of the heteronormative public. However, it should be noted that I do not include a Q because most same-sex loving individuals I interviewed did not use it to refer to themselves. Also, I did not include a Q to avoid any confusions with local identifiers, as the meaning of Q entails the identities of all members who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. Thus, I restrict myself to the acronym LGBT.

However, it should be noted that the acronym (LGBT) is unstable because some same-sex loving individuals struggled to identify their sexuality using the commonly assigned categories. Throughout this chapter, I use the acronym (LGBT) and "same-sex loving individuals/partners" interchangeably. I also use the term "gay" to refer to men who have sex with men, or men who have sex with both men and women. While the term "bisexual" was used by a few of interlocutors, I employ it to refer to men or women who are also attracted to the

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[21] New Video Group. *Call Me Kuchu.* DVD. Directed by Zouhali-Worrall, Malika, and Katherine Wright, Cinedign Corp., 2013.

opposite sex. Interestingly, some bisexual men preferred identifying as gay since their sexual

relationships with men are more frequent in their lives than with women. Additionally, one

bisexual woman preferred identifying as *kuchu* since her relationship with women is more

frequent in her life than with men. Further, there are several local terms that signal sexual

identities that are specific to Uganda.

For instance, I use the local *Kiswahili* term *kuchu* to refer to a same-sex loving individual

or the plural term *kuchus*. This term gained acceptance in 2007 when scholar and human rights

activist Sylvia Tamale B. Murillo (2007) described it as a catch-all term for practices of sexuality

that are not heteronormative. Nyanzi has noted that the term is commonly associated with "same-

sex-loving men, women, and transgender people" (Nyanzi 2013). According to one of my

interlocutors Chickie, the term *kuchu* also refers to "a lesbian's private part that is an attraction to

a same-sex individual" (pers. comm., Chickie. July 8, 2015).

Although some of my interlocutors did not accept the term *kuchu*, referring to it as an

awkward label, most of them agreed that forging local terminology was a way of negotiating an

indigenous identity. They emphasized that indigenizing terminology to define their identities is a

way to counter the prejudicial and erroneous idea that homosexuality is foreign to Africa. The

first issue of *Bombastic* includes four pages of definitions of terms employed to describe same-

sex loving individuals, most of which are borrowed from the Western academy. However, most

of my interlocutors emphasized the need to employ indigenous terms as a way of concealing

their identities and as such, evading any form of discrimination.

At other times, same-sex loving individuals evade discrimination by establishing false

heterosexual relationships in public as a way of maintaining familial or ethnic ties. But for those

identified by their families or members of the public as homosexual, living in the closet is the

only alternative for navigating societal hostility against sexual minorities. This also applies to those who have kept their sexuality a secret between their partners. For most members of the LGBT community, the kind of treatment they are subjected to because of societal misconceptions about minority sexuality has left them living as half citizens within their own country.

3.4 Living "Bare Lives?"

In his critique of human rights, Italian philosopher Georgio Agamben (1998) argues that human rights reinforce sovereignty by producing "bare lives." For Agamben, a "bare life" is akin to life as an alien, without equal rights as a citizen. While Agamben's notion is specific to aliens, I argue that citizens of a state can also live bare lives as same-sex loving individuals in Uganda. By living a closeted life that mutes their freedom of expression, among other constitutional rights, many same-sex loving individuals end up living "bare lives." Denied the rights of assemblage, association, and freedom of expression, the LGBT community in Uganda has been stripped of its citizenry. While many live a closeted life, in fear of persecution, the few that have come out of the closet have been discriminated in schools, work places, healthcare facilities, churches, and in many other spheres of life. Living amidst hostility impedes sexual minorities from participating as full citizens. Same-sex loving individuals that publicly identify as sexual minorities told me about instances of discrimination at work places and worship centers, and others reported being denied free HIV counseling and treatment. They are what I will call "relative citizens" because they have relatively few rights compared to others.

Living "bare lives" in Uganda is also mediated by several intersecting factors including class, ethnicity, age, level of education, and geographical location, among others. I indicate these intersecting factors throughout the chapter. Because of the multiple intersections in the study, the stories of same-sex loving individuals as presented in this chapter demonstrate multiple similarities and differences, as I will show later.

3.5 Belonging and the Politics of Belonging in Postcolonial Uganda

My dissertation draws on sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis's (2006a) framework of "belonging," and "the politics of belonging," to analyze how same-sex loving individuals construct senses of belonging amidst a homophobic and hostile society. Yuval-Davis notes that belonging "is about emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home' and . . . 'feeling safe.'" She suggests that the politics of belonging only emerges when belonging is threatened. However, the politics of belonging entails the naturalization of belonging, and its attendant boundaries (Yuval-Davis 2006a: 197; see also Van Zyl 2010: 339). For Yuval-Davis, such boundaries create tension and awaken power struggles. Belonging (among same-sex loving individuals), as demonstrated by Van Zyl, is always an act of becoming, and thus, remains a contentious issue, especially in African studies (Van Zyl 2011: 339).

Yuval-Davis (2006a) has pointed out that political projects permeate social boundaries. An example of such a project in Uganda is the Anti Homosexuality Bill of 2009. Introducing the bill to the public, members of parliament argued that same-sex practices are not part of an African cultural fabric and, as such, considered them alien to Uganda. Drawing the boundaries of the bill, it became clear that Ugandans – those defined as "true" Ugandans – were heterosexual.

But as Hall (1996) and Giddens (1991) remind us, formerly fixed hierarchies of identity were dislocated in late 20th century modernity. This means that normativities were disrupted, thereby allowing for new ways of imagining individual or collective identities. In the context of this chapter, I suggest that the dislocation of heteronormativity has allowed the emergent and yet, relative visibility of the LGBT community. In this sense, the rampant, yet, negative publicity about homosexuality being un-African by protagonists of homophobia is a struggle to redeem heteronormativity from the so-called "infiltration" by emergent sexual imaginaries.[22] A discourse of hate has tightened the boundaries of belonging. With Uganda's religious leaders under the National Council for Religious Leaders (NCRL) concurring with the state, sexual minorities are conceived of as deviant and immoral and described as the "work of the devil." Such discriminative attitudes based on religious orientation have forced same-sex loving individuals out of churches, in the end, stripping their sense of spiritual belonging away. But in all, such antagonism legitimizes the dislocation of heteronormativity as a fixed sexual category, and as such, as the only acceptable sexual practice in Uganda.

3.6 Into the Reality of 'Bare Lives' in Uganda

Having grown up in a staunch Roman Catholic family, with conservative cultural values, I had been brought up to believe that practices of same sexuality were evil to society. My pastors always preached that engaging in homosexuality is "a free ticket to hell." However, after reading

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[22] President Museveni sent David Bahati to South Africa to take part in the debate about homosexuality being alien to Africa. Initially recorded by the BCC in 2010, this debate was replayed on South Africa's Broadcasting Services (SABS) television in 2013 at the time when Bahati had called for the death penalty as a punishment for individuals convicted as homosexual. A video of the debate was uploaded on YouTube on March 3, 2013.

Heterosexual Africa?: The History of an Idea From the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS

by Marc Apprecht (2008), I learned about pre-colonial sexuality, and in particular,

homosexuality.[23]

During fieldwork, I had to negotiate my acceptance into the LGBT community. In

conversations with my interlocutors, I brought up controversial topics that have contributed to

rampant homophobia in Africa. Talking about homosexuality in pre-colonial times was

consoling to many who had been taught to believe they were abnormal by their parents, friends,

and religious pastors. During our conversations, I emphasized that my research was imperative in

educating a broader public about minority sexualities. Talking about LGBT communities in

Africa was also stimulating to interlocutors in Uganda because many started to envision

themselves as being part of a larger public within the diaspora. Sharing stories about sexuality in

Africa gave me a relatively smooth path into the "bare lives" of same-sex loving individuals of

both the low-income class, as well as the middle-income working class.

3.7 Stories of Same-sex Loving Individuals in Uganda

In this section, my methodology uses a broader lens, which is not only cognizant of the

social conditions under which the LGBT public is emerging within the larger public sphere, but

also the backgrounds of my interlocutors. This is an effort aimed at dis-alienating those "bare

lives" that are stripped of their sense of citizenship and as such rendered freedomless.[24] I believe

that telling their stories provides a response to the de-humanizing anti-LGBT discourse.

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[23] By interrogating how anthropologists constructed a monolithic heterosexual Africa, Apprecht (2008) argues that Africans, likes people elsewhere in the world, had multiple sexual identities.

[24] For an elaboration discussion of the term freedomless and its implications, refer to chapter six.

Over a period of eight months, I interviewed eighteen same-sex loving individuals using English and Luganda. Of these, four couples identified as lesbians, two of them working as professionals and the two others performing unskilled manual labor. A lesbian and gay man, both working professionals in Kampala, were living a single life at the time of my fieldwork. Four gay couples (including two working professionals and two unskilled manual laborers) were sexually active. All LGBT individuals who took part in this study were Ugandan citizens. Those that identified as working professionals mainly worked in offices as administrators, managers or assistant managers in private or public companies. Those that identified as unskilled manual laborers worked as street vendors, janitors, or maids. Apart from one gay man who was 38 years, the rest were between 19 and 29 years old.

Those who worked as professionals were organized and well-coordinated, whereas unskilled laborers were not. Professionals belonged to a social network through which they kept in touch with each other. They maintained constant interaction in public or private. Most of my interlocutors who identified as same-sex loving individuals revealed that they did not draw attention to themselves in the public for fear of being stigmatized, discriminated, or physically harmed. However, they said that they expressed themselves more freely in the private, especially at LGBT exclusive parties and at bars, such as Bubbles O'Leary's, an Irish bar in Kampala city.

The stories about same-sexuality that follow in this chapter represent the experiences of LGBT members who work in professional capacities in Kampala. Similar to the "snowball effect" in ethnographic research, my first interlocutor introduced me to her girlfriend, her girlfriend then introduced me to another friend, and the process went on and on, only to discover later that my interlocutors knew each other. Such an organized network demonstrates the

presence of an emergent group of people who identify as LGBT. Moreover, some of them, such as Kasha, have begun advocating for the basic rights of members of the LGBT public. For safety reasons, I employ pseudonyms to conceal the identities of LGBT individuals who shared their stories.

3.7.1 Telling Their Stories

On Wednesday evening of July 8, 2015, I met with Chickie, a 28-year-old telecommunication engineer whom I knew through a Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) official. Chickie and I met at Bubbles O'Leary's (an Irish Pub), and one of Kampala's renowned bars where many elites go to experience and enjoy nightlife. Bubbles O'Leary's is located at Kololo (Kampala), near some of Kampala's finest hotels and malls, as well as the Kololo golf club. After going through security, I was granted access to the long stairs downwards, where I was welcomed by the music that boomed from the speakers. The stairs led me straight down to the outside gardens, where some customers danced to music. While a group of other customers watched a soccer game on a projector screen located at one end of the gardens, others chatted with friends at the bar while sipping their drinks. The evening was busy and loud because of the collage of sonic interactions taking place between customers, as well as music booming from the speakers and the soccer game. Of course, the place was also overloaded with sonic antagonism characterized by chatting, soccer play-by-play narrations and applause, dancing bodies, and the calm wind that provided a pleasant aroma outside the gardens.

Once Chickie arrived, we sat in the garden and ordered drinks as well as *muchomo* (roasted pork). At the beginning of our interview, Chickie remarked:

It is so great to meet you but before we get started do you have any recorders with you? [I responded yes]. Okay you cannot record this conversation. Do not even try. Can I look at it? [I handed her both my audio and video recorders and waited in suspense to see what would happen next. [Chickie then said:] okay, I am afraid you will have to empty your pockets too [which I did by removing my wallet. Then she said:] Good, I will hold on to these until the interview is done (pers. comm., Chickie. July 8, 2015).

She said that our conversation had to remain unrecorded to protect herself from being targeted just in case the recording fell into the wrong hands. For Chickie, avoiding any form of surveillance was a way of negotiating her safety as a sexual minority. Learning from Chickie that my recording devices posed a potential threat, I did not take them with me during my subsequent interviews with other participants. But to keep track of our conversations, I was allowed to take down some written notes.

During our interview, Chickie identified as *kuchu*. Mentioning that she was in a relationship with a woman named Jess, Chickie explained that they prefer using local terms to counter the argument that minority sexuality is foreign to Africa. Contesting the use of foreign terms, Chickie noted: "although many people call us homosexuals, some of us hate that term because it does not originate from Uganda. We are kuchu[s], which translates into same-sex loving individual[s]" (pers. comm., Chickie. July 12, 2016).

Similarly, Jess, who is transitioning, loves being called "kyakula sajja," a *Kiganda* colloquial term for a "masculine-woman" among the Baganda people (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005). The term "kyakula sajja" not only signifies Jess' childhood memories, but also denotes her biological sex and gender identity: "As a child, I played soccer with boys, and even wore boy's clothes. To me this was an important encounter which I believe was central in shaping my [queerness]. When I am called "kyakula sajja," I feel reminded of who I am, regardless of my biological gender" (pers. comm., Jess. July 17, 2015). By forging a sense of belonging through

113

local nomenclature, Chickie and Jess contest the argument that homosexuality is alien to Africa in general, and Uganda in particular.[25]

Through Chickie and Jess, I met Nana, a 21-year-old lesbian who has been in an intimate relationship with 25-year-old Wint for five years. They met at an LGBT private party organized by one of their friends. Nana and Wint narrated their experience of discrimination at a healthcare center where they had sought medical attention. Nana stated, "the doctor we had gone to see about our routine health checkup disappointed us. We wanted to find out whether our sexual relationship did not pose any health threats to our lives." [Wint interjected:] "that doctor declined to help us, claiming that he had no idea of how to handle our case" (pers. comm., Nana and Wint. August 8, 2015). The two lovers did not report the incident to the authorities due to fear of reproach. However, they shared their frustration with friends, Jack and Jof, who identified as gay partners.

Jack met Jof during the first Ugandan gay beach bash[26] which took place in August, 2012. Jack (who is 30 years old) works as a lawyer in Kampala. His partner Jof is two years younger and self-employed as an electrical engineer in Kampala. Narrating his experience at Bubbles O'Leary's bar, Jack said that the place provided a space for them to live a normal life: "we do not have to show off that we are gay because many of our friends there are heterosexual and we do not want to cause any friction. I like the place because everyone minds their own

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[25] However, the term *kuchu* is not acceptable by everyone, as stated earlier. Chickies' lesbian friend Majo contested the term because it implied sexual activity, and Majo was still a virgin (Majo, pers. comm., September 18, 2015).

[26] The Ugandan gay beach bash is a parade and march, which was first held in 2012, and takes place annually in August at a specified location. At the event, a DJ in a moving truck plays music to accompany the procession. However, the march is always short-lived because the police close it down every year by claiming that it is an unlawful assembly.

114

business. And after all, members in our community not only know each other, but also how to communicate among themselves" (pers. comm., Jack. January 13, 2016).

By "communicating" with each other, Jack not only refers to verbal expressions, but also to bodily gestures, "most of which are adopted from Jamaican music videos" (ibid). The Jamaican music videos that Jack refers to are commonly characterized by sexualized images of half-naked women and men dancing exaggerated moves that foreground sexual parts of the body (such as the buttocks and waist). According to Jack, the manner in which the dancing bodies suggest sexual images provides same-sex loving individuals with symbolic material for celebrating their own sexuality. In this way, popular music has provided members of the LGBT public with material resources from which to symbolically construct their lifestyles. However, some of the symbolic codes consumed from Jamaican music videos are further abstracted so that the dominant heteronormative public cannot understand them. As I demonstrate in this chapter, abstraction is the only way of ensuring safety within a homophobic society like Uganda.

I asked my interlocutors about the relationship of Ugandan popular music to LGBT identity and community and they mentioned the song "Ikumabo" by local artist Jackie Chandiru. Jess said that "Ikumabo" foregrounds inclusivity, or "enjoying love in any way" (pers. comm., Jess. July 2015). Chickie added that they had once debated the song's inclusive character during a private LGBT party and concluded that the dancers' bodies and gestures in the music video "were sexualized and perceptually provocative for a lesbian who has feelings for women" (pers. comm., Chickie and Jess. October 2015). Wint added that she participated in the debate about the song's inclusive character during their 2012 private LGBT party (Wint). For Jack, "considering how the lyrics of 'Ikumabo' are abstracted, I believe that the song addresses our identity as LGBT people" (Jack). By addressing their identity, Jack was acknowledging the song's

115

carefully-crafted text whose meaning is inclusive regardless of the listener's gender/sexuality. Indeed, as I will demonstrate in my analysis, Chandiru's "Ikumabo" is not addressed to a particular group of listeners, but rather, to all who can identify with its sound, symbolism, and meanings.

Chickie, Jess and Nana mentioned that the dancers' bodies and moves in the music video turned them on (Chickie, Jess, Nana). Jack noted that at Bubbles O'Leary's pub, "Ikumabo" is played whenever one of their community members requests the song: "This is why we keep coming back to this place" (Jack). Additionally, Frankie concurred that the elite LGBT class relates to Chandiru's "Ikumabo" because the song and its accompanying music video articulate their aspiration of "loving the way everyone feels like" (Frankie). It is clear from these examples that music is a safe space for expressing one's sexuality. Before I discuss the song "Ikumabo," I will briefly introduce its composer, Jackie Chandiru.

3.8 Jackie Chandiru

Jackie Chandiru was born in 1984 to *Lugbara*[27] parents, Mr. Felix Eyaa and Mrs. Josephine-Eyaa of Kijomoro, Marac district in Uganda. However, Chandiru grew up in Wampewo, a suburb of Kampala, and that is why she is fluent in Luganda. Chandiru is a graduate of Makerere University where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Industrial Fine Arts. Chandiru's popular musical career began at the age of eighteen when she won Uganda's 2002 *Coca-cola Pop Star* competition. Together with Cindy Sanyu and Lillian Mbabazi,

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[27] Lugbara is the language of the Lugbara ethnic group of the West Nile in Northwestern Uganda.

Chandiru formed the trio *Blue*3* in 2003, which was successful until 2008 when Sanyu launched her solo career and the group disbanded. In 2010, Chandiru launched her solo career.

Chandiru has been involved in complicated relationships with married men, as well as drugs that have since March 2018 forced her to seek professional treatment. Having performed five years with Sanyu, who publicly identifies as lesbian, Chandiru's fans and most particularly the LGBT community perceived Chandiru's songs to be addressed to them. Moreover, Chandiru is open-minded about her music, and performs for diverse audiences. During my interview with her, she mentioned that throughout her music career, she has been more interested in entertaining her patrons rather than judging who they are: "I do not care whom I perform for, as long as they are able to pay for my artistic services; that is all that matters to me" (pers. Comm., Jackie Chandiru. January 13, 2016). With the above brief background about Chandiru, I now turn to her creative approach in the song "Ikumabo" to unveil the symbols and sonic features that appealed to same-sex loving individuals that I interviewed during my field work in Kampala.

3.9 The Schema of "Ikumabo"

"Ikumabo," composed in F# minor, consists of an intro, three verses, alternating refrains (with variations), and an outro. Against a descending harmony of I – VII –VI, the intro vocal part begins with a Lugbara exclamation, "Ikumabo, ikumabo, ikumabo" (you have left me, you have left me, you have left me) (see figure 11). The arc-shaped exclamation: "ikumabo," that begins and ends on an F# 3, as well as textual repetition of this phrase, asserts the breakup of two lovers. Reasserting itself as focal pitch in the song, the F#3 establishes F# minor as a key center on which the text and harmony of the song unfold.
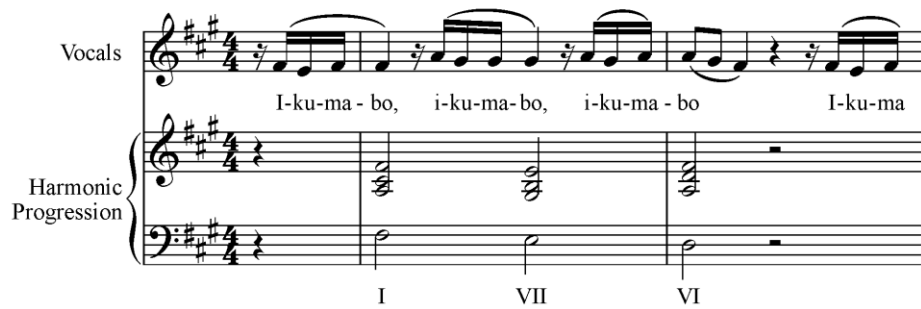
Figure 11: Intro/refrain of "Ikumabo"

Throughout the song, musical and textual material of the intro recur as refrains (with variation) after each verse. At the same time, the intro is also the outro of the song. Thus, the intro/refrain/outro is characterized by an ascending melody and an English language rap "me and my sweetie, we gonna get freaky, laws like a duty if you wanna get sneaky." During the rap, the key of the song is established by melodic stasis on the root and third of an F# minor chord (see figure 12). Against the rap, a descending chordal vamp I – VII – VI – (V), establishes the harmonic vocabulary employed throughout "Ikumabo." Unlike the other chords, chord V is seldom used (only in the second and third refrains).

The message of the rap "Me and my sweetie…" articulates some of the ways that same-sex loving individuals must create clever and hidden/underground ways to express their identities. Chandiru mocks the state's notion of the "laws being a duty" to citizens by mixing the phrase with the idea of "getting sneaky." On one hand, being "sneaky" means finding artful ways to conceal a sexual relationship from the surveillance of the state. On the other hand, "getting sneaky" is a sexual innuendo.

In the video that corresponds to this rap phrase, a dancer is initially foregrounded squatting, with her legs apart, and her left hand running between her legs. The dancer then repeats the gesture while touching her thighs. Several of my interlocutors mentioned that these

gestures, as commonly seen in Jamaican Reggaeton, are not simply sexually suggestive, but are also a symbolic invitation to romance and sex. These dance moves have also been perceived as sex positions and as such, construed as vulgar by conservative Buganda leaders, political groups, as well most Christian institutions.

Figure 12: The rap

In "Ikumabo," the refrain is treated to variations that are introduced in the intro of the song. As already noted, the opening *Lugbara* exclamation is initially sung with an arc-shaped contour. But upon its repetition in the intro, it is juxtaposed against an electronic chordal instrumentation of I, VII, and VI (see figure 13). Meanwhile, there is an additive vocal expression – "ikini mani" (you have told me) – which expands the previous phrase, enriching the texture of the refrain. Despite the contrary motion, the resultant harmony of the juxtaposed vocal exclamations ("you have left me"), which calls attention to a breakup of two lovers, aligns with the VI - VII- VI harmonic descent in the instrumental background. By harmonizing the juxtaposed materials, the compositional approach of the song calls attention to multiple ways of "doing the same thing," as though to reinforce the "multiple ways of loving" as expressed in the main message of "Ikumabo."

119

Figure 13: Juxtaposed vocal motion in the refrain

Each exclamation of "ikumabo" (you have left me) is repeated twice and bridged with an English exclamation: "but am never gonna be the same again since you took my heart" for the character in the song, following her heartbreak. This appears in the first and second refrains. But the repeats are connected by a short vocal expression "inemani ilema ii" ("but it seems you still love me") (see figure 14). In the outro, however, the same exclamation: "but I am never gonna be the same again since you took my heart," which acts as a bridge or the B exclamatory section in the refrain, is juxtaposed against exclamation A, "ikumabo" (see figure 14). The Lugbara exclamation retains its juxtaposed materials as before. At this point however, it becomes clear that juxtaposition forms part of the character of the song and consequently, its message, as I will discuss later in the chapter.
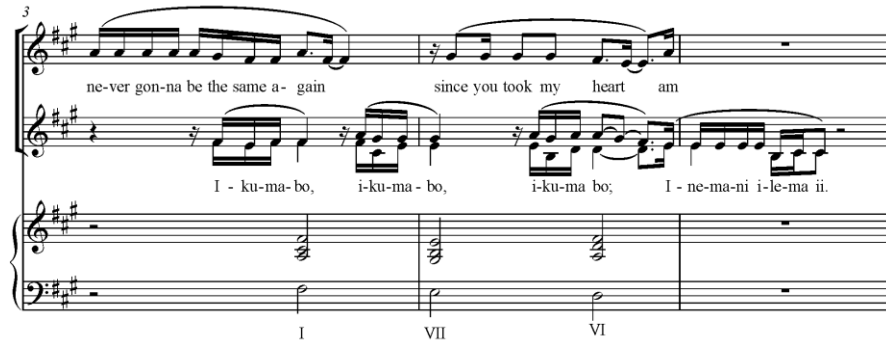
Figure 14: Vocal and chordal juxtapositions in the outro

3.9.1 The Verses of "Ikumabo"

All three verses of "Ikumabo" are composed of four phrases of four measures each, making up a total of sixteen measures (see figure 15). Each of the four large phrases of the verses contains four melodic and textual lines (one measure each) that can be sub-divided further into two smaller phrases of 8 beats (sixteenth notes). The fourth of the four larger phrases is a repetition of the first without variation. Characteristically, the second phrase repeatedly alternates between three notes (of the F# minor chord) before settling on the lowest note of the song (F#). The first, third, and fourth phrases have a similar interplay of vocal ranges – mainly in the mid and high ranges.

Variations in vocal ranges (between soprano and alto) are employed to enrich the rap of the first verse, which is constrained by limited pitch material. The verse is announced by an ascending jump to a perfect fourth; the jump of a perfect fourth provides the focal point on which Chandiru alternates between two vocal ranges, soprano and alto. Other ascending jumps to a perfect fourth reappear in measures 2, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 15 to reinforce the harmonic vocabulary of the song. In measures 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, jumps of a perfect fourth are followed by a descent. The ascending perfect fourth develops into an ascending fifth in

121

measures 5, 6, 7, 8, and 16. Yet, the descending 5-4-3 (C#-B-A) in measures 4, 12, and 16, and 3-2-1 (A-G#F#) in measure 6 and 8 are employed as melodic and cadential alternatives in the concluding statements and sub-phrases of the rap in verse one.

In measure nine, Chandiru modulates from quadruple to compound time (see figure 15). This temporal modulation, which shortly continues through the third phrase of the verse, evokes the baakisimba music and dance groove of the Baganda people. It is against this baakisimba groove that Chandiru's rap in Luganda gets faster, not only building tension, but also accumulating more musical interest in the predominantly limited pitch world of the verse.

Throughout the song, Chandiru blends Luganda, English, and Lugbara as a strategy for articulating the essence of an inclusive society. The predominantly repetitive nature of the first verse and the rap work as a template on which subtle variations in vocal ranges, intervals, and temporality take place. In addition to the aforementioned variations, the expansion of the perfect fourth at phrase beginnings, middle, and end are important ways that Chandiru creates forward motion alongside limited pitch material. Since the aforementioned processes are common in African composition styles, it is not surprising that Chandiru employs them in her song as a way of acknowledging her musical disposition (whether intentionally or not).

However, it is as if the limited pitch material symbolizes a "lack of words" to express the main character's anguish due to the ongoing breakup in the narrative. Ugandans often use the phrase "I am short of words" to express emotions, such as disappointment or excitement. Interpretively, the "lack of words" as an emotion in this case can be applied to the use of limited pitch material as a template against which Chandiru expresses her disappointment and conceptions about love.

Most important, the repetitive figures in the song direct attention to the narrative rather than the harmonic rhythm. This approach to harmonic treatment is not in any way unique to Chandiru's "Ikumabo." It is common in many popular songs whose harmonic vocabulary keeps circling around chords I, IV and V as a strategy of directing focus to the text rather than the rate at which the harmonic vocabulary changes. This strategy is similarly common in *kadongo kamu* music, which foregrounds narration and as such, calls for careful listening rather than dancing to its groove.

(4-bar phrase 1)

(4-bar phrase 2)

(4-bar phrase 3)

(4-bar phrase 4)

123

Figure 15: The 16-bar phrase of the first verse

To fully appreciate the logical narrative of "Ikumabo," it is imperative to understand the meaning of the song. As such, figure 16 is a transcription and translation of "Ikumabo" (the English translation is in italics in the right-hand column). In the English translation, phrases appearing in square brackets without italics are sung in English.

Verse 1

Nze ku mukwano mpulira nga nkilako gwe bikubye,	*With love I feel as though I am intoxicated,*
Mukama yagutuwa lumu tunyumirwe;	*God created love for us to enjoy;*
Buli omu n'amuwa agulinamu obubadi bwe,	*Each has their way of enjoying love,*
Obubadi bwe buli omu n'obubadi bwe.	*Their ways, each with their own ways.*
Nze mukulaba Mukama yakola yatobeka,	*In my view, God was creative,*
Nze anfaanana mukwano tanaba kulabika;	*No one resembles me dear friend;*
Waliwo abagamba nti nno oyo tayagalika,	*Some claim that you are not loveable,*
Nze akulina kye sikola kimu kukuleka.	*Me who has you cannot let go.*
Nze ndi wa muteeru nnyo era ne bwokibuuza ki diya,	*I am flexible even if you ask my dear,*
Nze ntamiira lwa mukwano nga sinyedde na biya;	*With love, I feel as though I am intoxicated;*
Bwemba nga nkwagala muli sibeera na fiya,	*If I love you, I am free of any fears,*
N'obubadi bwe buli omu n'obubadi bwe.	*One's ways, each with their own ways.*
Nze ku mukwano mpulira nga nkirako gwe bikubye,	*With love, I feel as though I am intoxicated,*
Mukama yagutuwa lumu tunyumirwe;	*God created love for us to enjoy;*
Buli omu n'amuwa agulinamu obubadi bwe,	*Each has their way of enjoying love,*
Obubadi bwe buli omu n'obubadi bwe.	*Their way, each in their own ways.*

Verse 2

Bwaba yabulwa empisa nga bambi tayagalika,	*If they are not lovable for lack of good manners,*
N'ogezaako ky'osobola nga aweta takuumika;	*You try your best but they keep breaking up;*
Awo ky'omanya Mukama abeera teyamukutondera,	*Just know God did not create that one for you,*
[*Get yourself* ofune] omutuufu alikugondera.	*Get yourself one that will respect you.*

124

Tomanyi bw'ondese diya otidde ogende,	*You have no idea how you have left me,*
Ebisuubizo bye twakola nti nno nfumbe;	*Promises we made, that I cook;*
Kale ka neenenye diya gyira odde,	*Let me apologize my dear, come back,*
	[Don't derail my heart].
Maze, ne nzijukira nti eby'omukwano bibeelamu enjawulo, yee;	*Finally, I now recall that love is much more complex, yes;*
Atalina musango ddala kituufu wa beera ne kyansi.	*With no offence, truly you had a chance.*
	[So take me away be my baby],
	[Say that you will be my one and only],
	[I want to reach for the sky].

Verse 3

Gwe atanafuna bwe mukwatagana,	*You who lacks a partner,*
Munoonyeko eyo gyaali eyo.	*Look; he or she is out there.*
Funa afazaali amufaanagana ye;	*At least find one of similar ways yes;*
Omukwano guva kw'oyo gwolina,	*Love depends on your partner,*
Funa akumatiza buli kanyomero.	*Find one that satisfies every part of you.*
Bw'omulabako oti n'oteta yee,	*One you see and gets you excited,*
	[me and my sweetie, we gonna get freaky,
	Laws like a duty, if you wanna get sneaky].
Yo ma photolike, switi switi	*You are my proto type, sweetie sweetie*
	[I will remember];
Nga tuli fenna ku piki sisoke.	*When we were both on a bike.*
Nze ku mukwano mpulira nga nkirako gwe bikubye,	*With love, I feel as though intoxicated,*
Mukama yagutuwa lumu tunyumirwe;	*God created it for us to enjoy;*
Buli omu n'amuwa agulinamu obubadi bwe,	*Each one has their own style of enjoying love,*
N'obubadi bwe buli omu n'obubadi bwe.	*Their ways; each with their own ways.*

Figure 16: The text of "Ikumabo" (translation by Charles Lwanga)

The first verse opens with the phrase, "nze ku mukwano mpulira nga nkilako gwe kikubye" ("With love I feel as though I am intoxicated") (figure 16). In the music video, a dancer who spreads her right leg sideways to perform a suggestive symbol while displaying her black knickers (pants) reinforces Chandiru's notion of "love-intoxication." Interlocutors who are not members of the LGBT public described the gesture of the dancer as sexually vulgar. Jane Nabatanzi, a 24-year old undergraduate student at Kyambogo University, explained this in terms of Baganda culture: "In our culture, we do not expose our knickers in public. I am so annoyed

because what that dancer did is not only embarrassing to women, but also unacceptable in society" (pers. comm., Jane Nabatanzi, January 29, 2016).

Nabatanzi was brought up to think that displaying knickers in public is immoral, and she perceived the dancer's movements in "Ikumabo" as embarrassing and offensive. Yet, Nabatanzi used the pronoun "we" as if to refer to others who share her perception of vulgarity. Indeed, when asked what she meant by "we," she was quick to respond: "The Baganda. Our culture emphasizes the privacy of our bodies. As such, it is abominable to display your knickers because that is similar to displaying your private parts" (ibid). Interestingly, some of my LGBT interlocutors who identified as Baganda did not perceive the dancer as vulgar because, to them, it is only a pleasurable gesture (Chickie and Jess). These competing perceptions about bodies in public draw attention to sexuality as a site of struggle over cultural values and morality in a conservative society.

In the first verse, Chandiru sings that love is God-given and that everyone is free to enjoy love in "their own way." The verse temporarily modulates from quadruple to compound time, introducing an indigenous baakisimba music and dance groove common among the Baganda. Originally a royal court dance, "baakisimba asserted the authority of the king as the head of Baganda society" (Nannyonga-Tamusuza: 2005). However, the dance is now performed in multiple contexts to construct, among others, heteronormative notions of "men" and "women." According to Nannyonga-Tamusuza, women dancers in baakisimba conventionally perform with forward-pointed leg gestures (ibid). However, in "Ikumabo," dancers move their legs sideways, subverting baakisimba's heteronormative meaning.

In the second verse, Chanidru laments her broken heart and willingness to apologize to her lover if that is what will restore her relationship. However, at this point and elsewhere in the

126

song, the "gendered other" that Chandiru keeps referring to remains ambiguous since not a single pronoun is referenced. We are left in a state of wonder, which opens a space for multiple conceptions about the kind of relationship Chandiru is fighting to restore in the narrative of the song.

The third and final verse calls attention to "compatibility" as an imperative in any intimate relationship. Regardless of whether one is in a heterosexual or same-sex relationship, the most important element is ensuring compatibility to realize happiness and satisfaction. Thus, by foregrounding compatibility as an imperative in any intimate relationship, Chandiru creates a space for carrying out sexual relationships in multiple ways.

Further, Chandiru restates her anxiety over getting "freaky and sneaky" once her lover comes back to her. She vows that nothing can obstruct her, even the law. Indeed, the final verse is intriguing for its clarity about sneaking behind the law if that is what it takes to express one's sexuality amidst constant surveillance by the state. To articulate her level of open-mindedness to sexuality, Chandiru recapitulates that: "God created love for us to enjoy; each has their way of enjoying love; their ways, each with their own ways." In my conversations with members of the LGBT community, the phrase "n'obubadi bwe buli omu n'obubadi bwe" (their ways, each with their own ways) became a catchy way to celebrate "Ikumabo's" inclusiveness.

3.10 Levels of Inclusion in "Ikumabo"

In "Ikumabo," Chandiru's gender identity and sexual orientation are ambiguous. Neither does Chandiru reference the gendered "other" who is breaking up with her in the narrative. Based on such gender ambiguity, Chickie said that when they discussed the song, they noticed that it was unorthodox and could be interpreted in several ways. For instance, Nana said that:

127

"unlike many other songs about love, 'Ikumabo' does not privilege any sexual relations. In fact, whenever I listen to it, I end up thinking about the gendered 'other' as a woman" (pers. comm., Nana. August 8, 2016). Nana's argument is drawn from the way Chandiru treats gender in the narrative. Chandiru does not employ pronouns to refer to characters. Rather, she leaves gender and sexuality ambiguous in both the text and the visual images. This approach to textual and visual abstraction gives the song an inclusive character because everyone, regardless of their gender and sexuality, can relate to the narrative.

Interestingly, the logic of videography in Uganda foregrounds heteronormative symbols in love songs. Tonny Ssemujju, a 19-year old barber at Nakulabye (a suburb of Kampala), noted that listeners not only want to identify with the characters and story; they also want to insert themselves into the text: "[N]o one knows the lover that is breaking up with the main character in "Ikumabo." From the very first time I listened to this song, I failed to identify with it as its text remains ambiguous about the genders [and sexuality] of the characters" (pers. comm., Ssemujju. February 25, 2016). Members of the LGBT public expressed different reactions.

Anonymously, I shared Ssemujju's view with Jess, Chickie and Nana at Bubbles O'Leary's pub and they all agreed that a person in Chandiru's position would know how to navigate homophobia in order to articulate an inclusive message about sexuality. They continued that by avoiding pronouns (to refer to people), Chandiru demonstrated her respect for freedom of gender and sexual identity within Uganda's predominantly homophobic public sphere. This is why most of my interlocutors who identify with the emergent LGBT public relate to "Ikumabo" as a symbolic space for articulating a sense of co-existence based on gender and sexuality.

Based on my interlocutor's expressions, I observed that the ambiguous gender and sexuality of "Ikumabo" serves as a strategy for avoiding censorship. However, ambiguity is not

peculiar to Chandiru's song. Drawing on Judith Butler's understanding of performativity as the "repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory framework that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being," (Butler 1990: 33), Gillian Rodger discusses the male and female characters in Annie Lennox' songs. Lennox's performative power, according to Rodger, is her ability to conceal the relation between characterization and the singer's identity (Rodger 2004: 18). Lennox's strategy, similar to Chandiru's "Ikumabo" music video, allows the listeners to only imagine themselves in relation to their identities, without offering a prescribed way of self-identification.

Chickie and her partner Jess noted that "Ikumabo's" music video is a unique site where an imaginary queer experience is negotiated. Jess claimed that the dance movement of spreading one's legs sideways reminds her of her masculinity. Jess conceives of this movement as unorthodox to the common misconception about the gentleness of a feminine body. But since Jess interpreted the dance movement as masculine, it reminded her of her queer masculinity.

Yet, for Chickie, the same dance movement is sexually provocative not only in the way it evokes an imaginary sense of intimate connection to Jess, but also for how the dance move articulates a common performative gesture among lesbians. Chickie explained that when a woman wants the company of a woman, spreading one's legs sideways while seated is the way to make herself available to a potential admirer. Because such a symbolic gesture (among others) is commonly known among members of the LGBT community, the dance moves in "Ikumabo" articulate a sense of queer performativity. Thus, the audible and visual traits of "Ikumabo" are important to those who can connect to their symbolism in their own ways.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates how audible and visual ambiguity in Chandiru's song "Ikumabo" represents the aspirations and anxieties of an emergent LGBT public in contemporary Uganda. Popular music represents a safe avenue for navigating the prevailing system of homophobia in Uganda, where, at this writing, same-sex loving individuals live in fear for their lives. Such fears stem from the history of violence, discrimination, and the dominant and repressive forces of morality that shape Uganda's dominant public sphere.

Throughout this chapter, the collectivity of same-sex loving individuals is referred to as a counter-public, contrary to other publics that are considered as fragments of the dominant public. As I have noted, any discussions about same-sex loving individuals by anti-gay proponents are usually conducted in reference to the heteronormative public. This comparison tends to set a boundary and by doing so, dislocates members of the LGBT public from what is accepted as "normal." This is why my anti-gay interlocutors argued that sexual minorities are trying to "act out of the ordinary" by imposing an amoral code of conduct, which is also perceived by many as alien to Ugandan society. Such negative perceptions against same-sex loving individuals have left many vulnerable and disenfranchised.

I have noted that the state has reinforced heteronormativity in Uganda by enacting harsh laws against members of the LGBT public. Additionally, several Evangelic pastors in Uganda, including Michael Kyazze and Martin Ssempa, have demonized same-sex relationships, labeling them as amoral. But despite these powerful political, religious, and cultural institutions and their homophobic attitude towards Uganda's emergent LGBT community, popular music is gradually opening relatively autonomous spaces where dominant ideologies about sexuality are contested, and a new sense of belonging can be negotiated.

Although living a closeted life is a relative way of guaranteeing safety against violence and rampant social injustices, the emergent LGBT public in Uganda is determined to employ whatever means necessary (including political advocacy, community gatherings, as well as publication of discourse and popular songs) to advocate for the recognition of their basic human rights.

As I have shown in this chapter, the song "Ikumabo" exemplifies how music has the potential to destabilize fixed meanings about gender and sexuality. For members of the LGBT community in Uganda, the song carves out a musical space for an emergent LGBT public. In this way, popular music is emerging as a potent site for imagining and re-imagining notions of publics and counter-publics in contemporary Uganda.

4.0 "TELL JENNIFER ON OUR BEHALF": VOICING THE STREET VENDORS, NEGOTIATING PARTICIPATORY SPACE IN KAMPALA

In November 2011, Jennifer Musisi, the executive director of the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), evicted about 8,500 vendors from the streets of Kampala.[28] This eviction was aimed at enforcing new urban regulations which had been passed by the 9th parliament on January 14, 2011. Acting under its mandate, the KCCA was executing its new redevelopment project of Kampala city, including the upgrading and reconstruction of city roads, reduction of traffic, enforcement of compliance with law and order, redevelopment of schools and health centers, management of pollution in the city, and the beautification of the city into a better living and working environment. Funding for these projects was provided by taxation and the recovery of previously mismanaged KCCA institutional assets, including bank accounts and property.

As part of the new redevelopment project and its regulations, KCCA security officers forcefully evicted all Kampala street vendors. In protest, and as a means of survival, the unemployed street vendors resorted to violence and robbery. Subsequently, Ugandan popular music star and politician, Robert Kyagulanyi (a.k.a. Bobi Wine) released a popular song, and its accompanying music video, "Tugambire Ku Jennifer" ("Please talk to Jennifer on our behalf"). The song expressed the plight of the evicted street vendors and their discontent over the implementation of the new city policies. It called for inclusive participation in city policy-making as well as peaceful dialogue between the evicted street vendors and the city authority.

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[28] Musisi had been appointed KCCA director by president Museveni in April 2011. As such, many people interpreted her gesture of eviction as harsh, given that it happened such a short time after her appointment.

This chapter examines the social and political circumstances that gave rise to the public of street vendors in Uganda since 2011. Using performativity theory, I describe how Wine's song and its accompanying music video exemplifies how a song shapes the social/cultural conditions that it simultaneously reflects. By analyzing the text and audiovisual representations in the music video, I demonstrate how Wine's song articulated, mediated, and consequently gathered the Kampala street vendors into an emergent public. Throughout the chapter, I argue that Wine's "Tugambire ku Jennifer" provided an alternative space of participation to mainstream models of participation that exclusively operate under strict state laws and constant surveillance. In the following section, I provide a brief biography of Wine's life previous to his election as member of parliament in 2017.

4.1 Bobi Wine, The "Ghetto President"

Wine was born on February 12, 1982 in *Kamwokya* ghetto, an economically poor suburb of Kampala.[29] Wine's popular music career took off in 2000 when he released his first single, "Kagoma." "Kagoma" stands for a small drum, whose sound, according to the message of the song, has the potential to silence everyone. Although most people did not interpret Wine's "Kagoma" as a political song, it would later shape his musical ideology of using popular music to vocalize the social constraints and aspirations of marginalized groups of people.[30]

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[29] The term "ghetto," while having derogatory associations in other places, enjoys currency as a term in Uganda to describe marginalized urban neighborhoods characterized by poverty, overcrowding, inadequate sewage facilities, and suffering. Most young people that occupy these spaces are illiterate. Ugandan urban neighborhoods are also a source of crime due to lack of employment among youth. Despite its derogatory usage in other settings, I will retain the term "ghetto" as an important term in Bobi Wine's music and discourse.

[30] This is not to say that Wine advocates for *all* marginalized publics; in fact, in the past, he did not support the aspirations of the LGBT public. I will discuss this further in a later chapter.

Growing up in the *Kamwokya* ghetto, Wine experienced the hardships of what it means to live in poverty. Unlike most illiterate ghetto youths, Wine was able to attain an education. Following his successful completion of high school, Wine entered Makerere University in 2002 to study social sciences. However, he opted for an Associate degree in Music, Dance and Drama, which he successfully completed in 2013. During one of my interviews with Wine, he noted that acquiring a University education not only made him unique in the music industry, but also equipped him with the necessary resources to compose songs in creative ways: "You see at Makerere, I read a lot of literature that enabled me to employ creative poetry in my music" (pers. comm., Bobi Wine. June 2014). This is evident in the way Wine composed "Tugambire ku Jennifer."

At the beginning of his popular music career, Wine performed with the *Fire Base Crew,* a popular music group in which he branded himself as the "ghetto president." This was because the group was based in Kamwokya, one of Kampala's ghetto suburbs. Within a short period of time, "ghetto President" became a popular buzzword for someone who represents, voices, or advocates for the basic rights of marginalized people. Wine later started a new popular music group called the *Ghetto Republic of Uganja*. On the surface, the name sounded funny to many people because he had changed the name of Uganda to Uganja (a play on the word "ganja"). The group also mimicked the political structure of the state; Wine was on top of the power hierarchy as the "ghetto president," and there was a "ghetto vice president" as well as a variety of ghetto ministers. But the power hierarchy that shaped Wine's ghetto cabinet was not to be taken as mere fun or entertainment. It also established a template for commenting on the state and its failures.

When I asked about the implications of such a power hierarchy in a local popular music group, Wine responded:

> It is important to demonstrate how power should be shared among multiple leaders. Once I saw that our country struggles with the idea of sharing power, I decided to exemplify the contrary, first, by naming my group the "Ghetto Republic of Uganja." This was to call attention to the possibility of an organized system of power hierarchy, where each member in the group contributes to the success of our goals. But our hierarchy also takes into consideration all members of the ghetto who in turn contribute to our cause by showing up during our concerts (pers. comm., Wine. June 2014).

I attended Wine's concerts on three occasions and I witnessed how this power hierarchy is articulated in concerts. Musicians who are not well-known rank lowest in the hierarchy of performers and perform first. This is a category of musicians who are still trying to establish themselves in the music economy. These members are also new to the group and are still learning from the senior members of the group. Next to perform are a group of musicians organized according to seniority. The "ghetto president" then appears on stage last. As the star of the group, no one performs after Wine, which mimics the political protocol during which no one speaks after the president of the republic has spoken. This hierarchy within Wine's ensemble legitimizes democracy as an imperative. However, unlike Museveni's so-called democratic governance, Bobi Wine's, is rooted in sharing of power, which is seen through the voicing of various artists during the concerts. Moreover, each participating musician enjoys a sense of autonomy by choosing their own songs to perform, without being coerced.

Bobi Wine has performed for communities in Uganda and the diaspora. His efforts as a performing artist have won him recognition in the form of awards. For instance, in 2018, Zzina Awards by Uganda's leading youth urban station, Galaxy FM, recognized Bobi Wine's song, "Kyarenga," as the song of the year. Zzina Awards also named Wine best Male Artist of the Year. Additionally, Wine's song "Tugambire ku Jennifer" won the 2013 Hipipo Award for being

the best Afrobeat song.[31] In 2008, Wine was recognized as the winner in the category of

Afrobeat Artist/Group, awarded by the Pearl of Africa Music Awards. In 2007, Bobi Wine was

announced best Afrobeat Artist/Group by the Pearl of Africa Music Awards. Also, his song,

"Kiwaani," won the best Afrobeat single. This was the second consecutive year the song

"Kiwaani" won the category of Afrobeat Single. The Pearl of Africa Music Awards further

recognized Bobi Wine as the best Artist of the Year in 2006. And in 2005, the Pearl of Africa

Music Awards recognized his single, "Maama Mbiire" (a collaboration with Uganda's Juliana

Kanyomozi) as Song of the Year.

Bobi Wine has accumulated substantial wealth through the music economy. Among

several properties, Wine owns "Ssemakookilo," a plaza at *Kamwokya*, where his main office and

studio are located. Wine rents out some of the space to business proprietors (including a state-of-

the-art hair salon, a pharmacy, and a restaurant). Wine also owns "One Love" beach at

Busaabala, a suburb of Kampala, where he employs more than 50 youths. As one of the richest

musicians in Uganda, Wine not only drives very expensive cars, but also owns a home valued at

approximately 1.8 Billion Uganda Shillings (about $500,000), which is very expensive by

Ugandan standards. However, he has also given back to his community through philanthropic

projects.[32]

In 2017, Bobi Wine decided to take a different approach to politics, while maintaining his

artistic career. In July 2017, he was elected Member of Uganda's 10th Parliament to represent the

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[31] Media sources have described some of Bobi Wine's music as Afrobeat, although this label is incorrect.

[32] These include the 2010 donation drive to build pit latrines in *Kisenyi,* a suburb of Kampala; the 2010 donation to Nakasongola Health Center for the prevention of malaria; the 2012 clean Kampala drive when Wine joined Kampala's Lord major, Elisa Lukwago to clean *Kamwokya*; a 2015 car wash drive to raise funds for cancer patients; and past experiences working with the Uganda Red Cross Society to sensitize communities about health and hygiene through music.

Kyaddondo East constituency. This achievement was not surprising to those who were familiar with Wine's political activity. Many knew that most of his songs were critical of the ruling NRM government. It is my understanding therefore, that Bobi Wine's election as Member of Parliament was a culmination of his consistent advocacy for the rights of Uganda's marginalized groups of people through music. In his new political role, Bobi Wine is positioned not only to voice the concerns of the Kyaddondo East people whom he represents in Parliament, but also the voices of the common people across the country.

While it was not surprising for Bobi Wine to compose a song that calls for an end to police brutality and the unfair implementation of new urban policies in Kampala city, his award-winning single, "Tugambire ku Jennifer" was significant in the way that the song mobilized the Kampala street vendors into collective action. Further, it consequently gathered street vendors into an emergent public beginning in 2012. "Tugambire ku Jennifer" uses performative utterances, which condemn police and the KCCA brutality, and call for better working conditions in Kampala city.

4.2 An Emergent Public of Street Vendors in Kampala

For more than three decades, Kampala street vendors have illegally operated business alongside the streets of Kampala. Many of these vendors sell the same merchandise as legally run businesses sanctioned by a labor union known as the Kampala City Traders Association (KACITA). By illegally operating business, the street vendors take business away from legal city traders, as well as tax revenue from the city.

On July 10, 2011, Jennifer Musisi issued a directive that all street vendors should vacate the city and relocate to private or public markets outside Kampala city. She claimed that the city

authority could no longer tolerate "an illegality simply because it has stayed for so long."[33] On July 14, 2011, the Kampala Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago, also an opponent of the state, opposed Musisi's directive. On August 10, 2011, Kampala city traders, acting under their labor association, KACITA gave the KCCA an ultimatum to remove all street vendors or they would similarly begin selling their goods on the streets in protest.

In response, on August 17, 2011, president Museveni issued a directive to the KCCA executive director to remove all Kampala street vendors from the city.[34] This sequence of events had political implications that would shape an emergent public of Kampala street vendors. On September 2, 2011, one of Uganda's print media publications, the *Daily Monitor,* called attention to the panel of people that endorsed the implementation of new urban policies in Kampala city. The panel constituted members of the KCCA, representatives from government, and selected political leaders.

The involvement of Kampala's Lord Mayor, the KCCA executive director, and the president in this matter was political. In the first place, as an opposition leader elected by the people of Kampala, Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago's response to Musisi was interpreted as oppositional to the state, which has historically marginalized the common people in politics and the economy. However, while Lukwago's message articulated important concerns of the street vendors, he favored new urban reforms in Kampala city, but disagreed with their repressive implications. Lukwago's concern was mainly the lack of alternative space for the street vendors who were about to become victims of circumstances. This reform would affect about 8,500 street vendors, mostly women, who dominate the informal (unskilled) sector of the economy.

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[33] Daily Monitor, September 2, 2011.
[34] Ibid; Musisi's directive also featured in Uganda's print media, *New Vision* of *September* 1, 2011.

President Museveni's directive was construed as state interference in local governance. Media institutions argued that the president should not have interfered with Musisi's work, as this weakened the authority of the KCCA. In addition, some people interpreted the president's involvement as an indirect fight against the Lord Mayor Lukwago, one of the strongest oppositional members of the Democratic Party (DP). Amidst these ongoing fights in the media, the street vendors started to gain visibility. In fact, they were already organizing themselves into a labor union so that they could voice their grievances.

The act of forceful eviction by the KCCA attracted many sympathizers, especially opposition leaders. In print media (such as *New Vision* and *Daily Monitor*), these urban disputes over space occupied headlines for several months. On radio and television, these issues became a center of discussion for many presenters and program hosts. And in 2011, Wine's song "Tugambire ku Jennifer" was released, becoming a mouthpiece of the vendors who lacked a unified voice at the time.

Uganda's regulatory body for broadcasting – the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) – censored Wine's "Tugambire ku Jennifer" because it directly attacked the authority of the KCCA executive director. The UCC had previously warned musicians against using music and the media to attack individuals (*Observer,* September 18, 2012). Thus, pending further investigations, the director of the UCC condemned "Tugambire ku Jennifer" and instructed radio and television stations not to play it or they risked closure. But this was far from the end of Wine's song.

The Internet was used effectively to counter censorship by the UCC. Once uploaded on YouTube, Wine's music video was quickly downloaded and transferred to CDs by local music-shop owners and youths. And within a very short period, the pirated version of the song had gone

viral in Kampala, particularly in bars, music stores, and at nightclubs. The importance of "Tugambire ku Jennifer" in articulating the struggles and aspirations of the Kampala street vendors took center stage during my field work with several vendors.

4.3 The Kampala Street Vendors and Their Social Struggles

In June 2014, I started visiting the former Kampala street vendors who had relocated to the Kasubi, Wandegeya, Nakulabye, and Kamwokya suburbs of Kampala. At each of these places, I heard the soundscape of venders, a collage of clashing melodies and utterances. Vendors were singing, clapping, or shouting to draw customers' attention.

A friend of mine who works as a local councilor at Rubaga North division of Kampala had earlier introduced me to Juliet Nalunkuuma (a food vendor) and Tom Kayongo (a cloth vendor) during the summer of 2013, when I carried out my preliminary field visits for this dissertation. Nalunkuuma and Kayongo were interested in my research because they hoped I would bring their aspirations to the attention of the KCCA. Nalunkuuma and Kayongo later introduced me to the chairperson of their emerging association of vendors, and several other vendors who had relocated to the outskirts of Kampala city.

Narrating how unfair the Kampala street vendors had been brutalized in 2011, Nalunkuuma and Kayongo expressed their fear that several of their colleagues could not afford to rent alternative spaces (and, at this writing, still cannot). Due to lack of capital, I was told that several former Kampala street vendors had lost their livelihood. The vendors lacked an organized association, which deterred them from having a unified voice. When I asked whether popular musicians supported their social struggles, Nalunkuuma and Kayongo mentioned Wine. Kayongo attested that Wine's song "Tugambire ku Jennifer" became central in articulating a

unified voice. The vendors also confided in Bobi Wine, who has commonly come to be known as a symbol of the marginalized people.

At the end of our conversation, Nalunkuuma invited me to their meeting, which took place on August 2, 2014 at a recreation center called Paya Gardens, at Nakulabye, a suburb of Kampala. At the meeting, we were welcomed by local tunes booming from three speakers positioned about 60 feet apart from each other. "Tugambire ku Jennifer" was also played, inciting the vendors into dancing as they sung along with the tune. Since this was happening at the beginning of the meeting, I held my questions for the end.

During the meeting, about 500 vendors discussed their plight. While brainstorming about the possibilities of resolving their grievances with the urban administration, a lawyer in attendance (who preferred anonymity) advised the vendors that the best way to build a unified voice and a strong base for negotiation was by forming a labor association. He added that first, the vendors needed a constitution, an idea that many welcomed with applause. The chair of the meeting, Musoke (also a street vendor), proposed that members brainstorm about the rules of the constitution. Two and a half hours later, members elected an interim committee that would work with the lawyer to adopt all suggestions and any other ideas that would protect the city vendors as a labor union.

At the end of the meeting, "Tugambire ku Jennifer" was played over and over to the enjoyment of the assembled street vendors. Later, I learned that they had unanimously agreed to use Wine's song as a symbol of their collective identity and struggles. Asked why he played Wine's song repeatedly, the DJ told me that he had been requested to do so: "Obviously, everyone knows that this is *their* [street vendors] *song*" (pers. comm., DJ August 2, 2014). Musoke added:

"Tugambire ku Jennifer" is a very important song to us because we identify with it. It gave us a unified voice. In fact, when it had just been released, we went to the streets of Kampala city singing it, shouting *tell Jennifer on our behalf, tell Jennifer that the city is ours.* We marched to the song as we attempted to go to the freedom square to protest our eviction, only to be tear-gassed by the police before we could get there (pers. comm., Musoke. August 2, 2014).

Musoke's story checked out when I interviewed other interlocutors, many of whom were still congregated in smaller groups conversing with each other. For Hope Atuhairwe, a female cloth vendor relocated at Kasubi, a suburb of Kampala: "'Tugambire ku Jennifer' empowered us, as you can see. We had never had a meeting of such a kind before. But Wine's support for our struggle against brutality and eviction has brought us together as family, and given us a voice to counter Musisi and her brutal men" (pers. comm., Atuhairwe. August 9, 2014). By *family*, Atuhairwe refers to the potential of music in mobilizing collective ties and actions based on common social struggles.

Other interlocutors such as Justine Nanfuka, a food vendor in Wandegeya, mentioned that Wine's "Tugambire ku Jennifer" was instrumental in articulating their grievances: "I think that since we struggle to make ends meet, those in power do not take us serious at most times. We tried to reach out to some of the KCCA officials but we were ignored. Wine's song voiced our concerns and I know that for the first time, Musisi listened" (pers. comm., Nanfuka. August 2, 2014). In the following section, I will discuss the structural elements of Bobi Wine's song "Tugambire ku Jennifer."

4.4 Text and Music of "Tugambire ku Jennifer"

To fully appreciate the analysis of "Tugambire ku Jennifer," I call your attention to the transcription of the text and italicized English translation in the right-hand column of figure 17. It should be noted that only the chorus and all three verses have English translations. However, the intro and outro are sung in English, and appear in square brackets without italics.

(Introductory rap)

["Well, this is the ghetto gladiator expressing exactly what is on the peoples' mind.
What is the solution for all the separation? This is my observation, my communication, stop!"]

Verse One

Lwali lwa Mande bwe luti,	*It was one Monday like this,*
N'obukuba nga bw'atonnye;	*When it had drizzled;*
Lw'akya nga olunaku olulala,	*The day arrived like any other day,*
Naye mu kuziba lwa kyuuka.	*By dawn, the day had taken a different shape.*
Mu ggeto gye njoleza e motoka ku makya,	*In the ghetto where I wash my car in the morning,*
Wentera n'okufuna e kyenkya;	*Is also where I usually have my breakfast;*
Mba ndi ku kyenkya,	*In the middle of my breakfast,*
Atuguza e mere e bweru n'alajana.	*The food vendor screamed for help outside.*
Obusajja bwasalako omukazi omunaku ,	*The KCCA men had evicted the poor woman,*
Nga bukambwe okukira e nnumba;	*Amidst anger, like that of an army ant;*
Mbu e mere gy'otunda eliwo mu bukyaamu,	*That you are selling food illegally,*
era nkututte.	*Thus, we have arrested you.*
Olwo ne bawamba buli kyayina,	*Then they seized all her belongings,*
Amasowaani masepiki n'akaaba.	*plates and saucepans, while she cried.*
Ne bamubuuza nkuyambe ki maama kuba osilaanye	*Asked what could be done since she was in*
na ngamba:	*trouble and she responded:*

Refrain

Tugambire ku Jennifer; akendeze obukambwe	*Tell Jennifer on our behalf to reduce her anger*
Tugambire ku Jennifer ekibuga kyaffe.	*Tell Jennifer on our behalf that the city is ours too.*

Verse 2

N'ewaffe bangobesaawo zi konteyina,	At ours, my containers were banned,
N'obumaali ne babwezibika.	And they even conned me of my little cash.
Mbeera kuba nga sesobola,	Had I lacked an economic base,
Singa nadda dda mukyaalo.	I could have headed back to village.
Kalibbala ye atembeya makooti,	Kalibbala is a jacket vendor,
Okuva lwe yajja mu Kampala.	Since he came to Kampala.
Omwo mwafuna eky'okulya,	That is how he earns a living,
Nabeezawo ne baasuza eka.	And even takes care of his family.
Naye ate bwosalilawo eyo mu ofiisi yo,	But if you make decisions from your office,
Gwe n'ongobaganya eno gyembeera;	To evict me from my work place;
Nga tondaze wemba nkolera,	Without showing me an alternative space to work at,
Oba nga ansiindise okubba.	It is like forcing me to steal from others.
Bannaffe musaasire bannamwe,	Our dears, have mercy on others,
Muleme obeetamwa ekibuga;	Avoid making them hate their city;
Bino tebiva munze,	These ideas are not my own,
Naye buli omu yeekokkola, bagamba:	But those of everyone complaining, saying:

Verse 3

Julayidi y'awo ku kkubo wakolera,	At the roadside where Julayidi works,
Waalya ne bu tooto naawelera.	Is where he earns a living to educate his children.
Naye buli lw'omugoba wa yiiyiza,	But when you evict him from his space of work,
Bwe butayimbwa obwo bw'owulira.	It culminates into rampant murders with iron bars.
Ka nsabe omukulu akwatagane,	Let me request the leaders to get in touch
Ne banakibuga bateeseganye;	And city vendors to come together;
Enkyuukakyuuka kale ekolebwe,	Reforms in the city can be made,
Naye muleme okubagobaganya.	But do not evict people from streets.
Ekibuga nga kinaakula,	If a city is to develop,
Kiyina okula nga mulimu n'abantu.	It has to develop alongside the presence of people.
Omukulembeze ye alina kola,	A leader is supposed to work,
Nga ali wamu n'abantu.	While in consultation with the people.
Nga temunnaziba binnya mu nguudo,	Before repairing the pit holes in the city roads,
Ebizimbe mulindeko obimenya;	Hold off bringing down peoples' infrastructure;
Kubanga kijuna bantu baffe,	Because it is for the betterment of our people,
N'okubimenya kinyiga bantu baffe.	Breaking them down marginalizes our people.
Ye nga lwaki okola otyo,	But why would you do such a thing,
Nga ate oli muganda waffe;	Yet you are our own native sibling;
Kati nawulidde nti n'ebivvulu,	Now I also heard that with music concerts,
Mwatandise okubiwera.	You are banning them too.
Awo obeera nga agamba ze tukola,	It is as if you are implying that the money we make
Tuziriire mu nju.	should be exclusively spent at our homes.
Ekibuga tukyagala nnyo kino,	We love this city so much,
Twakituuma dda n'abaana baffe.	We even named our children after it.
Ffe lwe mwakwata omuntu atunda kasooli,	The day you arrested a maize vendor,
Lwe nava ku nsi eno.	Was when I gave up on this country.
Nalaba amaziga g'omuzeeyi kwe kubuuza:	I saw the tears of an old woman and asked her:
Nti ate gwe jjajja? Kko ye:	How about you mum? She responded that:

Outro/Rap

["Now Ladies and Gentlemen, whatever you heard in this song is not the views of the artist, the studio, or the producer. These are views of common people; the poor people; the suffering people; the ghetto people; the angry people. So, please act accordingly to avoid another song; of the same kind; from another artist; of the same mind."]

Figure 17: The text of "Tugambire ku Jennifer" (translation by Charles Lwanga)

Composed in F# major with 4/4 meter, "Tugambire ku Jennifer" has an intro, three verses, a refrain after each verse, and an outro (intro, verse/refrain, verse/refrain, verse/refrain, outro). Unlike the intro and outro that are rapped in English, the three verses are sung in Luganda. While verses one and two are characterized by eight phrases (see figures 18 and 19), verse three is expanded to a total of fourteen phrases (see figure 20).

Figure 18: Verse one of "Tugambire ku Jennifer"

Figure 19: Verse two of "Tugambire ku Jennifer"

Figure 20: Verse three of "Tugambire ku Jennifer"

4.4.1 The Intro

The intro and outro of the song are characterized by verbal utterances in the style of rapping (in English) against an instrumental background. Beginning and ending with a rap renders the song cohesive and adds emphasis to the message of the song through repetition. In the opening intro, Wine raps: "Well, this is the ghetto gladiator expressing exactly what is on the peoples' mind; what is the solution for all the separation? This is my observation, my communication; stop!" In this rap, Wine introduces himself as the ghetto gladiator, meaning that he is the voice of the ghetto and its suffering people. But he is also the voice of other marginalized groups of people who do not reside in ghettos.[35]

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[35] However, he did not support all minority publics. Early in his career, Wine denigrated the LGBT community. His anti-gay sentiments even appeared in the headlines of Uganda's *Daily Monitor* of July 14, 2014.

The question: "what is the solution for all the separation?" sets the tone that Wine employs in articulating his own observations while communicating on behalf of the street vendors. And then, to express his own anger against the brutality of the KCCA and the police, Wine shouts "stop!" This expression, which is considered rude in Uganda, is rapped in a rather strong tone to forcefully emphasize the urgent nature of the problem and to make a powerful impact upon listeners.

4.4.2 The Refrain

According to Wine, the refrain of "Tugambire ku Jennifer" is the most important part in the song: "it expresses the voice of the Kampala street vendors, whose subsistence is being threatened by the new urban reforms" (pers. comm., Wine. August 2, 2014). In the song, Wine smoothly blends each of the three verses into the refrain by inserting an intervening question of what he can do to help, one which is answered by the two-part phrase of the refrain: "Tell Jennifer on our behalf to reduce her anger; tell Jennifer on our behalf that the city is ours too."

Figure 21: The refrain of "Tugambire ku Jennifer"

This is part of the reason he was denied a UK visa, where he was to perform for a group of Ugandans. However, he later changed his position and began supporting LGBT issues.

148

The refrain is characterized by a melodic descent from F# 4 to F# 3, which is similar to the genre of musical laments (such as funeral songs) common among singing traditions of Uganda (see figure 21). In the four-measure refrain, the first and third measures are the same. The second and fourth measures of the refrain also share a similar pick-up point (G# 3), but with different intervallic interplay. An ascending supertonic triad is arpeggiated (G# 3-B 3-D# 3) before the step-wise melodic descent to B 3. This gives a feeling of incompleteness, which is resolved in the fourth measure of the refrain when the ascending arpeggiation of an incomplete supertonic triad (G# 3-B 3) descends step-wise from the subdominant to the tonic (B 3-A# 3- G# 3-F# 3) (see figure 21).

Because the chorus is characterized by melodic and textual repetition, textual meaning smoothly translates into emphasis and seriousness. The message of the chorus is directed towards Jennifer Musisi. But as Bobi Wine states in the opening utterance, the views in the song are not his but those of the suffering people. In this case, it is the vendors, whose message Bobi Wine is passing on to Musisi. This way, the lyrical structure of the chorus can be understood as the voice of the vendors, but only through Bobi Wine.

Whenever the refrain is sung, Wine is directly speaking to Musisi, even though he is acting on behalf of the street vendors, who are also speaking to Wine as he articulates their concerns. Several interlocutors mentioned to me that the multivocal character of the refrain of "Tugambire ku Jennifer" foregrounds the core of the song's drama. For instance, according to Charles Kabugo, a food vendor at Wandegeya suburb of Kampala, "it is not any puzzle at all that our voice clearly comes out in the refrain. We know that Bobi Wine is addressing Musisi on our behalf" (pers. comm., Kabugo. July 12, 2014).

Similarly, Paul Mugambe, a fruit vendor located in Makerere Kikoni (a suburb of Kampala) said: "Wine's song was censored because it clearly provoked the KCCA boss to reconsider the implementation of the new urban reforms. The refrain is so memorable and strong in its message. It clearly articulates our struggles and aspirations without beating around the bush" (pers. comm., Mugambe. July 15, 2014). Wine himself confessed that he was not happy with the implementation of the new urban reforms: "I had to do something about it through my music" (pers. comm., Wine. June 14. 2014). Indeed, the chorus is not only the basis of the logic of the verses, but also pivot to the outro, whose strong message calls upon the KCCA authority to listen to the grievances of the Kampala Street vendors.

4.4.3 The Outro

As with the intro, the outro emphasizes that Wine is only a mouthpiece for a group of marginalized people. Wine states: "whatever you heard in this song is not the view of the artist, the studio, or the producer…[but rather the] views of the common people, the poor people, the suffering people and ghetto people, the angry people." Wine explicitly makes it clear that he is speaking on behalf of the Kampala street vendors who were initially denied a voice. In the absence of a working rapport with the city authority, Wine's song bridged the gap by providing the street vendors with an alternative avenue of speaking and negotiating with the KCCA. That is why he emphasizes in both the intro and the outro that "Tugambire ku Jennifer" represents the voice of the Kampala street vendors.

The strongly worded sentence that closes the song is cautionary, calling upon Musisi to respond positively: "Act accordingly to avoid another song of the same kind from another artist of the same mind." The implication of this statement cannot be underestimated considering the

150

impact of popular musicians on publics. According to Wine, musicians can add their voices to

his message if nothing is done by the KCCA to drop all charges against the city vendors. Of

course, if other musicians were to mobilize their fans through song, that would generate more

pressure and further chaos in the city. Thus, Wine concludes "Tugambire ku Jennifer" by calling

upon Musisi to "act accordingly" to avoid more drama in Kampala city.

4.4.4 The Audiovisual Assemblage of "Tugambire ku Jennifer"

Throughout the song, Wine articulates the social constraints of the Kampala street

vendors, who are speaking through Wine to Musisi. In the first verse, for example, Wine narrates

a first-hand account of one brutal experience at a restaurant in Kamwokya, where he usually eats

breakfast and washes his car. While eating breakfast, Wine hears a female food vendor

screaming for her life. He looks around and sees KCCA staff members seizing her food items

(such as utensils, plates, cups and saucepans) while others arrest her. Wine intervenes by asking

the woman if there is anything he can do. She replies: *"Tell Jennifer on our behalf to reduce her*

anger; tell Jennifer on our behalf that the city is ours too!"

Re-enacting the plot of the first verse in the music video, Wine is seen driving to

Kamwokya where he takes breakfast and interacts with people there. [36] Nearby, we see two other

male vendors (one selling coffee and the other selling clothes). Bobi Wine is served breakfast

and having his shoes polished. Arriving in a red pick-up truck, KCCA men arrest a female food

vendor and force her on to the truck. She breaks into tears as she attempts to free herself from the

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[36] This video can be accessed on YouTube URL https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LftbwqneJ2w
Also, Wine's interview about his song can be accessed on You Tube URL
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAfYzEsgy6w

151

KCCA men, but all in vein. Two other male vendors are arrested as they plead: "*Tell Jennifer on our behalf to reduce her anger; tell Jennifer on our behalf that the city is ours too.*" To give the song a collective voice, Wine adopts the arrested vendors' response as the refrain – a musical decision that successfully articulates the interwoven assemblage of the lyrics and images of the music video.

In the second stanza, Wine sings about rising crime rates due to unemployment. To drive his point home, he compares two scenarios involving the KCCA and vendors who possess different amounts of capital. In the first scenario, Wine presents himself as a vendor with a modicum of capital. KCCA men forcefully seize Wine's container full of merchandise. But he is able to retrieve the goods by bribing the KCCA officials. In the second scenario, however, the KCCA officials confiscate the property of a used-jacket vendor and he is left with two options: either go back to his village to start over, or remain in Kampala and resort to robbery for subsistence.

These two scenarios in the second verse of Wine's "Tugambire ku Jennifer" present a logical argument against forcing the vendors to leave the city. On one hand, Wine has the capacity to redeem his merchandise from the KCCA, but only through corruption. The KCCA men take advantage of the system to take a bribe from Wine. By singing about this situation, therefore, Wine exposes the corruption of the KCCA officials. On the other, the used-jacket vendor's scenario indicates how the new urban reforms can potentially lead to an increase in crime in Kampala due to unemployment. The above two scenarios are the bases of Wine's call for Musisi and her government team to provide alternative vending spaces for the Kampala street vendors.

In the music video, a man named Kalibbala is shown selling second-hand clothes in a surreptitious manner to protect himself from arrest. As in the first verse, Wine is shown driving in the city as he narrates his message to the public. A montage of images from the first verse includes a snapshot of the KCCA men evicting the two sellers from the streets. The second verse foregrounds the arrest of a coffee vendor who is brutally thrown onto the back of a KCCA truck. A KCCA official eats the vendor's coffee beans on the truck, in the presence of the vendor, who is being driven to the KCCA offices for citation. This KCCA official's behavior amounts to an abuse of authority, an issue that Wine hints at in the first verse.

Building on the effects of unemployment in the second verse, the third verse narrates a story about a street vendor named Julayidi, whose subsistence depends on work in the city. Bobi Wine sings that if Julayidi's livelihood is taken away, he will be left with no choice but to become a murderer as a means of survival. By mentioning murder as a likely consequence of unemployment, Wine calls for a dialogue between the KCCA, the street vendors, and other stakeholders who shape the destiny of the city. Additionally, Wine calls upon the KCCA to repair the roads before destroying the old buildings rented by business proprietors. To develop the city without marginalizing the street vendors who are also part of its social fabric, Wine calls upon the KCCA to insert a clause in the new urban policies. Such a clause would lead to more harmonious relations among those working in Kampala.

As with the first and second verses, to smoothly connect the third verse to the refrain, Wine recounts the arrest of a female corn vendor who broke into tears as she pleaded with the KCCA men. Wine asks the woman what is wrong, and she replies: "Tell Jennifer on our behalf to reduce her anger; tell Jennifer on our behalf that the city is ours too!"

4.5 Hearing Ears: Visible Change, Ongoing Negotiations

When I travelled back to Uganda in the summer of 2015, I noticed that several changes had taken place in Kampala. The KCCA was negotiating with street vendors on the modalities of using city space. However, many vendors on the outskirts of Kampala were being evicted. KCCA officers were knocking down all small shops and forcefully chasing vendors from road sides. Meanwhile, media outlets were hosting speakers to debate the plight of street vendors. Listeners and viewers called in during talk shows (on radio and television) to condone the brutal process of eviction without warning, or with short notice. Other vendors called in to complain about the lack of alternative spaces and the high cost of rent for the few alternative spaces that were available.

On September 15, 2015, while on my way to meet an old friend at Kikoni, a suburb of Kampala, I witnessed several KCCA men knocking down illegal shop units and arresting some vendors. Onlookers witnessed the chaotic scene in which vendors attempted to retrieve their property amidst police and KCCA brutality. A week later, I spoke to some street vendors about the changes that had happened since 2014, when I was last in Uganda. Nalunkuuma stated:

> Wandegeya market is open for vendors to rent but it is damn expensive, many of us cannot afford it. We have resisted the prices of rent but Musisi has not responded yet. During one of our meetings, we agreed that since Bobi Wine identifies with us, we should use the opportunity of his song ["Tugambie ku Jennifer"] to protest on the streets of Kampala; however, this never happened because Musisi summoned our leaders before our plan took off. [I asked her: "Why would you use Wine's song in protest?"] Wine's song [she answered] gives us the zeal to do things together; it gives us good morale to cause a considerable amount of chaos that can attract the attention of the president if need be. We feel that since Wine has come out to fight for us, there are many other people that sympathize with us out there (pers. Comm., Nalunkuuma. June 18, 2015).

Nalunkuuma's testimony can be attributed to collective identity formation as "a central catalyst

154

of broader changes in values, ideas and ways of life" (Eyerman and Jamison, 1998: 7). In her testimony, we can imagine the potential of an emergent public of street vendors to forge subversive performative action (such as contesting the legitimacy of the KCCA). If such a collective organizes to retaliate, there will be consequences (in terms of time, energy, resources and risks in protests, destruction of property, among other things that may cripple the subsistence of vendors for some time).

However, since 2012, the KCCA has embarked on a project of constructing markets on the outskirts of Kampala city. Wandegeya market (located near Makerere University) is one of these projects that was ready for use in 2014. However, several street vendors could not afford the high rental costs. As a result, most of the market remained empty. As Kayongo disclosed, market projects as alternative spaces for street vendors were interpreted in complex ways:

> The idea of relocating us [vendors] outside Kampala city is only a strategic ploy to disintegrate our solidarity. Surely, I do not think that Musisi will succeed in tricking us. We will continue fighting for our unity and cause wherever we will be. We will never give up (pers. comm., Kayongo. June 19, 2015).

In addition, an anonymous female employee of the KCCA confirmed that, "dissolving the unity of Kampala street vendors was indirectly part of cleaning up frequent strikes in the city, which in the history of the country have left many injured, and even others dead" (pers. comm., Anonymous. June 26, 2015). Yet, another senior male employee with the KCCA, who requested anonymity for fear of losing his job, attested:

> The relocation of all Kampala city street vendors was in the interest of cleaning up the crowded city. We have heard the vendors and Wine's song. All our boss is doing is for the betterment of the city. We are trying to build a better institution of accountability because many of these vendors did not even pay taxes, and yet they were polluting the city and using free space (pers. comm., Anonymous. June 29, 2014).

The foregoing assertion about accountability (by the anonymous KCCA official) came to fruition on May 17, 2015, when, to the surprise of the former Kampala vendors, the city boss reintroduced vending in Kampala. However, this would not take place daily as in the past. Vending would only take place on Sundays, and strictly at Kampala's Lumum Street. Among other rules, food would no longer be sold on streets, as the KCCA was conscious about the city's dust, which can easily contaminate edibles, and consequently cause illness (*Daily Monitor*, May 18, 2015).

I visited Luwum Street on the afternoon of Sunday, June 28, 2015. Most of my interlocutors expressed mixed reactions about the newly introduced arrangement for vending in the city. For instance, Jessica Ntambirwe, a female shoe vendor in her early 40s said, "we are grateful that Jennifer has reconsidered her previous position even though many of our old customers are not yet used to this new arrangement. But I hope we will get there" (pers. comm., Jessica Ntambirwe. June 28, 2015). For Peter Mugambi, a male cloth vendor in his mid-30s: "it is exciting that Musisi is trying to reinstate vending in Kampala – a culture many of us have grown up into. My only kind request is to reduce the fee of transaction by 50 percent so that others can affordably participate and contribute to the likely vibrancy of this new arrangement" (pers. comm., Mugambi. June 28, 2015). As with Ntambirwe, Mugambi seemed to welcome the new idea. However, he was bothered by the newly introduced tax required of each street vendor. Other interlocutors still referred to Bobi Wine's "Tugambire ku Jennifer" as the main catalyst for Musisi's positive response to the grievances of the Kampala city vendors. Although many called attention to some of the disadvantages of the newly introduced vending procedures in Kampala, it was evident that the KCCA was responding to pressure that had been mounting since the forceful eviction of street vendors in 2011.

On October 15, 2018, Jennifer Musisi made headlines when all Ugandan print media published that she would resign her position as KCCA Executive Director on December 15. Analyzing Musisi's surprising decision to step down from her position, print media mentioned that reconciling political views and the KCCA strategic plan had been one of Musisi's main challenges.[37] Nevertheless, her 21-page notice of resignation to president Museveni included notable achievements. In a surprising response seven months later, Museveni, during a meeting with officials from the Ministries of Education, Finance and Public Service at the Prime Minister's office, regretted having invested a lot of money in Jennifer Musisi and her staff at the expense of other sectors in the country. This was because Museveni was disappointed in Musisi's failure to "clean up Kampala" (*Nile Post,* May 2019).[38]

4.6 Conclusion

Cooke and Kasule (1999) have noted that an understanding of the current post-authoritarian Ugandan regime illuminates the circumstances under which contemporary musical forms are created. Following Cooke and Kasule (ibid), such musical forms created amidst an authoritarian regime emerge as response to forms of marginalization by the state. Indeed, "Tugambire ku Jennifer" not only demonstrates Wine's comprehension of the current social/political dynamics of Uganda, but also his endeavor to respond to them. The song not only

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[37] See "Museveni: I regret Appointing Jennifer Musisi as KCCA Executive Director, I Paid Jennifer Musisi A lot of Money to Clean Up Kampala But She Didn't." *Eyalama.* May 27, 2019. Accessed May 19, 2020. https://eyalama.com/museveni-i-regret-appointing-jennifer-musisi-as-kcca-executive-directori-paid-jennifer-musisi-a-lot-of-money-to-clean-up-kampala-but-she-didnt/

[38] Kirabo, Jonah. "Museveni: I Paid Jennifer Musisi A lot of Money to Clean Up Kampala But She Didn't." *Nile Post.* May 2019. Accessed May 19, 2020. https://nilepost.co.ug/2019/05/27/museveni-i-paid-jennifer-musisi-a-lot-of-money-to-clean-up-kampala-but-she-didnt/

articulates social constraints and aspirations of the Kampala street vendors, but also the potential of popular music to assemble a group of marginalized people into an emergent public.

I have drawn attention to Wine's "Tugambire ku Jennifer" as symbolic material that not only articulates constraints faced by the Kampala city street vendors, but also provides an alternative site of intervention to mainstream modes of participation that are perceived by the vendors as limited. By contesting the KCCA and police brutality against the street vendors, Wine calls upon KCCA Executive Director Jennifer Musisi to engage the street vendors in the process of formulating new city reforms. Beyond speaking to Musisi, "Tugambire ku Jennifer" has reimagined a new sense of identity and belonging for Kampala's street vendors. Moreover, a sense of unity and organization were constructed around Wine's song, becoming central to the formation of one of the most recent emergent publics in Uganda –the Kampala street vendors.

Wine's "Tugambire ku Jennifer" did not appear out of the blue. The song was a symbolic response to the harsh conditions that the Kampala street vendors were subjected to after their forceful eviction from the city in 2011. In Bobi Wine, the Kampala street vendors found advocacy, sympathy, and an inclusive site for negotiating their identity, belonging, and sense of unity. Indeed, "Tugambire ku Jennifer" remains part of the Kampala street vendors' identity, memory, and legacy. As one of my interlocutors attested, they will continue to identify their struggles with "Tugambire ku Jennifer," as the song, in return, continues to shape their destiny.

Wine's song has become central to the process of mediating ongoing negotiations between the KCCA and the street vendors. This is a positive step towards resolving urban grievances of space and the livelihood of many people (mostly women) who work as street vendors in Kampala city. Thus, beyond its capacity to mediate the struggles and aspirations of the Kampala street vendors, Wine's "Tugambire ku Jennifer" exemplifies the potential of

popular music to mobilize groups of marginalized people into audible and visible publics. By providing a mediated platform of relatively inclusive participation, popular music has become central to the construction of contemporary discourses of representation in contemporary Uganda.

5.0 'TOKA KWA BARABARA" (CLEAR THE WAY): SINGING FOR CHANGE

DURING UGANDA'S 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

This chapter examines the interplay of popular music, politics, and the public of opposition during Uganda's 2016 presidential elections. In Chapter 1, I discussed the regimes of Obote I & II, Idi Amin, and Tito Okello, during which musicians could not freely express themselves in opposition to the ruling authority. They could only address them in praise. However, a few musicians who criticized past military regimes did so by employing metaphorical expressions. In contrast, the 2016 elections offered a different platform of expression, as popular musicians and members of civil society took an active role in determining their leaders for the next five years (2016-2021).

By a new platform of expression, I do not mean that before 2016 musicians were not actively involved in politics. In fact, a handful of them were involved to mobilize voters. For instance, Uganda's *Daily Monitor* columnist, Henry Lubega notes that musician Fred Kanyike sung in praise of the *Kabaka Yekka* (Only Kabaka) party during the 1958 election boycott in Uganda. The *Kabaka Yekka* party was mainly constituted by the Baganda people who believed in the virtues of the Buganda kingdom. Additionally, before the 1962 presidential elections, Kanyike composed and sung the song "DP Egumire" (Democratic Party is Strong) in support of the DP party, which had become the new version of *Kabaka Yekka*. Musicians Andrew and

Margaret Kyamabadde also sang songs in praise of Ugandan leaders who had been at the forefront of securing the country its independence in 1962 (Lubega 2019).[39]

Music played a significant role in Uganda's 2011 elections. For example, in a 2011 story published by Ugandan newspaper *The Observer*, Adam Mulwana and the late Harriet Kisakye are said to have actively used their music to mobilize support for Dr. Besigye's presidential candidacy during the 2011 election campaign.[40] Music producer and singer, Eddy Yawe (Bobi Wine's older brother,) was previously involved with the Democratic Party campaigns, also as mobilizer (see chapter 6). However, the massive collaboration of musicians, politicians, and publics of supporters in the 2016 election had not been seen before in Uganda.

As I will elaborate in this chapter, the three main candidates for the position of president in 2016 drew on the cultural capital of musicians to mobilize voters. And more importantly, popular music became intertwined with politics in a way that enhanced participation more than in past election campaigns. Having attended a number of campaign rallies, I noticed that the public consumption of popular music was a source of enjoyment and education. It was at rallies that the people publicly expressed their sense of freedom to participate in dancing and singing with live musicians and recorded music, in ways they could not easily express elsewhere. In the end, the campaign rallies as platforms of enjoyment and education not only enhanced people's self-confidence, but also enabled their active participation as voters.

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[39] For a detailed historical account of music in service of politics, see Lubega, Henry. "Politics of Uganda As Seen Through Music Since 1950." *Daily Monitor.* February 3, 2019. Accessed May 19, 2020. https://www.monitor.co.ug/Magazines/PeoplePower/Politics-of-Uganda-as-seen-through-music-since-the-50s/689844-4963538-uopikuz/index.html

[40] Kiggundu, Edris. "Artists Bring Out Lighter Side to Campaigns." *The Observer.* https://www.observer.ug/component/content/article?id=11639:artistes-bring-out-lighter-side-to-campaigns (Accessed January 9, 2011).

In all, there were seven candidates vying for the position of president during the 2016 election. The incumbent, president Museveni, was running for the fourth consecutive time. His main challengers, Dr. Kiiza Besigye and Dr. Abed Bwanika, were also contesting for the fourth time in a row. First-time appearances on the presidential ballot included John Patrick Amama Mbabazi, a former prime minister and Secretary General in Museveni's government and the NRM party, respectively; Vanansius Baryamureeba, a former professor and Vice Chancellor of Makerere University; Benon Biraaro, a retired military general; and Faith Kyala, a former presidential advisor. However, Museveni, Besigye, and Mbabazi were the three main candidates who drew upon popular music to articulate their manifestos and mobilize supporters.

In the following sections of this chapter, I draw on fieldwork in Kampala to examine how popular music became inextricably intertwined with the 2016 presidential elections and what I will refer to as the *public of opposition* (or opposition public). I discuss how the song "Toka kwa Barabara" (Clear the Way) by a little-known up-and-coming musician, Adam Mulwana, emerged as a political symbol of shared emotional history, and a tool of mobilization for Besigye and his opposition public. This song was chosen for its popularity among Besigye's opposition public, which was the strongest challenger to Museveni. Although Besigye's candidature did not culminate into victory, the centrality of Mulwana's "Toka kwa Barabara" cannot be undervalued because of the ways it enhanced participation among the public of opposition. I discuss how Mulwana employed musical idioms to affectively inspire Besigye's candidature and public of supporters. I examine two places as sites where the consumption of Mulwana's song became laden with a mindset that recognizes and motivates the common people as beholders of power through the vote. Throughout this chapter, I argue that Mulwana's "Toka kwa Barabara" was

162

informed, bounded, and mediated by broader fields of popular culture, which rendered Besigye's public of opposition audible.

5.1 Music and Politics During Uganda's 2016 Presidential Elections

On February 18, 2016, Uganda held its fifth presidential election. This was the second multi-party election, following the 2005 constitutional referendum, which reinstated a multi-party system in the country after nineteen years.[41] The Uganda Electoral Commission established November 9, 2015 as the official start of the presidential and parliamentary campaigns. Before then, however, the incumbent, president Museveni, incorporated a new dimension to his campaign strategy. Departing from his 2011 election campaign when he surprised the public with a rap, "You Want Another Rap," Museveni commissioned twelve Ugandan popular music stars to compose the song "Tubonga Naawe" (We are with You) to announce and mobilize his re-election as president (*The Observer*, October 21, 2015).[42]

Launched in mid-October 2015 at the Speke Commonwealth Resort, Munyonyo, in metropolitan Kampala, the song "Tubonga Naawe" would later become Museveni's signature song in the election. Officiating at the launch, Museveni pledged and later paid musicians 140 Million Uganda Shillings (about US $38, 900). However, the involvement of renowned musicians in what later became known as the "Tubonga Naawe" project ended up being very controversial. Apart from Bebe Cool, whose support for Museveni was public knowledge years before the 2016 elections, most musicians and fans felt betrayed because Museveni's

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[41] Museveni's government had suspended the multi-party system on the basis that it promoted sectarianism.
[42] Musicians hired by Museveni included Juliana Kanyomozi, Jose Chameleon, Judith Babirye, Bebe Cool, Mowzey Radio (R.I.P), King Saha, Weasel, Rema Namakula, Iryn Namubiru, Haruna Mubiru, Mun G, and Pastor Bugembe.

government had never cared about them (*The Observer*, October 21, 2015).[43] "Tubonga Naawe" was controversial for economic and political reasons. Participating musicians were only supporting Museveni for monetary rewards, and not because they supported him politically. Further, Museveni was simply drawing upon the cultural capital of popular musicians as mobilizers; it was a purely tactical move on his part.

I argue that the mere participation in the "Tubonga Naawe" project translated into a political act, given the context in which it came into being. Fans were confused: they wondered whether their stars were only participating in the campaign for the money or because they supported the ruling NRM government. Indeed, it was difficult to detach the economic and the political. Fans publicly responded by threatening to boycott any future popular music concerts by the "Tubonga Naawe" musicians.

In contrast to the "Tubonga Naawe" project that featured prominent Ugandan popular musicians, campaigns for candidates Mbabazi and Besigye featured popular songs by lesser-known musicians. For example, David N'Saiga (a.k.a. Pragmo), a songwriter, singer, producer and owner of Pragmo Sounds Production studio, composed the song "Amama," hoping that he would reach a copyright deal with the Mbabazi campaign team. On his SoundCloud wall, Pragmo wrote that he was inspired by a print article and YouTube videos about Mbabazi's candidacy. He juxtaposed spoken utterances of Mbabazi with a jazzy groove and English-language lyrics. However, despite having publicized his cellphone number and email contacts on his SoundCloud platform, Pragmo's song was not chosen for Mbabazi's campaign.

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[43] Kaggwa, Andrew and Samson Baranga. "Tubonga Naawe Divides Artists, Fans." *The Observer,* October 21, 2015. Accessed May 19, 2020. https://observer.ug/lifestyle/42-entertainment/40553-tubonga-naawe-divides-artistes-fans

On several occasions, Uganda's online forum, "Celebrity Gossip," featured other popular musicians in the campaign. For instance, on October 29, 2015, Ugandan emerging popular music star, Ziza Bafana, allegedly claimed to have been contacted by one of Mbabazi's campaign aides to compose a song for Mbabazi. However, the deal never materialized. On November 4, 2015, "Celebrity Gossip" reported that Ugandan musician Geosteady would compose a song for Mbabazi. This gesture was done out of sympathy for Mbabazi, who lacked the support of popular musicians. Like Bafana, however, the song never materialized. However, in an interesting turn of events, a little-known duo featuring Uganda's Bruno Kiggundu (a.k.a Bruno K) and Kenya's Michael composed Mbabazi's campaign song "Tusonge" (Let's Go Forward) was launched on November 3, 2015 at Nakivubo stadium, Kampala, shortly after Mbabazi had been nominated to run for president.

Meanwhile, in Besigye's camp, Mulwana's "Toka kwa Barabara" was gradually becoming a political symbol for mobilizing leftist supporters. Besigye's camp was mainly composed of FDC party members, and a variety of supporters from various opposition parties; Besigye had served as the first FDC party president for two terms since 2004. The FDC party had been founded by disgruntled members of the NRM party, including retired military general Mugisha Muntu[44] and Museveni confidants, such as Eriya Kategaya, who wanted Museveni to stick to the initial two-year constitutional limit of presidential terms. But before the end of his second term in office, Museveni had drawn on his majority support in parliament to remove the two-year presidential term limit. This angered more NRM loyalists who had anxiously been

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[44] After losing his bid for a second term as FDC president to Engineer Patrick Amriat, General Muntu left the FDC party and formed his own Alliance for National Transformation (ANT) party on May 22, 2019.

waiting for a change in leadership. Instead, some NRM loyalists threw their support behind the

FDC party's mission of unseating Museveni and the NRM party through democratic means.

In a new move during the 2016 presidential elections, the opposition public moved to

unite against Museveni. On Wednesday June 10, 2015, leaders of the opposition public,

including supporters of the FDC party, the Democratic Party (DP), the Uganda Peoples'

Congress (UPC) party, the Conservative party (CP), the Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA) party

and the Justice Forum (JF) party attempted to form The Democratic Alliance (TDA) coalition to

support one candidate against president Museveni. The *Daily Monitor,* a Ugandan newspaper,

reported that the TDA coalition was a strong avenue of bringing Museveni's rule to an end

(Kafeero 2015)[45]. Unfortunately, the coalition splintered because Mbabazi and Besigye, the main

two competing candidates in the coalition failed to reach an understanding about the most

suitable choice to run against Museveni.

As a result of the splintered TDA coalition, Mbabazi stood as the presidential candidate

on behalf of his Go Forward party. Meanwhile, most members of other opposition parties within

the larger opposition public supported Besigye as their candidate. Besigye's support within the

opposition public was animated by the production of a popular song and its accompanying music

"Toka kwa Barabara" by Mulwana. The song went viral and consequently became emblematic of

Besigye's candidature. In the following section, I discuss my first encounter with the song "Toka

kwa Barabara" during the launch of Besigye's candidacy.

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[45] For details about how the TDA chose their candidate, see: Stephen Kafeero, "TDA Committee Backs Mbabazi," *Daily Monitor,* September 17, 2015, https://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/TDA-committee-backs-Mbabazi/-/688334/2873714/-/dy2fk2/-/index.html (accessed May 19, 2020).

5.1.1 Launching the Opposition: Performing "Toka kwa Barabara"

In this section, I discuss the context in which I first encountered the song "Toka kwa Barabara" to foreground how it became the basis of Besigye's campaign. I discuss the symbolism in the text of the song and how these symbols were embodied by supporters. I argue that the repetitive performance of symbolic bodily gestures was crucial in the construction of an opposition public in support of Besgiye's candidacy.

On November 12, 2015, I attended one of the official launches of Dr. Besigye Kizza as the presidential candidate of the FDC party. Before Besigye arrived, there was a somber mood as people greeted each other and the deejay played some soft music. At intervals of ten to fifteen minutes, the master of ceremonies updated the crowd about the estimated time of arrival of Besigye.

At about 12PM, the deejay started playing the song "One Uganda, One People," but it suddenly ended prematurely. The guest of honor, Besigye, had arrived and as soon as his presence became known, the deejay switched to "Toka kwa Barabara." I started to notice people's reactions to Mulwana's song and how they behaved as they listened to it. I did not know that the song would become Besigye's signature song or how it would come to shape the participation and audibility of an opposition public.

As soon as the deejey switched to "Toka kwa Barabara," the song prompted its composer (who was present) to come onstage. He grabbed a microphone and began singing over the recorded track. While dancing to the groove of the song, Mulwana led Besigye ceremoniously to his VIP seat. In the meantime, the excited crowd flashed the FDC 2-finger symbol of peace, clapped, danced, and responded in approval to the song's call-phrase ("eh eh").

I witnessed an excited woman who became the center of attention. She sang the phrases of the chorus while gesturing with her hands. She was later joined by other people who added hand gestures to the chorus of the song "Toka kwa Barabara." To me, the gestures that emanated from these two particular phrases of the chorus were a clear indication that the people understood the song's message. The text of the phrases in question referred to the *removal of the bus* and *the arrival of the key*. The bus stood for the ruling NRM party, and the key represented the FDC party and the opposition public. It should be noted that these symbols as employed in the chorus of the song were not simply performed out of excitement. As I will demonstrate, their repetitive performance at the various rallies I attended rendered them performative symbols, which were bound up with the 2016 election. Mulwana's "Toka kwa Barabara" and its performative practices were further exemplified during Besigye's rally at Namungoona, a suburb of Kampala, discussed in the following section.

5.1.2 The "Hammer" Comes to Namungoona

On December 14, 2015, Besigye and his team held a campaign rally at a soccer field located in Namungoona, a suburb of Kampala. Namungona is a residential suburb to many members of the opposition public who believe that Uganda is overdue for a change in leadership. Early that morning, a truck playing loud music drove around the Namungoona neighborhood announcing Besigye's rally in the area later that afternoon. Young boys and girls as well as adults ran from all corners of the neighborhood towards the source of the music. On the truck, there were six young female dancers, dressed in provocative costumes that revealed their bellies, thighs, and legs. Moreover, their choreography was sexually provocative as they danced to

various local songs. Although the music was tempting enough for one to wonder what was going on, the provocative dancing bodies turned the rally into a spectacle.

Meanwhile, as the dancers performed to recordings of *luga flow* (a localized version of American hip-hop sung in Luganda), and Afrobeat songs that were blasting through the speakers of the truck, the deejey juxtaposed spoken utterances loaded with political references to the two main candidates, Besigye and Museveni. "Come all in big numbers and bear witness to the *hammer* that will unseat the *cotter pin*," the Deejah announced." The analogy of the "hammer" was employed to refer to Besigye, with the ability to unseat the incumbent, president Museveni. And the "cotter pin" mainly referred to the incumbent's stubbornness for refusing to hand over power during the previous thirty years.

For me and many others, it was not the first time I had heard the "hammer and cotter pin" symbols. They had been employed during the 2006 and 2011 presidential elections during which the "hammer" was employed to refer to Besigye's intention of breaking Museveni's regime apart, while the "cotter pin" (a metal that fastens parts together), was employed to refer to Museveni's intention of clinging to power.

Later in the afternoon, at about 4PM, the Namungoona grounds were filled with an overwhelming number of supporters from Namungoona and its neighboring suburbs of Kampala. Before Besigye's arrival, some up-and-coming musicians took turns performing on the raised stage. Even though rain was threatening to fall, the people in the open space of the soccer field stayed put. People were pushing me from multiple sides and shoving themselves to the front. The rather unruly gathering was uncontrollable even in the presence of the police. The rather excited gathering of people constituted a variety of activities including dancing, shouting, screaming, pushing, and jumping. And when Besigye arrived, the people became even more excited.

The deejeey immediately switched to "Toka kwa Barabara," prompting Mulwana to take the stage. Grabbing the microphone from another musician, Mulwana entered the stage with a contemporary youthful swagger, and sung his song as Besigye flashed the 2-finger peace sign and danced his way to his seat on the raised stage. This iteration of "Toka kwa Barabara" was different from the first time it had been played. This time around, the heightened involvement by the people solidified the song's place during Besigye's campaign for president. For instance, while dancing to the groove, supporters responded to the song's calls with a cheerful affirmative expression, "eh!" Others employed bodily gestures which not only articulated the song's message, but also its position within the political logic that shaped Besigye's public of opposition.

With their palms facing downward, supporters spread their fingers outward, then folded them inward whenever they sang along to the two phrases of the song's chorus: "Toka kwa Barabara" (clear the way) and "towa basi yako" (remove your bus). In its yellow appearance, which is the official color of the ruling NRM party, the bus is a recruiting symbol. In the song, Besigye supporters gestured for the removal of the bus to give way to Besigye who holds the blue key, the symbol of the FDC party. The blue key, according to Keija, the Assistant Secretary General of FDC, symbolizes an opening device to a new political era.

The repetition of such gestures among others at various campaign rallies, albeit in various renditions, not only rendered them performative, but also central to the logic of Besigye's campaign design. Moreover, these performative gestures were equally central in shaping the opposition public during the 2016 elections. In the section that follows, I offer a critical analysis of how "Toka kwa Barabara" became an important template that shaped political perceptions and the logic of opposition in the country. I discuss how the multiple constructions of meanings and

170

performance of symbols of the songs enhanced participation among Besigye's opposition public. In turn, the song and its listeners' response constitute a musical practice that rendered music and politics inseparable in Uganda's public sphere.

5.2 "Toka kwa Barabara"

Composed in E major, "Toka kwa Barabara" has an intro, three verses (each separated by a chorus) as well as a reiteration of the first verse before the final chorus that leads to the end of the song. Reiteration in this case serves as a strategy of emphasizing Mulwana's disappointment in Uganda's unstable economy.

The song is sung in a combination of languages including *Kiswahili*, English, Luganda, and *Runyankore-Rukiga* (spoken by people of western Uganda). In particular, the first verse is sung in *Kiswahili,* the second in *Runyankore-Rukiga*, and the third in Luganda. In contrast to most Ugandan popular songs that last between 3 to 4 minutes, "Toka kwa Barabara" is 5 minutes and 11 seconds.

Figure 22 is a textual translation of "Toka kwa Barabara" in English. I use an upper-case letter C to denote a "call" phrase, and an upper-case letter R to denote a "response" phrase. It should be noted that verses 2 and 3 are structured differently, the former characterized by *runyankore-rukiga* calls and English responses, and the latter, with a mixture of *Kiswahili* and Luganda calls and responses. Because responses in verse 2 are not translations but rather phrases sung in English, they are not italicized as they are in verses 1 and 3.

Introductory Utterances

Kila mutu analia	*Everyone is lamenting*
Anaijja analia	*He or she comes in tears*
Songa mbele	*Move on*
Besigye songa	*Besigye move on*
Songa mbele	*Move on*

Chorus (sung twice)

(C): Toka kwa barabara: (R): eh	*Clear the way*: (R): yes
(C): Besigye ameingia: (R): eh	Besigye has come: (R): yes
(C): Towa bus yako; Tunataka kifunguwo: (R): eh	Remove your bus; we want the key: (R): yes

Verse 1

Miaka ishirini natano, bei ya vitu na panda sana.	*For 25 years, prices of commodities are high.*
Miaka ishirini natano,watu analia wu masikini.	*For 25 years, the poor are lamenting.*
Miaka ishirini natano, wali makyo analia.	*For 25 years, the farmers are lamenting.*
Miaka ishirini natano, mwalimu wa analia.	*For 25 years, the teachers are lamenting.*
Miaka ishirini natano, madaktari wanalia.	*For 25 years, the doctor are lamenting.*

Verse 2

(C): Dokitari ije otuyambe, enkuuto zifire [*Dr., come and help us, roads are in shambles*]	(R): Dr., we need a change to save our future
(C): Dokitari ije tuyambe, mashomero gafiire [*Dr., come and help us, schools are in shambles*]	(R): Dr., we need a change to save our future
(C): Dokitari ije otuyambe, amarwariro gafiire [*Dr., come and help us, hospitals are in shambles*]	(R): Dr., we need a change to save our future
(C): Dokitari ije otuyambe, abahingi ni barira [*Dr., come and help us, farmers are lamenting*]	(R): Dr., we need a change to save our future
(C): Dokitari ije otuyambe, abashawo ni barira [*Dr., come and help us, doctors are lamenting*]	(R): Dr., we need a change to save our future
(C): Dokitari ije otuyambe, abashomesa nibarira [*Dr., come and help us, teachers are lamenting*]	(R): Dr., we need a change to save our future
(C): Dokitari ije otuyambe, no kyengi etuligize [*Dr., come and help, we are tired of No Change*]	(R): Dr., we need a change to save our future

Verse 3

(C): Dokitari ije otuyambe, obubbi bususe [*Dr., come and help us, theft is rampant*]	(R): Dakitari jangu otuyambe otuwonye ababbi [*Dr., come and save us from the thieves*]
(C): Dokitari Jangu otuyambe, enguzi esuse [*Dr., come and help us, corruption is rampant*]	(R): Dakitari jangu otutaase otereze e gwanga [*Dr., come and restore order in the country*]
(C): Elyo eddagala mu malwaliro teliriyo; jangu otuyambe [*Hospitals lack medicine, come and help us*]	(R): Dakitari jangu otutaase otereze e gwanga [*Dr., come and restore order in the country*]
(C): Kati laba enguudo ezaali enungi, zona zaafa dda [*Look the roads that were once nice, are now all faded*]	(R): Dakitari ye yekka emutuufu anatuwonya e binnya [*Dr., is the only one that will save us from potholes*]
(C): Dokitari jangu otuyambe, obubbi bususse [*Dr., come and help u,: theft is rampant*]	(R): Dakitari jangu otuyambe otuwonye ababbi [*Dr. come and save us from the thieves*]
(C): Dokitari jangu otuyambe, eby'obulimi bifudde [*Dr., come and help us, our agriculture is dead*]	(R): Dokitari ye yekka omutuufu anatereza e ggwanga *Dr., is the one who will put the country back to shape*

Reiteration (before the final chorus)

Miaka ishirini natano, bei ya vitu na panda sana	*For 25 years, prices of commodities are high*
Miaka ishirini natano,watu analia wu masikini	*For 25 years, the poor are lamenting*
Miaka ishirini natano, wali makyo analia	*For 25 years, the farmers are lamenting*
Miaka ishirini natano, mwalimu wa analia	*For 25 years, the teachers are lamenting*
Miaka ishirini natano, madaktari wanalia	*For 25 years, the doctors are lamenting*

Final utterance

Change is coming; we need a better life

Figure 22: The text of "Toka kwa Barabara" (translation by Charles Lwanga)

"Toka kwa Barabara" is introduced by a call-response dialogue between Midi instruments and vocals (see figure 23); while the Midi part is the "call," the vocal part is the "response." This call-response structure is also employed in the second and third verses, as well as the chorus. In particular, the opening instrumental section emphasizes the tonic chord (with triplets), the repetition of which arouses a sense of tension and thus, calls the listener to attention.

While the opening instrumental section begins on a strong beat, the *Kiswahili* utterance: "kila muntu analia" (everyone is lamenting), which shortly follows at the end of the third beat, begins on a weak beat (figure 23). This does not diminish the importance of the uttered phrase since its tone and meaning cannot be mistaken for a mere joke or entertainment. The temporary ending of the opening instrumental section gives way to the spoken utterance as an imperative in the song.

Figure 23: Opening instrumental/vocal utterance

Dialogue between the opening instrumental section and utterance happens during the first four beats of the song, preparing the arrival of a foregrounded guitar melody that recalls Congolese *soukous*, a music and dance genre which not only foregrounds syncopated rhythms in fast tempo, but also juxtaposes long episodes of dance. Several of Besigye's supporters belong to an older generation whose night parties were characterized by sounds of Congolese dance music, which in the 1970s and 80s was commonly referred to as *Lingala* (pers. comm., Muwonge. November 2015). Because of its danceable groove that made it easy for supporters to express themselves, as well as its nostalgic feel among a particular age group, I contend that the *soukous*

174

groove became central to the way members of the opposition public experienced Mulwana's "Toka kwa Barabara" whenever it was played during and after the 2016 campaigns. And to the older generation, the groove was central to the way they imagined themselves within contemporary Ugandan politics and modes of participation.

The opening vocal utterance, which is characterized by an interplay of mid and low pitch ranges, sets the ground for lamenting about the social and economic constraints in Uganda. In fact, all three verses of the song are characterized by laments, which represent the people's response to their day-to-day social constraints. In this context, these laments and their attending emotional features (such as sadness, anger, and desperation) imply the desire for change in leadership. As such, laments are employed as the basis for legitimizing Besigye's candidature. This is because during 2016, the majority of the opposition public believed that Besigye represented a new breed of leaders who would bring about change in Uganda. The terms and conditions of implementing the desired change in the country are articulated in the chorus of the song, as described in the following section.

5.2.1 The Chorus of "Toka kwa Barabara"

Introduced with a pickup beat, the chorus of "Toka kwa Barabara" is call-response, with a duration of sixteen quarter-note beats (figure 24). It has two phrases. Part of what shapes its character is the opening sub-mediant (c#), whose instability and thus, tendency to resolve downward by a whole step, establishes the dominant (B) as a springboard on which an interplay between C# as well as A and E (in the response) takes place. A common interval in the two call phrases of the chorus is the rising/falling major second (figure 24). Additionally, while the first

175

phrase of the chorus is defined by two interjections of responses, the second has one response which smoothly resolves the call on the tonic (E).

Figure 24: Call-response dialogue in the chorus

The segmented call-phrase is an invitation to the people to clear the way for Besigye to come forth. Accordingly, the common people's desire for Besigye is emphasized in the second call-phrase, which draws on the symbolism of a "bus" (for the ruling NRM party) and the "key" (for Besigye's FDC party). Since the bus represents the ruling NRM government, the desire for the key is a clear message that the common people want change. And as such, Mulwana justifies the people's desire in the verses of the song, whose discussion I now turn to.

5.2.2 The Verses of "Toka kwa Barabara"

The first verse, unlike the second and third, is narrative in structure, as opposed to call-response. It has five equal phrases, each with eight quarter-note beats. Also, each phrase is characterized by an anacrusic beginning and ending. Melodically, each of the five phrases of the verse begins on a sub-mediant tone and maintains motion around the dominant and subdominant, before cadencing a step lower from the subdominant to the mediant (as shown in figure 25). Meanwhile, the vocal melody is supported by background instruments, whose harmonies (V-IV; V-I) are outlined by the bass.

176
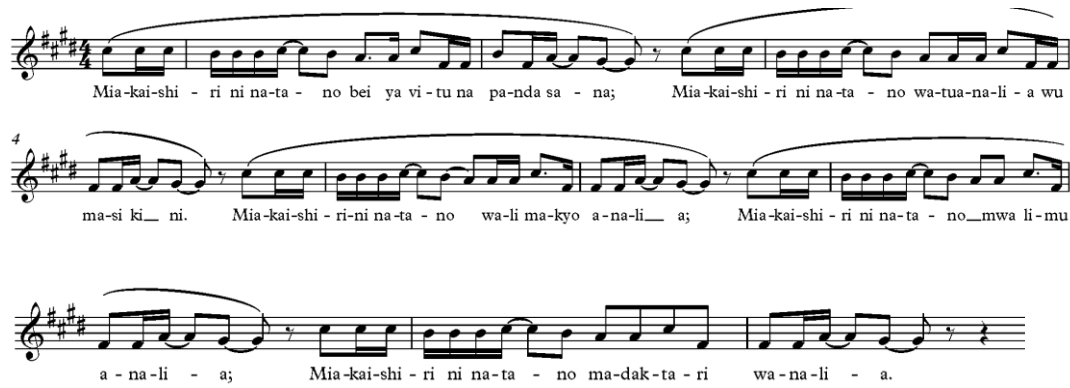
Figure 25: Opening phrase of verse one

Each of the five phrases of the first verse is structured around a similar melodic idea upon which text is juxtaposed. As demonstrated in figure 25, the simplicity of the melody enhances its recollection and the clarity of the message. In the verse, Mulwana cites examples of social constraints that have in the past disenfranchised the common people. The phrase "miaka ishirini na tano" (twenty-five years) is employed at the beginning of each of the five phrases of the verse to refer to the longevity of Museveni's governance and its failure to address the concerns of the common people. Mulwana claims that the ever-escalating prices of commodities, as well as the poor welfare of farmers, teachers, and medical doctors are unbearable.

The second and third verses are similar in terms of melodic and textual ideas. However, they have some distinguishing features as well. For instance, while both verses predominantly start on a strong beat, this characteristic gesture is temporarily interrupted by the anacrusic opening of the fourth phrase of the third verse. Also, while the second verse has seven phrases, the third has six. And while Mulwana employs *Runyankore-Rukiga* in the call phrases and English in the response phrases of the second verse, he combines *Runyankore-Rukiga* and Luganda in the call phrases of the third verse, and only Luganda in the response phrases.

177

In both the second and third verses of "Toka kwa Barabara," Mulwana calls Besigye to come forth and save the people from the poor roads, the poor education system, poor health care, the poor agricultural system, rampant theft of public funds, corruption, and poor remuneration of teachers and medical doctors. This call is reaffirmed in the responses, representing how the people are yearning for a new leader to save them from the social hardships they are facing under Museveni's rule.

Each of the five phrases of the section that reiterates before the song ends are eight quarter-note beats, in some instances, including an eighth-note rest and with the same text as was the case in the first verse (figure 26). Moreover, as was with the first verse, the phrases of the reiterating section begin and end on a weak beat as illustrated in figure 26.

Figure 26: First phrase of the reiterated section

In the following section, I discuss the symbols and their meanings in the music video and how they were employed during the 2016 campaigns to celebrate Besigye's candidature.

5.2.3 On Images and Symbolism in "Toka kwa Barabara"

The music video of "Toka kwa Barabara" was made by Uganda Live TV, an online media institution, in collaboration with Mulwana. In the music video, Mulwana employs a variety of images and symbolism to articulate his message. The discussion that follows emerges from my fieldwork experience, which not only entailed watching and listening to the live

performance of Mulwana's song along with its recorded track, but also the active participation of the people. Participation of the public in this case took on several forms, including the performance of symbolic gestures from the music video, dancing to the song as a celebration of Besigye's candidature, as well as talking about the song, "Toka kwa Barabara" in relation to the politics of campaigns.

My experience with the opposition public was challenging in several ways. Besigye's campaign events were very distracting due to the wide variety of media occurring simultaneously: music, theatrical performance, campaign speeches, and conversations became entangled in a collage of interactions, calling for a constant shift of attention. This experience was non-linear, and made it hard for me to focus on a single aspect from beginning to end. Based on this sense of multiple media and non-linearity, I will describe (1) my experience watching Mulwana's music video, (2) a live performance alongside a recording, and (3) the presence of a public whose participants engendered a discourse of opposition politics. It is my contention that "Toka kwa Barabara" provided a platform on which intimate relations were forged, acquaintances negotiated, and the shaping of Besgiye's opposition public took place. By this argument, I therefore demonstrate that symbolic material has the potential of forging publics in various social contexts, including political campaigns.

At the beginning of the music video when Mulwana performs the opening utterance, he is dressed in a white shirt and pants, like that of Uganda's traffic police officers. In the background are images of similarly dressed men holding pistols, one in each hand. But unlike Mulwana whom we can easily identify, the identities of the images in the background remain concealed as white shadows. After a short duration, we get a brief glance at one of Besigye's campaign rallies,

179

where supporters sweep the roads, dance, flash the FDC unity and peace figure-gesture, and imitate the FDC-key symbol, as ways of welcoming Besigye.

The aforementioned description of events constitutes the opening montage of the music video, which at first glance, seems confusing because of the overwhelming and fast-paced amount of information presented to the spectator. At the same time, most of these images contain hidden messages, as my interlocutors confirmed, that are situated in the interplay of images that may seem otherwise unrelated. However, following a critical analysis of the music video, as well as conversations with my interlocutors, I was able to unveil some of the veiled meanings behind the interplay of images and symbolism in "Toka kwa Barabara."

My interlocutors noted that the symbolism behind Mulwana's traffic costume and guns form some of the fundamental moments in the video. Some wondered why Mulwana employed such a costume, despite not holding a gun (as did the men in the background). Others wondered whether Besigye could utilize a military maneuver to take over power from Museveni. In trying to solve the puzzle of the music video, another interlocutor took our conversation a step further when she resorted to analyzing the montage as a whole, rather than focusing on its individual components.

Sheba Kanyunyuzi, a strong supporter of the opposition whom I met during Besigye's rally at Namungoona stated: "Since Mulwana was mobilizing support for Besigye's presidential candidature, it was fitting for him to look similar to a traffic officer who controls traffic and as such, makes sure that roads are clear of any obstruction" (pers. comm., Kanynyuzi. December 14, 2015). A closer analysis of Kanyunyuzi's statement foregrounds the traffic officer as well as the roads and their users as an analogy of the power dynamic between those who have power, and those who lack power. After all, it is common knowledge that roads and road-users are in

180

constant surveillance by traffic officers. As such, by using a traffic costume, Mulwana assumes

power in the context of popular song and politics, an avenue he uses to call upon the people's

support for Besigye to lead the country.

On the shadows of traffic police officers holding pistols, Samuel Mutumba, also an

opposition supporter stated: "The fact that images of men holding guns are not only positioned

behind Mulwana who is not holding a gun, but also moving across the screen, is a sign that we

are yet to overcome the rule of the gun, which has shaped Museveni's NRM regime" (pers.

comm., Mutumba. December 14, 2015). For Mutumba, the act of sliding off the screen meant

doing away with regimes of guns. This does not mean that the country does not need traffic

officers; of course, it does need them, and badly so, but guns should not be the most prominent

part of a government regime.

In a different interpretation, another interlocuter who preferred anonymity noted: "the

juxtaposition of Mulwana against the shadows of men holding guns calls to mind two scenarios.

First, that of Mulwana without a gun as a peaceful officer who does his work without threatening

the people, and second, the shadows of men whose gesture of holding guns seems to articulate a

message of violence. These scenarios speak to the power divide between those people with guns

and others without" (anonymous, pers. comm., December 14, 2015). In this case, I conceive of

the men with guns being representative of Museveni's repressive apparatus which has in the past

been deployed to scare off voters during elections. I also conceive of Mulwana's traffic police

uniform and the lack of a gun as representative of Besigye, whom despite having served as

senior officer at the rank of colonel until 2001, and possibly with the network to mobilize a

rebellion against Museveni, has decided to vie for political office peacefully. This way, the

fading images of men with guns denotes the departure of violence while Mulwana's image ushers in a peaceful regime that is free from violence.

In the introduction, Mulwana calls upon Besigye to "come forth" as a president with fresh ideas for transforming the country. This utterance leads into the chorus, which emphasizes making way for Besigye's coming, while foregrounding two political symbols (the bus and the key). In the chorus section of the music video, Mulwana employs similar hand gestures to those of supporters at the Najjanankumbi launch the Namungoona rally discussed above.

To drive the message home, Mulwana, in the second verse of the music video, incorporates selected images alongside each phrase. For instance, while singing about the poor condition of roads, we see a mini-van struggling to go over a deep pothole. For the phrase that reiterates the poor state of schools, we are shown a rural classroom built of wood and a grass roof top, but without windows or doors, leaving one to imagine what could happen to the people occupying such a classroom if it rained or the wind was strong enough to blow the entire structure off the ground. These are common occurrences in Uganda.

A common technique used in the video is an amalgamation of two images. The music video (01:18 and 01:40) juxtaposes a crowd of supporters at Besigye's rally and an overcrowded and dirty hospital. This gives the spectator an idea about the sorry state of the health care system, an issue in addition to education and the welfare of teachers and health workers, that is at the forefront of the message of the song. Also, an image of a malnourished child is shown alongside the text that describes a farmer's woes. This creates the impression that the malnourished child belongs to the group of farmers who are repressed by Uganda's poor economy.

As noted earlier, the third verse is melodically similar to the second, except that it is stripped of one phrase, leaving it with six phrases in contrast to the seven phrases in the second

182

verse. In its contracted version of the second verse, Mulwana employs Luganda, which is also his first language, calling upon Besigye to intervene in the case of rampant theft of public funds. He also mentions the lack of medicine in hospitals as well as the bad roads that tend to hinder transportation and the country's economy. Before the verse ends, we are reminded of the rampant theft of public funds as well as the economic constraints against Uganda's farmers. But to convince people that Besigye is the best alternative to Museveni, Mulwana creatively employs multiple languages in his song, some of which are characterized by linguistic distortions. In the following section, I discuss some of the linguistic distortions in the text of "Toka kwa Barabara" and their subsequent effects among the opposition public.

5.2.4 On Linguistic Distortions

Mulwana's gesture of employing multiple languages in "Toka kwa Barabara" comes with linguistic inaccuracies not only in intonation and the pronunciation of some words and phrases, but also with syntactical errors. This effort, according to my interlocutors, was more of an attempt to negotiate a sense of ethnic inclusion, rather than an intentional move of distorting grammar for any other hidden reason. For instance, in the opening *Kiswahili* utterance, Mulwana employs the statement: "*anaija* analia" to mean that everyone comes in tears. However, the correct grammatical phrasing is "anakuja analia." Further, in the opening phrase of the first verse, Mulwana calls attention to the rise in the prices of commodities over a period of twenty-five years: "bei ya vitu *ne panda* sana." But the words *ne panda* do not fit the grammatical syntax of Kiswahili. Rather, the word *imepanda* is correct, given the context in question. He uses the "wrong" text because it correlates better with the rhythm and groove of the song, and because he is trying to reach a wider audience.

183

Further, in the first verse, the poor are lamenting about the desperate social conditions of Uganda during the last twenty-five years. This message is foregrounded in the phrase: "miaka ishiri na tano *watu analia wu maskini*" (for twenty-five years the poor are lamenting). However, the phrase *watu analia wu maskini* is grammatically incorrect. It would take a Swahili speaker some time to figure that Mulwana meant "maskini wanalia" (the poor are lamenting). In the third phrase of the first verse, also, Mulwana wrongly refers to farmers as "wali makyo," instead of *walimao*. And finally, Mulwana, instead of employing the adjective *wanalia* to refer to teachers, instead applies a singular adjective "analia" because he is not familiar with the grammatical structure of the language.

Given the multiple ethnicities and languages in Uganda, there are a multitude of regional ways to pronounce the same word. Given that Mulwana is a *Muganda* who can hear and speak some western Uganda languages, it is not surprising that he confused some Rukiga words for Runyankore and vice versa, given their resemblance. And while he was by no means fluent in Kiswahili, Mulwana's effort in employing a mixture of languages was meant to appeal to a regional audience.

Mulwana's linguistic distortions, as I have discussed thus far, were relevant to the context in which the song was composed. Mulwana was not fluent in all four languages employed in the song. Rather, his attempt to engage multilingually, articulated one of Besigye's core values in politics: uniting the many ethnic groups of Uganda. One interlocutor, Harold Kaija, confirmed this position noting that "Toka kwa Barabara" embodied the ideology of the FDC party. "Besides being danceable, the song speaks to a number of people through its multi-lingual approach" (pers., comm., Kaija. November 27, 2015). As such, voters would appreciate his attempt at speaking those languages, even if he was not fluent in most of them.

184

By emphasizing the importance of multilingualism, Kaija reiterated FDC's ideology of building "one Uganda, one people," a slogan that characterized Besigye's candidacy. It cannot be concluded that "Toka kwa Barabara" realized this goal, given the opposition presidential candidates that stood against Museveni. However, I argue that the song provided an arena through which unity among people of diverse ethnicities was celebrated. In the next section, I explore some of the multiple meanings that were constructed by members of the opposition public that I interviewed.

5.3 On the Multiple Interpretations of "Toka kwa Barabara"

While my interpretations stem from my encounters with Besigye's public of opposition, my interlocutors also foregrounded other aspects of the song. For instance, some supporters claimed that "Toka kwa Barabara" reminded them of the social constraints they face on a daily basis. They alleged that these social constraints were the result of Museveni's longevity in power.

One of my interlocutors, Peter Ogwang noted, "history tends to position *Kiswahili* within a synonymous lineage with militaristic governance." Kiswahili has always been the official language of the military. Therefore, Mulwana's use of Kiswahili is a strategic choice to signify the language of military leaders.

In the video, Mulwana and the crowds of people gesture the departure of Museveni and the arrival of Besigye, in whom "the future of many lies" (pers. comm., Andrew Kibbo, December 4, 2017). But the crowds of people are not simply performing for the camera. They are expressing shared emotions, love, and support for Besigye. "Toka kwa Barabara" gave them

a discursive avenue for creating a sense of unity through shared emotions and aspirations for change.

During one FDC party rally at Nakulabye, a suburb of Kampala, Jennifer Mutesi, a businesswoman said, "when I listen to 'Toka Kwa Barabara', I recall my own frustration with Museveni's unfulfilled promises. It is now 30 years since he promised more jobs. Yet many college graduates have remained unemployed over time" (pers. comm., Mutesi. December 2017). At the same rally, Andrew Kibbo, a taxi driver in Kampala said that: "whenever I listen to 'Toka kwa Barabara' I find consolation in its message. It excites me with hope for change in power" (pers. comm., Kibbo. December 2017). And Sarah Atukwenda, a food vendor at Nakulabye said: "'Toka Kwa Barabara' gave me an opportunity to meet various people with whom we share a history of struggle in Uganda" (pers. comm., Atukwenda. December 2017). These multiple ways of responding to "Toka Kwa Barabara" within multiple political contexts call attention to the potential of music in assembling a performative culture of opposition in Uganda's politics.

Bennet (1999) and Halfacree (1999) have argued that "countercultural action is created by temporary coalitions whose goals are not so much to usurp institutional power but rather to expose it and expressively offer an alternative through lived experience" (quoted in Steinburg 2004: 5). By employing a similar logic, Mulwana's message simultaneously discredits Museveni and his ruling NRM party while justifying Besigye's political significance. Mulwana does not suggest taking over power from Museveni by force, but rather, laying the foundation for change through the power of the vote. In Mulwana's song, the reasons for a change in leadership stem from the poor conditions of roads, poverty, the poor health care system, unemployment, the sky-rocketing cost of living, the poor remuneration of civil servants (especially teachers and medical workers), as well as rampant corruption. These were the reasons behind Besigye's campaign in

186

the 2016 presidential election, and the support he garnered from the opposition public, which identified itself with the message in Mulwana's song.

According to the Uganda Electoral Commission, Museveni won the 2016 presidential race with 60.6%, followed by Besigye with 35.6%. Mbabazi was third with 1.39% and the rest of the candidates scored gathered less than 1% of the vote. Compared to the 2011 elections, there was a decline in the support for Museveni by about 7.7%, with an increase in Besigye's support by about 9.6 %. As in previous elections (2001, 2006 and 2011), the 2016 elections were allegedly characterized by vote rigging, violence, intimidation by the police and UPDF soldiers, as well as the impediment of free association, assemblage, and the freedom of expression that are guaranteed by the 1995 constitution of Uganda. As a result of these allegations, on May 11, 2016, Besigye secretly swore himself in as president of Uganda, a day before Museveni was sworn in. Besigye envisioned a parallel government that would run alongside that of Museveni's. However, it did not come to pass because continued surveillance of his activities impeded him from moving around the country freely. Moreover, surveillance by the state was illegal.

In this chapter, I have discussed how Mulwana's "Toka kwa Barabara" assumed political relevance and became embedded in the political culture of an emerging public of opposition. By employing the symbols extracted from the song in the context of campaign rallies, "Toka kwa Barabara" became a template of performative culture that shaped the politics of Uganda. This culture foregrounds music in people's daily political struggles, and musicians as central actors in elections.

Grossberg has suggested that music's power is primarily at the affective level in the ways in which it provides what he terms "mattering maps," which tell people how to generate and use energy, how to navigate their way through various moods and passions, and how to live with

emotional and ideological histories" (Grossberg 1992: 82; see also Street 1997: 166). In a similar way, the multiple ways that Besigye's public of supporters articulated their allegiances created simultaneous planes of "mattering maps" that have assumed significance in the ways that music and the role of musicians impact their ideas and behavior.

Popular music became an important fabric of the political culture during and after the 2016 presidential elections in Uganda. In particular, Mulwana's song, "Toka kwa Barabara" provided a site for the negotiation of social unity, historical memories, and the assembling of new alliances among the opposition public. As Kaija, the Assistant Secretary General of the FDC party noted, the multi-lingual aspect of the song provided a symbolic entry into FDC's important value of unity within diversity. Such musical symbols provided an entry point for the active participation of musicians in politics. The 2016 election signaled a shift in political allegiance from Besigye to Bobi Wine, a popular music star, as discussed in the next chapter.

6.0 "WE'RE CRYING FOR FREEDOM": BOBI WINE, "PEOPLE-POWER," AND SOUNDS OF CHANGE IN UGANDA

This chapter examines the interplay of popular music and politics in the formation of "people power," an emerging counter-public of youth named after the political slogan, "people power, our power." Bobi Wine introduced the slogan in 2017 during his campaign to become Member of Parliament for the Kyaddondo East Constituency, an endeavor that culminated in a historic victory. Since then, Wine's slogan has been employed as an inclusive strategy, whose roots are traced in chapter one, clause 1(i) of Uganda's 1995 constitution, which states that: "All power belongs to the people who shall exercise their sovereignty in accordance with [the] Constitution."

Most people were ignorant about their potential in determining the political direction of their country until Bobi Wine capitalized upon an important constitutional clause to articulate his political ideology. The slogan, "people power, our power," which consequently became Wine's political signature, not only reawakened a sense of self-consciousness among the common people, but also provided the foundation for an emerging social movement. Shortly thereafter, Bobi Wine's campaign became known as the "people-power" movement.

In this dissertation, I refer to the emerging "people-power" movement as a public, to foreground its transformative political influence among Ugandans and sympathizers living in the diaspora. By framing this movement of youth as a public, I engage with its complexity, which uses technology to move across physical places, as well as virtual or imaginary spaces. Although youth constitute the majority of "people power" supporters, the collective attracts members of the older generation as well.

The term youth is very fluid, since it lacks a standard of application across geographic locations. For instance, since 2007, the United Nations has continued to define youth as young people between the ages of 14 and 25 (UN: 2007). This definition of young people has also been adopted by science scholars such as John Santelli et. al. (2013); Fred Ssewamala et. al (2010); Jolly Beyeza-Keshesya et. al (2011); and Yashodhara Rana et. al. (2015) among others who work on HIV-AIDS among Uganda's youth. Also, in the State of Uganda Population Report of 2018, the state of Uganda defines youth as young people between ages 18 and 30.

Moreover, during my fieldwork, I discovered that the age of youth varies depending on place, as well as multiple social and economic factors. For instance, speaking from a position of authority, as the *Kattikiro* (prime minister) of the monkey clan in Buganda, Andrew Kaggwa explained that while a 25-year-old man may be categorized as a youth, he may not be considered so if he is married and has children, whom he can take care of, independent of his parents or immediate family. Also, a person who is beyond 35 years of age but still dependent on his or her parents may still be considered a youth, which further problematizes the meaning of the term (pers. comm., Kaggwa. November 1, 2015). For my dissertation, however, I draw on my interlocutors' understanding of the term "youth" to mean young people between ages 18 and 35, as commonly employed in Uganda, and most particularly, in Kampala, a region within the kingdom of Buganda, where my fieldwork was conducted.

According to Beatrice Daumerie and Elizabeth Madsen, young people below the age of 30 constituted about 77% of Uganda's population in a report published in 2010 (Daumerie and Madsen 2010). In their report, Daumerie and Madsen noted that given the high fertility rate among Uganda's women, the country would experience an annual population growth of about 3.2 %. The implication of this annual growth in population is that Uganda would not only

continue to experience population growth in general, but also a growth in the demography of youth below the age of 30 for many years to come.

Translated into political participation, this means that Uganda's youth have a high stake in the vote. Although many have not participated before, Bobi Wine has invested a lot of work in changing the mindset of young people to become registered voters so that they can participate in the 2021 general elections. In fact, the *kiganda* term*, mwebeleremu* (get involved), is a slogan that Bobi Wine employs to encourage young people over the age of 18 to become registered voters. As such, the rising popularity of the "people-power" public of youth has not only destabilized the opposition public, but has also posed a significant threat to Museveni and his ruling NRM party.

In this chapter, I draw on Street, Hague and Savigny's (2007) framework of understanding political participation not only through the link between music and politics, but also through the lens of organization, legitimization, and performance, to present data from fieldwork in Uganda's capital, Kampala. I examine the sociopolitical circumstances that gave rise to Wine's song, "Freedom" and the consequential emergence of the "people-power" public of youth. I provide a textual, sonic, as well as formal/structural analysis to demonstrate how the song "Freedom" represents the interests of common people. In so doing, I demonstrate how the song has helped to shape an emerging counter-public of youth, whose legitimacy was demonstrated when Wine spearheaded four different bi-elections in Uganda that culminated in victory. During these bi-elections, the song "Freedom" was employed as a mechanism of mobilization. Throughout the chapter, I argue that the song "Freedom" was organized, legitimized, and performed in ways that enhanced participation among the opposition faction, and as a result, stimulated the rise of the "people-power" public of youth.

6.1 The Sociopolitical Circumstances of "Freedom"

During the summer of 2017, I travelled back to Uganda to follow up with some of my interlocutors whom I had not seen since 2016. In Kampala, Bobi Wine was campaigning as an independent candidate to become the next Member of Parliament (MP) for the Kyaddondo East constituency. This parliamentary seat had fallen vacant following the High court's nullification of FDC's Apollo Kantinti, due to election malpractice by the electoral commission. With five candidates running for the seat, discourse around the country and in social media centered on Wine's candidacy. While some doubted how "omubanda wa kabaka" (the Rastafarian of the king [of Buganda]), as Wine fondly calls himself, would ever become an MP, others tried to smear Wine's candidature by calling him a "muyaaye" (a street gang star and idler) from the ghetto, who illegally consumes marijuana.

According to Baker Lule, the Kyaddondo East parliamentary bi-election seemed the toughest of all bi-elections due to the "Buganda factor," among others at play (Lule 2017).[46] In the race, Wine and another independent candidate, Muwanda Nkunyingi, were both from the Buganda region. Yet, according to Lule, Bobi Wine had fought a complicated battle over land with the Buganda kingdom, which resulted in the demolition of Wine's newly-constructed *One Love* beach parking lot. Wine expressed disappointment in Buganda for having demolished his property. So, when he presented himself as a candidate, speculation pointed to Wine's lack of support from Buganda, which has a high stake in the constituency. However, this was not the

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[46] For the full article, see: Baker Lule, "Mao: Opposition Could lose Kyaddondo East," *The Observer,* June 5, 2017. https://observer.ug/news/headlines/53213-mao-opposition-could-lose-kyadondo-east-seat (accessed May 27, 2020).

case. In fact, for many youth within the region, Wine's candidacy was welcomed as an opportunity for strong and fair representation in parliament, by one of their very own.

Throughout his campaign, Wine was supported by several popular musicians, including Dr. Hilderman, Ronald Mayinja, and Nubia Li, who drew on their musical talents to mobilize supporters for their fellow musician. During the campaigns, Wine controlled an entourage of vehicles, including a truck with a music system that blasted Wine's songs in the streets. During the drives to various venues, Wine's song "Bikwase Kyagulanyi" (Hand Them to Kyagulanyi) was played to mobilize people to support Wine as their representative in Uganda's tenth parliament. The fleet of vehicles also included musicians who performed during the drives and at campaign venues for their fans and supporters. Inasmuch as it was a race for political office, Wine's campaign was highly musical in nature, attracting long-time fans who became instrumental in voting Wine into political office. As I will argue, music became intertwined with politics by conveying a sense of self-hood, and as such, enhancing a new wave of supporters who believe in Wine as a new kind of leader among a younger generation.

In a massive historic victory, Wine garnered 77.7% of the vote, beating the ruling NRM's William Sebalu, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) candidate Apollo Kantini, as well as two independent candidates, Muwanda Nkunyingi and Sowedi Kayongo. Most political analysts attributed Wine's victory to his well-articulated vision (of fighting for the common people), a message that was already embedded in many of his popular songs. For the youth and opposition political parties, Wine's victory sent a strong message to president Museveni and his ruling NRM party that the people need change. Sworn in on July 11, 2017, Wine embarked on his new political career effective immediately, even though the days ahead of him would unfold into a series of violent, tense, and complicated scenarios.

In parliament, Wine was welcomed by the introduction of a bill ("Magezi") that would keep Museveni in power for life. On September 27, 2017, the opposing members of parliament (including a few from the ruling NRM party) moved for a motion to block the Magezi bill. They also urged the speaker, Rebecca Kadaga, to discipline Ronald Kibuule, a state minister for Water Resources, who had been suspected of smuggling a gun into parliament. Through parliamentary ruling, however, speaker Kadaga reluctantly endorsed Magezi's plan, causing chaos that entailed an exchange of verbal insults and physical blows. Some members of parliament threw chairs at each other, prompting speaker Kadaga to call upon the Sergeant at Arms to intervene. The Sergeant at Arms also called for reinforcement from the parliamentary police.

Surprisingly, soldiers from the Special Force Command (SFC) unit that protects the president, while dressed in casual suits, also stormed parliament and forcefully threw out all members of the opposition wing. This chaos not only resulted in the injury of some members of parliament, but also led to the premature ending of the day's parliamentary session. The following day, speaker Kadaga, after having watched the recording of the chaotic proceedings, suspended twenty-seven members of parliament, including Bobi Wine, from three consecutive parliamentary sessions. During this period of suspension, the Magezi bill was passed as an Act of Parliament and consequently signed by the president into law.

In protest, Wine composed the song "Freedom" and its accompanying music video to mobilize the people against the Magezi bill. With an assured following in his Kyaddondo East constituency, Wine's song "Freedom," in addition to other songs, were used to sensitize people about the danger of removing the presidential age limit. This move attracted supporters countrywide even in constituencies that are strongholds of the ruling NRM party. Unfortunately, NRM parliamentarians voted to remove the presidential age limit clause of the constitution after

being paid off by Museveni (Kaaya 2019).[47] This act of corruption consequently aroused a wave of anger among voters across the country. For example, *Daily Monitor* columnist, Nelson Wesonga, reported that the Buikwe District representative in parliament, Judith Babirye, and the Mityana North county MP, Godfrey Kiwanda were stoned by youth in October 2017 when they went to their constituencies to garner the peoples' support in favor of the Magezi bill (Wesonga 2017).

In many parts of the country, protests were held but quickly stopped by the police and the military. This level of anger stemmed from several factors, including Wine's involvement in mobilizing people against the Magezi bill. Although opposition members of parliament stood in solidarity against the presidential age limit amendment, Wine's strategic mobilization through music and rallies was equally imperative. As I argue in this chapter, Bobi Wine's song, "Freedom" became a phenomenon, not only in the way it articulated political critique, but also how it reawakened a sense of understanding, political awareness, and participation among the common people.

When this song circulated around and beyond Kampala, many youth simultaneously identified with it and formed a new political mindset that has given rise to the visibility of youth in the political sphere in Uganda. In the next section, I discuss the rise of the "people-power" public of youth and how its activities have destabilized Dr. Kiiza Besigye's support as the most popular opposition leader. The "people-power" movement has generated political allegiance for Bobi Wine who is at this writing scheduled to stand for election as president in 2021. I pay

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[47] For more details, see Sadab Kaaya. 2019. "NRM MPs Get Age Limit Cash." https://observer.ug/news/headlines/59668-nrm-mps-get-age-limit-cash (accessed June 8, 2020).

attention to this shift in allegiance among the opposition, from Besigye to Bobi Wine, and argue that music has the potential to enhance participation and generate political change.

6.2 The Case of an Emerging "People-Power" Public

From the very beginning of his campaign for political office in 2017, Wine, whose position as MP is mainly to represent the peoples' interests, also employed the slogan: "people power, our power" as a means of sensitizing the people as beholders of power, through the vote. As I noted earlier, a great portion of Bobi Wine's political signature is defined by his preoccupation with the need to create participatory awareness among common people. This endeavor has among other things entailed the use of a *kiganda* slogan, *mwebeleremu*, which translates as, "be involved" or "play an active role." The slogan calls upon the common people to actively participate in voting their leaders and deciding upon their community policies.

The *mwebeleremu* slogan comes in the wake of disappointment in Museveni's longevity in power, and as such, the struggling democratic system. Most common people lack the necessary confidence in the system of voting. Many think that it is a waste of time to vote, since the process is organized and overseen by the ruling NRM government. Many have not bothered to vote in the past because they are convinced that their vote will not have any impact. Bobi Wine has taken it upon himself to change the mindset of many common people who have lost confidence in the ruling government. By capitalizing on the slogan *mwebeleremu,* Wine is enlightening the people about an important constitutional clause, so that they take an active role in debating ideas and policies, and, most importantly, voting. Wine's advocacy for participation, and the employment of his music in this project, foreground voting and democracy as part of the nascent public of people-power.

During his campaign rallies, Wine introduced himself by shouting the slogan: "people power" and the people responding: "our power.' The call "people-power" was Bobi Wine's style of checking whether the people understood the concept of their power through the vote. And when his supporters responded, "our power," their response was a confirmation that they knew what was at stake. Often times, Wine uttered *mwebeleremu* as a reminder that the only way of making change was through active participation in the democratic transformation of the country. But as he always emphasized, the gateway to participation starts with becoming a registered voter because it is through voting that one acquires the legitimacy and power to participate as a lawful citizen.

At other times, Wine devoted time to explaining the meaning of the slogan, thereby creating awareness of an important clause of the constitution. Moreover, the slogan "people power, our power" was also combined with other symbols such as the red berets that are similar in shape to those of the military police. Like the military berets, the people power berets also have three circles, each representing the colors of the Uganda flag. In the middle of the beret is a black fist on a white map of Uganda, against a red circular background. The fist is a symbolic representation of power. When asked about the berets, Wine emphasized that while his is not a political party, the red berets are symbolic of his political agenda. His agenda is rooted in unifying the people, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, political inclination, age, education, or creed, among others (pers. comm., Wine. April 2018).

As part of their dress code, the people-power public is identified by red overalls. Moreover, members of this public have not only adopted the idea of wearing the Ugandan flag over their shoulders, but also waving it during Wine's performances. Some members of the people-power public believe that their intimacy with the national flag represents their sense of

patriotism. Many believe that Uganda deserves a peaceful transition of power if it is to conform to the logic of democracy. But to achieve this, patriotism is key. Therefore, the people-power public has taken a step by bringing the flag of Uganda to the people "as a reminder of their constitutional responsibility in the liberation of their country from its long history of military rule" (pers. comm., John Muwanga, June 2018).

I also recalled a live interview posted on YouTube, on July 26, 2013, in which South Africa's Julius Malema attested that the adoption of the red beret by his Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party, had been inspired by Thomas Sankara, the revolutionary and former president of Burkina Faso. For Malema, the red beret symbolizes their commitment and honor for revolutionaries as Sankara, who fought hard for "economic emancipation."[48] When I asked my interlocutors about their inspiration behind the red beret, I was surprised by the competing ideas behind it. Some insisted that it was Wine's original idea based on the need for identification. They quickly asserted that Malema had acquired the idea from Wine. However, Wine's rise as politician in Uganda dates back to 2017, while Sankara's has been in effect since 2013. Others argued that Bobi Wine had been inspired by Malema and his EFF party, even though the former's approach to politics has remained unconventional in terms of structure. Despite these competing ideas, Wine confirmed that their red beret is a "symbol of resistance" (*Aljazeera: News/Africa* 2019).

Wine's slogan, "people power, our power" soon became an emblem of an emergent public of youth and supporters from the opposing political parties, who believe in the people as bearers of power through the ballot. Caroline Nansamba, a shopkeeper at Kasangati trading

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[48] The term "economic emancipation" is directly quoted from Julius Malema who was talking about his inspiration for the red barret. The YouTube interview can be accessed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2csncng_BDU (accessed March 4, 2019).

center where Wine had one of his rallies said: "If it was not for Wine to sensitize me about how much my vote mattered, I do not think I would participate in the 2021 presidential elections because I thought it was all about the guns that we see on the voting day" (pers. comm., Nansamba. July 7, 2017). Nansamba's observation articulates some level of constitutional ignorance among people, which impedes them from acknowledging their right to cause change. But as Nansamba noted, Wine, during his campaign for political office, played a very important role in conveying awareness and self-consciousness, notably through his music and political speeches.

Bobi Wine's cause was also supported by a group of local popular musicians whose presence strengthened the idea of "people power." Most of these musicians started their music careers as young men and women and their participation became symbolic of a new era of youthful leadership. Similar to Wine, before each musician performed for the audience, they called upon the people: "people power," and the people responded: "our power," a ritual, in addition to the red beret and overall dress code that provided a platform for participation for many young people who have long been left out of politics.

The rising popularity of the emergent people-power public among the youth who constitute Uganda's largest electorate, shocked the ruling NRM party and even prompted the dissemination of propaganda against youth. One critique against the people-power public was its supposed lack of political direction and ideology. And during his September 2018 state of the nation address, president Museveni labelled the supporters of people-power as economic and political saboteurs whose aim was to divert the people from the successes that the ruling NRM government has achieved since it came to power in 1986. However, such alarming statements by

Museveni and propagandists have been dismissed as paranoia about the rising popularity of "people-power."[49]

In many places throughout the world, youth have found a platform of expression, association, and agency in popular music, as elaborated in the work of Eric Charry (2012); Alex Perullo (2011); Susan Shepler (2010); Joyce Nyairo and James Ogude (2005); and Andy Bennett (2000) among other scholars in the fields of ethnomusicology, cultural anthropology, as well as in media and popular music studies. These scholars have demonstrated that besides recreation, youth have drawn upon popular music to shape their identities, accumulate social power, comment upon prevailing social circumstances, and mobilize political support. In so doing, youth have become active participants in the public sphere.

In a similar way, popular music constitutes the backbone of the "people-power" public, which has also attracted the attention of Ugandan popular musicians such as Ronald Mayinja, Nubian Li, Eddie Yawe (one of Wine's elder brothers), Jose Chameleon, Dr. Hilderman, and Geofrey Lutaaya, some of whom are planning to compete for political office in the 2021 general elections. Drawing inspiration from Bobi Wine, musicians interested in running for political office are yet to demonstrate that besides being entertainers and educators, they can actively participate in the political domain of society as leaders.

The "people power" public has further inspired politicians from various political parties in the country. For instance, as I noted earlier, some MPs of the ruling NRM party, including John Baptist Nambesha, Barnabas Tinkasimire, and Gaffa Mbwatekamwa have publicly aligned themselves with the "people-power" public as a way of maintaining political relevance in their

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[49] One prominent propagandist is Ugandan (print, radio and television) journalist and proprietor of the news magazine, the *Independent,* Andrew Mwenda.

constituencies. These aforementioned Members of Parliament have been labelled rebels by the ruling NRM party, for having voted against the removal of the presidential age limit in 2017. Despite negative publicity by their own ruling party, rebel MPs are trying to position themselves ahead of the changing sentiments among voters, by supporting the "people power" public. These rebel MPs realize the damage of removing presidential age limits as a cause of anger among the common people, many of whom have vowed not to support the NRM party during Uganda's 2021 general elections.

Additionally, MPs from opposition parties such as the Democratic Party (DP), the Justice Forum Party (also known as JEEMA), and Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) party that have aligned themselves with Bobi Wine and promised to support his presidential bid during the 2021 presidential elections. This increasing level of solidarity was recently exhibited in Bobi Wine's popular song "Tuliyambala Engule" (We Shall Wear the Crown), whose music video was released in December 2018. The video features, among other people, musicians including Nubian Li, King Saha, Irene Ntare, Irene Namatovu, Dr. Hilderman, Ronald Mayinja, as well as Evangelical pastor and musician, Wilson Bugembe. Additionally, the music video features prominent opposition Member of Parliament, Asuman Basaalirwa, who is one of Bobi Wine's lawyers and a close political confidant.

The growing support for Bobi Wine not only emanates from his outstanding career as a politician, but most importantly, from the history of his artistry. Since the inception of his career in the early 2000s, most of Bobi Wine's popular songs have addressed topical issues that articulate the voice of the common people.

Although many of Wine's songs, such as "Bikwase Kyagulanyi" (Hand Them to Kyagulanyi) and "Zukuka Uganda (Wake Up Uganda) featured prominently during his campaign

for political office, the song "Freedom" and its accompanying music video became the song that rendered the "people power" public audible. The song conveyed a sense of awareness among youth as well as others, who were ignorant about their constitutional mandate to vote. To understand the idioms that rendered Wine's "Freedom" inseparable from political participation, I turn to the textual and visual analysis of the song.

6.3 A Textual/Structural Analysis of "Freedom"

Wine's song, "Freedom" has an intro, three verses, each separated by a repetitive chorus, and an outro. It mainly employs Luganda and English. However, a few end-phrases of raps (in the intro, outro, as well as the second, and the third verses) are uttered in *Luyaaye*, an urban language primarily spoken in Kampala. Because of its importance in shaping Wine's social background, *Luyaaye* is not only employed as a way of articulating the singer's background, but also a means of negotiating a network of self-identification with other youth.

In addition to speaking *Luyaaye*, urban youth have developed styles of clothing, music, and lifestyle. Having grown up in the Kamwokya ghetto, Bobi Wine employs *Luyaaye* to identify with the many young people living on the socio-economic margins of Uganda.

While these urban spaces have in the past been ignored by the government, Bobi Wine has made their mobilization his point of focus. These urban spaces constitute prospective voters who could have a high stake in shaping the democratic future of Uganda. In fact, in a very interesting turn of events in 2019, president Museveni appointed singer Butcherman, a former

ally of Bobi Wine as his "Special Envoy to the Ghetto" (Malaba 2019).[50] Butcherman was once Bobi Wine's vice president in the Kamwokya ghetto but the two had a falling out.

As a common motif in Bobi Wine's political songs, his opening rap, usually uttered in English, is a disclaimer that the views in the song are not his, but those of the common people. A similar disclaimer first appeared in Bobi Wine's song "Ghetto" (2008), which also featured his long-time friend and colleague, Nubia Li. Such a disclaimer is Wine's way of trying to avoid censorship and persecution. Nevertheless, many of his songs have been censored by Museveni's regime. As my analysis will demonstrate, Wine conceptualizes censorship by the Museveni regime as "imprisonment," which does not necessarily entail confinement in prison, but rather, the stripping of one's enjoyment of the sense of freedom. Thus, with "imprisonment," one is forced to live what Agamben has called "bare lives," a notion I have explored in my discussion of music and the emergent LGBT public in chapter 3.

To comprehend the narrative, I call your attention to the transcription and translation of the text of "Freedom." Some sections are entirely in English (the introductory utterance, verse 2, part of verse 3, and the final utterance); these sections are indicated by square brackets in figure 27. Sections in Luganda (verse 1, the chorus, and part of verse 3) are presented with my English translation in italics in the right-hand column of figure 27.

<div align="center">Introductory Utterance</div>

[This is a message to the government; expressing exactly what is on the peoples' mind]

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[50] Malaba, Tom. "President Appoints Artist Butcher Man Ghetto Envoy." *Daily Monitor.* October 28, 2019

Verse 1

Twakooye ebinyigiriza obulamu bwaffe,	*We are fed up with oppressing our lives,*
Nabuli kitumalako eddembe lyaffe;	*And whatever deprives us of our freedom;*
Uganda etambula edda mabega,	*Uganda is moving backward,*
Kituuse n'okutatamya eggwanga lyaffe.	*Making us hate our own nation.*
Mulimba mutufuga bubi nnyo namwe,	*You are unfair for misruling us,*
Kale tetugaanye mwalwana mu nsiko;	*No one denies your liberation struggle;*
Naye omwana gwe wasanga nga tanazaalibwa,	*But even the child you found unborn,*
Kati naye yazaala nadda.	*Has also given birth to children.*
Kino mukingambire muzeeyi abamulabako,	*If you see him, convey this message to grandfather,*
Nsaba ne bazeeyi banne bamugambeko;	*I pray that his fellow grandfathers advise him too;*
Eno ensonga nkyaamu gyalemeddeko,	*The matter he is insisting upon is so sensitive,*
Kati eggwanga lyonna lye nnyamidde.	*And now the entire country is in misery.*
Bagamba eyali demokulaasi bamuvuluga,	*What used to be democracy is now meaningless,*
Kati yafuuka na hipokulisi;	*And now transformed into hypocrisy;*
Bagamba eyali fandamento kyengi mwagivuluga,	*What used to be fundamental change is meaningless,*
Kati mugifudde nno kyengyi.	*And now transformed into no change.*
Bagamba nti ensonga ez'abalwaanya kati mwazibuukako,	*They claim you ignored the basis of your struggle,*
Nammwe mukola biri ebya bari;	*You are instead recycling the ills of past regimes;*
Bakusaba nti konsitityushoni yaabwe togikwatako,	*They beg that you do not alter their constitution,*
Kuba mwe musigadde essuubi lyaabwe.	*Because it is their only hope. [I say]:*

Chorus

(C): [only instrumentals]	(R): We are fighting for freedom
(C): Kampala, Mukono, Mbale, Jinja	(R): We are fighting for freedom
(C): Kabare, Rukungiri, Mbarara, Kasese	(R): We are fighting for freedom
(C): Soroti, Kitgum, Arua, Lira, Gulu	(R): We are fighting for freedom
(C): I say, Wakiso, Masaka, Mubende, Mityana	(R): We are fighting for freedom

Verse 2 (in English)

[We are living in a dance similar to the one of slave trade; this oppression is worse than apartheid
The gun is the master, citizen slave; the pearl of Africa is bleeding, Question:
What was the purpose of the liberation; if we can't have a peaceful transition?
What was the purpose of the constitution; when the government disrespect[s] the constitution?
Where is my freedom of expression; when you judge me because of my expression?
Look what you are doing to this nation; what are you teaching the future generation
See our leaders become misleaders; and see our mentors become tormentors
Freedom fighters become dictators; they look upon the youth and say we are distractors]

204

Chorus

(C): [only instrumentals]	(R): We are fighting for freedom
(C): Busia, Malaba, Mutukura, Kyotera	(R): We are fighting for freedom
(C): Nebbi, Pacwachi, Moroto, Kyaddondo	(R): We are fighting for freedom
(C): Pade, Masindi, Kabong, Karamoja	(R): We are fighting for freedom
(C): Hoima, Kiryandongo, Fort, Bundibugyo	(R): We are fighting for freedom
Musituke ba boy mukimanye nti,	*Rise up boys and get to know that,*

Verse 3

Okununula egwanga kitukakatako,	*Liberating a nation is concerning to all,*
ffe abaana ba Uganda ffenna;	*We the children of Uganda;*
Era manya anti bw'osirikira ebikyaamu n'osirikira eyo,	*Know that if you ignore any wrongs,*
olidde mu ensi yo olukwe.	*You will have betrayed your nation.*
Naffe abakulwaniriraho gwe n'osirikira eyo gyoli,	*Fighting for you while you are silent,*
obeera otusaddaase;	*amounts to sacrificing us;*
Jjukira nti ne bwebubeera bumyu nga bwakungaanye,	*Remember that rabbits working collectively,*
e ngo bugyitwaala terinnya.	*have the potential of scaring off a lion.*

Rap in English (also part of verse 3)
[No matter your age nor matter your sex; no matter your religion, no matter your tribe
Whether educated or uneducated; it's a revolution for a new generation
Whether you are doctor or a farmer; whether you are teacher or police man
Could be a taxi driver or a student; could be a lawyer, could be a soldier]

Chorus

[Instrumental]	(R): We are fighting for freedom
Musituke ba boyi; temupowea ba boyi	*Rise up boys, do not give up boys*
	(R): We are fighting for freedom
Ba nayuganda abali ku mawanga	*All Ugandans in the diaspora*
	(R): We are fighting for freedom
Abaana ba boda boda namwe mwebeleremu	*Motorcyclists, be involved too*
	(R): We are fighting for freedom

Final Utterance

[Yes man, like Martin Luther says;
In the end, we remember not the words of our enemies,
But the silence of our friends]

Figure 27: The text of "Freedom" (translation by Charles Lwanga)

The first verse of "Freedom" has ten phrases. Each phrase begins on a weak beat and has a count of eight quarter-note beats. Also, each of the ten phrases can be further sub-divided into two sub-phrases, identified by the IV-I and V-I harmonies, respectively. This repetitive harmonic template, as employed in *kadongo kamu* and Ugandan band music (both discussed in chapter one) is employed as the backdrop against which Wine narrates Uganda's situation.

The verse opens with an expression, which, according to Wine's disclaimer, represents the peoples' frustration with Uganda's system of governance and their lack of freedom. Wine notes that Uganda is moving backward, a situation that has led many to hate their nation. While acknowledging the contribution of the liberators, the verse expresses disapproval with the NRM government.

Towards the end of the song, Wine cautions president Museveni against extending his leadership because, by doing so, he would be repeating the mistakes of past military regimes that he fought against. Extending Museveni's regime will bring misery to the many people who are yearning for change. Adhering to the laws of the constitution, according to Wine, is the only hope for a better Uganda.

The first verse of "Freedom" is a critique of Magezi's bill, which was consequently passed into law. Wine critiques Museveni's reluctance to relinquish power even after ruling the country for 31 years. In his lyrics, Wine reminds Museveni that the basis of the liberation war that brought Museveni into power was undemocratic. Without employing metaphors, Wine openly labels Museveni's mode of governance as high-handed and oppressive. The song was released before the Magezi bill became law, and the verse concludes with a warning for

Museveni to refrain from endorsing the removal of the presidential age limit from Uganda's

1995 constitution. However, Museveni later signed the bill into law.

The opening phrase of the verse is introduced with a dominant pitch as if to suggest the

highest pitch in the melodic contour. However, in the second phrase of the verse, the range is

expanded by the introduction of a sub-mediant on the second syllable, "ga" on the word Uganda

(see the fourth beat of m. 6, figure 28, indicated by an arrow). But this is not an isolated case; the

sub-mediant as the basis of expanding the melodic range is further employed in the fifth and

sixth phrases.

Figure 28: The opening two phrases of "Freedom's" first verse

A peculiar moment in the first verse arrives in the third phrase, when Wine repetitively

employs the sub-mediant tone as a springboard to jump to the octave, the highest pitch in the

song (figure 29). The momentary arrival on the highest pitch in the song coincides with Wine's

critique against the idea of over-staying one's power. For, as we will recall, longevity engenders

"imprisonment," a sentiment simultaneously implied in the text. The notion of imprisonment is

explicitly enacted in the music video when Wine appears behind bars (0.08).

Figure 29: The repetitive sub-mediant as a springboard

The second verse of "Freedom," while maintaining a similar harmonic structure to the first verse (IV-I; V-I), has eight phrases, each containing two sub-phrases of four quarter-note beats. Unlike the first verse whose narrative is sung in Luganda, the second verse is a rap in English. Rapping in English is Bobi Wine's method of communicating his message to an audience of English speakers in Uganda and beyond. Similarly, English sub-titles are provided in the music video, particularly in the verses that are sung in Luganda.

Wine expresses furiousness in the rap of "Freedom" by employing hyperbolic expressions. For instance, expressing his disappointment in Museveni's style of governance in the opening phrase of the rap, Wine claims that Ugandans are living in a state of slavery, a condition that he perceives as being worse than South Africa's apartheid. By no means, however, are the two situations comparable in the first place, since each of them is informed by different social/historical conditions. For example, Uganda did not experience racial segregation. And even though the two scenarios could be associated with the denial of basic freedoms, they are not comparable in significance. As such, Bobi Wine's comparison of slavery to Apartheid is hyperbolic, an exaggerated way of representing the social constraints that most common people are living under the ruling NRM regime.[51]

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[51] Employing hyperbolic statements as a way of over-emphasizing a point is not peculiar to Bobi Wine's "Freedom." A number of popular musicians, particularly rappers, have employed the same technique. For instance, in the song "Threat," which features on his 2003 album, *The Black Album*, American rapper Jay-Z employs the statement: "I will kill you, commit suicide, and kill you again" to exaggerate his anger. The act of committing suicide and then killing someone is impossible, but the effectiveness of the message is based on this impossibility. Similarly, on his 2009 album "Everything Based," Lil B, uses the statement: "Hoes on my dick cause I look like Jesus" in his song "Pretty Boy," as an exaggeration about his identity which he compares to that of Jesus's, whose true identity remains unknown. Another well-known example is "Fuck the Police" (NWA).

In the same verse, Wine critiques the rampant presence of guns in public, which has impeded the people from enjoying their constitutional rights and freedoms. According to Wine, guns have become the master while the citizens have become slaves. This critique is directed to several senior government officials within the ruling NRM government, including civilians and military officers who publicly boast about clinging to power because they control the army as well as the guns used to fight off any prospective challengers. For example, the Honorable Evelyn Anite, a state minister of finance for investment and privatization; the Honorable Kayinda Otafiire, a retired Major General and currently minister of East African Affairs; as well as General Elly Tuwmine, have all boasted about having guns to defend their power. It is this level of impunity, according to Wine, that has subjected Ugandans to a form of slavery which accrues from fear.

Following up on the habit of boasting about guns in the rap section, Wine challenges Museveni and his boastful allies: what was the purpose of the liberation war if the country cannot have a peaceful transition of power? For Wine, these boastful generals fought the liberation war to instill peace and democracy in Uganda. Yet, since they took over power in 1986, the ruling NRM government has failed to usher in the peaceful transition of power.

But the liberation war is not the only affair Bobi Wine takes issue with. He also wonders about the purpose of the 1995 constitution of Uganda which has failed to protect the rights of citizens, including freedom of expression. Most of Bobi Wine's songs that are critical of Museveni's government have been censored. And as recently as 2019 his concerts have been sanctioned such that, at this writing, Bobi Wine cannot perform music in Uganda. Further, as discussed later in this chapter, Wine was arrested and brutalized in prison for his crusade against Museveni's longevity in power.

Building upon his message about the purpose of the liberation struggle, Wine bitterly complains about "leaders who become misleaders" as well as "mentors who become tormentors." Leaders should lead by example and mentors should provide guidance towards meaningful purpose. Yet, this is not the case with the NRM regime. Thus, in the message of the seventh phrase, Wine expresses a concern that the country is moving backwards toward a period of political turmoil and unrest. Wine is confused by Museveni's governance, under which any challenge to power amounts to persecution and in some scenarios, assassination. The second verse ends with a counterargument against the rampant tendency by the older generation to undermine youth for their political activism. For Wine, these tendencies discourage youth from participation (pers., comm., Wine. July 2017).

The sense of furiousness expressed in the second verse of "Freedom" is simultaneously embedded in sound and text. Here, I emphasize the sonic material. The verse unexpectedly opens with a repetitive supertonic, which briefly ascends to the G octave before descending to the tonic (see figure 30). Also, a unique feature in the second verse is the employment of stasis on the tonic, upon which occasional jumps, predominantly upward to the G octave are executed. But this jump is peculiar. For instance, in addition to articulating the syllable at the octave, it is simultaneously spoken and sung (this sonic simultaneity is indicated by an x note-head at each octave in figure 30). Following up with Bobi Wine about this vocal technique, he noted that "the expression of anger usually involves an abrupt interplay of high-low pitches. When I thought about this, the intervals of a perfect fifth or octave resonated well with this analogy" (pers. comm., Wine. November 2019). In fact, combined with the sensitive issues in phrases 3 to 8 in the second verse, one cannot mistake the articulation of Wine's emotional aesthetic for anything else but anger.

Figure 30: The first phrase of the second verse

The third verse combines some of the parameters employed in the previous verses. For instance, it employs the narrative style of singing (as in the first verse) and the rapping style used in the second verse of the song. Further, the third verse employs Luganda and English in an evenly distributed manner among the eight phrases of the verse, with Luganda employed in the first four phrases, and English in the last four phrases. Moreover, like the previous two verses, the third verse is composed of eight phrases, each containing two sub-phrases of four quarter-

note beats. Also, the third verse maintains the same supporting harmonic vocabulary as was the case in the two previous verses (IV-I; V-I).

The other unique feature of the third verse is its introduction that stems from the last instrumental phrase of the chorus, over which Wine juxtaposes a four-beat textual sub-phrase (see m. 64, figure 31). This sub-phrase simultaneously serves as a closing expression to the chorus, as emphasized by the repetitive tonic chord, and as an expanded sub-phrase to the third verse. Because of its simultaneous purpose, this sub-phrase is ambiguous for its dual function. In the former case, it completes an incomplete instrumental sub-phrase of the chorus, while in the latter, its meaning, a call to everyone to rise up, smoothly flows into the text of the opening sub-phrase of the third verse, as though to serve as the opening to the verse.

Figure 31: The ambiguous closing/opening sub-phrase to the second and third verses

Also, it should be noted that while the third verse begins on a strong beat, its subsequent phrases start on weak beats as was the case in the previous verses. It is my understanding that the above attributes, as employed in the first two verses of the song, and now re-employed in the third verse, give the song a sense of coherence in terms of its logical structure and flow. Rather than introducing new sonic material in each verse (other than the text, which is well-unified by

212

its logical and developmental narrative), sonic consistence in Wines' "Freedom" frees the song from an overabundance of musical ideas. In effect, its message comes across more clearly.

Following Wine's furious sentiments expressed in the previous verses, the third verse is employed as a call to all Ugandans to rise up against Museveni's authoritarian regime. The text of the first four phrases of the third verse effectively enhances a sense of self-realization among people, who have the power to determine the next generation of leaders through the vote.

Wine's song and its sentiments about freedom is shaped by his call for collective action. An analogy employed to encourage participation is that of rabbits, whose collective presence has the potential to scare off a lion. In reality, this analogy translates into Wine's belief in the common people, who may think of themselves as powerless non-participants in national politics but who are actually central actors. Whether by contributing to public debates, sharing opinions or voting, people play an important role in politics. Wine calls upon the people to liberate themselves from those chains of "imprisonment," which the current NRM regime has subjected them to, unfortunately, at the cost of their constitutional rights.

To drive his point home, Bobi Wine notes that his cause is a "revolution for a new generation of youth," a message which leads into the final chorus, and the closing utterance: "Like Martin Luther [King, Jr.] said, in the end we remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." This closing utterance, which is simultaneously spoken and rapped, serves as a form of empowerment to those who participate in the struggle for liberation. According to Bobi Wine, the common people are seeking to liberate themselves from the NRM regime. This is why they are "crying for freedom," a message that is clearly voiced in the chorus of the song, whose discussion I now turn to.

6.3.1 The Chorus of "Freedom"

The chorus of Wine's song, "Freedom," is six phrases long, each with two sub-phrases of four quarter-note beats. Like the verses, the chorus maintains the IV-I; V-I harmonic formula over which the sung and rapped messages are voiced. The call is rapped and the response is sung. With the exception of the first chorus, whose call-phrase: "I say" is part of the last sub-phrase of the first verse, subsequent choruses are introduced by the response: "we are crying for freedom," which reverses the common dialogical concept from call/response to response/call. This structural reversal in a well-known musical formula suggests Bobi Wine's creative attempt to transform the game of politics from traditional ways to more contemporary approaches that can appeal to a younger generation. My analysis stems from the common perception of a "call" as leader, and "response" as those being led. In this case, Bobi Wine's response/call, momentarily as it is, foregrounds the response (or those being led) as central to the relations accruing between the parties, which is exactly the reason behind Wine's struggle in the first place.

The chorus opens with the sub-mediant, an idea initially introduced in the opening instrumental melody. The opening sub-dominant is crucial in enhancing the downward melodic descent to the mediant and super-tonic, before making an up-ward motion back to the mediant, and finally, a jump to the tonic (as shown in example 32). The melodic range of a perfect fourth in the response constrains the melodic contour, reinforcing a sense of "imprisonment," a notion at the heart of Bobi Wine's song, "Freedom."

Figure 32: Inverted response/call in the chorus of "Freedom"

In the call of the chorus section Wine raps the names of the following districts of Uganda: Mbale, Kampala, Mukono, Jinja, Kabare, Rukungiri, Mbarara, Kasese, Soroti, Kitgum, Arua, Lira, and Guru. These districts are purposely chosen (from among the 134 districts in Uganda) because of their importance in the election. By naming these districts in the chorus, Wine anticipates the involvement of people from those districts. To understand the logic behind this cry, I turn to an analysis of the music video.

6.4 "Imprisonment" in the Music Video "Freedom"

The music video of 'Freedom" contains some disturbing images.[52] In fact, on YouTube, a disclaimer indicates that "this video may be inappropriate for some users." The use of the adjective "inappropriate" in this case is not directed toward pornography, as in other videos, but rather to the harsh and violent conditions of reality that many Ugandans are subjected to under

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[52] For the music video of "Freedom" see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8g0W9CIY5iM (accessed May 23, 2020).

Museveni's regime. To continue to the video, the viewer has to acknowledge what is at stake by clicking the phrase: "I understand and wish to proceed."

At the beginning of the music video, Wine, who is wearing a white top and a red overall is seen performing push-ups. He is preparing himself for battle. But the location is unclear. At 0'02", Wine, who is standing on a black SUV car, is seen waving the national flag amidst a crowd of supporters. According to Wine's manager, Lawrence Kyagulanyi, this shot was taken from one of Wine's campaigns for election to parliament for the Kyaddondo East constituency. By the end of the intro (0'09"), we become aware that the location is a cell. In fact, next to Wine is another prisoner, also performing push-ups, wearing a red bandana on his head, and black jeans.

The condition of "imprisonment" is the basis of Wine's call to revolt against Museveni's long rule. In the music video, imprisonment is visualized through the confinement of Wine and another unknown prisoner to a prison cell with a bed, toilet, window, and limited space. In all three verses of the song, Wine sings from the cell. However, Wine's prison images are combined with images of rampant injustices to reinforce the narrative. Beyond the prison cell, we see images of Wine on the campaign trail, the brutal arrest of Muhammed Ssegirinya, a Kawempe North councilor, the beating of bystanders by the police, the forceful eviction of parliamentarians from their chambers, and images of violence during the Bugiri bi-elections, where 28-year-old Asuman Walyendo, a supporter of the opposition, was killed by the police. The forceful eviction of opposition members of parliament from their chambers shows that the national government will not tolerate opposing views. The beating of bystanders by the police is a warning that idleness will be punished. The death of the young opposition leader Walyendo serves as a message that youth have no place in politics.

The second verse exposes social injustices by the powerful government institutions of Uganda. The montage of the verse contains a series of disturbing images, including children who had starved to death, the forceful eviction of street vendors from the streets of Kampala city (discussed in chapter three), as well as the brutal arrest of Kampala's Lord Mayor, Erias Lukwago. The images show the NRM regime's apathy for children, street vendors, and the Mayor, who is also a renowned opposition leader. The purpose of these images is to damage the reputation of the ruling NRM party and to support Wine's advocacy for change. By conflating images of Wine's imprisonment with the harsh conditions of Ugandan's people, the music video shows that Uganda's people are imprisoned by their own government. The unconstitutional denial of freedom impedes participation and collective organization as a public. Although those affected by such injustices do not necessarily end up confined to prison cells, they remain stripped of their constitutional rights and freedoms.

In the following section, I discuss my interlocutors' views about the artistic and political work of Bobi Wine. Their views about the song and video "Freedom" demonstrate music as an instrument of change.

6.5 Perceptions of "Freedom" Among Uganda's Youth

One of the questions I explored during my fieldwork was how the youth identified with Wine's song "Freedom." David Kalyango, a 24-year-old supporter of the "people-power" public said: **"**Wine's 'Freedom' is not any usual song we dance to only for the sake of passing leisure. It means a lot to me; it opened my eyes to the reality we live in. It made me believe in myself as a young man who is most vulnerable to the economic constraints of the country. I support Wine because it is our time, it is time for the youth to lead the country and bring on new ideas" (pers.

comm., Kalyango. June, 2017). One thing that comes to mind when I reflect upon Kalyango's statement is the awareness of his vulnerability and economic disempowerment as a youth. But in becoming aware of such a situation, the song was also an avenue for discovering his own potential and that of youth in establishing an alternative form of leadership.

Additionally, during Wine's campaign rally at Kasangati, a suburb of Kampala, Agnes Nawuuma, also a supporter of Wine said: "Bobi Wine's song "Freedom" inspired me for its blunt caution against social injustice in Uganda. The song is a gesture of Wine's courage to speak to those in power on behalf of the voiceless, most especially the youth. Moreover, Bobi is not scared of the rampant brutalities and assassinations by state mercenaries, which makes him an inspiration to me in a lot of ways" (pers. comm., Nawuuma. June, 2017). Nawuuma commends Wine's "Freedom" for speaking up against social injustices.

Justine Nabagenyi, a student at the YMCA in Kampala, while participating in Wine's campaign at Gayaza, a suburb of Kampala, noted: "We need a new generation of energetic and brave leaders like Bobi Wine who is not afraid of speaking truth to power. His song, "Freedom," just became part of my struggles from the first day I heard it. If Bobi Wine can make it this far, I am convinced that we, as youth, can stand up for our country. Museveni has ruled enough. It is now Bobi's time" (pers. comm., Nabagyenyi. June, 2017).

In line with the common saying that the youth are the future of the country, Bobi Wine emphasized that "the future is now. The youth cannot wait any longer. It is either now or never" (pers. comm., Wine. July 16, 2015).

Many youth lacked the confidence it takes to speak-up against those in power, or even actively participate in politics as leaders. Many have publicly announced their prospects of vying for political office during the 2021 general elections. But for those who are afraid to speak up,

the "people-power" public has become a strong political base. Inspired by Wine's advocacy for

all the youth *okwebeleramu* (to actively participate), this emergent "people-power" public of

youth believes in the power of the people through the ballot, as opposed to the power of the gun.

In fact, this belief has even been successfully tested during the past parliamentary by-elections, a

discussion I now turn to.

6.6 "Freedom" and the People-Power Public at Parliamentary By-elections

A "by-election" is a special election, not held at the time of a general election, to fill a

vacancy in Parliament for particular districts. Since Bobi Wine's election as member of

parliament (on June 29, 2017), 24 by-elections for Parliamentary seats have taken place. A

certain number of seats must be filled by people with disabilities and women. Among those 24

vacant seats, two were filled by people with disabilities, and eight were filled by women. The

remaining positions were filled by either women or men.

Of the 24 vacant seats, Bobi Wine actively participated in only five districts, including,

Jinja East, Arua, Bugiri, Rukungiri, and Homia. Apart from the Hoima seat, which the opposition

public lost to the ruling NRM candidate, Harriet Busingye, the other four seats were successfully

won by candidates from the opposition. Although the opposition public took fewer seats

compared to the ruling NRM party, it was a cause for celebration, as these were hotly contested

by influential constituencies with a high presence of voters. Moreover, the ruling NRM

government has always dominated these constituencies. However, losing those seats was an

important indication that the opposition was starting to gain momentum in rural constituencies.

At Jinja, Rukungiri, Bugiri and Arua constituencies, Wine's song, "Freedom" was

intricately intertwined with the politics of campaigns and elections, becoming an effective tool of

mobilization and participation. "Freedom" not only welcomed Wine at gatherings of supporters, but also prompted his live performance of the song. His performance at these gatherings created a template for participation, which, in return, invited his supporters to respond to the song's call. By performing "Freedom" during campaigns, the song's message became inseparable from a new style of opposition politicking in Uganda. This new style involving music and musicians has given popular music a new role in politics.

This does not mean that songs were not previously played during campaigns. Music was used in support of the ruling governments of Obote I and II and Idi Amin. But as noted in the introductory chapter, *kadongo kamu* musicians criticized Obote and Amin's regimes through metaphors. They could not articulate this critique directly in fear for their lives. However, since Uganda's 2016 general elections, the opposition public has explicitly and publicly criticized the ruling NRM government. In contemporary political songs such as "Freedom," "Tugambire ku Jennifer" (discussed in chapter four), and "Toka kwa Barabara" (discussed in chapter five), critique is direct, provocative, and confrontational. Further, these songs have transcended elections and they have become part of a new political culture that embraces music as a constituent component of oppositional politics. The successful outcome of the by-elections in four constituencies, and the emergent "people-power" public, established this new relationship between music and politics.

Bi-electoral victories in Jinja (3/15/2019); Bugiri (7/27/2019); Rukungiri (5/31/2019); and Arua (8/15/2019) left Museveni and his NRM party perplexed about the growing political popularity of Bobi Wine's "people-power" public. In September 2018, Museveni responded to the growing popularity of the "people-power" public by launching a donation-drive to send money to the youth of Wakiso and Kampala, the two most influential districts with the highest

number of voters in the country. Museveni had never given support to youth, and the initiative was criticized as simply a response to the rise of Wine's "people-power" public. The initiative was also very controversial as it was interpreted as a media ploy by the government. However, the youth living in Wakiso and Kampala never received the so-called monies that Museveni had promised.[53]

The ensuing victory for the opposition public did not come about peacefully. Campaigns and elections were filled with violence and social injustices committed by the ruling government. On August 14, 2018, a day before the bi-elections in Arua, it was alleged that the "people-power" supporters, led by Bobi Wine and his Arua candidate, Kassiano Wadri, threw stones at Museveni's convoy and damaged one of the cars. The incident is said to have occurred after Museveni had completed a campaign event for his NRM candidate. Swiftly jumping off their escort vehicles, the Special Force Command (SFC) rounded up whomever was dressed in red and brutally beat them. The SFC also stormed the hotel where Wine, Wadri, and others had retired from the day's activities, and rounded them up. Wine and 32 others were brutally beaten and consequently imprisoned without due process. Wine was released, but the next day, he participated in another bi-election in Arua. The event was characterized by rampant violence, and an assassination attempt on Wine, which claimed the life of his driver, Yasin Kawuma. Wine's whereabouts were unknown until days later, after his family and lawyers demanded his immediate release.

In a matter of weeks, the "Free Bobi Wine" campaign that started in Uganda spread to other countries including Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Great Britain, the United States,

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[53] For details about the controversies that surrounded Museveni's initiatives for youth, see: The Monitor Team, "How Bobi Wine's Return was Managed," *Daily Monitor,* September 21, 2018.

Germany, and the Netherlands. Around the same time, Export Development Canada, a credit agency in Canada, withdrew its support to fund four Bombardier jets for Uganda. Also, in protest against the violation of human rights, the British parliament condemned state violence and called upon Museveni's government to drop what appeared to be trumped-up charges against Wine as well as other legislators and civilians.

After being released from prison, Wine, who had been tortured by the SFC, was flown to Washington, DC for further medical attention. However, the police attempted to block him from leaving. In Washington DC, Wine appeared at multiple town hall meetings where he met with media outlets and supporters. They challenged him to establish a political structure to crystallize his vision, but he reluctantly declined. He claimed that his vision did not consist of forming a political party. His "people-power" public would not conform to conventional structures of politics.

Since his heroic return from the US on September 20, 2018, Wine's growing popularity among the youth who constitute Uganda's demographic majority continues to pose a threat to the ruling NRM government. The NRM government has expended a great deal of time and effort to destroying Wine's musical career in Uganda. For example, shortly following his return from the US, Wine was scheduled to perform a concert called "Kyarenga" (Beautiful Woman) in October 2018. The concert had been scheduled to take place at the Mandela National Stadium, Nambole, in Kampala. However, it was cancelled. Media critic and former secretary of press in Museveni's government, Tamale Mirundi stated officially that "it would be risky to bring more than a million youth to Namboole because if they decided to organize an uprising, it would be so hard to control them" (Mirundi, National Broadcasting Station [NBS] Television, November 2018).

The "Kyarenga" concert was later rescheduled for November 11, 2018, at Wine's *One Love* beach in Busaabala (a suburb of Kampala). Here, Wine's fans appeared dressed in red, the symbolic color of the emergent "people power" public. Fans actively chanted slogans for political change as they responded to Wine's calls which were simultaneously sung and spoken. Between intervals of songs, this kind of participatory interaction between Wine and the audience continued. Fans mocked the police and military personnel who were present to maintain order. But the police and military kept calm, despite the provocation from fans and Wine, who had been warned against politicizing the concert. As a result of his efforts to politicize the concert, Wine's subsequent concerts have all been cancelled.

6.7 Conclusion

According to Street, Hague and Savigny (2008), political participation can be understood by examining the link between music and politics, but only through the lens of organization, legitimization, and performance. Under this framework, the legitimization of music and musicians is based on organization. However, there should be some "means by which the music not only conveys the message or sentiment of the movement or cause, but also motivates it" (ibid., 7). As I have demonstrated in this chapter, Wine's "Freedom" and his emergent "people power" public of the youth share an intimate bond, which results from a well-organized network of actors, including MPs, media, fans, and supporters.

I have discussed how Wine's song, "Freedom" became inextricably intertwined with electoral campaigns in a way that has enhanced political participation. The song's text speaks directly to power. It calls for a new generation of youthful participants to take an active role in determining their destiny (*mwebeleremu*). The song and its contextualization during bi-elections

223

stimulated other musicians to become involved in politics. Wine's "Freedom" uses the interplay

of "imprisonment" as a *double reality*.[54] While the music video calls upon viewers to imagine a

sense of physical confinement in a prison cell, it also calls them to imagine a sense of

freedomlessness. I have argued that freedomlessness renders one imprisoned, without necessarily

being confined to a prison cell.

It is to my conviction that Wine's "Freedom" contains a double reality. On the one hand,

this double reality refers to imprisonment of opposition members in prison cells. On the other

side of reality, however, is that sense of "imprisonment" that many common people are subjected

to even though they are not physically in prison. Under these conditions of poverty, they struggle

for a basic livelihood, rather than participate in politics. In this way, Wine's song "Freedom"

makes audible the social and economic conditions that constrain them.

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[54] In his work about Kwaito and the aesthetics of Freedom in South Africa, Gavin Steingo (2016) employs the concept of "double reality" to demonstrate how the tv reality show "Yizo Yizo" was either perceived by viewers as real or as a mere fantasy.

7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have provided a historical and analytical examination of how popular music in Uganda has rendered marginalized publics audible since the early 1990s. I have noted that until 1993, state-controlled media (radio, TV, and print media) excluded many individuals and groups from participating as political actors in the public sphere. However, this changed in 1993 with the liberalization and privatization of media following a return to relative (but precarious) peace in the country. Since then, the establishment of private media institutions and the growing accessibility of the Internet have enhanced relatively autonomous avenues of participation for marginalized publics.

The development of the Central Broadcasting Services (CBS) radio network in 1993 enhanced the production, circulation, and consumption of popular songs that mediate the social aspirations of the Buganda kingdom. In 2004, the death of David Kato, the first gay man to announce his sexuality in public, stimulated the gradual rise of popular discourse, including music and print media, around LGBT issues. In 2011, the forceful implementation of new urban reforms in Kampala capital city provided the basis for a popular song about the aspirations of the city's street vendors. And Museveni's oppressive regime gave rise to multiple opposition publics such as Besigye's "people's government," as well as Bobi Wine's "people-power" public of youth.

As contemporary forms of collectivities, publics in Uganda are composed of groups who exchange information, debate ideas, and advocate for social change in a variety of physical and virtual spaces. They not only challenge the traditional monolithic public sphere where representation is exclusive to the majority, but also represent the struggles of an emergent

democracy and the basic rights of association, assemblage, and freedom of expression. As I have noted, hostilities toward these ideals have promoted rather than prevented the rise of publics that advocate for social justice in Uganda.

In Kampala, the capital city of Uganda where my field research was based, symbolic material in the form of music is produced in music studios and circulated on multiple platforms to audiences, who in turn consume them in a variety of physical and virtual spaces. But while radio, television, print media, and live concerts are still used as avenues for circulating popular songs, the Internet now supersedes them. My interlocutors observed that with the Internet, musicians can self-produce their music and no longer need to bribe producers to play their songs on radio or television. Moreover, with the high rate of censorship in contemporary Uganda, musicians who are critical of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party – namely Bobi Wine, Otim Bosmic, Adam Mulwana, and Ronald Mayinja, among others – find it much easier to publish their songs on YouTube, even though their creative efforts may be vulnerable to piracy.

The Internet also enhances the consumption of popular songs by virtual participants who not only listen to music in overlapping temporalities, but who are scattered in multiple spaces all over the globe. As Dueck (2013) has stated, *imaginary publics*, those constituted by the effort of reproducing others, are shaped by interaction with an invisible public that Benedict Anderson has previously referred to as *imagined communities* (Anderson 1983). Similarly, Warner (2002) has suggested that readers of a book or a novel, wherever they are, become part of a public (of readers) that never meet physically but is engaged at different places and in different temporalities. However, virtual publics become part of a physical public if they decide to involve themselves in social action, for example, in protests against social injustice and forms of

226

marginalization. In this way, social formations that are informed by intimate physicality

constitute what Dueck refers to as "intimate publics" (Dueck 2013). On the one hand, social

relations associated with place have the potential to enhance intimate publics. On the other, the

internet not only provides consumers with information, but also the choice of whether to

participate virtually or beyond. The publics in this dissertation are both physical or intimate, and

imaginary or virtual.

Besides the Internet being an important avenue for circulating music in Uganda, popular

music pirates act illegally as intermediary brokers in circulating music in a variety of physical

spaces. For instance, at shopping spaces outdoors, pirates play music on electronic devices to

attract customers. The sounds from multiple pirates create a collage of sounds. In most cases,

music is an invitation to look at merchandise. Once someone makes a stop and enters a particular

shop, they have actually made a choice to temporarily disengage with the collage and consume a

particular song as they transact business. And if they relate to the song in any way, they become

part of a public that is rendered audible through the music they are consuming.[55]

In spaces such as taverns, automobiles, indoor or outdoor gatherings (in the form of

parties) or live concerts, consumers are further treated to songs that speak to the aspirations of

publics. These songs provide the basis for conversations, enhancing participation from grassroots

levels to other participatory spaces. During a visit to maama Rhoda's tavern at a Nakulabye, a

suburb of Kampala, I observed customers seated in a circle of six men drinking beer while

listening to local popular songs. When one of Bobi Wine's old single, "Ghetto" was played, one

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[55] Here, I call to mind Jonathan Sterne's article about modes of listening in the Mall of America, and how they shape a sense of invisible community (Sterne 1997).

man said: "This is where great ideas begin. Just recall how Bobi Wine started in the ghetto of Kamwokya" (Customer November 14, 2016).

At maama Rhoda's tavern, the man's expression about Bobi Wine's success signals the potential of new spaces of participation. As we recall, it was at the Kamwokya ghetto that Bobi Wine initiated his career as a musician and consequently, a politician. The Kamwokya ghetto is an unconventional space for participation, yet, it is place where new ideas from youth have emerged through the agency of Bobi Wine among others. In a similar way, the man's expression: "[t]his is where great ideas begin," was a way of reaffirming that ideas or participation can take place in non-traditional spaces, such as taverns, where people go to drink, smoke, and chat with friends after a long day's work. Thus, regardless of place, people are utilizing contemporary spaces of participation to formulate ideas that can act as templates of discussions at other forums within the larger public sphere. These spaces are non-traditional and more inclusive in contrast to other traditional forums, such as the national radio or TV stations, or the parliament where selected parliamentarians exchange opinions of people from their individual constituencies.

All five popular songs analyzed in this dissertation demonstrate how popular music has participated in the transformation of the public sphere in Uganda into a more participatory arena. Popular music has provided an alternative avenue to traditional modes of representation that were historically controlled by the state. Through popular songs, the struggles and social aspirations of multiple publics are articulated in the form of symbolic material. Through its ability to ignite debates that influence social change in society, popular music has rendered publics audible.

The rise of new spaces and modes of participation has occurred amidst increasing authoritarian control by Museveni's government. I have called attention to how the capital city of

Kampala is central to the production of music and its dissemination throughout Uganda. Moreover, Kampala is an important place, tightly guarded by state security agencies in fear of any tensions that may arise from protests against the state or the dominant public. By virtue of its strategic location and status, Kampala attracts people from multiple ethnicities and is a space for blurring collective boundaries. It is within such tightly guarded spaces of Kampala's urban space that publics organize to articulate their social aspirations. As I have emphasized, these publics are constituted by intersecting categories including ethnicity, religion, political ideology, age, as well as gender and sexuality, among others. Due to their intersectional character, it is impossible to define the border lines of particular publics.

While there are multiple publics in contemporary Uganda, my dissertation centers on the Buganda kingdom, the LGBT community, the Kampala street vendors, Besigye's opposition public, as well as the emergent "people-power" public of youth. These publics are based in Kampala city, where my ethnographic research was based. As the capital city with the largest population among cities in Uganda, crime and protests are frequent.

One of the implications of Kampala's crowded nature is the difficulty of drawing border lines between ethnic groups, namely the Baganda and non-Baganda people. As I pointed out in the second chapter, some people identify as Baganda even when one of their parents is not a *Muganda.* In another example, some people of Indian descent who were born in Buganda also identify as Baganda. And as a sign of inclusion, kabaka Mutebi II has in the past appointed a person of Indian descent to his *lukiiko* (cabinet of ministers). Thus, the multiple ways that people construct their identities complicate any attempt at drawing boundaries based on ethnicity. My study describes a simultaneous overlap of identities based on multiple social categories, which enables us to understand how Uganda's multiple publics intersect.

Paul Ssaaka's "Omulemeb Omutebi," Jackie Chandiru's "Ikumabo," Adam Mulwana's "Toka kwa Barabara," as well as Bobi Wine's "Tuambire Ku Jennifer" and "Freedom" exemplify how ethnicity, language, and publics intersect through sonic material. Although each of these above-mentioned songs employs a mixture of languages, Luganda is present in each case. Despite various social differences, Luganda provides a common language for Kampala urban dwellers. To elaborate my point, I recall Chandiru's "Ikumabo," whose Luganda phrases invite listeners to enjoy love in their own way. The song not only engages with heterosexual individuals who belong to multiple publics (based on, for example, labor or ethnicity or gender or age), but also invites same-sex loving individuals who identify as Baganda. This way, Chandiru's song does not restrict its listeners to one public but engages simultaneous publics. The consumption of this song offers insight into how publics intersect as they consume symbolic material.

In yet another example, I recall a section in Chandiru's "Ikumabo" which briefly modulates from simple to compound time to simulate the baakisimba drumming and dance groove. In Ssaaka's "Omulembe Omutebi," however, the groove of the song is predominantly based on the baakisimba drumming and dance groove even though it briefly modulates to simple time, before modulating back to compound time. The employment of the baakismb*a* drumming and dance groove invites listeners to relate to a traditional performance practice in Buganda. Anyone who identifies as belonging to Buganda may appreciate such sonic elements based on their cultural orientation. Yet, in so doing, their simultaneous appreciation of, and identification with such a sonic element may not bind listeners to the Buganda public since they may already belong to other publics. I suggest, therefore, that aural practices are imperative in shaping how people identify their belonging to publics. This way, aurality becomes crucial among networks

that shape intersectionalities among publics. Regardless of social categories, publics intersect through modes of listening.

7.1 Conclusion

Although the five publics discussed in this dissertation draw attention to historic contingencies, they should not be perceived as disjointed. Even though their ascendance foregrounds particular moments within Uganda's history, these publics are not isolated. Rather, they should be conceived as working together or intersecting at multiple levels. At a macro level, for instance, the identities and social relations of these marginalized publics are shaped by disenfranchisement and social/economic constraints. And even though each of these publics arose within a particular historic moment, their struggles are ongoing. As such, their unending hope for a better Uganda coincides with the struggles and hopes of old and new publics. Thus, at the intersection of both old and new publics is the hope for a better society, one where people are free to enjoy their constitutional rights as guaranteed by the constitution of Uganda.

The lack of clearly articulated boundaries among groups foregrounds a great deal of interactivity among Uganda's marginalized publics. For instance, a number of my interlocutors who identified as same-sex loving individuals also identified as Buganda, by virtue of their ethnicity, and to the "people-power" public, given their youthful age and political aspirations that align with Bobi Wine's political movement (or agenda). Of course, this was not the case in 2014 when Wine expressed homophobic sentiments against the LGBT public. However, Wine's position changed in 2017 when he became MP and publicly announced support for same-sex relationships. This is one of the scenarios where publics are collapsed into an entity that renders border lines of particular publics blurry.

The "people power" public demonstrate yet another scenario of intersectionality. Lacking a traditional political structure, "people power" (as discussed in chapter six) has opened doors to supporters from multiple political parties, including the ruling NRM party. As one of the two strongest opposition publics in Uganda, the "people-power" public recognizes the struggles of other opposition publics and supporters within the ruling government. While one of its unique features is its attraction to youth, "people power" supports the aspirations of the underclass. Yet, the underclass includes street vendors, LGBT individuals, members of Besigye's people's government, and Buganda. Bobi Wine's project is a call to unite, regardless of social categories or political inclinations.

To emphasize my point even further, it should be noted that some outspoken same-sex loving individuals (such as Kesha Nabagesera) have not only publicly advocated for acceptance in society, but have also acknowledged the aspirations of other publics whose members are related through familial ties. As Uganda moves toward its 2021 general elections, these marginalized publics will work together to mount strong opposition against Museveni and his ruling NRM party. Public alliances between marginalized publics and the "people-power" public, which is preparing to present Bobi Wine as presidential candidate, demonstrate these intersectionalities.

I have argued that rampant hostilities by the state (against the basic rights of assemblage, association, and freedom of expression) have promoted rather than prevented the rise of publics since the early 1990s. These hostilities are reinforced by the predominantly heteronormative culture and some Christian denominations such as evangelical pastors and the Catholic church that define the norms of sexuality in Uganda's society. Despite their individual ideologies, the publics discussed in this dissertation are not isolated. They have well-defined goals that work as

templates for their activities within the public sphere. These goals enable publics to organize

means and avenues of participation through which their social aspirations can be articulated. As I

have shown, popular music renders these publics audible. However, media and technology also

enhance the work of these publics. For example, radio in Buganda is an important platform for

channeling Buganda concerns. For the LGBT public, the online journal *Bombastic* is an

important resource where same-sex loving individuals share their stories and experiences. In

Bombastic, song texts about minority sexuality and identity are shared, forming a unique forum

of participation for the LGBT community. And for all the publics whose music has been

censored, the Internet has become an important avenue of dissemination and a platform of

participation.

My dissertation should not be misunderstood as one which foregrounds music at the

expense of other popular cultural forms. Rather, while recognizing dance and music as

intersectional, it should be seen as one that underscores the importance of popular music in the

transformation of contemporary public spheres (both physical and virtual) into spaces of popular

participation by multiple publics. Africanist scholars have heretofore paid little attention to this

transformational role of popular music in the formation of multiple publics. As such, this project

is a humble contribution to the ways that popular music has enhanced participation, with

postcolonial Uganda as a case study.

These publics are not monolithic in the sense that they are exclusive in terms of religion,

culture, gender, sexuality, or creed. Rather, they are flexible and interactive, a dynamic that

renders their boundaries blurry. Membership to these publics is not restricted. Moreover,

members are not forced into a politics of allegiance. They are free to join or leave at any time. As

I have discussed, many belong simultaneously to multiple publics; for example, several of my

interlocutors identified simultaneously as Baganda, *kuchu,* and supporters of "people power." Many in the LGBT community insisted that they were not only Baganda, but that they were loyal to the kabaka. They said that in this case what was most important for them was to identify as they wished rather than how culture prescribes values and morals against their own wishes.

I have noted that music has been crucial to the construction of marginalized publics in Uganda. I have noted that in some instances, symbolic material is characterized by the recontextualization of indigenous musical materials into urbanized sounds using music software. Indigenous and Western musical idioms are combined to form an interactive sonic world, similar to what Gautier (2006) has called "sonic transculturation," an episteme that enacts or disrupts "sonic purification" (Gautier 2006: 803). This simultaneous attending feature of the process of sonic recontextualization is what I frame as sonic antagonism, an episteme that allows listeners to negotiate ways of listening and by doing so, to imagine a sense of hope for a better Uganda. It is this sense of hope that assembles publics into a complex web of intersectionalities that render individual boundaries of publics audible.

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