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SINGING POLITICS?: A HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF POPULAR GOSPEL MUSIC AND PENTECOSTALISM IN KENYA'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

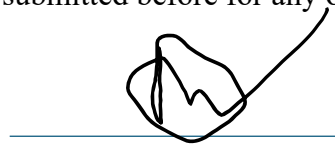
DAMARIS NGOKI NGORU

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Wits School of Arts, Faculty of Humanities,
University of the Witwatersrand

Johannesburg, November 2024.

Declaration

I declare that this research thesis is my unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.



Damaris Ngoki Ngoru

Student Number: 2529577

14 November 2024.

Abstract

This study investigates the role of popular gospel music and Pentecostalism in Kenya's presidential elections. Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has, over the years, shaped the political and social fabric of the country, as a significant portion of the population adheres to this religion. Contemporary gospel music, originating from Pentecostal ideologies, has become the dominant genre in Kenya and has as a result been employed by presidential candidates during electoral campaigns. My work has led me to conclude that gospel music serves three essential functions in a campaign: endorsement of presidential candidates; a socio-political reflection of the society; and facilitation of peacebuilding and reconciliation.

I conducted both physical and virtual ethnographies, which included interviews with gospel artists who have collaborated with presidential candidates and online observations of live campaign coverage. I have theoretically employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) on the lyrics of selected songs as case studies, some of which contain biblical passages that figuratively likened presidential candidates to biblical figures. I also incorporate religious populism in my analysis chapters, a relatively interesting concept that remains overlooked in African nations, particularly in Kenya. Presidential candidates have employed the theory of 'religious populism', characterised by a dichotomy of 'us' versus 'them', where 'us' represents political candidates embodying religious principles and 'them' denotes the opposition. I argue that gospel music in this context was appropriated to exploit the general will of the population. Although gospel music continues to be an important component in politics both presently and in the foreseeable future in Kenya, the pitfalls of employing gospel music in these 'secular' contexts must be acknowledged, as discussed in the concluding section.

Contents

Declaration……..ii

Abstract……..iii

Contents…….iv

List of Figures…….....vii

Abbreviations……...viii

Acknowledgments…….....x

Chapter One: Introduction

Background……1

Aim and Background of the Study…….....2

Problem Statement and Research Questions…….....4

Rationale…….5

Gospel Music in Africa……...6

Gospel Music in Kenya: A Historical Background and Development……...8

Gospel Music as a Socio-political Mirror…….....12

Peacebuilding and Reconciliation…….....14

Endorsement of Presidential Candidates……...16

Methodology…….....17

'Virtual' Ethnography……...19

Chapter Outline……22

Ethical Consideration……...22

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Popular Music in East Africa……...23

Religion in the Public Sphere……...29

Religious Populism……...33

Overtly Religious: Politicising the Sacred……...38

Covertly Religious: Sacralising the Political……39

Biblical Parables in African Politics…….....40

Critical Discourse Analysis of Campaign Music…….44

The Media and Religion in Africa…….....49

Chapter Three: Charismatic Pentecostalism, Politics and the Electoral Process in Africa

The Genesis of Christianity in Africa……...52

Pentecostalism in Africa……...56

Neo-Pentecostalism and State Affairs in Kenya……...61

Bishop Margaret Wanjiru- 'Mama na Kazi'…….....63

Chapter Four: Kibaki Tosha!: 'Unbwogable' Rhythms and Popular Ballads in Kenya's 2002 and 2007 Presidential Elections

The 2002 Elections and the 'Unbwogable' Tales……..71

'Unbwogable' Song Analysis……...75

The 2007 Elections……...77

Eric Wainaina's 'Daima Kenya'……...79

'Daima Kenya' Song Analysis…….....82

Chapter Five: UhuRuto Political Duo: the ICC, Popular Music and Pentecostalism in the 2013 Presidential Elections

Introduction……..86

The Genesis of the ICC Leading to the 2013 Elections……...88

UhuRuto's Religious Populism in Rhetoric and Popular Music……..89

Ben Githae's Background…….....93

Song Analysis of 'Mabataro'……96

The Media's 'Peaceocracy' Frame…….100

Juliani's Background…….....101

Analysis of 'Utawala'…….104

Orchestral Analysis of 'Utawala'……...108

Rufftone's Background……...113

Song Analysis of 'Mungu Baba'……115

A Comparative Analysis of UhuRuto and the Media in the Dissemination of Gospel Music…….119

Chapter Six: Ruto the Fifth!: Hustlers, Dynasties and the 'Gospel' of the 2022 Electoral Campaigns

Introduction……123

The Genesis of the 2022 Presidential Elections…….124

Kenya Kwanza Final Campaign Trail……126

Solomon Mkubwa's Background……...128

'Mfalme wa Amani' (Prince of Peace) Lyrical Analysis……130

Regina Muthoni's Background……...134

'Ruto, Kazi ni Kazi' Song Analysis……136

Azimio la Umoja Final Campaign Trail…….142

Song Analysis of Diamond Platnumz's 'Baba Lao'……...143

The Aftermath of the 2022 Election……...147

A Comparative Analysis of Kenya Kwanza and Azimio la Umoja Campaigns…….150

Ruto's Kenya Kwanza on the Spiral…….....154

Chapter Seven: Conclusion…….156

Bibliography…….162

List of Figures

Figure 2.1. Vertical and Horizontal Representation of the Two Broad Dimensions of Populism……...34

Figure 4.1 Lyrics of the New Recontextualised Version of 'Unbwogable'……..74

Figure 4.2 Lyrics of the First Version of 'Daima Kenya'……..80

Figure 4.3 Lyrics of the Second Version of 'Daima Kenya' by Eric Wainaina……81

Figure 4.4 Transcribed Section of the 'Daima Kenya' Chorus……..83

Figure 5.1 Lyrics and Translation to Ben Githae's 'Maya ni Mabataro'……94

Figure 5.2 Transcribed 'Mabataro' Chorus…….97

Figure 5.3 Lyrics to Juliani's 'Utawala' Song……106

Figure 5.4 The Transcribed Orchestral Version of Juliani's 'Utawala' by Ibrahim Sidede…….110

Figure 5.5 Lyrics of Rufftone's 'Mungu Baba'….....116

Figure 5.6 Excerpt of the Original Orchestral Arrangement of Rufftone's 'Mungu Baba'….....117

Figure 5.7. Transcribed Violin Solo……119

Figure 6.1 Transcribed 'Mfalme wa Amani' Chorus……..131

Figure 6.2 Lyrics to Solomon Mkubwa's 'Mfalme wa Amani'…….....132

Figure 6.3 Lyrics to Regina Muthoni's 'Ruto, Kazi ni Kazi'…….136

Figure 6.4 Transcribed 'Ruto, Kazi ni Kazi' Chorus'……141

Figure 6.5 Lyrics to Diamond Platnumz's 'Baba Lao'……...145

Figure 6.6 Recontextualised Version of Diamond Platnumz's 'Baba Lao'……146

Figure 6.7 Recontextualised Lyrics of Angela Chibalonza's 'Ebenezer'……..148

Figure 6.8Lyrics of ‘Ebenezer’……..149

Abbreviations

AG Assemblies of God

AICs African Independent Churches

ANC African National Congress

CBS Colombia Broadcasting System

CCM Chama Cha Mapinduzi

CDA Critical Discourse Analysis

CITAM Christ is the Answer Ministries

CMC Computer-Mediated Communication

CPK Church of the Province of Kenya

ECK Electoral Commission of Kenya

EAR East African Records

FEM Faith Evangelistic Ministries

GBC Ghana Broadcasting Corporation

GSU General Service Unit

ICC International Criminal Court

IEBC Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

IMF International Monetary Fund

JIAM Jesus is Alive Ministries

KANU Kenya African National Union

KNA Kenya National Archive

KTN Kenya Television Network

MDGs Millennial Development Goals

MOU Memorandum of Understanding

NARC National Alliance Rainbow Coalition

NCCK National Council of Churches of Kenya

NCIC National Cohesion and Integrity Commission

NDC National Democratic Congress

NPP National Patriotic Party

ODM Orange Democratic Movement

PC/C Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity

PCC Pentecostal-Charismatic Church

PNU Party of National Unity

PPMC Permanent Presidential Music Commission

PF Patriotic Front

RTD Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam

SASRIM South African Society for Research in Music

TNA The National Alliance

TRLM Television Libre des Mille Collines

UDA United Democratic Alliance

UhuRuto Uhuru and Ruto

UKIP UK Independent Party

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Damaris Ngoki Ngoru

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Chapter One
Introduction

Background

On the surface level, music and politics could be viewed as distinct realms, but as scholars have shown, this is far from the case. John Street (2012) states that 'one is concerned with the organisation of public life; the other with the creative use of sound and the appreciation of its beauties and meanings' (Street 2012: 1). However, as the two remain linked (music and politics), for example, in protest songs, campaign music and even censored music (see Drewett and Cloonan 2006), it is evident that the music is intertwined in politics and vice versa. However, the question remains regarding how they respond to each other and how music can influence political thoughts and actions. Street explains that music and politics are not to be seen as separate entities but rather as extensions of each other. He quotes:

> Music embodies political values and experiences and organises our response to society as political thought and action. Music does not just provide a vehicle of political expression; it is that expression. Furthermore, nation-states organize us through their management of music and sound more generally. The boundaries between the two realms of music and politics are largely illusionary. (ibid., 1)

Tia DeNora (2000: 163) also supports Street's argument when she makes a bold claim that 'music forges a relationship between the polis, the citizen, and the configuration of consciousness…it is much more than a decorative art, it is a powerful medium of social order'. In illustrating this power, DeNora (2000) refers to the way music can be used to control an environment and the behaviour that takes place within it. However, music cannot only be seen simply as a tool of control and oppression but can also act to constitute identities and articulate emotions that empower people (ibid.). It should come as no surprise that composers and music artists have long recognised the potential for political impact through their music (Schoening and Kasper 2012: 1-4). Evidence of this phenomenon dates back to at least the Classical Period; for example, Ludwig van Beethoven incorporated political themes throughout his music (Schoening and Kasper 2012). He dedicated Symphony No. 3 to Napoleon Bonaparte, although after Napoleon became emperor, he dedicated it to Prince Franz Joseph von Lobkowitz. Beethoven would eventually write musical pieces that supported non-republican German politicians and the Austrian military battles against Napoleon. He also wrote a politically themed opera, *Fidelio* (ibid.). In this rhetoric, Street

(2012) demonstrates how a set of sounds, however dexterously composed and performed, orders human thought and actions. However, he does not use a musicological approach but discusses this through topics such as music censorship, music policies, and music mobilisation. This research aims to provide a musicological analysis as well as a lyrical analysis of the music used in political campaigns in Kenya. It is important to note that the significance of the sonic arrangements and lyrics differs between elections. For instance, in a given election, the lyrics of a campaign message may carry greater significance than the sound, or vice versa. This, of course, depends on the underlying themes of the different presidential campaigns.

In the African context, popular music has become a platform for thinking through politics (Askew 2002; Turino 2000; Waterman 1998; Nyairo and Ogude 2003). This is because power and resources are allocated unevenly and are highly contested in the African context (Allen 2004: 1). Therefore, music constitutes one of the primary mediums through which Africans could voice their dissatisfaction with the uneven distribution of resources. Music also voices who the Africans are, what they believe in, and what they want (Allen 2004: 1). Music functions as a trenchant political site in Africa primarily because it is amongst the most widely appreciated art form on the continent. Moreover, leisure time tends to be strongly sound-oriented (Allen 2004: 1).

This rational use of music in the African context has, to some extent, demanded that it function in a politically-effective manner by both rulers and subjects. Many African musicians are continuously expected to use their privileged access to a platform to engage in socio-political issues (Allen 2004: 2). Concerning African musicians, Allen (2004: 2) further states, 'they are the continent's investigative journalists, talk-show hosts, and editorial writers'. In many African contexts, it is secular popular music that is often used as a channel to address political issues, as seen in case studies of Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa (Mutonya 2003; Allen 2003; 2002). However, my research takes a different angle as it discusses the role of popular gospel music in Kenya's presidential campaigns.

Aim and Background of the Study

This research project aims to examine the role of popular gospel music and Pentecostalism in Kenya's presidential campaigns. Due to Pentecostalism's rapid expansion in Kenya, mainstream churches have progressively assimilated Pentecostal ideologies and exerted an influence on the country's political affairs. Also, these churches have influenced the direction

that gospel music has taken, thus forging a new identity in Kenyan popular culture (Parsitau 2008a: 62; Kidula 2011: 1). The influences of this charismatic movement are evident in the secular music circles where secular musicians either convert to Christianity or release one or two gospel songs to fit into the born-again identity. Also, musicians from both the secular and gospel sectors have collaborated on numerous music projects. However, the primary focus of my research has been on gospel songs of musicians who were brought up in and still affiliated with the Pentecostal denomination including Ben Githae, Rufftone, Juliani, Solomon Mkubwa and Regina Muthoni. I have also added Gidi Gidi and Maji Maji, secular performers from Kenya who were initially raised in the Pentecostal Church but later transitioned into the secular music industry. I have analysed each of their popular songs, which played a critical role during the four presidential campaigns in 2002, 2007, 2013 and 2022[1]. The 2002 elections signified the commencement of a new democratic era led by Mwai Kibaki, following twenty-four years of dictatorship under Daniel arap Moi. Political matters were tackled in popular music, as exemplified in Gidi Gidi and Maji Maji's track 'Unbwogable', without the fear of censorship that was prevalent during the Moi era. Thereafter, post-election violence ensued in 2007 in response to the disputed presidential election between Raila Odinga and Mwai Kibaki. Violent confrontations and ethnic tensions ensued among the supporters of the two presidential candidates. Popular music of that moment reflected the sociopolitical unrest that emerged in the aftermath of the election. Eric Wainaina's 'Daima Kenya' (Forever Kenya) became the anthem that was broadcast on all media outlets throughout the 2007/2008 post-election violence.

The prominence of gospel music and Pentecostalism in politics increased during the 2013 elections. Political allies Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto formed a formidable alliance that ultimately secured them the elections, notwithstanding their indictment by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity committed during the post-election violence of 2007/2008. In their political campaigns, the pair embodied religious principles such as prayer and forgiveness to win over the populace, which comprises approximately eighty per cent of Christians. Gospel artists, including Ben Githae, utilised his chart-topping gospel track 'Mavataro' (My Needs) to support the duo's nationwide political campaigns. The song's lyrics are a request to God to answer one's supplication. This specific song was

[1] Presidential elections in Kenya are conducted every five years, as stipulated by the Kenyan constitution (Laws of Kenya 2022). It is worth mentioning that each of these presidential campaign years had themes that later influenced the music.

appropriated by the political duo due to its alignment with their campaign narrative, which centred around petitioning God for pardon over the alleged crimes they committed. Additionally, this tactic served as an attempt to demonstrate to the populace that they were prepared for a new beginning in politics on the condition that their 'sins' were pardoned. Gospel music was utilised in this instance to endorse the political candidates. Additionally, gospel musicians and music were integrated into these campaigns by the media. The media commissioned gospel artists such as Rufftone and Juliani to compose music that conveyed a message of peace, healing and reconciliation in the nation out of concern that a recurrence of violence would occur after the election.

My omission of the 2017 presidential elections was a deliberate decision, as it appeared likely that Kenyatta and Ruto would retain their positions. Therefore, it was neither a high-stakes election nor did it involve a transfer of power; hence, the political duo did not employ significant religious themes and music to the same extent as in 2013 (see Murhala 2017). In 2022, Ruto emerged victorious during the elections; nevertheless, he utilised religious rhetoric to advance his 'hustler' political narrative and gospel music once more exerted a substantial influence on advancing his agenda. By his top-selling single 'Mfalme wa Amani' (Prince of Peace), Solomon Mkubwa, a gospel musician of Congolese descent, became the public face of Ruto's campaigns. Regina Muthoni also actively participated in campaigning for Ruto by composing the song 'Ruto, Kazi ni Kazi' (Ruto, Work is Work), which endorsed Ruto's campaign manifesto.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

Limited attention has been devoted to the study of gospel music in Kenya, particularly as it relates to political campaigns. In her work, Damaris Parsitau (2008a) attempts to examine the significance of gospel music and dance in Kenya's political discourse by providing a concise historical overview. Nevertheless, there is a lack of musicological analysis of the songs she presents, as well as the absence of theories around which she grounds her arguments. This study will address the knowledge gap in the existing body of literature by examining the intersection of religious music and politics. Religion and politics remain contentious topics nationwide, particularly in the media; thus, my research aims to offer an academic contribution rather than merely engaging in the superficial public debates frequently broadcast by Kenyan media outlets. This study will provide answers to the following questions; namely, to what extent does the Pentecostal Church facilitate the integration of gospel music and

political campaigns?; in what ways does gospel music impact and exert influence within political campaigns?; what caused gospel music to become such an effective campaign tool?; which themes predominate throughout these songs?; and, to what extent does the evolution of the media environment impact the utilisation and execution of gospel music in the context of electoral campaigns?

Rationale

My scholarly pursuit is motivated by a convergence of my fascination with religion and politics. These two elements have significantly influenced the formation of popular culture in Kenya, where most of the population is religiously and politically affiliated. In the past few years, there has been a notable prominence of gospel music on political platforms in Kenya, particularly during electoral campaigns (approximately from 2007 to date). I delivered a paper at the Music for Sustainable Development conference held at Kabarak University in Kenya, wherein I argued that gospel music was inappropriately positioned within the secular sphere. Experts in religious music and a council led by Wilson Shitandi provided insightful commentary and constructive criticism regarding this research. A panelist proposed that I examine gospel music within a more comprehensive secular framework; thus, the notion of incorporating gospel music into political campaigns emerged.

Having been raised in the Kenyan Pentecostal church since childhood, I have fully assimilated into and comprehended its cultural practices. Additionally, I have facilitated worship sessions during Sunday services and, in 2008, collaborated with six students to release a gospel album named *Armageddon*. Hence, this research finds resonance in my personal experiences as a gospel musician. Nevertheless, the course of political events has significantly impacted the religious dialogue of the nation and shaped my outlook on gospel music. My local associate pastor in Kenya cordially invited the Member of Parliament for our constituency to attend our church family service in February 2021. During the service, he delivered an address to the congregation and subsequently deliberated on his political aspirations. Following the service, he contributed a substantial sum of money to the church and in appreciation, the congregation sang a hymn of thanksgiving in honour of this ‘politician sent by God’. These unfolding events solidified my motivation to write this thesis. Additionally, the interplay between religion and politics in Kenya may evolve in the future; thus, my research will serve as a reference for scholars seeking to further explore this topic.

Gospel Music in Africa

Since the 1980s, gospel music has emerged as one of the most dynamic and widespread genres of popular music in Africa (Carl 2021: 1). In nations with significant Christian demographics, popular gospel music is currently prevailing in national entertainment sectors. Thus, in prominent music production centres such as Lagos, Accra, or Nairobi, gospel music represents the predominant segment of commercial music production (Brennan 2015; Collins 2014; Kidula 2000). John Collins (2004, 2014) estimated that by the late 1980s, gospel music airplay on the state-owned Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) exceeded fifty per cent. Following the liberalisation of the media market and the advent of numerous new private broadcasters in the 1990s, the market share of gospel increased to over sixty percent (Carl 2021: 1). Bob White (2008: 35–37) observed that by the mid-1990s, popular gospel music started competing with secular dance music as the most preferred musical genre among listeners in Kinshasa and the Congolese diaspora.

By the onset of the twenty-first century in Kenya, gospel music had emerged, as noted by Jean Kidula, as 'probably the most lucrative music business' (2010: 62). Ezra Chitando observed, 'an explosion of gospel music' (2002: 7) that occurred in Zimbabwe and other regions of Southern Africa throughout the 1980s and 1990s, while other scholars have documented similar shifts in Nigeria (Ojo 1998) and Uganda (Basoga 2012). Vibrant gospel music industries have developed across the continent. New award initiatives and multimedia entertainment formats have been established to advance African gospel music, thereby enhancing the significant public visibility of Christian popular music and culture currently observed in numerous African states and the African diaspora[2].

Florian Carl (2021) argues that two primary factors accelerated the proliferation of gospel music across Africa. First, the remarkable rise of charismatic churches began in prominent cities during the 1970s. These emerged to compete with both traditional mission churches and African Independent Churches (AICs) founded in the early twentieth century (Gifford 1998; Meyer 2004; Robbins 2004). Charismatics draw upon the theological framework and

[2] An example is the Africa Gospel Awards Festival, conducted in Accra in 2019, honouring musicians from Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa. Also, the MTV Africa Music Awards, a continent-wide platform, have acknowledged numerous gospel singers since their establishment in 2008, notably the Kenyan gospel musician Owen Mwatia, known as Daddy Owen, who received the Best Anglophone award for his song 'Tobina' in 2010 (see Kidula 2011).

ritualistic traditions of classical Pentecostalism, especially emphasising what Birgit Meyer (2007) characterises as the 'Born Again' ethic. The charismatic revival is a component of the global Faith Movement that originated in the United States (Coleman 2002). By the end of the millennium, it had emerged as 'the most dynamic and rapidly expanding sector of Protestant Christianity globally' (Casanova 2001: 435)[3]. Gospel music, a fundamental component of Pentecostal and charismatic worship services and outreach initiatives like 'crusades', 'revivals', and other large gatherings, has been recognised as 'one of the most significant means by which charismatics shape their identity and penetrate public space' (Hackett 1998: 263). Pentecostal-charismatic churches serve as venues and training grounds for gospel music and musicians, while also significantly contributing to the production and dissemination of popular gospel music, with some emerging as key industry participants (Carl 2021).

The implementation of neoliberal reforms in the 1980s and 1990s significantly influenced the proliferation of gospel music in Africa. Neoliberal economic policies were forced on numerous African nations by international lenders, such as the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank. Framed as 'structural adjustment', these policies included severe austerity measures, market liberalisation, privatisation of state assets, and a reduction in funding for public sector institutions (Ferguson 2006). Therefore, there has been a significant alignment between neo-Pentecostalism and neoliberal capitalism in Africa, characterised by their adoption of an extreme free-market ideology and a messianic, quasi-magical perspective on prosperity and wealth accumulation (Coleman 2000; de Witte 2018; Gifford 2004; Hackett 1995; Maxwell 1998; Meyer 2007). African Christianity has progressively embraced the gospel of prosperity and has become increasingly commercialised, while the 'messianic, millennial capitalism' engendered by neoliberalism 'presents itself as a gospel of salvation' (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000: 292). Neoliberal prosperity theology is a common theme in

[3] This thesis will employ the term 'Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity' to collectively denote the expressive culture that emerged from the charismatic revival of the 1970s, which extended much beyond the boundaries of charismatic churches. Charismatics broadly exhibit numerous fundamental characteristics of Pentecostalism, such as 'the centrality of the Holy Spirit and its manifestation in ecstatic experiences, the emphasis on being Born Again, and a dualistic worldview grounded in the opposition between God and the Devil' (Meyer 2007: 6). Charismatic churches differentiate themselves from traditional Pentecostal churches by their pronounced global orientation, the structure of the mass or megachurch, the focus on the Prosperity Gospel, and the adept use of mass media for idea propagation (Meyer 2007: 6). It is important to observe that the distinction between charismatic and non-charismatic denominations is increasingly becoming less obvious, as several of these characteristics are also emerging in other denominations, including older mission churches and other African Independent Churches (AICs). Certain scholars, therefore, perceive the charismatic revival as an element of a wider 'African Reformation' (Anderson 2001).

some African gospel music, advocating a perspective wherein wealth and socioeconomic achievement are perceived as external manifestations of divine favour and grace, whereas poverty and illness are regarded as evil afflictions requiring exorcism (Carl 2021).

Moving 'from the liturgical context within churches to the public sphere' (Ojo 1998: 210), gospel music has effectively served as the sonic background to neoliberal reforms across Africa during the 1980s. It serves, as noted by some, as an expressive medium that symbolically reflects the socioeconomic transformation the continent experienced from the 1980s to the 2000s (see Gwekwerere 2009; Parsitau 2008), offering hope and solace during periods of insecurity and adversity while simultaneously reinforcing neoliberal ideologies of competition, accumulation, and consumption. Gospel music serves as an aesthetic medium that actively involves its audiences in processes of (self)transformation, manifesting as an embodied, emotive experience inside charismatic rituals and through the ritualisation of everyday life (Csordas 2011). Popular gospel music not only mirrors wider societal developments, as noted by some, but also fosters the development of a neoliberal worldview and habitus inside individual subjectivity and behaviour (Carl 2021). In this chapter, I will illustrated how gospel music reflected the socio-political realities in several African states during and after the implementation of structural adjustment programs.
I have similarly expanded this approach to demonstrate the function of gospel music as a soci o-political reflection of the nation during Kenya's presidential campaigns.

Gospel Music in Kenya: A Historical Background and Development[4]

According to Kidula (2000: 408), the term 'gospel' refers to a popular Christian genre that often consists of one to eight performers. In Kenya, the term 'gospel' is employed as an industry designation encompassing commercialised Christian music, irrespective of its religious or secular musical character. Being a very profitable occupation, it has become an appealing choice as a career. During the 1980s, prominent foreign-owned record firms, namely CBS, Polygram and AIT, asserted that the absence of local performers resulted in the promotion of international and pan-African artists. The proponents of this imported music

[4] In the scholarship on the history of gospel music in Kenya, Jean Kidula was the first ethnomusicologist to contribute extensively to this area of study. Therefore, I will regularly reference her. However, there are literature and theological scholars such as Joyce Nyairo and Damaris Parsitau, respectively, who have made attempts to analyse contemporary gospel music in Kenya, although not in as much detail as Kidula. Generally, all these scholars mentioned have contributed immensely to this chapter.

underscored that the indigenous and prosperous customer base never valued or actively sought out local music. In Nairobi's River Road, which is considered the unofficial music area for local artists and session musicians, the stores and wholesalers primarily sold Congolese or Tanzanian music products, which hurt local music (Kidula 2000). The diminishing of local content was facilitated by state-owned radio and TV stations through their acceptance of bribes from multinational corporations to endorse international performers (Stapleton and May 1989: 226-29). The cultural imperialism overtly subjected Kenyans to the influence of international music aesthetics. Notwithstanding the government's directives on broadcasting local music, their implementation of sales and promotional strategies for local music was poor. Kenyan musicians were composing music in the 'Congolese' style; nevertheless, from a cultural standpoint, there is a preference for live club performances as opposed to the recorded version.

In Nairobi, the hub of recording in East and Central Africa, the cassette business in Kenya had reached a level of development that facilitated convenient access to music for the public. However, the general population required convincing to acquire the product. Jambo Records, a regional record label, has been in operation since the 1950s to promote and nurture local talent. The company created widely acclaimed commercial recordings, including the 'Malaika' song (Harrev 1989). Considering the standing point of worldwide and local record labels on local music products, Kidula (2000) addresses the factors that contributed to the rise of gospel music as a popular genre which include; where the genre developed and nurtured; the gospel musicians of that particular season; and the impact of the genre on the growth of the Kenyan record market. According to Kidula:

> Music roots itself in particular traditions rather than suddenly bursting onto the scene. Through innovations initiated, manipulated, and approved by composers, producers, and audiences, new styles are birthed. (2000: 410)

The Multinational companies were partially correct in suggesting that there was no Kenyan music tradition. Like most African countries, Kenya comprises many 'nations' (ethnicities). Henceforth, after Kenya gained independence in 1963, the government desired a representative musical genre that was to be in a language that was widely disseminated or in a 'neutral' language; preferably a language that did not have any Congolese expression (Kidula 2000: 410). Swahili's popularity in music grew as it spread across East and Central Africa, providing an added advantage. In this vein, the multinationals were looking for a secular

product, but the Kenyan public gravitated towards a Christian religious product (Kidula 2000: 411).

The presence of religious musical products in Kenya may be traced back to the nineteenth century when Christianity was introduced to the country (Kidula 2000). The contemporary religious milieu in Kenya can be attributed to the influence of Western colonial politics and the efforts of missionaries. During the period of colonisation, music emulated the Western musical structure known as 'Makwaya', a Swahili name denoting 'choir'. One issue arose from the primary responsibility of the missionaries in enforcing this music. The compositions employed a four-part harmony structured according to European hymn/chorale conventions. During the latter part of the 1980s, musicians initiated a gradual yet cautious integration of drums and other African instruments into the choral repertoire (Kidula 2000: 412). The perception of Kenyan choral music performances by the British missionaries was characterised by deficiencies in tonality, movement and instrumentation. According to Spencer (1975: 40), Kenyans included handclapping and subtle dance moves as a means of sustaining the tempo. The inclusion of these 'African' features was perceived as a pagan custom. The local music producers expressed a desire for the Kenyan performers to embody European characteristics while also including elements of Africanness. This approach was perceived as perplexing and lacking clarity by the missionaries (Kidula 2000: 412).

It is apparent that Christian genres were indeed present in Kenya, yet the marketing of Christian music elicited a multitude of diverse responses from the broader public's worldview. Kidula (1998 and 2000) argues that the assertion of the absence of Kenyan local artists might be interpreted as a strategic marketing tactic aimed at a misguided audience. The global corporations did not perceive gospel music as a commercially viable product, nor did they conduct any research on the genre's potential for widespread distribution. Choral music, being a collective endeavour, prohibited individual performers from establishing themselves. Local musicians were unable to establish reputations as solo performers. According to Kidula (2000: 414), for the stars (musicians) to shine, it was necessary to investigate alternative music that was both unconventional yet acceptable, had national accessibility, expressed contemporary ideas, encouraged individual innovation and socially acceptable. Contemporary gospel music has evolved as a viable alternative to traditional choral music, with the national airwaves serving as a prominent platform for its dissemination and exposure. While both the Swahili and English languages were employed in the musical compositions, Swahili garnered

a more favourable reception because it is the national language. According to Kidula (2000: 414), gospel musicians strategically positioned themselves by establishing a sustainable genre that incorporated not only their ethnic and religious associations but also their understanding of the music demands.

The churches consistent in conducting choral music performances generally conveyed a sense of ambiguity regarding the commercialisation of Christian music and their engagement within the music business. The focus of their concern revolved around the historical practice of musicians in the church performing without charge, intending to glorify God (Kidula 2000: 414). Furthermore, they deemed it a sin to derive financial gain from something earned without any expense, as salvation was attained without any monetary sacrifice. Also, when groups recorded music, it served as a straightforward method of 'publishing' and ensuring its longevity. Additionally, the tunes were not perceived as sufficiently good by the market. The music failed to engage with societal concerns, as its sole objective was to disseminate the gospel. For gospel music to attain widespread recognition, it needed to be consumed in non-religious settings, as most of the commercially produced gospel music was typically performed in clubs and pubs. Also, the issue of copyright was not sufficiently addressed and managed properly by the government (Kidula 2000). Joseph Kassanga, Mary Atieno and Faustin Munishi developed their skills in solo gospel performances through the well-received program 'Sing and Shine' during the 1980s and 1990s. Munishi received acclaim for his exceptional poetic talent, Kassanga for his exceptional marketing skills and Atieno for her remarkable singing capability (Kidula 2000: 415).

Following its success in the 1990s, gospel music started to penetrate beyond religious communities and gained recognition in the public sphere (Parsitau 2012: 496). According to Joyce Nyairo (2015a), the state-organised political assemblies in the 2000s provided a new platform for its presence (see also Parsitau 2008a). Based on my research, I have identified three crucial functions of gospel music in political contexts: serving as a socio-political mirror; promoting peacebuilding and reconciliation; and providing endorsement of presidential candidates. I demonstrate the applicability of these functions inside the political spheres of various countries with a particular focus on Western and African countries beyond Kenya. Then, in the following chapters (Four, Five and Six), I examine these positions within the specific context of Kenya.

Gospel Music as a Socio-Political Mirror

According to Matthew Ojo (1998), gospel music in Nigeria serves as a means of critiquing and commenting on the socioeconomic and political transformations that occurred in the country between the 1980s and the 1990s. The music effectively tackles matters of poverty, corruption and inequality, either through direct or indirect means. According to Gadziro Gwekwerere (2009: 353), gospel music in Zimbabwe can be seen as a reflection of the current societal mood. According to Gwekwerere (2009), the gospel music of the 1980s and 1990s was predominantly focused on reform. The performance of songs such as 'Mugove' (My Portion of Wealth) by Leonard Zhakata motivated political leadership in Zimbabwe to confront societal and economic concerns, shed light on the unethical conduct of the ruling class and question the corrupt and dishonest behaviours exhibited by high-ranking individuals. The population of Zimbabwe faced substantial socioeconomic difficulties due to the implementation of the structural adjustment program. The nation was impacted by inflation, industrial closures and retrenchments. Gospel music emerged as a means of expressing the grievances of the marginalised, who felt that the government had betrayed the principles of the liberation movement (see Mapuranga and Chitando 2006 for further details). Fungisayi Mashavave conveys these challenges in her song 'Kurarama Inyasha' (God is the Solution), emphasising that God is the one remedy during challenging periods. The broader significance of gospel music as a means of expressing ethnic, national and occasionally pan-African identity in the context of growing globalisation, has been emphasised by several scholars (Chitando, 2002; Kidula, 2010, 2011; Lamont, 2010). In the next section, I give an overview of gospel music as a social-political mirror in the United States of America.

Gospel music played a prominent role in social movements in the United States. Its function was to foster the formation of communities, articulate opposition to political perspectives, transmit hidden signals among participants in movements, ignite optimism and cultivate bravery (Corte 2013; Roy 2010). Music had a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement (1950s to 1960s), with many perceiving it as a 'singing movement' (Appleton 1975: 243; Eyerman, 2002). According to Clyde Appleton (1975: 243), the significance of song inside the Movement is perhaps unparalleled in the history of significant social movements in the United States. According to Tee Walker (1979: 46), a notable characteristic of the social importance of spirituals is the recurring motif of hope and assurance in the attainment of emancipation. During the escape to freedom, certain songs, including 'Wade in the Waters',

served as encoded signals (Jones 2007; Rose 2007). Canaan, also known as the Promised Land, functioned as a point of reference for seeking refuge in a more favourable location, like the Underground Railroad. According to Walker (1997), the spirituals played a significant role in the slave society by exerting a cohesive influence on both the 'invisible church' and the wider population of the slave quarters. Invisible churches were clandestine assemblies conducted in isolated locations without the awareness of the 'slave masters', wherein people would attend religious services led by preachers of their selection (Raboteau 1978). The use of gospel hymns during the Civil Rights Movement closely parallels that of Apartheid in South Africa, given their similar histories of racial segregation (see Power 2014) . Hymns like 'Siyahamba' (We are Marching in the Light of God) symbolised the living and the deceased marching forward despite oppression and social injustice during Apartheid (Gorelik 2020). The worship of ancestors is a prevalent custom among indigenous South Africans; hence, the deceased are perceived as advocating for the living. This South African hymn is currently performed globally, notably at concerts and church services across North America. Nonetheless, the music of the Civil Rights Movement did not influence Kenya's gospel music at that time, as Kenya achieved independence in 1963, before the end of the Movement. Additionally, due to British colonisation, Kenya's gospel music scenes were significantly shaped by British missionary churches, as previously noted in this chapter.

During Donald Trump's 2020 presidential campaign, Daniel Dietrich, a worship pastor, gained widespread attention for writing an anti-Trump song called 'Hymn for the 81%' calling out the eighty-one percent of white evangelical voters who supported Trump in 2016 (Seipel 2020). In an interview, he states:

> In 2016, 81 percent of white evangelical Christians voted for Donald Trump after, among other things, hearing an audio recording of him bragging about sexually assaulting women. Even after enacting deliberately cruel policies to rip families apart and put children in cages at the southern border, evangelical support is as fervent as ever. I was raised in the evangelical world and was taught to take the words of Jesus seriously: love God, love your neighbour, feed the hungry, and fight against injustice. Perhaps some feathers needed to be ruffled by this song. (Seipel 2020)

The song has gained more than 700,000 views on YouTube (Deitrich 2020). Part of the lyrics state, 'You said speak the truth. I'm calling you out. Why don't you live up to the words you put in my mouth? May love overcome and justice roll down' (Deitrich 2020). Deitrich described the song as a 'lament and rebuke', ending with the lyrics 'come home, you are

better than this, you taught me better than this' (Deitrich 2020). While the song drew praise from the left, those in the conservative party criticised it for being 'divisive'. These scenarios demonstrate how gospel music exposes the sociopolitical conditions of the respective society; as such, they are crucial for understanding how gospel music functions in Kenyan election campaigns.

Peacebuilding and Reconciliation

In the event of a war/conflict in a country, music can be used to enhance human life or destroy it (Urbain 2015; O'Connell and Castelo-Branco 2010). In Rwanda, during the pre- and post-genocide periods, popular music played two critical functions: one was to instigate violence and the other was to foster peace-building through the commemoration of the horrific events. Daniel Mwambari (2019: 1325) further argues that a full analysis of music in Rwanda requires the exploration of two separate domains of research: the role of music in instigating violence and its contribution to post-conflict reconstruction. Considering the capacity of music to galvanise populations, politicians employ it as an instrument to promote their objectives which are occasionally manifest in acts of violence. According to George Kent (2008: 104), individuals in positions of political authority occasionally employ music as a means of disseminating propaganda. Similarly, music was employed to spread propaganda during the Rwandan genocide and Simon Bikindi was among the musicians who were accused of these atrocities (Street 2012: 2-3). Bikindi was a prominent Hutu musician who played an influential role in spreading the hatred that fuelled the genocide against the Tutsi people in 1994. Bikindi's music was played by the French radio station *Television Libre des Mille Collines* (its French acronym is TRLM) daily during the genocide. Alison Des Forges (1999) observes that 'when patrols went out to kill, they went off singing the songs heard on RTLM, such as those of the popular Simon Bikindi'. There was, however, no evidence that Bikindi himself instructed the radio to play his music (McCoy 2013: 10). Bikindi's fate was later determined at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), who noted in their judgment that Bikindi was a celebrity who used his influence to incite genocide through speech (Grant et. al., 2010; McCoy 2013: 11). After a lengthy trial that garnered international attention, particularly from defenders of free speech, authorities convicted and sentenced Bikindi to fifteen years in prison, not for his music but for the speeches he delivered during the genocide (McCoy 2013; Snyder 2006). Marlise Simons (2008) wrote in the *New York Times*, describing Bikindi as the 'first entertainer to be found guilty of a genocide-related

charge'. Furthermore, scholars have argued how music is used in conflict transformation by constructing narratives that revolve around a collective history of violence and fostering peace in the aftermath of war (Mwambari 2019: 1325). Kizito Mihigo's gospel music can be classified within this genre due to his extensive involvement in shaping the narratives of commemoration and collective memory in Rwanda, focusing on promoting peace and reconciliation (see also Monte and Kiguru 2018).

Mihigo (1981–2020) composed 200 liturgical tunes that gained widespread popularity in Catholic masses around the country before age 19. Furthermore, in the year 2000, he engaged in a collaborative effort with fellow Rwandan musicians to craft the composition of the Rwanda National Anthem (Mwambari 2019). Following his national recognition, he was awarded a scholarship to further his studies in France. Due to the genocide, Mihigo (from the Tutsi ethnic community) became an orphan, which led him to compose songs that played a crucial role in his quest for survival. Both of his songs, namely 'Amateka' (History) and 'Ijoro Ribara Uwariraye' (Loosely: The One Who Was Awake Narrates the Night Tales), had a significant impact on the conversations held among the Rwandan people during the memorial ceremonies of 2011 and 2012. The two songs achieved popularity throughout the remembrance period for various reasons. Firstly, the songs tackled crucial inquiries that had been the focal point of disputes. Secondly, Mihigo's distinctive musical approach leveraged his Catholic identity and his status as a young survivor of the genocide to interact with the broader Rwandan society in a manner unparalleled by any other musician (Mwambari 2019: 1327). Despite allegations of involvement in the genocide, the Catholic Church continues to exert significant influence in Rwanda (Longman 2010; Rittner et al. 2004). Mihigo openly urges all Rwandans to assume the responsibility of recalling the past and preserving their collective memory. In the song 'Amateka', the second line expresses the desire for unity among Rwandan brothers and sisters. The historical narrative, whether positive or negative, necessitates safeguarding it against individuals who employ destructive ideologies. In a manner consistent with his previous musical compositions, the artist commences the second song titled 'The One Who Was Awake', by employing gentle keyboard melodies while vocalising the following line: 'Children of our nation, Rwanda, come let us remember, remember the genocide against the Tutsi' (Mwambari 2019: 1327). The song is an anthem that celebrates the unity and healing of the nation of Rwanda.

Mihigo's songs use Christian rhetoric and concepts. For instance, in 'Amateka', he expresses his admiration for the resurrection that the Cross has brought to Rwanda, rather than praising the Cross itself. Mihigo employs the religious representation of the cross, a significant emblem of the narrative surrounding Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, to allude to the forthcoming Easter celebration, which occurs in April, coinciding with the commemoration month of Rwanda. Mihigo asserts that the genocide in Rwanda might be likened to the crucifixion of Christ, drawing a parallel between Rwanda's revival and Christ's resurrection. In addition, the artist juxtaposes darkness and light in the two songs, suggesting that Jesus Christ's crucifixion was intended to introduce illumination into the world (as cited from John 1:3-5). These biblical references struck a chord not just with Catholics, but also with adherents of other religious groups in Rwanda.

Endorsement of Presidential Candidates

Gospel music has the potential to support political candidates by incorporating biblical scriptures into its songs (Amoakohene et al. 2019: 117). According to Amoakohene et al. (2019: 117), election campaign songs in Ghana incorporate many themes that are connected to the utilisation of Biblical imagery, repetition and testimony. Amoakohene et al. (2019: 117) posit that people use biblical metaphors and images to indicate divine help and actively proclaim divine truth. The song 'Tiki-Taka' exemplifies a religious metaphor that links significant political leaders with religious characters, while also implying a heavenly decision. The song endeavours to establish a connection between the Biblical figure Elijah and the deceased Ghanaian president Evans Mills, who passed away while holding office. John Dramani Mahama, the head of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party, was likened to Elisha. Elijah, a prophet mentioned in the Bible (2 Kings: chapter 2), bequeathed his spiritual authority and double portion of his anointing to his successor, Elisha. Similarly, the lyrics imply that Mahama, as Mills' constitutional successor, was poised to acquire a twofold portion of Mills' ability to effectively implement the nation's development plan. The term 'double' had a pivotal role in the political campaign rhetoric of the NDC during the year 2012. In addition to portraying Mahama as a divinely selected candidate, the song also implies that he ought to serve as the president during the second term of his deceased predecessor, Mills. The song additionally draws a parallel between Mahama and the biblical character 'Joshua', who assumed the role of his predecessor Moses in guiding the Israelites into the land of promise (Amoakohene et al., 2019: 118).

According to Amoakohene et al. (2019: 120), many political campaign songs depicted candidates as humble and obedient individuals who desired divine assistance to achieve power and triumph. As an illustration, the song 'Great Victory' during the 2012 presidential elections depicted Nana Addo, the presidential candidate of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), as a devout individual who fervently implored God to recall his efforts in his pursuit of electoral triumph (Amoakohene et al. 2019: 117). Piety, a composite of spirituality, dedication and humility, holds significant importance among the citizens of Ghana. Politicians often invest significant effort in projecting an image that aligns with the Christian faith, characterised by piety, dedication and charity. In addition to their usual involvement in prayers, Thanksgiving gatherings and attendance at well-known churches, songs have become important platforms for the performance and transmission of these religious images.

Methodology

In this research project, I engaged in an ethnographic methodology which I approached in two ways. First, there was the traditional form of ethnography which entailed physical interviews and individual participation and second, 'virtual' ethnography. Before travelling to South Africa for my desk-based research in February 2022, I visited the Kenya National Archives (KNA) in January 2022 and to my dismay, they did not have a single audio recording or archival material on Kenyan Elections. One of the senior staff members, John Njenga, advised that the KNA is facing financial hardships, but plans were still underway to renovate and digitise their data[5]. We discussed my research topic at length, and he advised that I visit national media institutions such as Nation TV, Royal Media Service and the Kenya Broadcast Corporation, which do live coverage of every electoral campaign in the country. He also advised that the Permanent Presidential Music Commission (PPMC) would be a suitable place for collecting audio-visual music performances during state functions. I paid a visit to the PPMC shortly after my conversation with Njenga. Although I did not gain access to the audio-visual storage room due to unforeseen circumstances, the assistant steward, Edmond Obillah (a music scholar), was kind enough to give me a tour of the institution. It was exciting to see the infrastructural developments such as the music library (which was still incomplete), music practice rooms furnished with an upright piano and recording studios. The highlight of the visit was the opportunity to interact with members of local bands who were active participants

[5] I only had a glimpse of sculptures and precolonial artifacts which preserved the cultural history of various ethnic communities. However historic it was, nothing was significant to my research.

in state functions. However, I did not have ample time to interview the band members because of interference with their rehearsals[6]. I traveled back to my home country on the 30th of November 2022 and conducted detailed fieldwork research. I engaged with my participants via interviews (physically and on the phone).

In December 2022, I revisited the PPMC in Kenya during my research trip to acquire data from their archive. Regrettably, the music audio/visual materials in the archive were not significant to my research, as most of them consisted of traditional music performances at state events. However, there were recordings of major music initiatives led by the PPMC director, Don Otoyo, that conveyed messages promoting peace and harmony within the country. These recordings were readily accessible on YouTube. Thanks to Edmond's assistance, I successfully obtained the contacts of most gospel musicians that I intended to meet and interview. I visited the Nation TV media house in December 2022 to purchase a complete coverage of all electoral campaigns from 2002 onward. However, I was disappointed to find that the charges were exorbitant, with a charge of around one hundred dollars per ten minutes of coverage. On the same day, I also went to the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), where an intern named Dishon, a Kenyan filmmaker, advised that obtaining election coverage would be a challenging and costly endeavour. He attempted to communicate with several KBC authorities on my inquiry, but it proved to be ineffective. Notwithstanding these obstacles, we engaged in extensive discussions regarding the ideas and issues encountered by aspiring and emerging artists in the music and film sectors in Kenya. However, I managed to collect sufficient data from online sources as there have been numerous publications regarding each electoral campaign in Kenya.

In this research, I began with a 'virtual' ethnographic approach for several reasons. First, during the 2022 campaigns leading to the elections on 9 August 2022, I was in South Africa conducting my desk-based research at the University of the Witwatersrand and funds were not available to travel home. Secondly, this approach helped me to analyse previous electoral campaigns that occurred before writing this thesis. I used YouTube videos, news web-based data and social media forums. This, however, did not subvert the use of the 'traditional' ethnographic approaches. Conducting virtual research for an ethnomusicologist is speedier,

[6] My travel preparations to South Africa limited the time I had to visit the PPMC once again. However, I did visit the PPMC during my fieldwork in December 2022, and it was there that I got the contact details for all my research participants through Edmond.

cheaper and long-lasting. Secondly, it gives the chance for fieldwork at the ethnomusicologist's desk (see Hine 2000). This also aids in the practicalities of planning 'offline' fieldwork. Therefore, I integrated the online and offline approaches to maximise the validity of the data collected.

'Virtual' Ethnography

Applying this approach, I effectively conducted several interviews through WhatsApp conversations and gathered data from legitimate YouTube channels. This was due to the challenges in accessing several musicians, including Eric Wainaina, Juliani, and Rufftone, whom I use as case studies in my analysis, Chapters Four and Five[7]. I have employed this strategy when analysing live and recorded presidential campaigns in Kenya from local media outlets such as Citizen TV and Nation TV, which stream these campaigns on their own YouTube pages. This involved observing and providing a descriptive analysis of the musical performances and audience reception, as well as transcribing the speeches of the presidential candidates. In Chapter Six, I transcribed the speeches of William Ruto and Raila Odinga during the 2022 electoral campaigns, focusing on the use of biblical parables, which was particularly prominent in Ruto's speech, as he campaigned under the disguise of being an Evangelist. Furthermore, my selection of songs was centred on the themes prevalent during the electoral year and the musician/music preferences of the respective presidential candidates. I additionally employed Norman Fairclough's (1992) and John Richardson's (2017) approaches to critical discourse analysis. I did not follow a precise analytical method in matters of sonic structures, as the selected songs span different genres, requiring distinct approaches to analyse their sonic arrangement.

Although I successfully conducted online research without any obstacles, I engaged with readings that were essential in comprehending the nature of online research and its advantages and disadvantages, which I will summarise in the following part. Virtual ethnography or computer-mediated communication (CMC) as an ethnographic methodology is often criticised because it allows researchers to investigate a culture without having face-to-face contact

[7] I specifically utilised the YouTube channel 'Cleaning the Airwaves'. Richard Njau, founder of Chanel, has undertaken the initiative to interview musicians who have significantly influenced the Kenyan music industry from the 1990s to the present. His conversations last three to four hours, providing audiences with comprehensive insights into the musician's past, musical genres, and achievements.

(Hine 2008: 259). It is sometimes seen as inferior to traditional ethnography because much of the data is collected passively (Hine 2008). Early approaches to online CMC were far from acknowledging it as a site for rich cultural exchange. According to Nancy Baym (1998), it seemed that computers could not support the same richness of communication offered by face-to-face situations. She further states that this method lacks 'social context' cues; gender, age and race. As Lee Sproul and Sara Kiester (1986; 1991) reiterate, the lack of these social context cues can cause the researcher to focus more on themselves than on other participants. However, this approach has been disputed by 'context-based' scholars such as Martin Lea and Russell Spears (1991), who argue that the alternative approach is to focus more on the context in which the technology is applied.

Howard Rheingold (1993) invented the term 'virtual communities' and argues that the Internet brings people together by reforming the connection threatened by modern life and enhancing democratic participation. His definition stresses the use of the Internet to form sustained relationships:

> Virtual communities are social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace. (1993: 5)

According to Steven Jones (1995: 11), the introduction to the ground-breaking edited collection *Cybersociety* proposed that new ways of doing research were needed to study the 'non-traditional social formations' found online. The CMC was therefore adopted by a range of social science methodologies and approaches therefore adopted the CMC. Once the CMC was conceptualised as a culture, researchers from different fields of study— anthropology, cultural studies, communication and media— entered the cyberspace to study the social, cultural and political formations found there. Rosanne Stone (1995: 243) observed that cyberspace is 'crowded with researchers swarming over the virtual landscape'. The studies of online settings take observations of the rich and complex uses of the CMC as a starting point for analysing 'situated behaviour' that includes linguistic resources drawn from discourse analysis (Gee 1999) which participants use.

Moving traditional ethnography to an online setting involves a critical re-examination. In an offline setting, an ethnographer is expected to spend a prolonged period living or working in a field site, participating in activities such as observation, asking questions, interviews and taking photographs to draw information from the participant's point of view. Thus, moving

this approach to an online setting, as Christine Hine (2000: 6) highlights, 'possesses interesting problems'; how does one live in an online setting?; should the researcher be logged in 24 hours a day or at periodic intervals?; is it possible to analyse newsgroup archives without participating and still call it 'ethnography'? Whilst it is important to consider the concerns raised by Hine (2009: 6), Ahmet Atay (2009: 107) posits that it is easier for researchers to collect data without being visible to the participants. This action of being a hidden observer is referred to as 'lurking'—a person who reads messages on online discussion boards but remains a hidden participant-observer throughout virtual ethnographic fieldwork (Atay 2009). Atay (2009: 113) argues that 'lurking' remains an effective way of collecting data and conducting research in virtual environments. According to Amy Bruckman (2002), lurking is ethically permissible. If the online community is perceived as public, researchers can freely quote and analyse online information if the following criteria are met; it is officially and publicly archived; no password is required for archive access; no site policy prohibits it; and the topic is not highly sensitive (Bruckman 2002).

The Internet presents many methodological difficulties in conducting ethnographic research due to its complex, diffuse and multi-faceted structure that makes it challenging to focus on a specific research object. Hine (2005: 109-112) recommends framing online ethnographic data with the study's research questions to focus on the research but remain in the qualitative paradigm. Additionally, authors of 'virtual' ethnography not only discuss the theories within this approach, such as human behaviour and social interaction, but also give an empirical study that applies 'virtual' ethnographies and their theories thereof. For example, Shani Orgad (2005: 51-65) narrates his experience in conducting interviews of breast cancer patients in an online setup and thereafter, an offline setting. Liav Sade-Beck (2004: 1-7) also encourages the use of online and offline methodologies through his empirical study of Israeli bereaved communities online, in which he interviews victims both online and offline. However, he did not simply conduct interviews but collected data via online observations and reading online/offline documents (see also Grivjalva 2021 on the use of virtual ethnography during the pandemic).

The triangulation of online and offline methods increases the validity of data interpretation. Hine (2000: 48) suggests that 'extending researcher-informant relationships that emerge online into an offline context could be seen as a way of contextualising and adding authenticity to the findings obtained online'. Maria Bakardjiera and Richard Smith (2001: 69) also stress the need to capture 'developments on both sides of the screen—online and offline'.

Conclusively, conducting online and offline interactions does not necessarily imply that one method will give more authentic and accurate information than the other. Rather, as Orgad (2005: 54) suggests, 'the rationale of combining offline and online interaction should be grounded in the research context and its goal'.

Chapter Outline

Following the current (introductory) chapter which provides an overview of the research project, a literature review and the theoretical frameworks that underpin the subsequent chapters of analysis comprise the second chapter. In Chapter Three, a historical overview of the development of Pentecostalism in Africa and Kenya is presented. Additionally, a case study is conducted on Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, a Kenyan Pentecostal preacher who ran for governor of Nairobi, Kenya. I integrate the analyses of the 2002 and 2007 presidential campaigns in Chapter Four because gospel music was not as prevalent in electoral platforms at the time. The fifth and sixth chapters provide comprehensive analyses of the elections of 2013 and 2022, respectively, while the seventh chapter serves as the conclusion to the dissertation.

Ethical Considerations

This research follows the University of the Witwatersrand's research ethics guidelines on research relating to human subjects. As such, ethical clearance was granted by the University to conduct this study. In the process of this study, my research participants consented by signing the interview consent form. Fortunately, all the participants consented to disclose their identities and permitted me to quote them directly. The resources that are in public digital spaces such as YouTube and online websites, have been suitably referenced throughout the chapters.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of music in the East African region, specifically focusing on Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. I use these three countries in my discussion due to the numerous ethnomusicological commonalities among them. The study reveals the circumstances that contributed to the rise of popular music in the region, therefore positioning gospel music at the forefront of urban music in the area. I further examine the presence of religion in the public sphere, which I believe sets the groundwork for my examination of gospel music's role in the political arena. I will also examine the theoretical frameworks that have shaped the comprehension of the role of gospel music in politics. This study investigates the incorporation of religious populism and biblical parables into African politics. It also analyses Norman Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and John Richardson's (2017) 'recontextualisation' approach to CDA. These frameworks are crucial for my analytical examination of the songs utilised as case studies in this research. Next, I analyse the correlation between the media and religion in Africa. This chapter aims to situate the primary focus of my research within the extensive body of literature on religion and politics.

Popular Music in East Africa

Most of the historical documentation of music in East Africa, which includes countries like Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, emerged through the work or influence of foreign scholars, traders, missionaries, migrants, and colonial administrators (Perullo 2022). Early Arab traders and scholars, for instance, helped to create the first Arab-Swahili writing system that documented music, dance, and poetry along the Swahili coast (Perullo 2022). Explorers and traders in the interior regions wrote the earliest accounts of musical instruments, sounds, and cultural practices; and the making of sound recordings, which began in East Africa in 1901, was most frequently done by scholars interested in documenting the languages and sounds of East Africa on new technology. The result is that the early history of music in East Africa privileges foreign over indigenous insights (ibid. 2022).

Beginning in the 1950s, scholarship and the increasing accessibility of recording technology brought attention to topics, genres, and styles often ignored in previous research (Perullo 2022). Importantly, this scholarship recognised that music did not exist in isolation: it

occurred with other elements, such as poetry, dancing, theatre, prayer, celebration, storytelling, healing, and belief (ibid. 2022). Many indigenous words across the region connected music with something else, which made it necessary to touch on language and other cultural practices to comprehend the significance of music (ibid 2022). In addition, since at least the 1960s, local recording engineers and producers reshaped the sound of music throughout the region, giving voice to traditions of interest to local audiences rather than just those that were the focus of Western scholarship (ibid. 2022). By the 1980s, an increasing number of indigenous scholars researched traditions from their home communities, pushing against the long history of privileging nonindigenous scholarship on the region's musical forms (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005: 32). The tremendous growth in scholarship has resulted in the presentation of a wealth of topics related to music throughout East Africa (Perullo2022).

The earliest recordings known to have taken place in Africa occurred in 1901. Sir Harry Johnston, a British explorer who studied many facets of East African life, made several recordings of the Suk, Maasai, and Baganda populations (Perullo 2022). The songs featured vocalists, flutes, and drums as well as a Baganda war song (Perullo 2022). Over the next several decades, other explorers and scholars travelling throughout the region made recordings, often on fragile equipment, such as wax cylinders. These recordings existed for scholarly study and several became part of early studies in the emerging field of comparative musicology that later developed into the discipline of ethnomusicology (Ibid. 2022).

Over the next several decades, recordings became an increasing part of life in East Africa. Expatriates used records in their homes, as part of events and social gatherings, and as a means to generate interest in local businesses (ibid. 2022). Gramophone records were played outside of storefronts in towns across East Africa to entice people to enter (Kubik 1981: 90). Colonial officials used gramophones to, in their words, 'pacify' local populations. In one case, a gramophone concert held by a colonial official in front of 20,000 locals 'caused the wildest excitement' (Perullo 2022). Stores opened focused on selling records as well as musical instruments and sheet music. As early as 1911, the Boma Trading Company sold gramophones from stores in London and Nairobi, where they advertised the sale of records in the local press (Ibid. 2022).

By the mid-1920s, an African and Asian middle class emerged and purchased records both as a form of entertainment and as items of prestige (Perullo 2022). Gramophones were symbols

of success and social class as well as a means to learn about other cultures and musical forms. As more people purchased gramophone records, access to imported music expanded to include music from European folk songs, ballroom dances, hymns, military music, and the recordings of brass bands; Latin American and Caribbean genres, including rumba, samba, calypso, and conga; African popular music from outside of eastern Africa, such as kwela, African jazz, and highlife; American music, particularly Hawaiian, country, and jazz music; and Indian popular music and Arab poetic traditions (ibid.). Along with records, the number of musical instruments imported and purchased also expanded significantly, allowing aspiring artists to purchase items that gave them a chance to play the music heard on records. This included the Gallotone acoustic guitar manufactured by the South African Gallo Record Company (ibid.).

The first recordings of East African artists intended for commercial distribution took place in 1928 (Perullo 2022). The Zanzibar-based taarab singer Siti binti Saad flew to Bombay to record for His Master's Voice (Fair 2003). The 31 recorded songs became widely celebrated in many areas of Africa and, by 1931, Saad had sold over 23,000 copies. That same year, Saad recorded an additional 100 songs that sold 40,000 copies (Graebner 2004: 171-192). Recognising the success of these recordings, other companies, including Columbia, Trek, and Gallotone, recorded and released music on a variety of East African musical styles. Columbia set up studios in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam in 1930 and 1931 to record children's, military, religious, and ngoma songs (Perullo 2022). After World War II, a regular circulation of recordings and records could be found in most towns across eastern Africa, leading to a significant growth in new musical genres (Perullo 2011: 44-45).

After World War II, as those living in East Africa became increasingly interested in hearing recorded local music and more musicians turned music into a potential career, the number of commercial recording studios and record companies grew (Perullo 2022). Kenya had the most studios and record companies, including the Mombasa-based Assanand & Sons Ltd., which ran the Mzuri label, and the Nairobi-based East African Sound Studio, which owned the label Jambo Records (Perullo 2022). The Africa Ground Cotton Company took over East African Sound Studio in 1951 and created a new company, East African Records Ltd. (EAR) (ibid. 2022). The following year, EAR opened the first record-pressing plant in East Africa, creating a means to locally produce vinyl records. According to Ronnie Graham, 'By 1957 there were almost fifty different labels available in Kenya with local companies accounting for forty of them' (Graham 1992: 148). Although it is hard to corroborate these numbers—research on

catalogues of records and record labels has produced a much smaller list of labels than noted by Graham—artists from throughout East Africa recognised the importance of Kenya as a source to both hear and record music (Graham 1992).

In Uganda, Dr. Georg von Opel, grandson of the founder of the automobile manufacturer Opel, started the Opel Gramophone Record Factory, Ltd. and the Tom Tom label in 1956 (he also began the Opel Battery Factory, Ltd.) (Perullo 2022). Opel planned to hire 150 workers, mostly women, for his factory. The factory had a capacity for 50,000 records per month, although it likely produced only a small number of recordings. Some sources claim that the factory and label closed in 1960 because of the boycott on foreign goods started by Ugandan businessman Augustine Kamya in 1959 (Perullo 2022).

As commercial recording grew, so too did ethnographic research on music. The ethnomusicologist Klaus Wachsmann made around 1,500 recordings in Uganda beginning in 1949 when he was the curator of the Uganda Museum in Kampala (Perullo 2022). These recordings cover a wide variety of cultural groups, instruments, and song styles. The South Africa–based British researcher Hugh Tracey also recorded African music beginning in the late 1940s. Tracey toured different regions with a crew and several vehicles, documenting both traditional and popular music. In 1950 and 1952, he made recording trips to East Africa, including Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, and Zanzibar, preserving a wide variety of musical forms (Perullo 2022). These recordings represent one of the best glimpses of the wide variety of music being performed throughout East Africa during the colonial period (Perullo 2022).

After East African countries gained independence in the early 1960s, the market for commercial music continued to grow, although each country took a different approach (Perullo 222). In Tanzania, the state controlled the country's only two recording studios, run by the Tanzania Film Company and Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD) (Perullo 2022). These studios, particularly RTD, heavily censored artists' songs and recommended changes to any lyrics that were considered obscene or contrary to nationalist goals or that did not uphold social norms as defined by the state (Perullo 2011: 68-81). In Kenya, particularly in Nairobi, a range of studios and record companies operated. Many international companies, including EMI, CBS, and Polygram, which took over Phonogram (a Philips company) and Polydor, set up operations as Kenya was considered a hub for the commercialisation of music (ibid. 2022). The investment by both local and foreign interests in Kenya's music economy proved to be

successful for a few years. In 1981, for instance, EAR, which was then owned by Polygram, pressed over two million 45s and 150,000 LPs per year (Malm and Wallis 2003: 86).

Despite the success of commercial music after independence, the illegal duplication and sale of music overtook legitimate sales throughout East Africa by the early 1990s (Perullo 2022). This forced most record companies and recording studios to go out of business, leading to the growth of an informal market for music sales and a strong dependence on live performances over album sales (ibid. 2022). In Kenya, this meant a collapse of foreign investment in music and the closure of most local record companies. This collapse led to opportunities for the commercialisation of music in neighbouring countries (ibid. 2022). As Tanzania moved away from socialism, for instance, entrepreneurial producers, engineers, musicians, and businesspeople opened new radio and television stations, recording studios, and music distribution points. In 1999, a new copyright law also emerged to protect investments by artists in their music (ibid. 2022). By 2010, Tanzania had one of eastern Africa's most successful music economies, which attracted artists from throughout East Africa to record. Eventually, this too would collapse because of the digital distribution of music online, the lack of enforcement for intellectual property rights, and the government's unwillingness to work with the arts community to protect artists' works (ibid. 2022).

Online music sales and cell phone companies provided the latest investment in commercial music (Perullo 2022). While many companies started by illegally using the music of local artists, several companies began to pay artists royalties for the use of songs (ibid. 2022). One of the largest sources of income for some artists in the region was from ringtones and ring back tones (ibid. 2022). This revenue helped to supplant the lost sales of recorded music for many artists. Despite these gains, however, evidence of corruption in the distribution of royalties has emerged in each East African country, calling into question the ability of artists to earn an income from the use of music in broadcasting, on the internet, or through cell phone distribution (Perullo and Eisenberg 2015: 148-169).

The predominant genre of music in East Africa was Congolese rumba (Perullo 2022). The prevalence of Congolese music on the radio and profitable record sales in the 1960s and 1970s afforded Congolese artists the opportunity to exploit their sound and identity as commodities in East African urban centres. This enabled performers to traverse the region and achieve success, even if it required adapting to local preferences and experiences of rumba music. For example, more than 200 Congolese artists relocated to Dar es Salaam, marking one

of the most significant artist-centered migrations on the continent (Perullo 2008: 296).The prominence of these musicians and their bands significantly shaped the sound of various music genres, enhanced the professionalisation of popular music, and contributed to the expansion of urban nightlife by performing live events regularly, frequently five nights per week. The effect of Congolese music on the sound of popular music recorded in East Africa during the post-independence era is unmistakable.

By the mid-1980s, youth began to encounter the sonic expressions of American hip hop (Perullo 2022). Cassettes including rap music and breakdancing videos were predominantly distributed among affluent youth in urban regions of East Africa (ibid. 2022). Some youths adopted the fashion depicted in the videos and emulated rap songs during performances. During the 1990s, numerous musicians composed songs in regional languages that tackled local concerns. The Bataka Squad, a rap group in Uganda, composed songs in the Luganda language, establishing a style referred to as Luga-flow (Ntarangwi 2009: 25). In Kenya and Tanzania, artists created songs in Kiswahili, which served as a primary language for artists aiming to engage listeners throughout East Africa. Artists further released albums through independent labels and created high-quality music videos, which became a significant characteristic of hip-hop music across the region (Perullo 2022). Due to their popularity and politically charged lyrics, numerous artists, like Joseph Mbilinyi and Joseph Haule in Tanzania, Charles Njagua Kanyi in Kenya, and Bobi Wine in Uganda, became members of parliament in their respective countries (Perullo 2022).

Despite the considerable success of hip hop, which is extensively disseminated across East Africa, gospel and choral music continue to be the most prevalently performed genres in the region (Perullo 2022). During colonial rule, missionaries employed choral music to instruct populations on religious customs and ‘appropriate’ singing methods utilising the tonic sol-fa system. Numerous churches maintained rigorous stipulations about the where and how of hymn performance (Kidula 2013). Missionaries frequently prohibited or sought to limit indigenous populations from engaging in traditional music, deeming it wicked and characterised by ‘vile gestures’ and ‘weird songs’ (Kidula 2013: 73). Following independence, church music experienced numerous alterations as Christian artists sought to popularise their work by relocating performances to secular venues and integrating various genres into their works (Kidula 2013). Gospel music originated from church teachings but broadened its performance settings to encompass mainstream music venues, live television broadcasts, and political events (Perullo 2022). Artists in Kenya and Tanzania created songs that integrate

popular music genres, including reggae, soukous, zouk, salsa, hip hop, and Afrobeat (Nyairo 2008; Sanga 2009). In Uganda, artists incorporated the traditional Baganda worship beat known as *ekidigida* and popular music to create the sound of gospel music among the Pentecostal community (Basoga 2012: 142). In the early 2000s, gospel music in various regions of East Africa surpassed nearly all other genres in sales due to its blend of religious themes and popular sounds (Perullo 2022).

Religion in the Public Sphere

The role of religion in the public sphere is an important aspect to discuss in this chapter because the research project investigates the role of gospel music and Pentecostalism in Kenyan politics. In this context, politics represents the 'public sphere'. The concept of the 'public sphere' first originated from Jurgen Habermas (1991) and has since gained significance among anthropologists, sociologists, historians and political scientists. It has equally created disputes, sentiments and numerous debates. According to Habermas (1991), the public sphere mediates between the private sphere and the sphere of public authority. Here, the private sphere is comprised of the civil society, while the public authority deals with the state or the realms of the police and the ruling class. According to Habermas (1991), the public sphere crosses over these two realms and through the realm of public opinion, it puts the state in touch with the needs of the people. The public sphere is conceptually distinct from the state and is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical to the state. In Habermas' understanding, the people themselves have come to see the public sphere as a regulatory institution against the authority of the state (Habermas, 1989). Today, the study of the public sphere centres on the idea of participatory democracy and how public opinion becomes political action. According to Hauser (1998), the basic belief in public sphere theory is that political action is steered by the public sphere and that the only legitimate governments are those that listen to the public sphere. In Hauser's (1998) opinion, democratic governance rests on the capacity of and opportunity for citizens to engage in enlightened debates. Much of the debates over the public sphere involve what the basic theoretical structure of the public sphere is, how information is deliberated in the public sphere and what influence the public sphere has over society (Hauser 1998).

Having defined what the 'public sphere' entails, it is important to highlight that the arguments of this section are in the context of liberal democratic societies. With democracy, comes freedom of expression on matters of (but not limited to) religion and political advocacy.

Despite the predicted and expected demise of religion by modernists and secularists as perceived by Damaris Parsitau (2008b: 1), religions are still thriving all over the world but most especially in the global south. Religious groups such as Pentecostals, Muslims, Jews and indigenous movements are thriving and competing with modern states (Hackett 2005; Parsitau 2008b; Meyer and Moors 2006). According to Rosalind Hackett (2005: 660), globalisation, democratisation and modern media have made religion significant in the political sphere over the years. Different religions and spiritualities have moved from the fringes to the centre of national politics around the world (Parsitau 2008b: 2; Frahm-Arp 2019: 317).

Paul Weithman (2004: 1) also agrees that religion remains the most potent political force in the contemporary world. The recent emergence of religious fundamentalism in many parts of the world and the rise of religious conservatism in America, as Weithman (2004) argues, are developments that can hardly be exaggerated. In his arguments on religion in the public sphere, Weithman (2004:1) offers a dichotomy between the church and the state and provokes intriguing questions such as, should the state be independent/dependent on religious codes of conduct and should public school prayers be permitted if the majority favour it? Here, if the state is in favour of the majority religious groups, Weithman refers to it as the democratic commitment to majoritarianism (2004). In light of this conflict between the church and the state, Weithman (2004: 2) argues that the citizen is the central/pivotal person when discussing religion in the public sphere (see also Bompani and Valois 2018). Weithman (2004: 3) states that 'reasonable disagreement can be countered by reasonable citizenship'. Therefore, what sort of arguments and reasons can ordinary citizens offer one another on the occasions when they speak in public forums? Can the arguments be based on religious or secular convictions? Robert Audi (1993) and John Rawls (1997) offer some insightful yet very different conceptions of the use of religious arguments in the public sphere.

Audi (1993) argues for the rational separation of church and state affairs. However, he first acknowledges some of the most important roles when accounting for the appropriate use of religious arguments in a liberal democracy (Audi 1993: 685)[8]. The first role is an expression, not merely putting something across, but in the sense of 'self-revelatory': to set out one's perspective on an issue. This means articulating one's feelings on a major event and getting something off one's chest (Audi 1993: 685). This role has a major implication. A society that

[8] According to Trevor Allan (2008: 67), in a liberal democracy, political power is moderated by the rule of law and individual rights and freedoms are officially recognised and protected.

protects freedom of expression, must also protect the freedom to express one's religious views even in contexts where there are good reasons to offer secular reasoning for those religious convictions. The second role is communicative. This according to Audi (1993: 685), is to express one's deepest feelings or to show where one is 'coming from'. This communicative argument may also be expressive, in the sense of expressing 'something'. However, the aim of the argument is not to simply articulate one's position but to change the understanding of the other party (Audi 1993: 685). The third role is persuasive; it gets people to agree with one's view or follow one's prescriptions or identity. The first approach is to persuade people who accept one's general religious views and the second is to persuade those who are non-religious (secular) or religiously different from oneself. In the latter approach, which is somehow the most difficult, one must create enough common ground for the non-religious to agree upon. The fourth role is evidential. This is to offer supporting reasons for a view or course of action. Lastly, religious arguments may play a heuristic role. For example, by raising questions on what God would command, or what biblical texts imply, religious arguments may stipulate the discovery of new truths (Audi 1993: 686). The appeal to God's intellect or will as a standard of knowledge or value, according to Audi (1993: 686), can open hypotheses and clarify assumptions that might otherwise be lost. Audi (1993) further argues that the use of religious/biblical texts is an inexhaustible source of ideas, standards and practical wisdom.

According to Audi's (1993) advocacy for the separation of the church and the state, a liberal democracy must make special efforts to prevent the domination of one religious group. This is because the authority structure common in many religions can have a desire to dominate other groups and provide a rationale for it which is to save mankind from their sins (Audi 1993: 690). Another reason is that the dictates of religion often extend to the conduct of religious and secular persons so if domination of one religious group occurs, it undermines religious freedoms (Audi 1993: 690). Religious freedoms are given high priority in a liberal democracy, therefore, if religious considerations threaten those of the secular, the liberal democracy (through its constitution) can restrain them (religious consideration) (Audi 1993: 690). Audi (1993) further argues that where religious convictions are the basis of a disagreement, it is less likely that the parties in dispute can achieve a resolution or even peacefully agree to disagree. Also, the use of religious convictions or the dependence on God's will may seem to be the only way of viewing issues (Audi 1993: 691).

On the contrary, Rawls (1997) presents a more neutral view on the relationship between the church and the state, specifically on the incorporation of religious beliefs in public discourse. He advocates for the use of 'public reasoning' in the public sphere (Rawls 1997). Public reason refers to the fundamental moral and political principles that govern the relationship between a constitutional democratic government and its citizens. Habermas, according to Judith Butler et al. (2011), has also been appreciative of Rawls' (1997) work on public reasoning in his attempts to revive political theology. They state, 'Habermas emerges as the paragon of the view that we cannot confuse the secularisation of the state with the secularisation of society' (Butler et al. 2011: 15). Melissa Yates (2007) also reiterates:

> Habermas endorses an account of political liberalism much like John Rawls'. Like Rawls, he argues that laws and public policies should be justified 'neutrally', by reasons that people holding conflicting worldviews could all accept. Habermas also distinguishes between reasonable religious citizens and unreasonable religious citizens in his expectation that religious citizens self-modernize. (2007: 1)

Rawls (1997: 775) differentiates between 'public reason' and secular values/reason, asserting that they are distinct from each other. According to Rawls (1997: 775), secular values refer to all-encompassing non-religious ideas. In addition, he contends both religious and secular ideas are overly broad to effectively fulfill the objectives of public reason (1997: 775). When individuals realise that they are unable to come to an agreement or even establish a common understanding due to their conflicting comprehensive doctrines (both religious and non-religious), they must contemplate the types of legitimate justifications they can present to one another when fundamental political issues are involved (Rawls 1997: 766). According to Rawls (1997: 766), public reason does not criticise or challenge any comprehensive system, whether religious or non-religious, unless such a belief is irreconcilable with the fundamental principles of public reason and democratic society. Audi (1993: 690) also concurs that secular values are not derived from public reason.

Rawls (1999: 149) raises the question of how citizens who hold religious beliefs can fully participate in a democratic society, actively supporting its fundamental political ideals and values rather than merely accepting the prevailing political and social dynamics. Rawls (1999: 149) poses this topic directly, pondering how both religious and non-religious individuals might support a constitutional regime even if their beliefs may not thrive or may even diminish under it. These concerns highlight the importance of public reason in determining the legitimacy of laws. In civilisations characterised by the coexistence of different religions

with competing claims of superiority, such as the United States, the constitution plays a crucial role in safeguarding the religious freedoms of these divergent faiths. In a pluralistic society with multiple religions, political matters should be approached by focusing on political ideas and values to steer clear of religious conflicts and prevent the incitement of sectarian animosity. According to Rawls (1997: 150), public reason in this context aims to mitigate conflicts and promote societal cohesion. However, under this scenario, society will lack stability for the appropriate reasons, namely due to a strong commitment to the political (moral) principles and values of a democratic society.

Based on the arguments presented, Audi (1993) employs the idea of 'secularism' to counter the use of religious reasoning in public discourse, but Rawls (1997) embraces the concept of 'public use of reason' to remain neutral on the matter. Therefore, the idea of 'religious populism' can be strategically utilised to advocate for the integration of religious reasoning in the public sphere, particularly in African nations where religion holds significant influence in the political realm.

Religious Populism

To understand the relationship between religion and populism, it is important that I first describe what is meant by the term 'populism', its scholarly concepts and how it has been applied in African states. As populism remains a contested phenomenon, it is not a simple task to analyse it. Edward Shils set out an early account of defining populism, which he argues is 'a popular resentment against the order imposed on society by a…ruling class which is believed to have a monopoly on power, property, breeding, and culture' (1956: 100-101). He further argued that three other ideas may be inherent to populism. The first is that 'the people' are sovereign and above the rulers; the second is that there ought to be a direct connection between 'the people' and their government; the third is that the 'will of the people' is an 'associate with justice and morality' (Shils 1956: 98). Shils' (1956) ideas have continued to influence the scholarship on populism. However, there has been a great deal of contestation among scholars on whether these concepts could form a coherent set of populist ideas/ideologies (one of the concepts of populism) or elements of populist performance (Gidron and Bonikowski 2013). Roger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin (2018: 7) argue that 'populists prioritize the culture and interests of the nation and promise to give voice to a people who feel that they have been neglected, even held in contempt, by a distant and often corrupt elite'. Ihsan Yilmaz et al. (2021: 2) posit that perhaps the largest body of scholars

argue that populism is a divisive set of ideas that consider society as two hegemonic and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus the 'corrupt elite' (see also Mudde 2004: 543). According to Cas Mudde and Cristobal Kaltwasser (2013: 151), politics should serve as the 'volonté générale' (general will) of the people.

Beyond these definitions, Pierre Taguieff (1995: 32-35) observes two broad dimensions of populism. These are vertical and horizontal (see Figure 2.1). In its vertical dimension, populism divides top from bottom, or 'the people' from the 'elite'. While the horizontal dimension divides society between 'the people' who belong and the 'others' who do not belong—the unwanted, the traitors. This approach, according to Rogers Brubaker (2017), applies to North-Western Europe, where nations and people are divided into religious civilizations to which people belong. Populist leader Geert Wilders claims that Europe is the culmination of two thousand years of Judeo-Christianity and Humanist culture and it faces an existential threat from Muslim and Islamic Civilization (Ihsan Yilmaz et al. 2021: 2). The Muslims in this context fall under the category of the 'other' in the North-western countries of Europe (Ihsan Yilmaz et al. 2021).

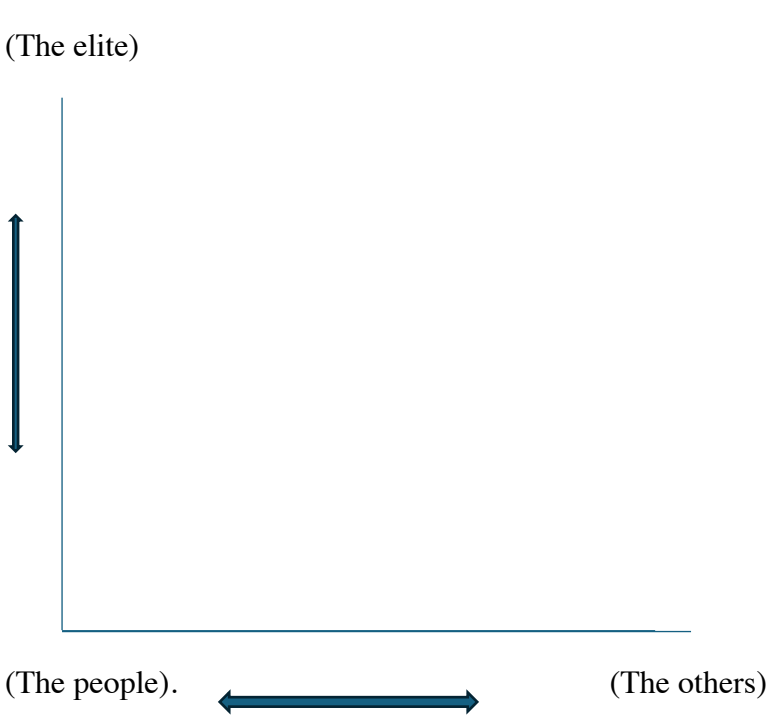


Figure 2.1 Vertical and Horizontal Representation of the Two Broad Dimensions of Populism.

Populism, according to scholars, features three concepts which include populism as ideational, strategy and performative stylistic (Yilmaz et al. 2021: 2-3). The ideational approach, as cited by Mudde (2004: 543), constitutes the people, the elite and the general will of the people. This approach divides the society between the 'elite' and the 'people'. This approach to populism has, according to Mudde (2017), become the most broadly used in the field today, especially among scholars of European populism, many of whom study the large growing number of right-wing populist parties in the region (Gidron and Bonikowski 2013). Kurt Weyland (2001: 14) defines the strategic approach as 'a political strategy through which a personalistic leader seeks to exercise government power based on direct, unmediated, institutionalized support from large numbers of mostly unorganized followers'[9]. In this approach, populists attempt to cultivate a direct relationship between 'the people' and a populist leader. This strategy also attempts to convince 'the people' to support a particular populist leader/movement on the basis that; (1) the leader of this movement/party understands their 'will' or in some way perhaps embodies the people themselves; (2) that no other political leader understands the people's will and therefore ought not to be supported but, rather, be opposed. Scholars in this group perceive populism as a 'strategy' in the hands of strongmen, which they use to revise the democratic structure and capture power (Barr 2009; Weyland 2001). Scholars such as Benjamin Moffitt (2016: 45) define populism as a political style that features an appeal to 'the people' versus 'the elite'. He further describes populism as:

> A political style consisting of repertoires of embodied, symbolically mediated, performance made to audiences that are used to create and navigate the fields of power that comprise the political, stretching from the domain of government through to everyday life. (Moffitt 2016: 38)

The three approaches to populism may not be entirely compatible, but they certainly correspond to the different cases of populism in different cultural and political geographies. Furthermore, all these approaches to populism can incorporate an examination of the role of religion within populist movements, parties, or leaders. Efe Peker and Emily Laxer (2021: 317-343), have done extensive research on how populists deploy religion under each of the populist concepts; ideational; strategic; and performative stylistic.

The cross-regional comparisons of populism have mainly focused on the West and South American countries (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2012; 2013). However, in the African context, according to Danielle Resnick (2017: 102), it has been difficult to conceptualize the essence

[9] A personalistic leader is charismatic.

of populism given the long-standing absence of well-established political parties and the prominence of personalistic rule[10]. This has been facilitated by the dominance of the presidential system with strong executive powers (see van de Walle 2003) and a tendency of African leaders to hold on to power beyond the respective constitutional term allocated (Schatzberg 2001). To tackle these complex structures, Resnick (2017: 102) argues that the 'cumulative' approach, which combines the three conceptualizations (ideational, strategy and performative stylistic), provides better analytical leverage in discerning African cases of populism. According to John Gerring (2012), the cumulative concept is a combination of characteristics that need to be jointly present for an example to qualify as a category. The more attributes present, the closer an example fits the conceptual ideal (Resnick 102). Resnik (2017) gives examples of African states that qualify as populist nations. These include 1981 Ghana under the leadership of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings; Burkina Faso under Thomas Sankara; Zimbabwe under Robert Mugabe; and Uganda under the leadership of Yoweri Museveni. Other authors have discussed populism in countries such as South Africa under Jacob Zuma (Attwell 2020; Vincent 2011; Resane 2022) and the Democratic Republic of Congo under the opposition leader and now the current president Felix Tshisekedi (Kapanga 2020). In contrast, Kenya has received limited scholarly attention regarding populism. Resnick (2017: 112) passively discusses Raila Odinga's use of populism as the opposition to the incumbent Kenyan government (see Cheeseman and Lamer 2013), but he does not give a critical analysis of how presidential candidates have applied populism to win the majority votes (see also Lockwood 2023).

A scholarly consensus according to David Arter (2011: 490), has largely come to agree that populism is confrontational, chameleonic, culture-bound and context-dependent. Also, Benjamin De Cleen and Yannis Stavrakakis (2017) recognize that populism cannot be described as a 'thick' ('thick' refers to a solid ideology with a proper worldview such as socialism or liberalism) ideology because it cannot stand on its own, but must be attached to a wider left-wing, right-wing, or eclectic political/social program. Gabriel Dietze and Julia Roth (2020) also acknowledge that populism by its true nature attaches itself to 'thick ideologies and for right-wing populism, religion(s) emerges as an indispensable host'. Yilmaz et al. (2021: 4) assert that 'if populism is a set of ideas, it can be easily and effectively appended to the thick ideology of an organized religion'. The attachment of populism to religion helps

[10] Chazan et al. (1999: 166) posit that populism in Africa is fiercely nationalist and anti-imperialist and its basis is deeply entrenched in frustration and protest.

populists turn religion into a weapon for consolidating power within societies in which religion already plays a significant role. Scholarship on religious populism has mainly focused on Western countries, according to Peker and Laxer (2021: 318). Thus, non-western countries, particularly in Africa, have not received equivalent scholarly attention[11]. Also, much of the religious populism scholarship has mostly focused on the three Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Islam and Judaism), and José Zúquete (2017: 450) argues that scholarship must look beyond these. The study of Hinduism in India (Frykenberg 2008) and Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka (Berkwitz 2008), for example, may provide other rich avenues of research within the field of religious populism. Religious populism does exist in Africa, but it is discussed in generalized topics such as, 'religion and politics in Africa' (Haynes 1996; Ellis and Haar 1998); or 'Pentecostalism and politics in Africa' (Afolayan et al 2018; Ogbu 2008). However, these general topics do not adhere to the concepts of religious populism. Because of the scarcity/lack of research on religious populism in the African continent, I draw from scholarly works on religious populism in presidential campaigns in Latin America (Brazil), the USA and Western Europe (UK and France). My research project will be the first study to examine the utilisation of religious populism, particularly in its relevance to gospel music in Kenya's presidential campaigns.

Following Zúquete (2017: 445-466), religious populism is divided into two dimensions. The first is overtly religious and covertly religious. The overtly religious is shaped by a particular faith tradition as it is often, but not necessarily, tied with traditionally organized religions. This is characterized by politicians claiming to do God's work on earth against its godless enemies, however, this may or may not involve the backing of religious authorities or organizations (Peace 2021: 3; Zúquete 2017: 446). Zúquete (2017: 446) also states that overtly religious can also be termed as the 'politicization of religion'. The second dimension is covertly religious which constitutes the 'sacralization of politics' (Zúquete 2008: 92; 2017: 446). This dimension of religious populism is often tied to 'identity' rather than 'belief'. The populist leaders in this dimension may not necessarily have grounded beliefs in their respective religion but use it as a weapon to battle the 'other' minority religions. However, the populists in the overt dimensions are strongly grounded in their faith/religion and even shape some of the policies of the country through the dominant religious beliefs. To better understand the differences between the two dimensions, I give empirical examples of world

[11] In Africa, South Africa is the only country that has received scholarly attention on religious populism (Forster 2019).

leaders who have implemented religious populism in their political endeavours. First, I demonstrate those in the 'overt' dimension and then the 'covert'.

Overtly Religious: Politicizing the Sacred

In the United States, religion remains an important influence on politics. The evangelical churches have been part of the political rhetoric, especially through their support for Donald Trump as a presidential candidate in 2016 (Dochuk 2012). The Trump movement courted the evangelicals, particularly through the appointment of Mike Pence as his running mate. However, Trump could still not portray himself as a strong Christian (as his running mate was) (McCaskill 2016). When asked for his favourite Bible verse, Trump replied, 'An eye for an eye' (McCaskill 2016). Nevertheless, Marcia Pally (2020: 405) points out, 'In the 2016 presidential election, 81 percent of white evangelicals voted for Trump'. Trump in this appeal, appeared to be a religious figure and a protector of American Christians from secular 'elites'.

In the 2024 presidential elections, the evangelical churches are still in support of the Trump movement, because according to Samuel Perry (2024), the evangelicals are not only partisans but culture warriors who feel their values are under attack by the Democrats. According to Sarah McCammon (2024), despite the allegations made to stop Trump's 2024 presidential campaigns, more than half of the white evangelicals in republican states voted for Trump in the primary election in 2023. Many like Brad Sherman, a state representative and an evangelical pastor, view Trump's harsh style of politics as an asset even though he (Trump) sometimes 'says things I wouldn't say' (McCammon 2024). Perry (2024) also argues that leading up to Trump's 2024 campaigns, he did not make much of public appearances, yet he remains the 'evangelical favourite even among the most devout'. Despite Ron DeSantis' (Trump's Republican opponent) effort to sell himself as an 'anti-woke' and religious conservative, most of the evangelicals did not buy into it but instead had more confidence in Trump as their 'warrior king' (Perry 2024).

In South Africa, Dion Forster (2019) gives an account of the historical relationship between the Christian churches of South Africa with 'the people' of the nation. Forster argues that the major churches of South Africa participated in a 'good' form of populism after 1985 when they were guided by the populist Kairos Document. The document argued that Christian churches should serve the people and not the white elitists of South Africa (Forster 2019: 333). In more recent times, however, Forster argues that the church has begun to serve the ANC (African National Congress) and not the people. The new Christian populism which he

calls ‘a popular state theology’ allows South African churches to become ‘agents of the unjust state’ (Forster 2019: 332-33). In support of Forster’s view, Jaco Beyers (2015) highlights how religion has become an inseparable part of the state and it is used for redefining policy decisions. Beyers (2015: 158-161) further states that other African countries including South Africa can be further studied through the lens of populism, to reveal the very nature of relations between religion and politics.

In Latin America, perhaps the most obvious example is Brazil’s right-wing populist president, Jair Bolsonaro, whose rise to power was in part through the support of Brazil’s conservative religious groups such as the Neo-Pentecostal churches and Charismatic Catholics (those who practice Catholicism but adopt the Pentecostal style of worship) (Knoll 2019: 227). Gabriel Feltran (2020) draws from ethnographic research to describe the forces that were behind the rise of Bolsonaro. According to Feltran (2020), behind the populist mass movement underlying Bolsonaro’s rise to power is a redemptive promise that Brazil’s social and political problems can be resolved by ending all social differences. Feltran (2020: 95) states ‘Bolsonaro will create a community of equals in a Christian fatherland’. Feltran also describes Bolsonarism as a movement that ‘seeks a major shift away from modern politics, party mediation, law, pluralism, and the constitution, and instead, towards mass movement, male honour, identity, and the gospel’ (2020: 97). Religion, therefore, played an important role in both Bolsonaro’s rise to power and the country’s socio-political foundations.

Covertly Religious: Sacralising the Political

Religious populism in contemporary Western Europe, where populist radical right-wing leaders have gained much electoral power since the turn of the century, has surprisingly little to do with the Christian religion. Rather, as Brubaker (2017) and Olivier Roy (2016) have illustrated, most nominally Christian populism in Europe is identarian[12] and draws upon Christian identity but no other aspects of the Christian faith. The ideology of the populist right in Europe is primarily anti-Muslim. They use their identity as Christians or Judeo-Christians to restrict the immigration of Muslims into Europe. (Brubaker 2017 and Roy 2016).

In France, the National Rally under Marie le Pen was a movement that used its Christian identity to oppose the entry of Muslims while taking nothing from Christian ethics, theology, or tradition. According to Marie le Pen, the French culture is based upon secularized Christian

[12] According to the Collins dictionary, Identarian signifies, ‘An anti-immigrant, far-right group in Europe that aims to prevent immigrants from reaching the continent’.

principles (Morieson 2021:133). Here, Christianity is merely a progenitor of Western Europe's secularism and Liberalism (Brubaker 2017). Christian identity populism has also influenced mainstream politics in the United Kingdom. The pro-Brexit UK Independence Party (UKIP) could not be realistically described as a Christian party, yet it published a 'Christian Manifesto', in which the party set out to show that its policies were made of Christian values. The party leader, Nigel Farage, called upon the British government to stand up for its 'Judeo-Christian' values when combating Islamic extremism in the UK (Moodley 2014). Here, Christianity is used in a relatively secular sense. For UKIP, like other radical right parties in Europe, Christian identity is used to define the British ingroup and to exclude 'others', especially Muslim immigrants.

Conclusively, religious populism is a reality in the 21st century as it exists in both secular and deeply religious societies. Political leaders and parties have continuously employed it in varying contexts and degrees. Populism, whether understood as a set of ideas, a strategy, or a style, has found a solid ground in religion(s) and attached itself firmly. There is however a need for scholars to explore the various facets of religious populism. For example, scholars have remained silent on the role Christianity and Islam play in African populism. This is particularly unfortunate because many Africans who are affiliated with religious groups in Sub-Saharan Africa live in fragile yet democratic states where religious populism may easily become a significant force in politics.

Biblical Parables in African Politics

The Bible is regarded as one of the most significant components of the Christian heritage in Africa because of its central significance in the lives of believers (Mwandayi and Mukole 2023: 1). John Mbiti claims that 'Africa is deeply immersed in the Bible' (Mbiti 2005: 247). The Bible is constantly read in families, schools, churches and on a range of occasions (Chitando 2007: 6). Not only does the Bible continue to inspire the African imagination in all facets of life, but it also works as a guide to belief and action. The beliefs and activities dictated by the Bible are not viewed simply in issues connected to spirituality; they are extended to day-to-day activity in society. That is, every sphere of life, such as education, leadership and even politics, are areas where the Bible is expected to be a guide in delivering the best principles to produce great and long-term outcomes (Mwandayi and Mukole 2023: 1).

The Bible has played a prominent role in African political discourse, both positively and negatively, serving as a source of inspiration and justification for both noble and self-serving

actions. The Bible holds significant relevance in politics due to the prevailing belief that it possesses unequivocal and authoritative guidance on every issue. According to Paul Gifford (2003: 23), one reason for the Bible's influence in the African public sphere is 'the creation of the God-fearing ruler [public official] …who fulfils the law of God, and that such a king [public official] inevitably pleases God'. In the post-colonial age, Africa has witnessed political leaders proclaiming their adherence to Biblical virtues and asserting their leadership was divinely given to them by God to lead their respective nations. Several scholars have utilised specific examples of African leaders or movements employing Biblical parables to rationalise their political endeavours. To illustrate this, I have given key examples of African presidents who have applied the Bible in their political junctures, these include Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa (Wabyanga 2017; West 2012).

President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda has made a practice of incorporating Biblical text and anecdotes into his political speeches, which has become a distinctive characteristic of his political style (Wabyanga 2017: 1). According to Robert Wabyanga (2017), Museveni does not employ the Bible in the traditional manner of religious devotion and inspiration. Furthermore, he has no affiliation with any Christian organisation. Museveni's utilisation of the Bible deviates from the African 'Bible Hermeneutics' commonly associated with African theologians. Instead, he employs biblical parables. From the writings of Gifford:

> African Biblical Hermeneutics focuses on how issues raised in the Bible can be interpreted and addressed within the socio, cultural, and religious context of Africa, and creates a dialogue between the text and the African context through the process of appropriation. (1998: 122)

The Bible exhibits socio-economic and cultural similarities with the African world context, rendering it a significant instrument for comprehending and addressing African matters (Wabyanga 2017: 1). According to John Mbiti (1986: 26-27), Africans perceive the Bible as a validation of their own cultural, social and religious existence. Museveni's utilisation of parables from the Bible serves a political-ideological agenda. Consistent with this methodology, Museveni et. al (1997) authored a book on the parable of the 'mustard seed'. In his book, he suggests that his involvement in armed conflicts was a selfless act aimed at remedying Uganda's deplorable condition. In addition, he asserts that he was laying the foundation for the introduction of freedom and democracy in Uganda, symbolised by the metaphorical 'mustard seed' (Museveni et al. 1997). Museveni presents himself as a divine and messianic figure (Jesus) who was believed to save Uganda from oppressive regimes (Wabyanga 2017).

Museveni's parable remarks, derived from his political speeches, are characterised by nationalism, Pan-Africanism, socio-economic reform and democracy, all of which are central to his political goal. During the 68th United Nations Assembly in September 2013, Museveni addressed two significant topics: the Millennial Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa and the difficulties faced by Africa in forming global alliances. Before proceeding on to the subsequent subject of global partnerships for Africa, he recited two biblical passages from Matthew 7:16-20:

> By their fruits, you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears fruit but a bad tree bears bad fruit. (Wabyanga 2017: 5)

While discussing the challenges of global collaborations in Africa, he expressed his anger towards the International Criminal Court (ICC) for its arrogance towards the democratically elected leadership of Kenya. Museveni criticised the ICC for mishandling intricate African matters. Wabyanga (2017: 5-6) states that Museveni describes his government as a 'good tree' and a 'good system' that has yielded positive outcomes under the MDGs. The ICC, often labelled as 'arrogant', is a negative influence in Kenyan politics, resulting in unfavourable outcomes. Thabo Mbeki, the former president of South Africa, likewise used Biblical parables in his remarks.

From Gerald West's (2012) observation, the gradual withdrawal of Christianity and religion in general from the public realm after 1994, and Nelson Mandela's careful refusal to use religion in the public realm and his even more careful refusal to refer to a specific religious tradition, it was intriguing to find an extract of an article by Thabo Mbeki in which he directly referred to the Bible (West 2012). Mbeki (2003:1) began his outline letter:

> In the Biblical Gospel according to St Matthew, it is said that Jesus Christ saw Simon Peter and his brother Andrew fishing in the Sea of Galilee. And He said to them: 'Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men' [Matthew 4: 9].

In the next line, Mbeki continues to interpret this biblical passage by saying that:

> Perhaps taking a cue from this, some in our country have appointed themselves as 'fishers of corrupt men'. Our governance system is the sea in which they have chosen to exercise their craft. From everything they say, it is clear that they know it as a matter of fact that they are bound to return from their fishing expeditions with huge catches of corrupt men (and women). (Mbeki 2003:1)

The remainder of his letter elaborates on this issue, consistently employing the 'fishing' metaphor. The essence of Mbeki's message is unequivocal. He is profoundly troubled by those in our nation who presume the government is corrupt just due to its largely African (black) composition. He dismisses their 'profoundly offensive and deeply rooted stereotype of Africans', as they attempt 'to depict Africans as a populace that is corrupt, inclined to deceit, susceptible to theft and self-aggrandizement through unethical means, a group that is otherwise disdainful in the perception of the "civilised"' (Mbeki 2003:4). Mbeki appears to suggest that these self-designated critics are attempting to uncover corruption where it is non-existent or minimal. Nonetheless, although Mbeki's fundamental premise is evident, his application of Matthew 4:19 is very ambiguous. West (2012) contends that Mbeki may be employing the Matthew text to establish a dichotomy between the legitimate appointment of disciples by Jesus, who are tasked with benevolent actions towards humanity and the illegitimate self-appointment of individuals who have 'appointed themselves' to eradicate perceived corruption. Both groups are on a mission, Mbeki may assert, one legitimate and the other not. Mbeki may be employing the Matthew text in a more negative context, suggesting through this passage that, just as religious people are easily taken in by religious propaganda, certain South Africans are similarly vulnerable to anti-African stereotypes. Alternatively, Mbeki may be employing a biblical image that has detached from its textual context, resulting in minimal or no correlation between Mbeki's usage and that of Matthew (West 2012).

West (2012) suggested that it was intriguing that a secular, yet urbane president could consistently use Biblical imagery in his speeches. First, by using biblical texts, Mbeki's objective was to rejuvenate the basic principles of humanity ('Ubuntu') rather than merely address the economic and materialistic needs of South Africans, although these were also significant. Secondly, the Bible served as the most profound text for contemplation and the cultivation of wisdom, which Mbeki asserts is essential for the holistic flourishing of every South African (West 2012).

To conclude, Gunda (2012: 35-36) argues that the Bible, when used in the public sphere, has the potential to be offensive or harmful to social well-being. This is particularly true when considering its historical association with colonial exploitation, racial segregation and the promotion of patriarchal systems. Discussing the benevolent intentions of most biblical writings and the notion of fairness is distinct from examining the Bible's presence in the public domain. Norman Gottwald (1985: 111) makes a discerning insight by pointing out that

discussions over sacred texts were not solely concerned with disseminating religious values but primarily centred around determining who held authoritative power within the society. The examples of Museveni and Mbeki illustrate that their understanding and utilisation of Biblical materials during political interactions led to their perception as political 'idols' and individuals divinely selected by God. This is a strategy adeptly employed by many African leaders who exploit the widespread reverence for religion, particularly Christianity, among the African populace (see Tofa 2012). This use of Biblical text is similarly observed in Kenya, where presidential candidates employ Biblical parables to appeal to the predominantly Christian audience, as demonstrated in Chapters Five and Six of this research. The use of Biblical texts is evident in popular gospel music, where political leaders appropriate these songs to present themselves as divinely chosen figures. During electoral campaigns, music has been utilised to enhance a positive public image(see Mambwe 2019), especially when a presidential candidate has a background of corruption or has perpetrated crimes against humanity. Therefore, Mambwe's (2019) assertions are crucial in the dissemination of gospel music during a political campaign.

Critical Discourse Analysis of Campaign Music

Elastus Mambwe (2019: 166) asserts that music in Africa serves as a platform where the socio-cultural and political aspects are actively expressed, rather than a mere form of art. In evolving African democracies, music has integrated into the electoral discourse and procedures. It serves as a medium to convey messages about political parties, candidates and party manifestos (Mambwe 2019) (see also Onyebadi 2017 and 2019). Mambwe (2019: 177) noted that campaign music in Zambia's elections has two primary functions: first, as a means of mass mobilisation and advertising and second, as a way for politicians to reacquaint themselves with voters on a social level. However, these insights are not exclusive to Zambia, but apply to other African nations as well, as I shall elaborate in this section.

Kenneth Yang and Yowei Kang (2016) define political mobilisation as 'activities that intend to motivate masses of participants to express themselves and to undertake a particular political action' (see also Street 2012). Music has become an essential element of political mobilisation in electoral campaigns. Mobilising followers to rally behind political candidates and parties is commonly employed in politics (Mambwe 2019: 177). Typically, musicians are hired to record or perform songs that attract large audiences and convey the political parties' message (Mambwe 2019). As stated by David Dewberry and Jonathan Millen (2014), the performers

elicit certain emotions while conveying the content of the song, thus enhancing the emotional impact of the music. According to Benjamin Schoening and Erik Kasper (2018: 2), music can intensify a current mood or alter a person's general state of mind. They also argue that:

> It is the emotional power that campaigns also work to exploit within the electorate; they attempt to form bonds in voters' minds between candidates (including their ideas) and the music that is played at campaign stops, rallies, conventions, and television advertisements. Regardless of the way in which campaigns choose to use music, its enduring power in presidential campaigns is indisputable. (Schoening and Kasper 2018: 2).

Nevertheless, according to Mambwe (2019), the inclusion of music in campaign rallies has resulted in the establishment of entertainment platforms, thus detracting from the primary objective of a campaign, which is to effectively convey a political party's aim. The musical acts, presented as a kind of entertainment, diverted the attention of people who attended the rally with the expectation of listening to the campaign speeches and party manifestos (Mambwe 2019: 178). According to Justin Patch (2017: 10), music has the potential to serve as a substitute for tangible evidence, knowledge and meaningful expression of political ideas. When an electoral candidate lacks popularity, musical performances are likely to overpower the campaign's objective. According to Mambwe (2029; 178), this generates inquiries about whether the music is used as a mere gimmick or is valued as a means of communication. John Street (2001) challenges Mambwe's (2019) assertion that music performances serve as a form of distraction in political campaign venues. Street (2001: 310) narrates that 'we have to understand the pleasure and the fun if we want to understand the politics'. According to Street (2001), music is selected for political objectives primarily because of its intrinsic musical qualities, rather than its potential political benefits. Music is utilised not only in physical campaign rallies but also in political advertisements through the media. Lynda Kaid (2004: 156) defines political advertising as 'any message that is primarily under the control of a source used to promote political candidates, parties, policy issues, and/or ideas through mass channels'. According to Christina Holtz-Bacha and Lynda Kaid (2006), political parties and politicians use the media as a platform for promoting themselves to the voting public (see also Christiansen 2018). Mambwe (2019) contends that in Zambia, campaign songs have transformed into advertisements due to political parties paying for the broadcasting of their songs on radio and television.

As stated by Mambwe (2019: 179), music has served as a means for the candidate to socially reacquaint with the voters in the political sphere. Social reacquainting refers to the process of

reintroducing a political candidate as someone who is part of a community and understands the everyday difficulties faced by ordinary individuals (Mambwe 2019). In this context, the music mirrors the candidate's persona. According to Dewberry and Millen (2014), the selection of campaign music does influence the perception of the candidate to the electorate. The process of social reacquaintance of a candidate can change the perception that voters have towards the candidate. For example, if a candidate has a negative political record known to the public, this process can rebrand him/her into a good person in the eyes of the public (Mambwe 2019). In this context, a song can depict a candidate as modest and approved by God. Edgar Lungu, a member of the Patriotic Front (PF) party in Zambia, was first perceived as lacking charisma. However, he swiftly utilised the party's repertoire of music to develop a persona that contributed to his success in two presidential elections (Mambwe 2019: 179).

Although Mambwe (2019) explores the communicative functions of campaign music, he neglects to provide a theoretical framework for his textual analysis of the songs. The utilisation of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theory is crucial when discussing the role of popular music in political campaigns. Hence, before providing instances of scholars who have employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of popular music in political campaigns, particularly in African nations, I will first provide a more detailed explanation of the theory and its methodologies that will be utilised in the analysis chapters of this thesis.

CDA, as illustrated by van Dijk (2004: 352), 'is a type of discourse analysis that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts'. As an area of study, it investigates the utilisation of written and spoken words as social and cultural activities (Fairclough 1992). According to Allen Luke (1997), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) suggests that one of the purposes of language (both spoken and written) is to construct and influence human identity and behaviour. Adaobi Duru et al. (2019: 191) present another argument in favour of CDA, stating that text might serve as cultural capital with exchange value in specific social contexts. Hence, CDA, as a methodology, investigates the correlation between individuals who produce written or spoken messages and those who receive and interpret these messages (Duru et al. 2019). CDA also assumes a power asymmetry between the two parties due to differences in resources. According to Van Dijk (1995), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed to examine the power dynamics manifested in both spoken and written language. In the political realm, the ruling class exerts control over communication to shape the thoughts and beliefs of the audience. During a political campaign, politicians exert their influence by using language

that promotes and sustains their objectives. Hence, the argument proposes that when politicians employ musicians, whether gospel or secular and engage in singing or dancing, they wield influence capable of manipulating the thoughts of the public, specifically prospective voters (Duru et al. 2019: 191).

The two methodologies employed in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), namely the three-dimensional framework and recontextualization, play a crucial role in my examination of the utilisation of popular gospel music in political campaigns in Kenya. One of the dimensions of Fairclough's (1992) approach is discourse-as-text. This part of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) centres on the textual qualities of a communication piece that unveils the meaning behind the communicator's choices and patterns in grammatical structure, word usage and sentence structure (Fairclough 1992). This section of the framework tries to identify the framing strategies employed in the text. In this research, songs are utilised as a case study to find the underlying meanings in the lyrics. The construction of words in a communicative piece is crucial because the recipient of the product typically interprets the discursive content based on what they hear or read (Duru et al. 2019). Moreover, the examination of words reveals underlying structures and their intended objectives. Frames, as defined by Robert Entman (1993), are prominent themes that consistently appear in a specific written work. When specific terms are mentioned and highlighted in a communication piece, it indicates the promotion of an idea. This study focuses on analysing the inherent frames included in the songs. Fairclough's (1992) framework's second component centres on discourse as a discursive practice. The emphasis here lies on the process of text production, reproduction and consumption. Fairclough (1992) illustrates the importance of print media in the dissemination of communicative pieces to the public, however, with technological advancement, YouTube and social media platforms have become key for users to interact and share their experiences.

The third dimension refers to discourse and its connection to social and cultural reality. Discourse as a social practice examines how a piece of communication affects societal enactments, either by changing or reinforcing the current situation (Fairclough 1992). This third dimension is critical in analysing how Kenyan presidential candidates employ music to retain control, assert dominance and/or influence public perception of their leadership capabilities or limitations. However, these tactics are not exclusive to political leaders but are often employed by media organisations that utilise song lyrics to highlight important themes throughout an election campaign period. In their study, Duru et al. (2019) effectively utilised Fairclough's (1992) framework to analyse the performative turn in Nigeria's political scene.

They focused on songs featured in YouTube videos that involved three prominent politicians in the country: Olusegun Obasanjo (former Nigerian president), Bola Tinubu and Dino Melaye. The three-dimensional model offered a deeper understanding of how Nigerian politicians utilise musical performances and song lyrics to promote political inequity and the misuse of power. The findings of Duru et al. (2019) indicate that political players in Nigeria use metaphorical language as performative tools to reinforce ridicule, intimidation, threats, political conflict and domination.

Another approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is John Richardson's (2017: 71) recontextualization method, which he specifically applies to the context of the German fascist culture. According to Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak (2001, 2009), when an element of text such as a speech, quote, or phrase is removed from its original context, we consider it to be 'decontextualized'. Nevertheless, when the identical element is placed into a different context, it undergoes a process known as 'recontextualization'. According to Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak (1999: 96), the process of recontextualization always entails a transformation. The specific aspects that undergo modification rely on the objectives, ambitions and values of the new context in which the activity is recontextualized.

Richardson (2017: 77) identifies four main transformations used in the process of recontextualization: deletion, addition, rearrangement and substitution. During the process of de- and recontextualization, certain parts of the texts may be omitted. The key question in this case is what specific content is being removed and what are the resulting ramifications. Additionally, it is possible to include additional aspects. Furthermore, textual pieces can be rearranged or scattered throughout the new text. Ultimately, pieces have the potential to be substituted. This is the point at which a decision is made to substitute one element with an alternative from a selection of possible options (Richardson 2017: 77). Recontextualization offers a fascinating perspective on music and song since it allows composers to modify lyrics, themes, motifs, melodies and entire songs (see to Geary 2014; Young 2011). Lovers of a specific song, including amateurs and professionals, can demonstrate their devotion by applying the diverse principles of recontextualization outlined by Richardson (2017). Richardson (2017: 79) explores four distinct methods through which recontextualization takes place in fascist lyrics and music: textual appropriation, interpolation, cover versions and ideological alignment recording. The four approaches to recontextualization are based on the four main transformations: deletion, addition, rearrangement and substitution.

Textual appropriation refers to the act of incorporating a whole song into the fascist cultural agenda, either by reproducing the content or performing it. By appropriating a song in this manner, the party or movement seeks to rearrange the implied significance of the song. Interpolation refers to the process of incorporating an element from a song or recording into a new song and thus recontextualising it. Interpolation, also referred to as musical 'quotation' in the field of musicology, is a prevalent characteristic of modern hip-hop. One instance is the song 'Gangsta's Paradise' (1976) performed by Coolio and LV, which incorporates the chorus and melody from 'Pastime Paradise' (1976) by Stevie Wonder. Similarly, the song 'Let's Stay Together' (2004) by Cee-Lo Green, featuring Pharrell, incorporates a recurring phrase from the song 'Live Forever' (1994) by Oasis. Richardson (2017: 85) provides an instance of a notable occurrence in fascist music, which involves the repurposing of the Nazi anthem 'Die Fanhe Hoch' (Raise the Flag), later more commonly referred to as 'The Horst Wessel Lied', after the songwriter. The fascist parties and organisations throughout Europe adopted various versions of the song. A cover version refers to a fresh rendition or recording of a song that has already been recorded, performed by an individual other than the original artist (Richardson 2017: 82). A cover version demonstrates the admiration for the original song or, particularly in the context of a fascist song, the original artist and their political motivation. Cover versions fundamentally alter original compositions by replacing and reorganising them. An instance of this can be seen in the acoustic ballad 'The Snow Fell' by Screwdriver, which both commemorates and laments the fatalities of German Wehrmacht soldiers on the eastern front in World War II. Hundreds of amateurs and professional musicians have recorded the song. An ideological realignment is a particular type of cover version that functions similarly to a parody but lacks the intention or effect of being comical (Richardson 2017: 82-83).

The Media and Religion in Africa

Religions globally disseminate their message by auditory and visual means and provoke a different form of political affiliation, frequently in rivalry with the contemporary nation-state (Meyer and Moors 2006: 1). Birgit Meyer and Annelies Moors (2006: 1) provide an understanding of how the accessibility of new mass media, made possible by new global infrastructures and media technologies, as well as government laws promoting media freedom, enable the public expression of religion. The correlation between religion and media has garnered significant scholarly interest in recent times (Meyer and Moors 2006). In the 1980s, religion and electronic media were perceived as existing in separate domains, but this perception has evolved. Currently, the televangelical format is not only becoming popular in

Pentecostal-Charismatic movements in Africa, Latin America and Asia, but there is also a proficient use of different electronic and digital media such as radio, television and the internet (Meyer and Moors 2006: 1). Emerging media platforms have a profound impact on religious discussions and practices. For instance, religion portrayed in films and television shows is often regarded as a source of entertainment or 'infotainment' (Meyer and Moors 2006: 15).

Mediated religion in Africa has been extensively studied by scholars, such as Meyers and Moors (2006). In this discussion, I will focus specifically on mediated Pentecostalism using modern media in Africa. I utilise Ghana as a prominent illustration. Following the implementation of a new democratic constitution in Ghana, Pentecostalism has significantly influenced the country's public sphere. This was accompanied by the liberalisation and commercialization of many forms of media such as radio, film, TV and the press (Meyers 2006: 295). Pentecostalism exerted even more influence over secular areas through the conversion of both state-owned and private cinemas into churches. Meyer's (2006) field research conducted in Ghana illustrates the practice of Pentecostal churches promoting their church programs through billboards and brochures displayed at bus stops. Programs focused on Pentecostalism are quite prevalent on television and radio stations, making it extremely unlikely to overlook them (Witte 2003). The religious cinema industry also highlights the Pentecostal doctrine of the contrast between light and darkness, as well as the belief in God's supremacy over demonic spirits (see Meyer 1995 and 1999). Pentecostalism has changed because of its accessibility to the public through new media platforms, extending beyond the confines of traditional church settings. According to Meyer (2006: 300), this perspective presents Christianity as a diversion by intentionally adopting an entertaining manner, resulting in the dissemination of the Bible's message without limitations. The potency and jurisdiction of Pentecostal teachings may be diminished if the message is misconstrued or misread in the public domain (Meyer 2006). According to Meyer (2006), the presence of Pentecostalism in the public domain comes with a drawback: it diverts persons from experiencing authentic religious encounters. Meyer's (2006) reasoning is subject to challenge, as the Book of Mark 16:15 states that Jesus Christ commanded His apostles to disseminate the gospel to all creation. Moreover, Jesus Christ's mission was executed in the public domain rather than restricted to the synagogues. Despite the contemporary misappropriation of Pentecostalism in the public domain, it remains effective in fulfilling its intended goal inside that space. The discourse on media and religion in Africa underscores the crucial function of Kenyan media

in disseminating Pentecostalism by broadcasting gospel music and live Sunday services of Pentecostal churches. This demonstrates that the practice of religion is efficiently propagated beyond the church's boundaries, so reaching a broader community through the media.

Chapter Three

Charismatic Pentecostalism, Politics and the Electoral Processes in Africa

In Chapter One of this thesis, I argued that the emergence of Pentecostalism has heightened the production and consumption of gospel music in Africa. This chapter, therefore, presents a historical overview of the origins of Christianity in Africa, with particular emphasis on the rise of Pentecostalism in Africa and its various elements. To also comprehend the nexus of Pentecostalism and politics in Kenya, I have examined neo-Pentecostalism and its political implications, highlighting the role of Pentecostal Charismatic Churches (PCCs) in the democratisation processes of Kenya. This is then succeeded by a case study of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, a prominent Pentecostal preacher in Kenya, who has been elected to several national political offices. Wanjiru exemplifies the strong participation of Pentecostal churches in politics, particularly in electoral campaigns.

The Genesis of Christianity in Africa[13]

> Although African Christianity has only recently begun to make a considerable mark on the continent and around the world, Christianity's story on the continent is as old as that of the beginnings of the faith itself. (Ngong 2012: 208)

It has been contended by religious academics that a thorough examination of African Christianity necessitates the inclusion of early Christianity in the region of North Africa. Early records of Christianity suggest that certain followers of Jesus, such as Thomas, delivered sermons in Egypt. By the latter part of the second century, Christianity thrived in Alexandria, which, along with Rome and Antioch, was considered one of the three major religious hubs in ancient times (Ngong 2012: 208-209). With the assistance of the most extensive library in antiquity, Alexandria emerged as the epicentre of knowledge, attracting intellectuals from all corners of the world. The city was home to notable theologians, namely Clement, Origen, and Athanasius, who made substantial contributions to the development of the Christian tradition. The presence of Coptic Christianity in Egypt and the African diaspora can be attributed to the

[13] From its influential beginnings in Egypt and Roman North Africa to its spreading around the world, Christianity has always been an important part of the religious landscape of Africa. There were over one billion people in Africa as of 2010, and 490 million of them are Christians and indigenous religionists (about 108 million). Muslims (about 423 million), Hindus (about 3 million), Buddhists (about 250,000), Jews (about 133,000) and atheists (about 600,000). Still, in 2010, 212 million Christians lived in East Africa, 105 million in Central Africa, 16.5 million in North Africa, 47.5 million in Southern Africa, and 109 million in West Africa. Christianity in Africa was further divided into denominations such as Anglicans, Catholics, Independents, Orthodox, and Protestants (World Christian Database 2020). The recent exponential growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity (hereafter PC/C) in Africa forms the main backdrop of this chapter. The World Christian Database predicts that there will be 600 million Christians as of 2025.

amalgamation of indigenous and non-indigenous cultures. While the survival of Christianity in the Maghreb region has been minimised by the emergence of the Islamic community, it is important to acknowledge the substantial contributions made by early Christian theologians, including Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine, to the development of the Christian tradition in this area[14] (Oden 2010; Ngong 2012: 210).

The origins of the early church are also examined by historians through the lens of what they refer to as 'Constantine Christianity' (Ngong 2012: 212). Religious activities inside the royal courts were observed in Nubia (now Sudan) and Axum (Ethiopia). In the context of Ethiopia, Frumentius and Aedesius, two Syrian Christians, were saved from a shipwreck in AD 316 and sent to the royal palace of the Ethiopian king in the city of Aksum, located in northern Ethiopia. Whilst they were in residence, they provided education to the monarch's offspring and promoted the religion of Christianity to both the king and the kingdom at large. From the fourth century until the twentieth century, Western missionaries utilised a similar approach, which involved the conversion of kings to Christianity, with the expectation that the general populace would emulate the royal conduct (Ngong 2012).

In the thirteenth century, King Ezna of Ethiopia tried to Christianise the entire kingdom and called for the extermination of Jews and pagans (Ngong 2012: 212). Recognised as the national religion, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church received privileges from the state at the expense of the people (Ngong 2012). Here, religion and politics were not separate. Christianity was, in most cases, appropriated in ways that promoted power for the incumbents rather than the well-being of the people. This is also a reflection of the modern-day religious institutions in Africa, where churches in some cases prefer to support the interests of the political elite at the expense of the populace who suffer under the same leaders due to poor leadership. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, being acknowledged as the official church of the nation, was granted certain benefits by the state, albeit at the cost of the populace (Ngong 2012). Religion and politics were inseparable in this context. Christianity was predominantly assimilated in manners that bolstered the authority of the ruling class without prioritising the welfare of the populace. This phenomenon also serves as a manifestation of contemporary Churches in Africa. According to Ngong (2012: 213), the utilisation of Christianity for the

[14] These scholars have authored significant theological treatises that continue to hold relevance and serve as indicators of the socio-political circumstances prevalent in African nations. The primary treaty focused on the issues of poverty and wealth. This excerpt is derived from the parable of the affluent young man found in the New Testament.

benefit of those in positions of power has been an inherent characteristic of the religion throughout Africa. Ngong (2013: 213) suggests that 'the appropriation of Christianity to serve the purposes of the powerful has been a staple of the faith in Africa'.

Based on scholarly works on Christianity in Africa (Barrett 2019; Isichei 1995; Ngong 2012; Oden 2010; and Ogbu 2008), Etherington (2012: 198) argues that the notion that Christianity in Africa is primarily a Western import disseminated by contemporary European missionaries is an inaccurate belief. Nevertheless, the missionary encounters did significantly influence the development of modern African Christianity. Etherington (2012) explores the impact of missionaries on the development of Christianity in Africa. Missionary operations were initiated in the southern region of the Sahara when the Portuguese arrived on the West African coast (Isichei, 1995; Ngong, 2012). Following 1415, the Portuguese arrived in Africa to engage with indigenous Christians to outsmart adherents of the Islamic faith. In 1498, Diego Cao, a Portuguese explorer, arrived in the estuary of the Congo River to establish a shipping route for African Christians, intending to foster an alliance against the Muslim population (Ngong 2012). Despite not coming to fruition, the lower Congo quickly became the main area of Portuguese evangelisation in Africa. Soon after, the regional leader, Manikongo[15], declared his conversion to the Catholic faith and a few chosen members of the royal family were dispatched to Europe for advanced education. After a promising initial phase, the Congo mission experienced a fall characterised by confusion and corruption. The decline can be attributed to the emergence of the slave trade, which coincided with the identification of sugar-growing opportunities on the outlying islands. Nevertheless, a significant drawback of the Catholic ecclesiastical practices implemented by the Portuguese was the hierarchical dominance exerted by the upper echelons, resulting in the suppression of African Initiated/Independent/instituted churches (AICs).

While Christianity managed to endure in Portuguese Angola and Mozambique, it did not gain prominence as a substantial evangelistic influence until the resurgence of Portuguese imperial aspirations in the late 1800s (Etherington 2012: 198-207). What was particularly fascinating was that the Protestant missions to sub-Saharan Africa began in the 18th century with no support from the government. Following this, their missions underwent expansion to include kingdoms situated outside the boundaries of Britain's Cape Colony in South Africa. Despite

[15] Manikongo was the title given to the ruler of the Kongo kingdom, a former kingdom in west-central Africa from 1390-1914 (Ngong 2012).

incurring costs due to the demise of agents who succumbed to endemic fevers, their primary motivation sprang from the imperative to eliminate the operations associated with the Atlantic slave trade. Subsequently, as the number of missionary fatalities increased, some missions resorted to employing indigenous agents who had developed immunity to the most prevalent diseases throughout their childhood. As a result, the inaugural Church Missionary Society in the Niger Delta was spearheaded by Samuel Crowther, an African Bishop (Etherington 2012: 198-207).

The mission's engagement in numerous human rights activities was influenced by the human rights concerns surrounding slavery (Etherington 2012: 198-207). The emergence of the connection with human rights concerns gained prominence during the nineteenth century in South Africa. The legal system of the Cape Colony, which systematically deprived indigenous people of their land and freedom, was challenged by Johannes van der Kemp and John Philip of the London Missionary Society (LMS). Nevertheless, they encountered recurrent assaults from governmental authorities and white settler politicians (Etherington 2012). African Christians demonstrated their apprehension on this issue by assuming prominent positions in the establishment of the African National Congress (ANC) (Etherington 2012: 198-207).

In the colonial era, mission schools were the primary providers of formal education, occasionally receiving government funds. Therefore, the assembly of the initial group of leaders in the domains of business and politics following independence bore a striking resemblance to a reunion of college alumni. Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Robert Mugabe and Nelson Mandela were notable individuals who graduated from prestigious educational institutes affiliated with missions. Missions also provided opportunities for individuals pursuing further degrees to pursue education overseas (Etherington 2012). Tiyo Soga, the first African individual to receive ordination as a minister from the Presbyterian Church in South Africa, pursued his education at a prestigious teachers' college located in Glasgow. John L. Dube, the inaugural president of South Africa's ANC, attended Oberlin College in Ohio. The African elitists acquired an in-depth awareness of the global system within which they were positioned and were furnished with the necessary means to question their position within it.

The expansion of mission Christianity was made possible by the advances in medical knowledge, which made tropical regions more accessible to outsiders. European and North American missionary societies viewed the sub-Saharan Africa region as the greatest

opportunity to evangelise. Agents from an array of denominations streamed in, just as they had earlier streamed into the healthier climate of South Africa. Africans soon came to understand that they could choose their own denominational identities. Under such circumstances, missionary control of the congregation was difficult to achieve. This denominational fragmentation was also initiated by the Venn-Anderson[16] theory of the 'three selves'—self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating churches (Etherington 2012: 203). Once the local congregations were granted the authority to choose their affairs, the path was opened for further denominational fragmentation. The development of the American Zulu Mission in South Africa provided a good example of this process. African Independent Churches (AICs) also culminated during the nineteenth century because of this 'self-governing' system. The AIC posed a threat to British rule. The British officials tried to stamp out these AICs in South Africa. Etherington (2012: 204) suggests that:

> Spies and secret police were assigned to report on their meetings. Laws were passed to prohibit any non-white preacher from occupying a station or preaching without direct supervision by a white missionary. Itinerant black preachers were turned back at border crossings and American black missionaries—thought to be especially dangerous –were denied entry.

Nevertheless, the proliferation of independent churches in South Africa and other European colonies remained constant. The regions of West Africa and the Congo River Basin have given rise to autonomous religious leaders. Anderson (2015) states that the initial autonomous churches were established as a response to and in opposition to missionary paternalism and racism. The AICs in Africa have been classified by theologians and anthropologists under the framework of Pentecostalism. This assertion is made based on the observed parallels in beliefs and modes of religious observance. In the next section, an examination is conducted on the historical development of Pentecostalism in Africa, as explained by Kalu Ogbu (2007); it ultimately led to the emergence of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity (PC/C).

Pentecostalism In Africa

The rise of modern Pentecostalism is a highly notable advancement in the religious histories of Africa (Kwabena 2015: 100). According to Asamoa-Gyadu Kwabena (2015: 100), Pentecostalism falls within the broader category of the 'Pneumatic movement'. This word encompasses a Christian community that has had the unique opportunity to encounter the Holy Spirit in their Christian existence and religious practices. Kwabena (2015: 101) states

[16] Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson were American mission theorists who were influential in promoting African initiatives in the nineteenth century (Etherington 2012: 203).

that Pentecostalism originated from the Bible, specifically from the book of Acts 2, where the Holy Spirit's fire descended upon the disciples of Jesus Christ:

> When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2: 1-4)

Olufunke Adeboye (2018: 25) has presented a counterargument to the prevailing scholarly consensus that attributes the emergence and dissemination of Pentecostalism in Africa to the Azusa revival in Los Angeles, USA[17]. Adeboye (2018) argues that Africans had distinct encounters with the Holy Spirit. In Africa, there were three primary streams of Pentecostal Movements which were: classical AIC, classical Pentecostal denominations including Assemblies of God and Christ Apostolic and neo-Pentecostals such as the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International and the contemporary charismatic/prosperity-preaching churches (Kwabena 2015: 101; Adeboye 2018: 26-30).

In response to the absence of practical experience in Western mission Christianity, African Christians established their own Holy Spirit movements, coinciding with the Azusa Street Revival. According to Anderson (1999) and Gampiot (2017), the AICs, which are commonly referred to as 'prophet-healing' or 'Aladura' in West Africa, 'Kimbanguist' in Central Africa and 'Zionist' church groups in South Africa, represent the initial cohort of spirit-led or charismatic Christian organisations in Africa. These churches typically exhibit similar phenomenological characteristics, including the wearing of white clothes, extended prayers,

[17] The history of Pentecostalism is usually traced back to the 1906 Azusa Street Revival led by the Black Methodist preacher William J. Seymour (Robeck 2006: 10-12). He previously worked under a white preacher, Charles F. Parham in Topek, Kansas. At a Bible School called Bethel, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues is said to have occurred with one student, Agnes Ozman, after Parham laid hands on her (Robeck 2006). Seymour later parted ways with Parham over some racist experiences, and later became the leader of the Azusa Street Revival, from which most of the world's classical Pentecostal churches trace their origins (Robeck 2006). Two developments, according to Cephas Omenyo (2006: 247), turned the Azusa Street Revival into a popular global movement. The first was the willingness of people from all racial backgrounds to worship together under the leadership of a black man, namely Seymour. Second, the beneficiaries of this revival travelled across the nations to preach the gospel to 'make disciples of all nations'. Some of these missionaries travelled to Liberia, Angola, West, and Central Africa respectively. South Africa has a history of encounters with the early North American Pentecostalism (Omenyo 2006). Although African Pentecostalism may not entirely have its roots in the Azusa Revival; magazines, and newsletters with testimonies of the Holy Spirit baptism, speaking in tongues, and encounters of miracles, were received in many parts of Africa. These testimonies helped to inspire many African leaders of the Pentecostal movements during the early twentieth century (Omenyo 2006).

healing rituals and prophetic ceremonies. Upon the AIC's establishment, it faced significant opposition and persecution from the established mission churches. The AICs faced allegations of promoting occult rituals within the Christian faith (Baïta 1962: 35–36). The AICs diverged from the liturgically structured, quiet and intellectual Christianity of the historical mission churches by emphasising the experiential potency of the Spirit. This was seen in the focus on individual metamorphosis and rejuvenation, restoration, purification and fervent forms of worship that valued spontaneity and enthusiasm over formal church rituals (Kwabena 2015). The AICs were established by prophets such as William Wade Harris from West Africa, Garrick Sokari Braide from the Niger Delta, Simon Kimbangu from Central Africa and Isaiah Shembe from South Africa. These individuals, known for their travels as evangelists, played a crucial role in the growth of the Holy Spirit movements throughout the continent (Adeboye 2018: 26). Ogbu provides a more detailed account of how African Indigenous prophets played an essential part in establishing the groundwork for the emergence of Pentecostalism in Africa:

> These prophets tilled the soil on which modern Pentecostalism thrives. They were close to the grain of African culture in their response to the gospel and the felt resonance between charismatic indigenous worldviews and the equally charismatic biblical worldview…William Wade Harris trekked from Grebo Island through the Ivory Coast to the Gold Coast [Ghana] baptizing, healing, teaching new choruses and charismatizing the religious landscape. The Charismatic fire that [the prophets] lit became more important for the future of Christianity in Africa than the grand [1910] Edinburgh Conference that shut out African voices. (2008: x)

The continued influence of Zionist congregations in South Africa can be attributed to the nation's political past. Nevertheless, in some regions of Africa, the AICs have undergone extinction, and the neo-PC/C has exerted a substantial impact. The AICs are thus no longer fully representative of the Christian religious advancements in Africa (Meyer 2004). The emergence and growth of Neo-Pentecostalism in Africa can be classified into five broad factors: contextual, cultural, instrumentalist, strategic and spiritual (Adeboye, 2018: 31). Contextual variables encompass the broader environmental conditions that contribute to the flourishing of Pentecostalism. During the 1980s and 1990s, multiple states in sub-Saharan Africa experienced political and economic crises (Adeboye 2018: 31). Asonzeh Ukah (2005) described the situation in Nigeria:

> In the midst of the legitimacy crisis, social decay, state failure, massive corruption, academic graduate unemployment, environmental degradation, unprecedented abuse of human rights, and crippling poverty of many amidst

> the scandalous wealth of a few, new churches and ministries proliferated…. (254-255)

Amidst these difficulties, individuals sought peace and consolation from the Pentecostal churches. According to Adeboye (2018: 31), the implementation of structural adjustment programs in several states presented challenges for their respective populations. According to Paul Gifford (1993), there exists a correlation between the emergence of neo-Pentecostal churches and the economic downturn experienced by African nations throughout the 1980s. Gifford further argues that this connection also explains the ensuing reliance of these churches on the United States. According to Gifford (1993), the emergence of neo-Pentecostalism in Africa can be attributed to North American televangelism, rather than indigenous African Pentecostalism. However, Gifford's claim (1993) has been challenged by African academics such as Adeboye (2018: 32), who contend that cultural aspects have had a substantial impact on the emergence of Pentecostalism in Africa. Undoubtedly, the economic downturn experienced by most African nations prompted a heightened inclination towards religious devotion. Nevertheless, the reason that maintained their fascination with the Pentecostal church was the alignment of customary African preoccupations with the supernatural within the Christian framework (Adeboye 2018: 32). According to Opoku Onyinah (2007: 308), Pentecostalism in Ghana addressed cultural concerns inside the African psyche. Pentecostalism condemns the realm of obscurity, magic and malevolent spirits. It typically depicts these actions as malevolent. Simultaneously, it affirms the truth of its existence while providing reassurance to adherents that the omnipotence of God surpasses all others (Onyinah, 2007). Hence, according to Pentecostalism, to achieve triumph over demonic entities, it was imperative to embrace the teachings of Jesus Christ and receive the power of God through the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Onyinah 2007: 308). Ogbu (2008) also applied Adeboye's (2018: 32) cultural argument in the African context when he observed:

> Pentecostalism in Africa derived its colouring from the texture of the African soil and the interior of its idiom, nurture, and growth: its fruits serve more adequately the challenges and problems of the African ecosystem than the earlier missionary fruits did. (2008: 170)

According to Ogbu (2008), indigenous worldviews still dominate contemporary African life and continue to shape the character of Pentecostalism in Africa.

The instrumentalist factor underscores how Pentecostalism was deployed by its followers for their own purpose (Adeboye 2018: 32). For example, Pentecostalism is used by the young, educated and upwardly mobile to contest against the use of old traditions. In Zimbabwe,

David Maxwell (1998: 354) illustrates how the members of the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God (AG) Church were taught to reject tradition and focus on the nuclear family. This according to Maxwell (1998: 354) would free them from the 'exactions of kin and community thus enabling personal accumulation'. Doctrines are thus formulated to enable Pentecostals to make rapid social changes such as social mobility, to prevent individuals from falling into poverty. The instrumentality of the prosperity gospel was used to confront and renegotiate issues of political exclusion and economic frustrations (Maxwell 1998).

The strategic factor, according to Adeboye's argument, examines the successful strategies employed by Pentecostals to expand their brand and territory (2018: 33). First, their use of modern media technology promoted a direct encounter with their audiences and potential converts, more than could have been achieved in a physical setting. Pentecostal ministries have now launched highly interactive websites where visitors can recall previous sermons, listen to worship music and pay their tithes and offerings (Adeboye 2018: 33). Feedback and prayer requests are also received online via platforms such as email addresses, Facebook and Twitter. Parsitau and Mwaura (2010) however argue that more research needs to be done on the implications of these virtual interactions of church services. Meanwhile, mass media has facilitated world evangelism and helped Pentecostals forge and maintain transnational relationships (Adeboye 2018: 33). Lastly, is the spiritual factor that examines the growth of Pentecostalism in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Adeboye (2018: 34), the demonstration of the Pentecostal charismata within this period was unprecedented, therefore it was generally interpreted as representing a special move of God. African Pentecostalism has generated immense spiritual capital in the form of healing, conversion to born-again believers and spiritual virtues unmatched by mainline churches. It was also this period that witnessed the growth of groups such as Gideon Bible International, Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship and Women Aglow (Adeboye 2018: 34). These groups provided avenues for born-again professionals to reach out to their colleagues and other individuals in society and were altogether viewed as a mighty move by God in Africa (Adeboye 2018: 34).

Neo-Pentecostalism and State Affairs in Kenya

While ethnicity[18] has always been recognised as a significant element influencing political identification in Kenya, the importance of religion and religious identity in politics has witnessed a notable rise in the last three decades (Throup 2015: 29). The composition of religious groupings in Kenya has seen significant transformations in recent decades. Based on the 2009 national census of Kenya, 81 per cent of the population identifies as Christians, while 11 per cent identifies as Muslim[19] (Throup 2015: 29). Within these general approximations, there exists a substantial and enduring diversity, resulting in a heightened state of religious fragmentation. According to Throup (2015), the Christian population in Kenya has experienced a growing fragmentation due to the emergence of Pentecostalism and the quick expansion of prosperity gospel preachers. The Muslim community expressed their frustrations about political and economic marginalisation when the Pentecostal narrative became deeply ingrained in the socio-political fabric of the country. The argument is outlined by Alamin Mazrui as follows:

> While Kenya is constitutionally a secular state which upholds the principles of non-discrimination on the ground [sic] of religion, non-Christian citizens have nonetheless been known to suffer gross inequalities in their post-colonial experience. The ascendancy of Christianity to a position of dominance in Kenya's body politic has partly resulted in a systematic imbalance that has allowed the management of national and public affairs to assume a peculiarly Christian bias. (1993: 199)

In December 1991, the Kenya National Assembly called for the repeal of Section 2A of the constitution. According to Benson (1995: 177), the objective was to establish the legality of opposition political parties to engage in competition with the Kenya African National Union (KANU)[20] for political dominance. The United States and other international donors compelled President Moi to abolish the one-party policy and they declined to provide financial assistance to Kenya unless its political system underwent reform. This resulted in Moi facing international humiliation and a decline in his domestic influence. Benson (1995) contends that Moi's attempt to recreate the Kenyan society from his predecessor, Jomo Kenyatta, was undermined by ideological differences. Moi's efforts to transform Kenya into a

[18] Personal ties and ethnic solidarity rather than ideology, have been the primary bases for mobilization by politicians and party leaders (Throup 2015).
[19] According to Throup (2015), 'This latter figure may be something of an underestimate today. The claim by the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) that at least 20 percent of the population are Muslims may be closer to the mark, although the contention by some Islamic leaders that 30 percent of Kenyans are Muslims is exaggerated'.
[20] KANU was the only ruling political party during the reign of Daniel Arap Moi (1978-2002).

'Nyayo' state spanned from the enactment of Section 2A of the constitution on 9 June 1982 until its dismissal on 10th December 1991[21] (Benson 1995: 178).

The church in Kenya put pressure on these system reforms. In April 1992, the Justice and Peace Commission of the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK) issued a pastoral letter that reflected their discontent with the one-party government:

> Fear was the order of the day and before very long that fear became a new culture in the national life—*the culture of fear.* Other institutions which were critical of the government were also intimidated and some succumbed to silence. In the final analysis, it appeared as if only the Church and the Law Society had the courage to speak on behalf of the people. (CPK 1992)

At a time when many opposition figures had gone into exile, the churches— especially the non-Catholic main-line churches— became the vehicles for resistance to Moi's regime. The churches' critique of the Nyayo state was, however, determined by their agendas and not the exiled radicals. Benson (1995: 178) compares the conflict between the Nyayo state and the church to a contest between a Roman gladiator and an opponent armed with a net during the late Roman empire, respectively.

The second-wave Prosperity/Charismatic Gospel preachers became the most prominent in the last three decades in Kenya[22] (Throup 2015: 29). This new breed of Pentecostalism has designated the term 'Charismatic' to distinguish it from the classical Pentecostal churches in the early twentieth century. One feature that distinguishes the PCC[23] from the older Pentecostals is its establishment in urban areas. According to Togarasei (2005: 350), neo-Pentecostalism has been an urban affair, largely drawing its clientele from the 'urban middle class, the elite, and fairly educated population'. Some of the major cities that are highly populated with PCCs include the capital Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kiambu, Nyeri and Kisumu (Parsitau and Mwaura 2010). According to a newspaper report (*The Standard* 2007), the Registrar General's office was overwhelmed by the increasing demands for registration of these churches. Former Attorney General Amos Wako indicated the overwhelming number of PCCs in the country. As of 2007, the department faced difficulty in processing 6,740 pending applications (Parsitau and Mwaura 2010: 3-4). Examples of PCCs in Kenya include Deliverance Churches, Neno Evangelism Ministries, Maximum Miracles Ministries, Jesus is

[21] 'Nyayo' is a Swahili word which means footsteps. The Nyayo philosophies implied that Kenyans would follow the footsteps of Moi.
[22] According to Parsitau and Mwaura (2010), this proliferation of the PCCs began in the 1970s.
[23] Religious scholars also refer to the PCC as neo-Pentecostal Churches.

Alive Ministries, The Happy Churches, Faith Evangelistic Ministries, Redeemed Gospel churches and the Winners Chapel International Ministries (Parsitau and Mwaura 2010: 4).

According to Parsitau (2008a), religious leaders affiliated with the PCC have actively engaged in socio-political spheres, making significant contributions to the process of democratisation and governance in the nation. The interplay between religion and politics has long been characterised by a reciprocal relationship (Parsitau 2008). However, it was during the 2007 general elections that the dynamic between these two domains underwent a significant transformation (Parsitau 2008: 24). The Pentecostal churches exerted a substantial influence on national politics during these fiercely contested elections. The evidence supporting this claim is the significant participation of clergy members including bishops, pastors and evangelists in the 2007 elections (Parsitau 2008). Nevertheless, only a small number of them were elected. One of the individuals included in this group was Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, the founder of Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM), who successfully secured a Members of Parliament position in the Starehe Constituency in 2007. Nevertheless, it was her campaign for the Nairobi governor position in 2013 that propelled her into the political spotlight. Hence, the next section presents a case study examining her political involvement in her capacity as a senior clergy member of the PCC.

Bishop Margaret Wanjiru – 'Mama na Kazi[24]'

> Politics is about governance; politics is about leadership. The church is about governance; the church is about leadership… So, for me, it's about leadership, it's not about religion. (Bishop Margaret on Capital FM, February 8, 2013)
>
> The calling of preaching and the calling of leadership are the same thing. It is some of the politicians who have made politics so dirty, that they do not want good people to enter into politics. The Bible states that there is the office of the priest and the king, and the two must function together peacefully. (Bishop Margaret on KTN News, September 1, 2015)

In November 2012, Bishop Margaret Wanjiru made a public declaration at her Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM) church in Nairobi, expressing her intention to run for the governor of Nairobi in the forthcoming 2013 elections as a member of the ODM (Orange Democratic Movement). This came after a period of speculation regarding her political future. She was the first female candidate to compete for this position, which was established as a

[24] 'Mama na Kazi' was a slogan given to Bishop Wanjiru by the media, indicating that she was a woman of hard work.

consequence of the structural modifications brought about by the new 2010 constitution (Gez and Alvis 2014). At that point, Wanjiru's political trajectory was undeniably extraordinary. In 2003, she initiated the expansion of her activities beyond the church by engaging in economic and political endeavours (Parsitau 2011: 135). According to Gez and Alvis (2014), Wanjiru was elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) in 2007 for the Starehe Constituency, which is located in the Northeastern region of Nairobi, on an ODM party ticket. In the year 2008, Wanjiru assumed the position of Assistant Minister for Housing. Subsequently, in 2010, she effectively secured the Starehe seat through byelections that were initiated in response to a petition submitted to the court by her opponent from 2007, Maina Kamanda. During the course of these processes, Wanjiru consistently upheld her position within the church. Despite her humbled background, which she alluded to as a disadvantaged upbringing, a self-made woman in a male-dominated society, a single mother and the founder and leader of Nairobi's prominent Pentecostal congregation, her political ascent seemed remarkable (Gez and Alvis 2011). Additionally, in light of ethnic rivalries that culminated in the post-election violence in early 2008, the association of Wanjiru, a Kikuyu by origin, with ODM, which is dominantly Luo[25], was seen as an unlikely choice[26].

To understand the growing trend of Kenyan church leaders and Pentecostals doubling as politicians, I use Wanjiru's 2013 campaigns as a case study. Gez and Alvis (2014) use the two 'strands' inherent in neo-Pentecostalism as well as Bishop Wanjiru's discourse and conduct, either of which can offer possible explanations for the expanding of one's operation beyond

[25] The Luo is an ethnic community located in the western part of Kenya, in the Nyanza province. The ODM opposition leader Raila Odinga hails from this community, and so were most of his political allies.

[26] In recent years, there has been a growing observation among scholars on the political involvement of Kenyan pastors, particularly those of the Pentecostal denomination (Cheeseman 2008; Kavulla 2008; Gifford 2009; Droz and Maupeu 2013). According to Gifford (2009) and Droz and Maupeu (2013), the achievement of the Christian lobby in mobilising support for the obstruction of the 2005 constitutional referendum served as a promising indication for religious leaders who aspired to participate in matters of national significance. On 21 November 2005, a referendum on a proposed new constitution was peacefully conducted in Kenya (Andreassen and Tostensen 2006). The campaign was organized in two referendum camps, the Bananas (yes) and Oranges (no). The proposed constitution was however rejected by 57 percent, while 43 percent voted in favour (Andreassen and Tostensen 2006).
The churches' engagement in the struggle for democracy throughout the 1990s may be traced back to earlier periods (Sabar 2002; Knighton 2009). The 2007 elections in Kenya witnessed the emergence of a new occurrence when church leaders pursued political positions. This encompassed prominent individuals such as Wanjiru herself, along with Pastor Pius Muiru from Maximum Miracle Centre, who campaigned for the presidency and exhibited poor performance. The 2013 elections witnessed a further increase in the number of political candidates from the clergy, however, the case of Bishop Wanjiru has garnered significant national and intellectual interest, as evidenced by the works of Parsitau (2011), Ogbu (2008: 150-152), Kavulla (2008), Gifford (2009), Gathogo (2011), and Mwaura (2002).

the church and into the political arena. The first strand is made of the spiritual ideals grounded in the idea of being an agent of a 'Godly plan' and a member of a 'Righteous class' (Gez and Alvis 2014), whereas the second strand is associated with a pragmatic entrepreneurial spirit. Through the examination of the two strands and recognising their inherent tension, I offer an examination of Wanjiru's 2013 campaigns and her eventual failure both at the polls and in the public eye. More broadly, this case study articulates the general concern about the neo-Pentecostal movement, whose claims to be a vehicle of untarnished divine authority often conflict with its current embrace of 'worldly' modes of operation.

After declaring her political candidature for 2007, which was revealed to her through a prophetic message from the American Prophetess Brenda Todd (Kavulla 2008), Wanjiru cited Proverbs 29:2 – 'When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice'— and sought support from her congregation (Parsitau 2011: 135). This Biblical passage was interpreted to express the notion that individuals belonging to a 'righteous class', would assume the role of exemplary governmental leaders. Wanjiru, as a born-again religious leader was deemed as a suitable political leader. The underlying concept conveyed by Kenyan Pentecostals is that God is the solution to all the adversities that affect the physical, spiritual and societal aspects. Esther Wahome, a renowned gospel singer in Kenya, introduced this concept in her song 'Kuna Dawa' (There is a Cure), whereby she advocates for Christian salvation as the only remedy to life's challenges. The music clip depicts Wahome delivering these teachings to individuals in many environments, including children within an educational institution, the Maasai community dressed in traditional garments, residents of slums and even individuals who are unwell in a hospital (Esther Wahome Official, 2019). The song, while not explicitly political, juxtaposes the divine benefits during the hardships of everyday life. Consequently, the song might be employed to communicate the notion that 'clerics can introduce Christian principles into politics, which is commonly perceived as "unclean" in Kenya' (*Daily Nation*, February 21, 2013). The music was performed at nightclubs and dance clubs. Furthermore, Bishop Wanjiru utilized this song during her 2013 campaign, asserting that both the ODM and herself possess the potential to offer essential remedies for the challenges encountered by the residents of Nairobi and the nation at large[27]. One of the respondents from the JIAM, as described by Gez and Alvis (2014), provided further details regarding this parallel:

[27] Please see Watch http://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=VG0AnFuNEW8.

> A church is like a hospital. I have never seen a hospital take someone who has had an accident as maybe someone healthy […]. Whether you are healthy or you are sick, the church should admit you, know where your problem is, and treat you. That is why the church is like a hospital.

Wanjiru struggled to effectively maintain the desired flawless image of a clergywoman while utilizing her religious appeal. The act of engaging in politics posed a potential threat to her religious reputation. Her choice to enter politics elicited varied responses from religious adherents, leading to a significant number of them disaffiliating from the church. Furthermore, by asserting that her candidature was divinely sanctioned, Wanjiru was undertaking a significant risk. Commentators expressed their concerns about the involvement of Pentecostals in politics, specifically highlighting the problematic focus of both pastors on the prosperity gospel[28] (Gathogo 2011: 14-16). The validity of Wanjiru and Pius Muiru is called into question by their prophetic pronouncements. Both individuals asserted that God communicated with them regarding their political endeavours, although ultimately, they suffered a sad defeat.

In 2013, Wanjiru was forced to quit the gubernatorial race due to irregularities with her academic credentials. Instead, she entered the senatorial race and ran against a well-known established religious leader, Bishop Adoyo of Christ is the Answer Ministry (CITAM)[29]. Another obvious comparison that can be drawn between Adoyo and Wanjiru is that the two are Bishops and leaders of large Pentecostal congregations in Nairobi. Despite Adoyo's low-key campaigns, which earned him merely 10,527 votes, he did not pose a significant challenge to Wanjiru. For instance, while Wanjiru was determined to maintain her role as head of JIAM throughout her campaign, Adoyo claimed to have resigned from his position at CITAM to join politics; he stated that 'you cannot serve two masters' (Barasa 2013). However, both bishops mobilized support from within the church (Family TV, February 12, 2013). In explaining how two Pentecostal preachers could vie for the same position, Adoyo argued that he had been preparing to run for the senatorial position long before Wanjiru, who, having 'failed to get the governor seat', fell back on the senatorial race. According to Adoyo,

[28] Pastors here refer to Bishop Wanjiru and Pastor Pius Muiru.

[29] Bishop Adoyo's long career covered several distinguished leadership roles, including chancellor for the Pan African Christian University, chairman of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Africa, and moderator of the Interreligious Council of Kenya. During Moi's last years in office, Adoyo was a member of the Commission of Inquiry into the Cult of Devil Worship (Adoyo 2009).

Wanjiru had asked him to switch with her and run for governor instead, supposedly to avoid this conflict between two preachers (Gez and Alvis: 2014).

In Wanjiru's justification for being in politics and the leader of a church, she stated:

> They say if you want to go to politics—resign, then go to politics. My argument is 'I am too young to resign. I am energetic. You want me to resign and go where? I mean, I have three kids and four grandchildren, let me serve the people'. (Capital FM, February 8, 2013)

Although Wanjiru's refusal to step down as a church leader while running for the 2013 elections was not different from her actions in 2007, it still drew criticism. The constant attacks and criticism highlight the popular sentiments that saw Wanjiru's political career as an expansion, not of religious commitment but that of her ambitions towards amassing power and wealth (Gez and Alvis 2014).

Adoyo's formal agenda was primarily geared towards good governance, confronting corruption without fear or intimidation. By contrast, Wanjiru had put the subject of 'wealth creation' on top of her list, promising to set in place laws that would favour small business owners. Below are some responses to questions concerning her agenda for the city of Nairobi:

> Number one on the list is wealth creation. Our manifesto is jobs. So, wealth creation is on top of the list. We must create jobs for our people. To do this, we must have the right laws in place, to implement what we want to do. That is my number one job. (*Citizen TV*, January 29, 2013)

> Number one, I would like to start with wealth creation. My number one agenda is wealth creation. We have such a wide gap between the rich and the poor, it is miserable. I mean, when you see poor people, even the laws that we have are not friendly to the poor, but they are very friendly to the rich people. So, my number one assignment is to make sure that the small businesses are well taken care of, accommodated, have trading areas, and have friendly trading laws. (*Capital FM*, February 8, 2013)

According to Gathogo (2011), Wanjiru emerged as a prominent advocate of the prosperity gospel during its early stages. One of the other labels attributed to her was the abbreviation BMW, denoting Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, which was occasionally employed by her adherents. This abbreviation capitalizes on the prevalent correlation between luxury automobiles and not only financial influence but also as a symbol of affiliation with the exclusive circle of the political elite. The categorization of Wanjiru as a BMW alludes to her religious doctrines, which openly promote material prosperity, while also suggesting her

integration into Kenya's ruling elite, a connection that was confirmed despite her humble origins. Nevertheless, this acceptance creates a sense of detachment between Wanjiru and her religious leadership. In one of her church services, she articulates a sentiment that bears resemblance to the entrepreneurial mindset she aspired to imbue into her role as senator:

> We simply do not have to be poor. We can be rich, and have wealth, and not apologize for it. Do not apologize for your shamba, for your farm. Why are you trying to explain to people how you got it? You were praying for it. Go and plant flowers and export them. Do not apologize for your good car. Drive it like you own it, not like you borrowed it. (Wanjiru's Sermon on 15 October 2012)[30] (Raila Odinga 2012)

Another illustration that exemplifies the role of Wanjiru's religious achievements in advancing her political aspirations for the senate position occurred during a morning radio program. During the duration of the thirty-minute interview, Wanjiru exhibited minimal inclination toward appealing to her religious aptitude. In the following passage, however, her religious stance is invoked distinctively, serving as an illustrative instance that bolsters her portrayal as a prosperous entrepreneur and leader. The expressions 'rise from ashes' and 'transformation of the mind' are commonly employed in her church sermons:

> Nairobi needs a role model. Nairobi needs a very transformative leader. You need to transform communities. I always say that poverty is not a state of the pocket; it is a state of the mind. If you can transform the minds, then you can transform the pocket. If you are not able to transform the mind, it doesn't matter [what is] the state of the pocket, that person cannot change. So, my number one assignment is—to create opportunities. Then transform the mindset of our people that you do not have to be poor. Whether you have a good education or not, you do not have to be poor. You can rise from your ashes. Look at me; look at the church that I run today. It's an international organization. But that's not where I started. I started on the streets; I was a preacher on the streets. (*Capital FM*, February 8, 2013).

Upon analysing the two threads that permeated Wanjiru's 2013 campaign, I agree that the entrepreneurial strand best represents Wanjiru as a resilient female entrepreneur. This observation suggests a shift from how her campaigns were presented in religious language in 2007, a factor that might perhaps be said to have contributed to her victory in 2007 but defeat

[30] Please see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCZ16eAam_Y (Published on October 15, 2012). This sermon was given during Raila Odinga's visit to Wanjiru's church.

in 2013. Nevertheless, the initial aspect was not completely eradicated throughout her campaign efforts in 2013. The first thread that associates Wanjiru with the 'righteous elite' and perceives it as a component of a 'Godly plan' for Kenya was also evident in 2013 but to a lesser extent. Within the church, Wanjiru presents herself as an agent of a 'Godly plan', but outside of the church, she presents herself as an entrepreneur. According to Swidler (1986), Wanjiru's practice of selective self-presentation can be seen as a deliberate and calculated approach, which, depending on the specific circumstances, serves to strengthen her assertions.

Before the 2013 elections, a Presbyterian pastor remarked, stating that Christians who assume political roles experience a detrimental impact on their Christian faith, resulting in their inability to maintain a strong position in politics. According to a report by Family TV (2013), their religious content becomes diluted or watered down. Wanjiru's lack of success in the 2013 elections can be perceived in the pastor's remarks, which stemmed from her inability to effectively reconcile her political abilities with the anticipated spiritual qualities of a devout church leader. Wanjiru's legitimacy as a Bishop while in political office was called into question due to various issues. These included corruption scandals at the Ministry of Housing, controversial academic documents that resulted in her losing her chance at the Nairobi gubernatorial race and her taking over Elizabeth Ongoro's democratically-nominated senatorial nomination seat from the ODM. These contentious matters hindered Wanjiru's ability to present herself as a proponent of 'Godly' politics. Through her fervent pursuit of 'worldly' matters and her emphasis on presenting herself as a self-made and resilient woman, Wanjiru's religious standing was undermined, resulting in a perception of insincerity among the voting population. Notwithstanding these political obstacles, Bishop Wanjiru persisted in her pursuit of political office during the 2022 electoral campaigns, particularly for the Nairobi Senator position under William Ruto's Kenya Kwanza political party, which she ultimately failed to secure.

In my concluding views, the PCCs have long encouraged their members to participate in national politics. Besides, the Bible talks of going into the world and becoming a light in darkness (the 'darkness' here denotes the 'world'). However, when it comes to members of the clergy vying for political office, they are looked down upon by the population and even within the Church. If a member of the clergy vies for a political office and wins, his/her ministry loses the spiritual momentum or influence it previously possessed. As witnessed with Wanjiru, her ministry no longer has the strong spiritual map it once bore in its days of birth.

The public slowly lost their respect towards her as a woman of the cloth. Also, after Pius Muiru launched his bids to become the President and failed horribly, he lost his notoriety as a vigorous Evangelist who held crusades all over the country. Rueben Kigame is likewise a perfect example of a minister of the gospel and musician who lost his fan base after campaigning for the presidential position. This seems to be a continual trend in Kenya where Pentecostal leaders are frowned upon while seeking political seats, and their integrity is brought into doubt. It may be linked to the notion that politics is a ‘dirty game’, hence those affiliated with it are also seen as ‘dirty’ in a manner. This is a phenomenon that is yet to be fully understood.

Chapter Four

Kibaki Tosha!: 'Unbwogable' Rhythms and Popular Ballads in Kenya's 2002 and 2007 Presidential Elections

In this chapter, I discuss the role of popular music after the 2007 presidential campaigns that saw Mwai Kibaki re-elected as the President. It is worth noting that gospel music was not prevalent during these elections. After the election results were announced and Kibaki sworn into power, a wave of ethnic violence swept the country, leaving about 1300 dead and others displaced. The post-election violence led the country to substantial political and economic turmoil that attracted global attention. In this context, I analyse Eric Wainaina's song 'Daima Kenya', a popular ballad, which was played throughout the national airwaves because of the peace and reconciliatory message it carried; I also discuss the musical attributes. However, I begin with the 2002 elections that saw the rise of democracy in the country.

The 2002 Elections and the 'Unbwogable' Tales

First, it is necessary, however, to discuss the roots of what occurred in 2007 by contextualising and exploring the preceding 2002 elections. The 2002 presidential election was heralded by an immense desire for change and the subsequent removal of the ruling party, Kenya African National Union (KANU), under the leadership of Daniel Moi from 1978 until 2002. The two contesting political parties, KANU and the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) endorsed two of their desired presidential candidates, Uhuru Kenyatta and Mwai Kibaki, respectively. However, Mwai Kibaki won the elections. These campaigns favored Mwai Kibaki because the NARC party comprised the political 'big men', including Charity Ngilu, Raila Odinga, Kalonzo Musyoka and Martha Karua, who represented the key ethnic communities of Kenya. This multi-ethnic alliance was a promise to defeat authoritarianism in the country.

On 29 December 2002, Mwai Kibaki was sworn in as Kenya's third president in front of a million jubilant citizens in Nairobi's Uhuru Park (Cheeseman 2007: 166). The audience chanted the song 'Yote Yawezekana Bila Moi' (All things are possible without Moi), which was originally a gospel song with the lyrics, 'Yote Yawezekana Kwa Imani' (All things are possible by faith) (AP Archive 2015). John Richardson (2017: 78) suggests that 'fans of a particular song—whether amateur or professional—can signal their admiration through recontextualization; they can add elements of an old composition to a new one, whether

through sampling, interpolation ('quotation' of musical content) or appropriation of thematic or structural aspects of a composition'. Kenyan's appropriation of Christian music lyrics for political expression reflected a nation that was jaded by twenty-four years of oppression perpetrated by the dictatorial government under the leadership of Moi. The song reflected the 'people' (Kenyans) versus the 'fascist' (Moi); signifying that the citizens had taken back their powers and gained freedom of expression[31]. During Moi's era, such outbursts would culminate in police brutality against the citizens. This appropriation of popular music songs for political purposes did not start during the inauguration but during NARC's political campaigns. Although it was not gospel in its original content, the popular song 'Unbwogable'[32] by Gigi Gidi and Maji Maji[33] was appropriated and used as the political mantra by the NARC political party. It became a popular national anthem thereafter.

'Unbwogable' surfaced in Kenya's public sphere on a September morning in 2002, notably through the state-controlled Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) (Nyairo and Ogude 2005: 227). It was broadcast on the General Service show 'Breakfast Club' by Bill Odidi, who presented it as the thrilling new song from the Luo-speaking pair, Gidi and Maji, known for the 1999 Luo rap hit, 'Ting Badi Malo'[34]. At the time, Odidi did not even imagine the sheer impact this song would have on the nation over the next couple of months (Nyairo and Ogude 2005). By the time it became known as 'Unbwogable', the song had crossed the threshold of entertainment to become a conduit of political expression and, indeed, a symbol of resistance and determination. In September and October 2002, it was heard in the privacy of homes and cars, across airwaves and sometimes through discs and cassettes. It dominated the *mahewa*[35] on *matatus*[36] (Nyairo and Ogude 2005).

By November 2002, KBC no longer aired 'Unbwogable' because it had become one of the primary vehicles within which Kenya's efforts toward political transition were being

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[31] Thomas Turino (2000: 190) explains a similar phenomenon in Zimbabwe, which he terms 'musical nationalism'. The term is 'the conscious use of any preexisting or newly created music in the service of a political nationalist movement, be it in the initial nation-building stage, during the militant moment of manoeuvre, or during and after the moment of arrival to build and buttress the relationship between the general population and the state' (Turino 2000: 190). The consciousness of a nationalist function applies to the consumer, not necessarily to the creators or originators of a piece or style. Thus, in this view, musical nationalism is exceedingly context-specific. In this instant, the nationalists are the Kenyans who appropriated the song 'Yote Yawezekana Kwa Imani' (All things are possible by faith) during the political rally. However, they were not the original composers of the song, but the citizens turned the song into a political anthem at the time.
[32] 'Unbwogable' is a slang term for 'unshakable'.
[33] Their actual names are Joseph Ogidi (Gidi) and Julius Owino (Maji).
[34] Luo for 'Raise your hands in the air'.
[35] *Mahewa* is a common Sheng expression used especially in matatus to refer to the loud music they blare out.
[36] Public service vehicles.

transported at full speed. John Street asserts that 'state intervention can turn a work of art into a political gesture' (1997: 26). In the case of 'Unbwogable', the intervention took place in two ways. The first is censorship. As KBC no longer aired the song, the National Service presenter, Elizabeth Obege, was fired because she aired it contrary to the station's policy regarding politically sensitive material (Nyairo and Ogude 2005). According to Nyairo and Ogude (2005: 232), 'to appreciate the impact of this censorship, we must first appreciate the close relationship between broadcasting and the development of popular music'. Not only did radio influence the musical preference of the public, but, as Ted Josiah[37] argues in light of airplay, 'it provided advertising services and exposed the material to the public' (Nyairo and Ogude 2005). Banning a song from the airwaves denies it and the artists the exposure they require to ensure both sales and performance contracts. However, censorship can be counterproductive as stated by Nyairo and Ogude:

> In situations such as that of the 'new' multi-party Kenya, a time when people were being reared into the new culture of alternative politics and being weaned off official, state-sanctioned politicized discourses, censorship signals an alarm and people happily tune in to emergent alternative voices. (2005: 232)

In other words, the censorship generated curiosity among the public and further propelled the song to fame.

Secondly was the timing which also played a significant role in steering its fame. Against a looming and critical general election, the incumbent government's act of sidelining the song gave it the kind of political resonance it might never have acquired at any other moment in history (Nyairo and Ogude 2005). Gidi and Maji insisted that at no point in the conception of their song did they have a political design for its future reception[38]. The song, which they initially called 'Who Can Bwogo Me?', was drastically turned to 'Unbwogable' by the public and the music duo thus changed the name to affirm the public's choice[39]. Karin Barber argues:

> As consumers of African popular genres, local audiences are never passive; they do not 'give up their turn in normal patterns of communication'. They are instead 'interlocutors', actively 'constituting the (very) performance' of the text; and thus, their input is key to its eventual texture and input. (1997: 347)

[37] Ted Josiah is Kenyan music producer. He produced the song 'Unbwogable'.
[38] The duo composed the song because of the economic difficulties they were facing as young college students.
[39] Here the publics also comprised of the local music pirates.

Nyairo and Ogude assert that 'the transformation of 'Who Can Bwogo Me?' into 'Unbwogable' emanated from the patterns of its reception by committed and indigenous publics' (2005: 230). This editing underlines Karin Barber's (1997) argument that the public has a hand in constituting the 'meaning' of a performance, text, or utterance.

The NARC party took 'Unbwogable' as their anthem to propel the party's agenda and popularity by riding on the song's success. The act of appropriating the music was a conscious intervention by the international supporters of NARC. The song's producer Ted Josiah remarked that licensing fees were paid for NARC's use of 'Unbwogable' as its party slogan. Gidi and Maji insisted that they did not receive money from NARC or its supporters and this could partly explain their denial that their song was ever political. They claimed they were not even paid for concert appearances at Nyayo Stadium organised by NARC as part of their campaign. Josiah intimated that NARC sponsors (who were the British) suggested a new version of 'Unbwogable'. They asked the producer to remove many Luo elements and add Maasai, Gikuyu, Kamba, Luhya and Kalenjin elements to give the song a broader national appeal. Josiah came up with a version of the song:

Lyrics	**Translation**
What the hell are you stopping me for? Can't a young Maasai chunga ng'ombe anymore?	Can't a young Maasai graze cattle anymore?

(Nyairo and Ogude 2005)

Figure 4.1. Lyrics of the New Recontextualised Version of 'Unbwogable'.

The remix version of the song, featuring Mr Ebbo, captures the socio-economic woes of other ethnic groups (MELBUR 2021)[40]. The NARC supporters raised nearly ten thousand US dollars by duplicating and distributing tapes with this song (Nyairo and Ogude 2005). This was all part of the performative politics of the party to convince Kenyans that they would erase all the wrongs perpetrated by the Moi regime, including economic decay, corruption and the mismanagement of the country's resources. Nyairo and Ogude suggest that 'the very idea of remix versions is centered around the tropes of destruction and plurality, around the notion of breaking the known, and of creating something over and over again, each time building on the old to create a new form' (2005: 241). 'Unbwogable' became engrained in the cultural memory of the citizens; it stood for an identity, a spirit of invincibility and pride in the nation.

[40] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7eZQaALuNA4

The incumbent President, Kibaki, transported it from the outside terrain of resistance to the comfort and recognition of the State House. This slogan also found its use in parliamentary sessions. This newfound culture went beyond the borders of the Kenyan identity; the international community also played into the understanding of the slogan (as quoted from Nyairo and Ogude 2005: 245):

> Kenyan presidential hopeful Mwai Kibaki will head into tomorrow's election boosted by his wildly popular campaign anthem. The hit song, 'Who Can Bwogo Me?', echoes the message of Kibaki's National Rainbow Coalition, bridging tribal differences while voicing resistance to corruption and oppression. (*Washington Post,* 27 December 2002)

> Until recently, Kenyans felt defeated and downtrodden as they watched their county's downward spiral of economic and social decay. But a political transformation with the defeat of Daniel arap Moi's handpicked successor in the country's first real elections, in December, has given them a new spirit that is best captured in a single word— 'Unbwogable'. (*New York Times* 16 February 2003)

'Unbwogable' Song Analysis

The song features rich timbres from group vocals (namely, Gidi and Maji), which encourage and facilitate audience participation in singing, irrespective of their musical proficiency[41]. The tempo is moderate, with significant repetition of the phrase 'Who can bwogo me? I am unbwogable'. This recurrence is emphasised by the half-step (semitone) ostinato, which creates anticipation and fulfils expectations, allowing the listener to predict the rapid resolution during the listening experience. The utilisation of vocal sound effects, reminiscent of screaming or chanting, also promotes engaging and peripheral participation. The chorus lyrics demonstrate a call-and-response format. They shout in a staccato rhythm, 'Who can Bwogo me?' to which the duet replies with a legato chant, 'I am unbwogable'. The response, while not staccato like the call, is high-pitched. The staccato call enhances the song's rhythm and depicts the duo as resilient and confrontational towards the Moi tyranny. The song sustains its vigour and tempo until the end. Similarly, the public sustained the same enthusiasm for the song during Kibaki's electoral campaign. The song was appropriated to

41 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcIDTiqzJ0s&pp=ygUjdW5id29nYWJsZSBnaWRpIGdpZGkgb2ZmaWNpYWwgdmlkZW8%3D

oppose the Moi regime, prompting the populace to sing it with equal fervour, if not greater, than Gidi and Maji's original version.

[Chorus]
Who can bwogo me?
Who can bwogo me?
I say, who can bwogo me?
I am unbwogable
Who can bwogo me?
Who can bwogo me?
I say, who can bwogo me?
I am unbwogable

Using Norman Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional approach to critical discourse analysis, the meanings of the 'Unbwogable' song text were a cry for liberation from economic difficulty and of course, a portrayal of invincibility. Likewise, for the NARC party, the song indicated freedom from an oppressive predecessor (Moi) and their portrayal as a government that would be undefeated despite the political intimidation of the incumbent. Second, as a discursive practice, it is important to recognize the importance of the media in the circulation of the song. The modes of production and distribution contributed to the success of the song to a point where the masses could relate to the lyrics and ultimately, the NARC political party made it an anthem for their campaigns. Third, as a social practice, the song shaped the social structure of society, especially among the youth. It gave the masses an unusual sense of freedom to express their views without the fear of incarceration (which took place in Moi's era). For the NARC party, the song was used as an assurance to the masses that their voices would be heard and that their freedom of expression would not be watered down as it was before.

Media stations still reappraise this slogan. Gidi and Maji were invited to perform their 'Unbwogable' hit on the youthful show '10 over 10', hosted by Willis Ruburu on Citizen TV (Citizen TV Kenya 2018a). The duo claimed that when they first introduced themselves to the music industry, it was 'fresh' and not as developed as it is now; they recognized significant growth in the country (Citizen TV Kenya 2018b). They also stated that they simply sang their hearts out, reflecting on their hardships as young adults. This composition re-introduced the local music industry to the public sphere because of its Hip-Hop style of production, which was a highly appreciated sound, especially among the youth (Marsh and Petty 2013). Hip-hop music from the North American culture expresses the struggles and oppression of black

communities (Morgan and Bennett 2011), similar to what Gidi and Maji emphasise. However, their plea was not necessarily on 'race' issues. Their song introduced the phenomenon of political appropriation of music in Kenya and hence, politicians have been known for this narrative in the elections that followed since 2002. Were it not for the streaming of 'Unbwogable' through media stations, the song would not have been recognised as a political anthem in the country. The media acted as the middleman between the music and the politics thereof. Although the song does not hold religious connotations, the song altered the trajectory of popular gospel music dissemination in the country. Gospel musicians emerged as active political endorsers. In my interview with Ben Githae, a gospel artist discussed in Chapter Five, he indicated that Gidi and Maji were crucial in Kenya's 2002 politics, which motivated him to produce music for electoral objectives in the long run.

The 2007 Elections

The 2007 electoral campaigns, which took place in a confused partisan situation, were characterised by a fierce debate and genuine mobilisation, which took a violent turn. The campaign was lively and contested by two men of opposed nature and vision, Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga (Cussac 2008: 35-54). After the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) announced the disputed presidential results, the campaigns raised several challenges that worsened violence nationwide. At the end of the campaigns, the voting process on 27 December 2007 was peaceful compared to the post-election period. During the campaigns, the competition was stiff between the primary political opponents—Mwai Kibaki of the Party of National Unity (PNU) and Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). Additionally, the 2007 election was a test for Mwai Kibaki, who, despite achieving socio-economic success during his first term (2002-2007)— economic growth of six percent and free primary school education— found his position weakened by the haphazard management of his cabinet and his failure to keep several of his campaign promises (Cussac 2008).

Kibaki's new alliance (PNU) was significantly weaker than NARC in at least three ways. Firstly, the departure of Raila Odinga, Kalonzo Musyoka and Charity Ngilu from the NARC party left Kibaki with a much narrower ethno-regional support base. Kenyan politics has heavily relied upon ethnicity, especially at the presidential level. Kenyan ethnic communities have historically proven unwilling to vote for a party that does not contain any of their aspiring leaders within its ranks. Secondly, by allying with former President Daniel Moi and controversial ally, Nicholas Biwott highlighted Kibaki's failure to break from the past and

tackle corruption. It gave the impression that the President was out of touch with the country's mood. Part of this failure enabled Raila Odinga to present himself as the 'change' candidate to mobilise young voters who were frustrated at the refusal of the old guard to 'move over'. Thirdly, Kibaki failed to integrate the various components of his alliance into an effective election vehicle.

Religious populism was a recurrent theme during these elections. Kalonzo Musyoka capitalised on his 'Mr. Clean' image by making his wealth public to signify his dedication to financial transparency and battle against corruption (Cussac 2008). Based on the solid religious nature of Kenyan society, he also used the reputation of piety and of being a born-again Christian, using terms such as 'miracle' and 'prophecy' during the launching of his presidential campaign at Uhuru Park in October 2007. He believed he would snatch the presidency from Kenya's two favorites—Odinga and Kibaki. On the other hand, Odinga signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Muslim leaders of the country. This was meant to secure the interests of the Muslim community, who were said to be oppressed under successive governments since independence in 1963. In exchange, the community would support Raila Odinga's campaigns. This caused controversy among the Christian leaders of the country because churches appeared to be the most influential religious structure in the public debate in both the 1992 and 1997 elections. However, in 2007, just as in the 2002 presidential campaigns, most Christian leaders took a neutral stance, simply reminding Kenyans of the importance of voting and holding free and fair elections.

During the buildup of the 2007 elections, political and racial tensions were palpable throughout the country. And it was only after the announcement of Kibaki's victory, that tensions escalated into the post-election violence that attracted international attention. The violence was mainly in Kenya's Central, Rift Valley and Western regions, primarily comprising the Kikuyu, Kalenjin and Luo ethnic communities. Unlike the 2002 election, where music served as a means of endorsement, the music during the 2007/2008 elections functioned to foster peace and healing in a nation that had experienced significant loss of lives, a wounded and displaced population. Therefore, Eric Wainaina's song 'Daima Kenya' was intended to serve the specific purpose of promoting peace and reconciliation through the lyrics and sonic arrangement, as elaborated in the section that follows.

Eric Wainaina's 'Daima Kenya'

I resorted to gathering information from several discussions on reputable YouTube channels— some were forty minutes to four-hour-long interviews— that featured Eric Wainaina. This was because getting Wainaina to participate in interviews proved somewhat challenging. The interviewers, such as Daniel Ndambuki[42] and Richard Njau (from the Airwaves 2023a)[43], even testified about the number of years it took to have Wainaina participate in their interviews, respectively. I also analysed Wainaina's music through his YouTube and Spotify channels. The discussions entailed some crucial aspects of Wainaina's musical journey and his impact on Kenya's music industry for over twenty years. However, not many musicological aspects were featured, therefore, I had to analyse his music and justify what aspects— particularly of 'Daima Kenya'—impacted the politics.

Wainaina's musical journey was heavily influenced by his family who jammed to the music of the late Joseph Kamaru, the Jackson 5 and The Beatles. He claimed that his father, almost eighty years of age, was an astute 'Twisty' dancer[44]. By participating in choirs and musicals, Wainaina's musicianship was honed at St. Mary's High School in Nairobi and also took piano lessons at the Kenya Conservatoire of Music. As he continuously grew in the music space, he found his faith in God through the Winans family (a family that comprises gospel music singers from America) and Ladysmith Black Mambazo's music. In the early 1990s, Wainaina formed a cappella group of five young men called the 'Five Alive', meaning five guys alive in Christ. The team were avid performers at the Nairobi Baptist Church but later received backlash from the clergy because of their performances in secular spaces such as the Carnivore Club. They resorted to performing outside the Church without the pressure of living up to religious standards. When the ensemble parted ways in the late 1990s, they had spent eight months doing concerts in London.

The Moi era had no doubt influenced and informed Wainaina's compositions. He claims that the 'democratic space influenced the ensemble'. In 1992 and 1997, Kenya experienced ethnic clashes from the multi-party elections for presidential and parliamentary positions[45]. In 1994,

[42] Churchill Television 16 November 2020.
[43]Richard Njau is a renowned YouTube content creator in Kenya. He has over the years interviewed musicians from all spectrums in Kenya, taking Kenyans through the journey of the entertainment industry since the 1990s. Jean Kidula has used Njau's online interviews for her music students at the University of Georgia, who were venturing into the histories of Kenyan music (CTA-Cleaning the Airwaves b. 2023).
[44] The Twist is a popular American style of dance defined by the hips and legs moving left and right.
[45] Multi-party elections first took place in 1992 and then in 1997.

the genocide in Rwanda occurred, leaving many deceased and displaced. Wainaina narrates that all these political unrest and socio-economic challenges inspired him to compose music that engaged with these issues. Such music includes his song 'Nchi ya Kitu Kidogo' (A country of small things), where he sings about the normalcy of taking bribes and the rampant corruption in Moi's era. In 1997, while pursuing his music degree at the Berklee College of Music, Wainaina composed and recorded the 'Daima Kenya' audio-visuals during his holidays in Kenya. The music recording was done at the Kenya National Theatre. The first video recording was uploaded on YouTube in 2018; although the audio-visual quality is not up to standard[46], the message is quite comprehendible. The version of this recording was solely in English and it was named 'Kenya Only' (Eric Wainaina 2012)[47]. In 2000, Wainaina's former music manager persuaded him to re-write the song in Swahili to reach a wider audience within the East African Community. The song was then named 'Daima Kenya' (Eric Wainaina 2017)[48], a translation of 'Kenya Only'. His manager helped him to transcribe the lyrics to Swahili because he was not quite fluent in the language despite being a Kenyan citizen[49]. Wainaina performs the English version like a pop ballad, intricately woven by words with poetic imagery of patriotism. The lyrics are:

Stanza 1

Our glory lies in unity, our strength in our accord,
Hatred and disparity, we cannot afford,
Our task is incomplete if our souls and minds don't meet,
If there's one in the multitude, who does not share our attitude,

Chorus
To work, to live for Kenya only,
Let my flag remind me of my sacred duty,
Black for the people, green for the land,
Red for the price of freedom,
And white for peace in Kenya, my pride, my strength, my joy
Always will be Kenyan, in pride and strength and joy.

Figure 4.2 Lyrics of the first version of 'Daima Kenya'.

The Swahili version of the song includes some lines that were excluded or added, which means that it is not an exact translation of the original English version. The Swahili version

[46] You Tube was first introduced globally in 2005.
[47] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=60lcmDFWD-k.
[48] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdXhhm9dAmA.
[49] Swahili is Kenya's national language, and it is a compulsory language that is taught from elementary to secondary school.

received a bigger and better reception in Kenya; Wainaina acknowledged this during his interview[50]. This is why I have mainly analysed this version. The lyrics and translation are as follows:

Lyrics	**Translation**
Stanza 1 Umoja ni fahari yetu Undugu ndio nguvu. Chuki na ukabila Hatutaki hata kamwe Lazima tuungane, tuijenge nchi yetu Pasiwe hata mmoja Anaetenganisha	**Stanza 1** Unity is our pride Brotherhood our strength Hate and tribalism We do not want We must unite and build our country Let there be no one who will pull us apart
Chorus Naishi, Natumaini Najitolea daima Kenya Hakika ya bendera udhabiti wangu Nyeusi ya wananchi na nyekundu ni ya damu Kijani ni ya ardhi, Nyeupe ya amani Daima mimi mkenya Mwananchi mzalendo	**Chorus** I live, I hope, I sacrifice for Kenya Surely the flag is my fortress Black is for the people, red for the blood Green for the land, white for peace Forever I am Kenyan A patriotic citizen
Stanza 2 Kwa uchungu na mateso Kwa vilio na uzuni Tulinyakuliwa Uhuru Na mashujaa wa zamani Hawakushtushwa na risasi Au kufungwa gerezani Nia yao ukombozi kuvunja pingu za ukoloni	**Stanza 2** In pain and suffering In cries and agony Our freedom was grabbed for us By heroes of old Bullets did not deter them Or even imprisonment Their aim was redemption, breaking the colonial chains
Bridge Wajibu wetu Ni Kuishi kwa upendo Kutoka ziwa Mpaka pwani Kaskazini na kusini	**Bridge** Our common responsibility Is to live in love From the Lakeside to the Coast North and South

[50] It is also evident through the number of YouTube views—263,000.

Figure 4.3. Lyrics of the second version of 'Daima Kenya' by Eric Wainaina.

'Daima Kenya' Song Analysis

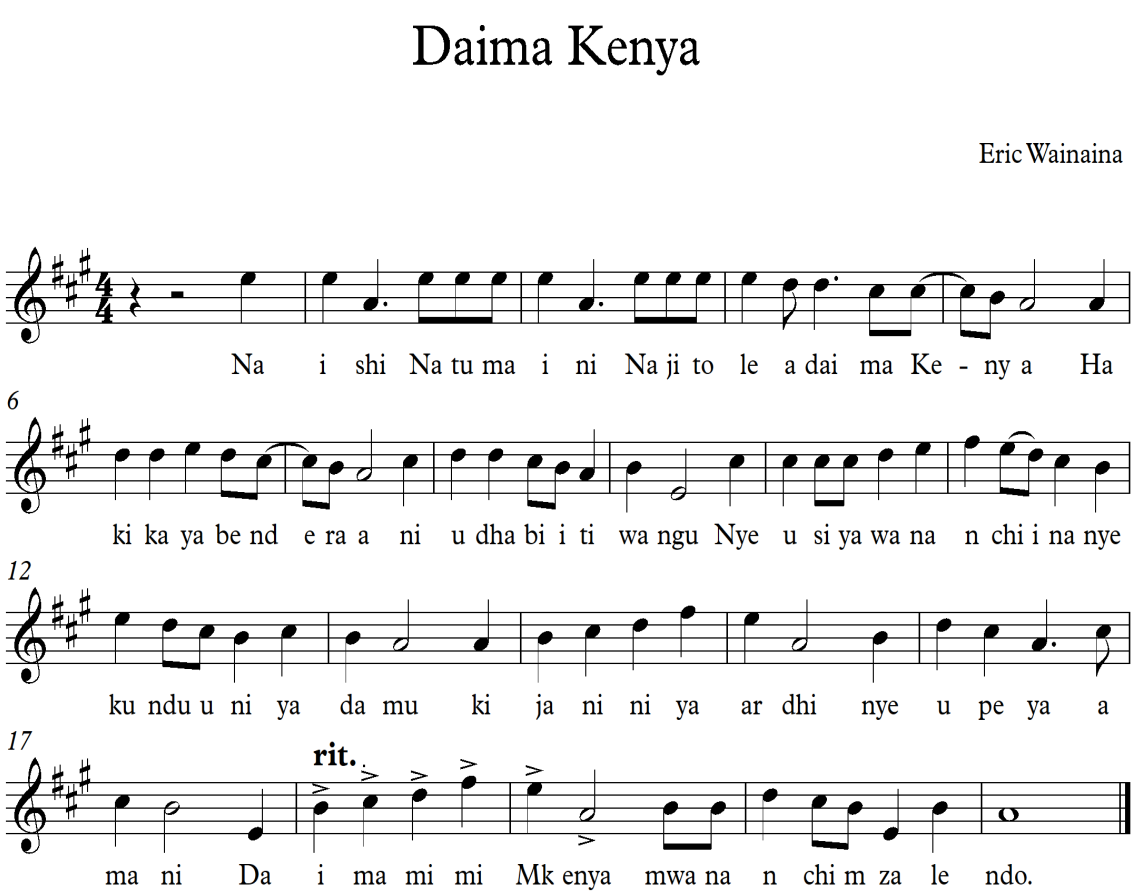
Wainaina begins the first stanza with a call to unity, admonishing Kenyans to reject and rise above ethnicity and tribalism. The second stanza narrates Kenya's colonial history and praises the freedom fighters' ability to face the colonisers fearlessly, even though it cost them their lives. In comparison, the chorus is simply a reminder of what the colours of the Kenyan flag symbolise, which evokes patriotic emotions in the listeners. Chronologically, one would expect Wainaina to start the song with colonial history, but this is not the case. This alteration would be to capture the attention of the audience. To this effect, the song's orchestration was well arranged to capture the poetic lyrics and even give a better understanding of the song. Richard Middleton posits that lyrics should not only take the form of content analysis, 'which tends to oversimplify the relationship between words and "reality" '(1990: 227). He argues that the structural specificity of the verbal and musical signifying systems is crucial. Dave Liang also reiterates that the words' simple meanings are often transcended or modified, either when particularly strong musical conventions take precedence or when lyric effects are transformed by the musical treatment of the words (1969: 99).

The song begins with a motivic piano introduction[51], accompanied by subtle strings, alto saxophone, brass and the timpani, which join in a syncopated rhythm. The first stanza then begins with a piano and voice solo. The simplicity of the musical arrangement in the first stanza captures the mood and intention of the lyrics. The stanza is a dialogue between Wainaina and the listeners as he conveys the message of unity and strength. The chorus, sung three times, has melodic contours accentuating the intonation, as shown in the transcription Figure 4.4. Bars 8 to 20 are characterised by ascending and descending notes, distinguishing the chorus from other stanzas. The purpose of this scale sequence is for the listeners to remember the chorus easily. Also, the words in bars 8 to 20 state the literal meanings of the colours of the national flag, with which the citizens are familiar. In bars 18 to 19, Wainaina accents and elongates the phrasing on the words 'Daima mimi mkenya' (forever I am Kenyan) to emphasise patriotism and the song's theme. Then it returns to the normal tempo in bars 19-21. During his interview, Wainaina stated that certain piano chords in the piece, notably the

[51] This piano motif is repeated at the end of the song as a postlude.

chorus, were strategic to evoke patriotic emotions in the listeners: the Bm^7, Bm and $F\#m^7$. The chorus is accompanied by the harp, which plays a soft glissando at the beginning of every phrase. The strings are also played lightly in the background.

Figure 4.4. Transcribed Section of the 'Daima Kenya' Chorus



From the second stanza, the drum kits, lead guitar and a short clarinet motif make their entries, which continue throughout the song. However, the virtuosic four-phrase alto saxophone is played before the final chorus. The saxophone is also prominently showcased in Wainaina's 'Ritwa Riaku' (meaning 'My Name') love ballad, performed with the same skilful and masterful flair as his other musical works. Ruftone's 'Mungu Baba' and Juliani's 'Utawala' songs, which were considered anthems during the 2013 elections, share a similar orchestral sound. In conclusion, Wainaina's musical skills and education have contributed to his meticulous musical arrangements. He even acknowledged that his education at the Berklee College of Music meant everything to his music career.

From the inception of the Swahili version of the song in 2000, it has gone through the process of 'music revival'. Juniper Hill and Caroline Bithell (2014: 3-42) posit that music revival comprises the effort to perform and promote music valued as old or historical and usually perceived as threatened or dead. Hill and Bithell (2014) further argue that revivals are often motivated by dissatisfaction with some aspects of the present and a desire to effect cultural change. Revival agents usually have agendas specific to the socio-cultural or political contexts and can also be regarded as activists. Wainaina revived the song after the 2007 post-election violence period to remind citizens that political disparities should not undermine their true call to patriotism. This particular music video version is different (Makayas Online 2010)[52]. As opposed to the 2000 version, where Wainaina performs the song alone in a dark room playing the piano, in the 2007/2008 post-election music video Wainaina incorporates the Shangilia Youth Choir[53] (Makayas Online 2010). The Director and editor of the video, Prince Makaya, elaborates that instead of highlighting the typical landscapes, scenery and wildlife, Wainaina opted for a simpler concept of the video which highlights the children, who are the future of the country (Makayas Online 2010). The voices of the children are mixed in with Wainaina's original track. This patriotic song was used extensively to bring back sanity to a beautiful country that was consumed in the 2007/2008 post-election violence.

The song caused controversy after the Japanese Ambassador to Kenya, Ryoichi Horie, performed 'Daima Kenya' at the State House for the then-President Uhuru Kenyatta in 2021. According to Martin Murigi (2021), Wainaina was banned from performing at the State House after making a statement that he could not vote for Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto in 2013 because they were accused of crimes against humanity during the 2007 post-election violence. The irony was that his song was performed at the State House, yet he was banned from performing at the very place. Boniface Mwangi, a human rights activist, took to his Twitter page and quoted, 'Wainaina can't perform at State events for speaking truth to power!' Wainaina has been acclaimed as a patriotic activist through his songs. Nonetheless, his later pieces emerge as pop love ballads[54], which appear to be his preferred style of composition

[52] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dh3oKHJ7KZQ

[53] 'Shangilia' is a Swahili word for 'celebrate'. This video had 821,000 views on YouTube when I viewed it. Please see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dh3oKHJ7KZQ.

[54] A pop ballad is a short popular song that often features a narrative element. The term also signifies a slow-tempo love song (Garrett 2012).

thus far. While Wainaina's song was not officially utilised by any political party, it has served to bring Kenyans together during periods of political turmoil through the media stations. This includes the post-election violence in 2007/2008, the terrorist attack at Westgate Mall in Kenya in 2013 and most recently, the protests against the proposed finance bill in June 2024, which resulted in the deaths of the youth population. Wainaina remains an influential figure in the country's music scene.

Following the post-election unrest of 2007/2008, the nation gradually restored its previous stature. The International Criminal Court (ICC) commenced investigations against the perpetrators of the electoral violence. Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto were convicted of crimes against humanity. The subsequent chapter presents an examination of how the two political leaders, Uhuru and Ruto, conducted a successful campaign despite facing accusations from the ICC. Popular gospel music and Pentecostalism significantly influenced their 2013 electoral campaigns, as indicated in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

UhuRuto Political Duo: the ICC, Popular Music and Pentecostalism in the 2013 Presidential Elections

Introduction

The 2013 elections saw the political duo, Uhuru Kenyatta, the presidential candidate and William Ruto, his running mate, come together under very difficult circumstances. The media coined the term 'UhuRuto' to showcase their political unity. The two were charged by the International Criminal Court (ICC) with crimes against humanity after the 2007/2008 post-election violence[55]. Despite the charges, the two ran a successful campaign and won against their fierce rival, Raila Odinga. I argue that the political duo employed religious populism, and I also utilise the term 'framing theory' to describe how the media disseminated the concept of peaceocracy. I demonstrate how the lyrics of various gospel songs served as the basis for the theoretical frameworks utilised by both the political duo and the media. In addition, I contend that each of the songs fulfilled distinct functions. For instance, within the UhuRuto camp, gospel music served exclusively as a means of endorsement and also as a socio-political and economic reflection of the country. UhuRuto used gospel music to portray themselves as 'righteous' in the public eye, particularly in response to the accusations leveled against them by the ICC. Conversely, the media utilised gospel music as a socio-political reflection of society, as well as a tool for promoting peace, healing and reconciliation.

According to José Zúquete (2017), religious populism can be defined as a type of populism that is influenced by a belief in a connection with God or the divine realm. This form of religious populism asserts that it is adhering to or accomplishing the desires of the Supreme Being, with whom the individuals believe they have a special connection. Religious populists assert that they are carrying out divine tasks on earth, opposing those who do not believe in God (Zúquete 2017: 2). The ICC was the adversary of the UhuRuto campaigns. Ben Githae's song 'Mabataro' (My Needs) was a popular gospel song that marked the start of the UhuRuto campaign. The song is a supplication that implores the Lord to fulfill the material requirements of His followers. Within the UhuRuto campaign, the phrase 'My Needs'

[55] Uhuru and Ruto were summoned to the Hague for their hearing at the ICC. However, their cases were both dropped by the court because the witnesses had been compromised and the Kenyan government did not cooperate fully with the ICC.

symbolised their desire to be exonerated by the ICC of all the accusations leveled against them. The song was adapted to align with the religious populist narrative of Uhuru and Ruto.

I utilise the media's concept of 'framing', which facilitated the dissemination of the peace message during the campaigns. Framing, as commonly understood, refers to a major notion or narrative that gives importance to a series of unfolding events, building links between them. The framing of the subject matter serves to identify the nature of the disagreement and the essential essence of the issue (Gamson and Modigliani 1987: 140). According to Thomas Nelson (2011: 190), this term is an excellent starting point but lacks comprehensiveness because the concept of 'framing' is broad and academics have different interpretations of it. Nelson (2011) highlights the importance of clearly defining boundaries between various framing techniques and refraining from categorising everything as a frame. Considering the current debates on important societal matters, it seems unlikely that the disagreements will come to an end (Nelson 2011). According to Thomas Leeper and Rune Slothuus (2019: 155), frames provide a viewpoint that allows for the characterisation and understanding of an issue. Frames may offer a limited amount of information, mostly guiding viewers to reflect on their existing knowledge (Leeper and Slothuus 2019).

Frames play a crucial role in shaping the perspectives of citizens on a specific subject by considering their different concerns, even in the absence of new information (Leeper and Slothuus 2019). These elements, considered by citizens, can impact their tendency to either support or oppose a specific issue (Chong 1993; Feldman and Zaller 1992), often causing citizens to feel confused and unsure about their stance. Frames are used to reduce ambiguity by identifying the important components and downplaying the less important ones (Nelson and Kinder 1996: 1058). In the 2013 elections, Kenyan media outlets disseminated messages advocating for peace, as there were concerns about the possibility of another outbreak of post-election violence, given the ongoing ethnic tension in the country (Saka 2022). Citizen TV and Nation TV commissioned gospel musicians Rufftone and Juliani to compose songs that embodied the media's 'frame' theory of peace. The media houses broadcast their songs 'Mungu Baba' (Our Father) and 'Utawala' (Prevail) to promote the concept of peace in the country during the 2013 elections. In the next section, I provide a fundamental outline of the ICC that shaped the 2013 electoral campaign discourse.

The Genesis of the ICC Leading to the 2013 Elections

On 5 February 2008, the ICC prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo, declared that his office had initiated a preliminary inquiry into the violence that occurred after the 2007 elections. The 2007/2008 crisis had a devastating impact on Kenya's reputation as a peaceful country in a volatile Africa (Kagwanja 2015: 149). There was confusion regarding the necessity for the ICC to get involved in Kenya's case because it is considered one of Africa's most politically stable countries with well-functioning institutions. According to Peter Kagwanja (2015: 150), the primary motive behind the ICC's involvement was the extensive allegations of 'ethnic cleansing' by the incumbent government. The Kikuyu and Kalenjin were the primary ethnic groups who participated in intense acts of violence. While the post-election violence did not reach the catastrophic levels of death seen in Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), it still resulted in the loss of 1,333 lives, the displacement of over 300,000 people and economic losses of more than 100 billion Kenya Shillings ($1.5 billion) (Kagwanja 2015: 149). The ICC intervened due to the government's refusal to execute the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the post-election violence, commonly referred to as the 'Waki recommendations'. The report was named after Justice Phillip Waki, a judge of the Kenya Court of Appeal (Kagwanja 2015: 150).

The 'Waki Report' identified six individuals, popularly known as the 'Ocampo Six' (see Saka 2022: 63), who were responsible for inciting the post-election violence. Among them were Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto. The 'Ocampo Six' were to be held accountable for the allegations of committing crimes against humanity. Luis Moreno Ocampo, the ICC prosecutor, expressed his intention to present Kenya as a model for the rest of the world, emphasising that he would not tolerate impunity. Regardless of the allegations, Uhuru and Ruto formed the Jubilee Alliance and campaigned together for the 2013 presidential election. The ICC served as a cohesive element that forged their political alliance. Using religious populism, the pair embarked on a nationwide campaign to persuade the voters that the ICC posed a threat to Kenya's democracy and that Ocampo had ulterior motives in using Kenyan cases to restore the ICC's tarnished reputation (Kagwanja 2015). Therefore, I will analyse UhuRuto's electoral campaigns through the lens of religious populism discourse in the subsequent section.

UhuRuto's Religious Populism in Rhetoric and Popular Music

The 2013 elections were post-crisis elections (Maupeu 2014: 27). They were held after two historic events that shaped the trajectory of Kenyan politics namely, the 2007 post-election violence; and the new constitution that was introduced in 2010[56] (Maupeu 2014: 23). Thus, the post-election violence coherently shaped the 2013 electoral discourse. Certainly, the ICC emerged as a representation of an omnipresent 'commander' throughout the election process. To adapt to this institutional framework of the ICC, politicians engaged in intensified legitimation, which led to a change in political culture. The duo, Uhuru and Ruto, played with the power of the people against the ICC judges (Maupeu 2014). They relied on popular legitimacy to counter the legitimacy of the rule of law. In this way, they made the 4 March 2013 elections a referendum on the ICC. Their electoral win hinged on the effective use of overt religious populism aimed at diverting attention from the actual causes of their charges at the ICC to unite the disparate electorates (Maupeu 2014: 27-28). Secondly, it also highlighted the necessity of an electoral agreement between the two main ethnic communities, Kikuyu and Kalenjin, who had been fiercely opposed to each other in previous elections. (Maupeu 2014: 29). By cleverly using the ICC charges, Uhuru and Ruto became heroes of their respective ethnic groups (Kikuyu and Kalenjin), which helped them unify their communities during the election period. Maina Kiai stated in an interview:

> The ICC was definitely a factor in this election, but not necessarily the factor that you would expect…It got people out. People were saying, 'They are our boys, they are our sons, we need to protect them'. (Wolf 2015: 162)

In early 2011, the political duo traversed the country and engaged in 'prayer meetings-cum-rallies'. They were accompanied by clergymen who led in prayers. Most Members of Parliament who launched the most violent attacks against the duo quickly joined forces with the Uhuru-Ruto Jubilee party ticket. One could not be seen as pro-ICC if one wished to be re-elected (Maupeu 2014) and gradually, most parliamentarians from UhuRuto ethnic groups started attending these 'prayer meeting-cum-rally' sessions. In addition, their travel expenses were all paid for the Jubilee party.

In February 2012, the ceremonies launching the election campaigns of UhuRuto were within a religious framework. The announcement of Uhuru Kenyatta's presidential candidature took

[56] The new constitution was adopted to put checks among government officials and to ensure the independence of structures such as the Electoral Commission to guarantee free and fair elections.

place at the NCCK facilities in Limuru, which serves as the headquarters for the National Council of Churches of Kenya, the primary federation of Protestant churches. Two retired bishops, Peter Njenga of the Anglican church and Lawi Imathiu of the Methodist church have urged the Gema people (consisting of the Gikuyu, Embu and Meru communities) to unite in the face of unfounded allegations made by both internal and external adversaries. Simultaneously, William Ruto oversaw the election campaigns in a gathering held at the Catholic Pastoral Centre, presided over by Bishop Korir. Occasionally, both pairs would campaign in separate venues instead of constantly being together in one area. Several pastors spoke during the meeting, including Reverend Murupus. He asserted that the Kalenjin ethnic group did not plan the 2007/2008 violence and placed the blame solely on Raila Odinga, who refused to accept the election results in 2007. Kerugo Macharia (2013) perceives the interconnection of politics and religion as a process of reestablishing Christianity as the official religion of the state. The prayer sessions, as augured by Maupeu (2014: 32), were a component of the broader process of the Pentecostalization of political and social life— which shares a similar meaning to 'Overt religious populism' as indicated by Zúquete (2017).

Another manifestation of this religious framework was observed at their prayer gathering in the 64 Stadium in Eldoret town, a deliberate venue selection. Eldoret served as the focal point of the 2007/2008 post-election violence. If the residents of Eldoret could be convinced to embrace a fresh collaborative alliance between Uhuru and Ruto, it could potentially result in a favourable outcome for them in the 2013 elections (Nyairo 2015b). During the prayer meeting, Ruto cited several texts from the Bible that depicted his victory against his adversaries, specifically the International Criminal Court (ICC). Nevertheless, these religious 'acts' generated disputes among critics and the political elite. The then Minister of Justice Mutula Kilonzo questioned the inverted logic of praying for the suspects rather than for the 'voiceless' victims of the violence (Nyairo 2015b: 137). Emeka Gekara (2012) also interjects:

> The narrative of the meetings has been a push for a unity pact to stop Prime Minister Raila Odinga from succeeding President Kibaki. In doing so, the accused have resorted to hyperbole and hysteria into which their respective communities have been drawn.

The skeptics did not deter the duo from using religious rhetoric. During their political rally held at the Afraha Stadium in Nakuru county, in preparation for the ICC pre-trial, the duo was prayed for by various members of the clergy whilst kneeling in front of a massive audience. After which Ruto addressed their audiences saying:

> Have we not knelt and prayed over the ICC matter? Just like Paul and Silas in the Bible who were miraculously released from prison, we shall also be vindicated from all accusations. (Citizen TV 2011a)

UhuRuto took the Pentecostal ideology which focuses on the action of the Holy Spirit, the privilege of being 'saved' and receiving God's forgiveness when one repents. Pentecostal rituals involve prayer meetings in the form of confessions and long testimonies. Emotion is always heightened, and ideological messages become more persuasive (Maupeu 2014). This Christian perspective allows individuals to condemn those responsible for the challenges faced by Kenyans, specifically Raila Odinga and the people from Western Kenya, and to offer prayers for peace in the nation. In the autumn of 2012, as the campaigns officially commenced through several primary electorates, the Jubilee party ceased its rhetorical assaults on its adversaries, so facilitating the unification of the Kikuyu and Kalenjin. The Kikuyu and Kalenjin ethnic communities, who had previously witnessed post-election violence in 2007/2008, took on the role of pioneers of peace, pledging to resolve the conflicts among their communities. Meanwhile, Raila pledged that if he were elected, he would restore the proceedings of individuals who have been accused by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Raila's persistent criticisms rekindled a sense of love for one's country and confirmed Uhuru and Ruto as individuals who had suffered harm and injustice (Maupeu 2014: 32). The prayer meetings served to consolidate the Kalenjin community, which had been fragmented due to the presence of several ethnicities within the group. The Kikuyu community successfully resolved the social division that caused fragmentation, notably concerning the Mungiki group, who frequently lacked political representation. According to Maupeu (2014: 32), UhuRuto managed to temporarily calm the ethnic tensions in their communities by positioning themselves as victims.

In the prayer meetings, UhuRuto invented a new political language that combined prophecies and redemption. In a campaign in Thika town, Kiambu County, Kenyatta explicitly prophesied their intention to cooperate with the ICC, yet he confidently asserted that they would be exonerated of all charges, leading to the nation's genuine redemption from Western political interference (Citizen TV Kenya 2011b). In times of uncertainty and insecurity, spiritual and other prophet leaders emerged to explain the new issues, rules and principles to observe to cope with the political tensions that arose from the ICC (Maupeu 2014). Political leaders also tapped into the Pentecostal reference of being 'born-again'. This mode of discourse was appealing because by pleading for divine intervention to protect the unfairly

accused leaders, the public is also safeguarded, therefore answering to their material, social and ethical insecurities. But as Ruth Marshall (2009: 10) points out, these 'political spiritualities', correspond to a system of Pentecostal practices that focus on what the individual must do for self-improvement. The born-again conversion implies exemplary personal conduct, if not asceticism, which corresponds to a country or individual (rather than public) morality. UhuRuto were able to explain that the country's success depended on the morality of individuals affording it economic success. This implied that the state had no other function than to provide a framework in which the 'perfect' will of God is acted upon.

Political leaders employed the Pentecostal approach to manipulate the political ideologies of the nation (Maupeu 2014). The Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), which was the opposing party, also employed a similar Pentecostal method of communication. Raila Odinga, the leader of the ODM, placed significant reliance on Prophet David Awuor and his followers. One notable aspect of his campaign was the emphasis on 'national repentance'. In February 2013, a gathering at Uhuru Park was organised by the religious leader on behalf of ODM. During this event, all political leaders expressed the need for repentance in the country following the post-election violence in 2007/2008. The announcement was made that the polls would be conducted peacefully, irrespective of the election results (Maupeu 2014).

In a similar vein, popular gospel music served as an aural confirmation of the UhuRuto Christian rhetoric, which promoted religious populism. The gospel song 'Mabataro' by Ben Githae was selected as the official campaign anthem for the Jubilee party. The political duo, UhuRuto, toured the nation accompanied by Ben Githae during their election campaigns. The song was encoded with requests and pleas to God, which UhuRuto appropriated for acquittal from the allegations brought against them by the ICC. Following my discussion with Ben Githae (Githae interview 2023), the following section presents an overview of his path to fame in the music industry and the associated political aspects. Additionally, it provides an analysis of how the many elements of the song, particularly the lyrics, transformed it into a fitting campaign song that was appropriated for political objectives.

Ben Githae's Background

Githae (b.1976) discovered his gift in music at a tender age. He claims that he was labelled as 'ka radio' (a small radio) by his peers. His ability to memorise and sing the latest tunes in school functions was astonishing to his teachers and fellow students; part of this was because the students had to write down the lyrics, but for Githae, he relied solely on his memory. In the coffee farms of Gatundu South, from where he hailed, Githae was fond of climbing trees and entertaining the coffee farmers during harvest periods. He claims to have been called 'the village DJ', as he could switch from one song to another by memory. Participating in the Kenya Music Festivals also shaped his musicianship. From a religious standpoint, Githae was raised as a staunch Catholic, but he later converted to a born-again Pentecostal at a crusade in his town Gatundu in 1994. This would change the trajectory of his life in ministry. Since this encounter, he served under seasoned fathers of the Pentecostal faith, including Archbishop Harrison Ng'ang'a, founder of the Christian Foundation Fellowship Church. Githae was an interpreter, translating Ng'ang'a sermons to Kikuyu. Githae also ministered severally at this Church and claimed that Ng'ang'a is his 'spiritual father'.

From our interview, Githae asserted that his song 'Timiza', which is a prayer to God for the fulfillment of our desires, was significant during the signing of the peace accord between Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga in 2008. However, it was during the 2013 campaigns that Githae became more prominent in the political scene. He performed at almost all the political rallies (which were in the form of prayer meetings) of Uhuru and Ruto. His song 'Mabataro', played a key role in these campaigns and even his presence as a member of the Kikuyu ethnicity. Githae hails from the same rural area as Uhuru Kenyatta, hence, their affiliation during the campaigns was not unusual. Githae was also a representative of the Kikuyu community, which makes up the majority of the Kenyan population (Statista 2019). This strategy of endorsement played in favour of Uhuru and Ruto; it was an assurance of gaining the majority votes from Central Kenya (the Kikuyu region). Githae stated that he drew his inspiration for 'Mabataro' during a flight journey from the United States to Kenya. During the flight, he sat next to an elderly British lady who asserted that she was very wealthy and that all she did was travel from one country to another to visit her children. This inspired the lyrics of the song:

Lyrics	Translation
Stanza 1 Nĩ ndoka mbere yaku mwathani Ngĩenda tũrĩkanĩre nawe Na ndooka ndĩna mabataro Marĩa ndĩrenda wee ũhingĩrie Ngai wakwa ndũnyihanyihĩirwo	**Stanza 1** I want to talk to You, I come with all my needs, Please help me meet them, My God, You never lack a thing
Chorus Maya nĩ mabataro makwa Maya nĩ mabataro makwa Hingĩria, hingĩria Ngai wakwa ndũnyihanyihĩirwo	**Chorus** These are my needs, Help me, help me, My God, You never lack a thing
Stanza 2 Igũrũ na thĩ nĩ nene mũno Na waciũmbire na kiugo kĩmwe Mabataro makwa ti kĩndũ Gweta kiugo kĩmwe nyone wega Ngai wakwa ndũnyihanyihĩirwo	**Stanza 2** Heaven and Earth are very big and you created them with one word My needs are not too big for You Just speak one word that I may see clearly My God, You never lack a thing
Stanza 3 Irio njega nyonaga ikĩrĩyo Ona niĩ ngaigua nderirĩria Ona niĩ no nyende kũrĩa ta cio Rĩrĩa ngũrĩa ngaugaga ũrogoocwo Ngai wakwa ndũnyihanyihĩirwo	**Stanza 3** I see people eat good food I also desire the same I also desire to eat like them And as I eat, Oh Lord be praised My God, You never lack a thing
Stanza 4 Nguo njega nyonaga ikĩhumbwo Ona niĩ ngaigua nderirĩria Ona niĩ no nyende kwĩhumba cio Ngĩkinyũkia ngaugaga ũrogoocwo Ngai wakwa ndũnyihanyihĩirwo	**Stanza 4** I see people dress well I also desire the same I also desire to dress the same As I walk, let Your name be praised My God, You never lack a thing
Stanza 5 Ngari njega nyonaga igĩtwarwo Ona niĩ ngaigua nderirĩria Ona niĩ no nyende ũhe yakwa Ngĩtwarithia ngaugaga ũrogoocwo Ngai wakwa ndũnyihanyihĩirwo	**Stanza 5** I see people drive good cars I also desire the same I also desire that You give me the same As I drive, let Your name be praised My God, You never lack a thing
Stanza 6 Nyũmba njega nyonaga igĩikarwo Ona niĩ ngaigua nderirĩria Ona niĩ no nyende kũgĩa yakwa Hurũkĩte ngaugaga ũrogoocwo Ngai wakwa ndũnyihanyihĩirwo	**Stanza 6** I see people live in good houses I also desire the same I also desire to have my own house As I rest in my house, let Your name be praised My God, You never lack a thing.

Figure 5.1. Lyrics and Translation to Ben Githae's 'Maya ni Mabataro'.

Although Githae was living a modest life, travelling to countries especially America for his performances, he still had a desire for more material possessions. The song further talks about his prayers for good clothes, cars and houses, which are quite similar to the Pentecostal prosperity model that emphasizes the importance of wealth (see Attanasi and Young 2012). Being a born-again Pentecostal, Githae did not omit this discourse in his lyrics. Also, in the video recording of the song on YouTube (Ben Githae Official 2017)[57], Githae demonstrates the meaning of every lyric of the song; he is constantly in a posture of prayer and petition, asking God to meet all his material needs. Githae claimed that his music takes on the contemporary Benga style[58].

[57] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Q_SuBp1dro

[58] Benga is the signature genre of Kenya which emanated from the Luo community in Nyanza Province, Kenya. Translated as 'A Beautiful Thing' in the Luo language, Benga's roots in a rhythmic style are a fusion of Cuban music and Congolese Rhumba. As Emmanuel Mwendwa (2018) quotes:

> The genre first developed in East Africa in the early 1970s, unifying various characteristics of Kenya's musical past, and it quickly helped crystalize poetic traditions of the country's disparate communities, with lyrics conveying powerful political messages alongside more carefree lines of love and longing.

Benga has emerged as Kenya's dominant musical form, encapsulating the essence of several indigenous musical traditions and serving as a conduit for national identity. The style is defined by prominent guitar plucking and sharp hi-hat drumming, complemented with bass guitar riffs that align with the song's characteristically high-pitched vocal harmonies. Historical records demonstrate that the genre's pioneers experimented with diverse traditional rhythms and the Luo (Mwendwa 2018). The Luos predominate in the western regions of Kenya, and are traditionally known for instruments such as the nyatiti lyre, orutu fiddle, and ohangla drums. In the mid-1960s, following independence, a group of guitarists commenced experimenting with a new, electric guitar-plucking pop style within their indigenous music. The outcome was an appealing, audacious endeavour to replicate the rapid push-and-pull strumming of the Luo eight-string nyatiti ('kamba nane' in Swahili), producing a dexterous interplay of chords, in which both the solo and rhythm guitarists appear to pursue one another (Mwendwa 2018).

The pioneering benga artists aimed to cultivate a distinct musical identity by establishing a specific rhythm that fused aspects of ethnic communal songs and indigenous dances. In this context, influenced by the post-independence 1960s, solo guitarist John Ongara, acknowledged as a pioneer of benga, collaborated with fellow musician Ochieng Nelly (Mwendwa 2018). The duo would allegedly organise informal neighbourhood and community performances before moving to a developing urban centre, present-day Kisumu City. The late teacher Daniel Owino Misiani, who established the Shirati Jazz Band in 1967 alongside Ongara, Nelly, and Misiani, was instrumental in the national recognition of benga music. At this juncture, benga's vigorous, pulsing bass lines, interwoven rhythm-guitar riffs, and repeated vocal solos began to resonate with the rural populace. The genre's popularity surged dramatically. During the 1970s, motivated by this rapidly expanding trend, diverse ethnic groups residing in densely populated regional enclaves began to adopt the genre, incorporating local language nuances into their music. As the genre's popularity expanded beyond the lakeshore, it began to be common to enjoy benga songs featuring lyrics in Kamba, Kikuyu, Luo, Kalenjin, Kisii, Embu, or Meru languages. In the following years, multiple bands from diverse ethnic groupings accelerated benga's golden age from the early 1970s to the late 1980s. The Victoria Kings Jazz Band, esteemed composer Gabriel Omolo, Kikuyu folk artist Joseph Kamaru, and talented guitarist Daniel Kamau, known as "D.K.," distinguished themselves among several proponents who capitalised on the benga genre during its peak (Mwendwa 2018).

Joseph Kamaru (1939-2018), Githae's music mentor and first producer, was known for his Kikuyu Benga love rhythms before he converted to Christianity. However, he also composed socio-political music, for example, 'Safari ya Japan' (A Trip to Japan), in which Kamaru stated that former president Daniel Moi asked him to accompany him on a state tour to Japan (Njora 2010: 107). Githae has since emulated Kamaru but in a more 'contemporary' form. Githae stated that after years of working with Kamaru, he decided to work with another producer because Kamaru's style of production was not up to his standards, Githae stated that 'ilikuwa na uRiver Road mwingi', meaning that the music had a 'River Road' trademark of poor quality. Also, Kamaru would benefit more from the sales of the albums, leaving Githae with peanuts, hence Githae took it upon himself to market and sell his music.

Song Analysis of 'Mabataro'

The song 'Mabataro' is in the key of E-flat major at a tempo of 115 beats per minute. It is a combination of synthesised drum kits, lead guitar, strings and a keyboard. The song is a prayer to God for the supplication of one's material needs, hence, E-flat major is a suitable key that shows the anticipation of an individual's longing for an answered prayer. The tempo is somewhat fast, rendering it suitable for dancing (benga music is typically favourable for dance). The high tessitura of Githae's voice is characteristic of benga music. There is no contrast in dynamics and rhythm throughout the whole song, however, the chorus is an octave higher than the rest of the verses (see a transcribed score of the chorus in Figure 5.2). To enhance the distinction between the chorus and the verses, the vocals in the chorus have been 'double-tracked'[59], increasing the chorus's volume, but the verses feature a singular vocal line. Kikuyu benga has effectively emerged as an accepted musical genre in the country, appealing predominantly to the Kikuyu ethnic community. This factor may have rendered Githae an appropriate artist to propagate the UhuRuto political agenda.

[59] These are layers of vocal lines overlaid to produce a powerful chorus. Double tracking is effective because each time a vocalist records the sound file, there will be small differences in pitch and timing. Live choruses produce a rich sound due to the simultaneous presence of numerous voices, resulting in a beautifully expansive audio experience (Fitzwater 2024).

Maya ni Mabataro

Ben Githae



Figure 5.2. Transcribed 'Mabataro' Chorus

The lyrics of the song resonated well with the UhuRuto 2013 elections. In every 'prayer rally', Githae was invited to perform this particular song after the political duo was prayed for by the clergymen. The song was appropriated in two ways. First, the political duo was preparing for their trial at the ICC, hence the lyrics resonated with them as they continued in prayer during their campaigns for God to vindicate them. The chorus in particular was the highlight of their campaigns:

These are my needs,
Help me, help me,
My God, You never lack a thing

The entire campaign followed a path of prayers and petitions to the Lord for forgiveness, presenting Uhuru and Ruto as leaders chosen by God, who sought divine intervention in their hour of desperation. This consequently portrayed the ICC as a malevolent entity in opposition to the divinely appointed leaders, Uhuru and Ruto. Secondly, the Jubilee campaigns placed great importance on extravagance and splendour. Therefore, Githae's plea for material things aligns with the underlying messages of the campaigns, as evident in Stanzas Three, Four, Five and Six, when Githae expresses his desire for fine cuisine, luxurious attire, vehicles and mansions. UhuRuto were taking up leadership from the Kibaki administration, which had achieved significant economic success with the development of major infrastructure projects and the introduction of free primary education. Thus, the pair had to demonstrate to the general public that they possessed the ability to maintain an already prosperous economy. The Jubilee party spared no expense when it came to strategic planning and merchandise. During the launch of their new party, The National Alliance (TNA), which was under the umbrella of Jubilee Coalition, at the KICC on 20 May 2012, it was apparent that Uhuru Kenyatta would spare no expense when it came to his second shot at running for presidency (he run for the presidential seat in 2002 but lost to Mwai Kibaki). According to David Throup, a longtime observer of Kenyan elections, 'Uhuru hired a firm of British election consultants at the cost of 16 million dollars even before he announced his candidature' (2012). The local press cited that the TNA campaign was one filled with 'pomp and grandeur …an elaborate and expensively assembled launch' (Nyairo 2015b: 139). It was clear that money would not be a barrier to the UhuRuto campaigns. Raila also spared no expenses during his campaigns. The party also invested in helicopters to ferry their party members from one rally to another, provided free branded merchandise for voters and paid for billboards and posters. It is clear

that the grandeur and extravagance of political campaigns in Kenya superseded the policies and 'promised' manifestos by respective political parties. A commentator said:

> Read any of their manifestos and you are left to imagine a Garden of Eden. There will be free secondary and University education; a fully stocked referral hospital in every county; a pension scheme for everybody over 60; a national health insurance scheme for every Kenyan; and cash transfers to the urban poor. Holy Lord, the list is endless. Any intelligent person can see the manifestoes [sic] are most unrealistic. They are a total waste of time to read, and a total waste of money to print. You don't need to be an economist to see the extravagant promises they are making have a total disconnect with the reality of our economy. (Nyairo 2015b: 139)

The lyrics of 'Mabataro' depict two distinct Pentecostal concepts; prayer/supplication and prosperity, with prosperity being particularly prominent. Poverty continues to be the primary economic issue in Africa, leading to the general acceptance of the prosperity model in African Pentecostal Churches as a means of achieving economic growth (Wariboko 2012: 35). The case for prosperity, as outlined by Katherine Attanasi and Amos Young (2012: 18), can be based on biblical rationale and socio-contextual reasons. Biblically, the most frequently quoted scripture is 3 John 2, 'Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul'. From this standpoint, scripture presents a promise to save souls, provide supernatural healing for the body and ensure material prosperity for individuals (Attanasi and Young 2012: 18). The prosperity framework is operational at each level of the ministry of Christ. Within the social context, the message of prosperity would generate hope and potentially inspire a specific path of action that foresees the gradual, if not more effective, eradication of poverty in developing nations (Attanasi and Young 2012: 18). Based on our interview, it is evident that Githae did not come from a financially-secure family. As a result, he exerted great effort in the music industry to support himself and improve his quality of life. This is demonstrated by the level of success he has attained in both the music industry and politics. Githae's songs not only expressed his love for riches but also mirrored the public's captivation with a prosperous lifestyle, a mindset that has been instilled by the majority of charismatic churches in Kenya. The 2007/2008 post-election violence resulted in economic hardships for Kenyans, with businesses being looted, homes burned down, and people displaced from their homes. Therefore, Githae's lyrics expressed the people's aspiration and plea for improved living standards and economic conditions[60]. This

[60] Despite President Kibaki's endeavours to revive the nation's economy in the aftermath of the 2007/2008 post-election violence, Kenyans continued to struggle to recover from the economic challenges. These economic challenges were also felt in the East African region (Kimani 2008).

explains the reason why UhuRuto perceived that the song would be suitable for their political campaigns and why it was favourably received by the general public. In the following section, I discuss the media's role in the dissemination of gospel music during the 2013 electoral campaigns.

The Media's 'Peaceocracy' Frame

During times of conflict, the media can serve two roles in providing information. It can either actively engage in the violence, thereby fuelling it, or it can adopt a neutral position and refrain from being involved in the friction, so opposing conflict and reducing violence (Saka 2022: 50). The mainstream media in Kenya is acknowledged for playing a significant role in bringing an end to the post-election violence that occurred in 2007/2008 (Gakunju 2017). According to Rosemary Saka (2022: 71), numerous reports on the violence recognise the commendable efforts of national media outlets in promoting calm during the mediation process between the conflicting political groups, which was overseen by former United Nations (UN) secretary general, Koffi Annan. As a result, the transmission of information through mainstream media in Kenya has become a highly significant aspect of the country's electoral process (Saka 2022: 71). The mainstream media played the role of a peace influencer by promoting peaceful transitions. They ensured that the information they shared with the public was reliable, controlled and aimed at preventing armed conflicts between political factions with different ideologies during the process of electing leaders democratically (Saka 2022: 71). In the wake of the 2013 elections, however, Nicholas Benequista (2015: 260) elaborates on a debate which transpired over whether the mainstream media sacrificed its duty to report the truth for the sake of preserving peace in the country. The media houses had maintained a very neutral position and did not side with either of the political divides. As one senior journalist put it:

> This time no media house wanted to be associated with one position. If you support Odinga, you won't sell in Central. (Nicholas Benequista 2015: 269)

According to Gabriel Lynch et al. (2019), it is evident that a concerted effort was made to promote a peace narrative to undermine the legitimacy of protests during the 2013 elections. The emergence of such a narrative was solely facilitated by the post-election violence that took place in 2007/2008. Peace campaigns that follow acts of violence can frequently become intense. However, it is important to recognise that these peace campaigns can be exploited to create a system known as 'peaceocracy'. In this system, the focus on peace is utilised to

prioritise stability and order, often at the expense of democracy (Lynch et al. 2019: 604). My argument is that gospel music, inside the media's framework of the peace narrative, played a crucial role in leading the message of peaceocracy. The songs 'Utawala' and 'Mungu Baba' by Juliani and Rufftone, respectively, gained widespread popularity across the nation since they were frequently broadcast on the airwaves during the 2013 elections to promote peace. Kenya's national media outlets are well-acquainted with the 'Gospel' discourse. Gospel programs like 'The Stomp' on NTV Kenya and 'Kubamba' on Citizen TV have been specifically scheduled to broadcast gospel music on Sunday mornings. However, it should be noted that 'The Stomp' is no longer being aired on NTV Kenya. In addition, every media station offers a live broadcast of sermons from prominent Pentecostal-Charismatic churches throughout the country. The 'Kubamba' gospel show is renowned for organising gospel concerts in high schools nationwide and providing live coverage of these events, which serve as a form of evangelism. In the following section, I present a detailed explanation of the selection process that led to Juliani and Rufftone being appointed as gospel music ambassadors of KTN TV and Citizen TV. Their role was to promote the message of peace during the 2013 elections through their songs.

Juliani's Background

I obtained information about Juliani's musical history and career from two primary sources: Mwenda Ntarangwi's (2016) monograph on Juliani and online interviews conducted on Juliani himself in recent years. In his study, Ntarangwi (2016) conducted ethnographic research on the creation and performance of hip-hop music by Juliani, a Christian musician. The book explores not only Juliani's biography but also the socio-political factors that affected and molded his worldview and approach to creating hip-hop music. Nevertheless, Ntarangwi (2016) solely focused on the cultural anthropology of Julian's music, neglecting the musicology aspects. Therefore, my examination of Juliani will focus on a musical analysis, namely of his widely-recognized anthem 'Utawala', which had a significant influence during the 2013 elections.

Juliani, born in 1984, is the stage name of Julius Owino. He was born in Dandora, Nairobi. He was raised in a Catholic household and regularly attended Holy Cross Catholic Church in Dandora Parish. Juliani had a fondness for English Literature and Physics during his time at Dandora High School, but he had a particular affinity for music. His fascination with rap and hip-hop began during his high school years. In his study, Ntarangwi (2026: 11) indicated that

Juliani and his classmate Rawbarz frequently shared song lyrics and practiced their rap abilities while completing their school tasks. In his interview with Richard Njau (CTA-Cleaning the Airwaves 2021a), he recounts that his immersion into hip-hop was influenced by his contemporaries in the Dandora area after he finished his high school education. Juliani formed connections with prominent hip-hop artists, including Maji Maji from the Kenyan hip-hop duo Gidi Gidi and Maji Maji. Maji Maji graciously invited Juliani to their residence in Dandora, where they would spend the entire day immersed in music. The song 'Shook One' by American hip-hop musician Mobb Depp strongly appealed to them, as it was highly popular around that period. Juliani was thrilled to have the opportunity to be in the presence of the Kalamashaka (also known as K'Shaka) hip-hop group, who would frequently gather at Maji Maji's residence. During this engagement, Juliani had the opportunity to socialise with other musicians from the nearby area, including Warogi Wawili (Two Witches) and 'Ukooflani Mau Mau' (a specific group within the Mau Mau movement). Juliani asserts that these musicians transformed Dandora into a trendy and significant cultural destination (Ntarangwi 2016: 11). Furthermore, they presented Juliani and other young people with a different portrayal of the 'gangster' perspective that was linked to Dandora. Juliani received the approval of the 'family', indicating that the team recognised his talent for creating and performing new and innovative lyrics daily. Later on, upon his conversion to Christianity in 2005, Juliani departed from the Ukooflani ensemble and embarked on a solo career.

Juliani is widely considered to be the leading hip-hop musician in Kenya at this point. He has utilised his fame to advocate for political reforms, raise awareness about environmental concerns, and endorse agricultural produce. His capacity to navigate through all these social contexts is what made him an intriguing representation of modern Christianity in Kenya. Ntarangwi narrates:

> Juliani's music follows the tradition of hard-hitting lyrics composed in poetic and textual innovativeness that he was introduced to by Ukooflani Mau Mau. His talent and ability to focus on critical sociocultural issues emerged early in his music career. (2016: 12)

His career as a Christian hip-hop musician has been marked by contention and controversy. He remembered encountering an individual who, without even greeting him, immediately pointed a finger and expressed her dislike for the lyrics of his song 'Pages za Bible' (Pages of the Bible). The lyrics were 'Ninadara pages za Bible' (I am caressing the pages of the Bible). The term 'Ninadara' in Sheng, a local urban slang that combines English and Swahili, denotes

the action of ‘I am caressing’. This could clarify the unfavourable reaction it provoked from the woman. Juliani deviates from the norm of gospel artists in Kenya; he defies convention. During an interview with Larry Madowo (DeejayGJO 2015), Juliani was questioned about the labelling of his music as gospel. He said, ‘Nenda Google’ (meaning ‘Go to Google’). Juliani also reiterated:

> I usually want to use this example every time. When Christ asked his disciples, ‘Who do they say I am?’ The disciples said that some people called him David and others Moses. But Christ asked them ‘Who do you think I am?’ So, at the end of the day, it depends on what you see me as. If you want to know more about who I am and what I represent go online, search me, buy my music online, listen to my whole album, and you will know who I am. (DeejayGJO 2015)

Juliani’s self-definition defies labelling as either a gospel or secular musician, which would otherwise allow others to control and define his identity. Instead, he assigns his music as the central point of his identity. He performed many gospel songs that accurately portrayed the experiences of his own life and the immediate social setting. The reason for this approach to gospel music is that he states, ‘Growing up as a ghetto boy, gospel music was just Sunday music, it never made sense the rest of the other six days’ (@JulianiKenya, 27 May 2013). Juliani’s stance on governance and politics has evolved, transitioning from his 2008 album ‘Mtaa Mentality’ to his 2013 single ‘Utawala’. Following the 2007/2008 elections, Juliani appeared disenchanted with politics and regarded the entire electoral process as futile. He viewed voting as a mere act of staining one’s finger. In the lyrics of the song ‘Who Is to Blame’ from the album ‘Mtaa Mentality’, which is a collaboration with Eric Wainaina, he expresses that ‘voting is only staining one’s pinky finger with a blue ink’. Throughout the pre-election campaigning in 2013, he offered a distinct political viewpoint. He regarded the involvement of individuals in elections as crucial in altering the course of democracy in the nation. Juliani claimed that his political songs were a means of raising awareness among people to make informed decisions to avoid a recurrence of the post-election violence experienced in 2007/2008. Today, he not only empowers the voters but also expresses criticism against those in authority, as demonstrated in his popular 2013 song ‘Utawala’.

Analysis of 'Utawala'

Juliani was assigned the task of composing a song for the 2013 elections, resulting in the composition of 'Utawala', which means 'prevail'. The media station KTN (Kenya Television Network) TV contacted him through investigative journalist John Allan Namu with a request to compose a song that would be used as background music for the entire election season. Juliani later claimed that he had a dream in which he heard the tune, and the words came soon after. Namu described the song as a 'masterpiece', leading to its frequent airing on KTN TV and resulting in popularity as a national anthem.

Although Juliani differed from the conventional gospel singer, the notion of crafting such lyrics during political campaigning is thought-provoking. While many singers were aligning themselves with political parties or singing about healing and peace after the 2007 elections, Juliani was openly denouncing the wrongdoings and injustices perpetuated by the political establishment. Juliani's songs mirror his societal views as he addresses the marginalised population in Kenya. In addition, he speaks out on the negative effects of corruption that are encountered regularly (Boombavideo 2013)[61]. In a single line of verse, he specifically discusses the elections, urging everyone to select a genuine leader when they reach their ballot box. The remainder of the song serves as a socio-political reflection on a morally- corrupt society. However, the political party he was addressing remains ambiguous. KTN adopted Juliani's song due to a political objective. In addition, the fact that he has similar perspectives to John Allan Namu, a renowned investigative journalist known for his work on exposing corruption, is not a mere coincidence. Therefore, it is not surprising that Namu decided to approach a singer who addressed these very topics through his songs. Following his departure from the KTN media house in 2015, Namu established the 'African Uncensored' company, which specialises in investigating matters of injustice. The company operates a YouTube channel that focuses on problems related to governance and elections. Namu and Juliani appeared to share a mutual interest. Juliani explicitly references Allan Namu in the song as someone who exposes corrupt leaders. In the third stanza of the song, he cites the lyrics, 'Moha, John Allan Namu, Jicho Pevu wakianika mkono refu ina pickpocket wanyonge' (They expose the thieves at the expense of the poor).

[61] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HNl8YAnp0Q

Juliani has consistently rapped the entire songs in his past and current pieces or worked with singers who would sing the chorus. This can be observed in his songs ‘Exponential Potential’ and ‘Barua ya Ocampo’ (Ocampo’s Letter), respectively. However, in this specific song, Juliani delivers the stanzas through rap and sings the chorus himself. In the chorus, Juliani enunciates each word clearly and avoids using any Sheng language, which is different from the verses. All the words are in proficient Swahili. In the chorus, Juliani sings the lyrics while he raps in the rest of the stanzas. I argue that he does this because the chorus carries the critical message of the song. Juliani proclaims in the chorus, which marks the beginning of the song that he refuses to passively observe society’s descent into moral decline. He further expresses his readiness to bear the price of freedom. The entire lyrics are as follows:

Lyrics	Translation
Chorus	**Chorus**
Niko njaa hata siezi karanga	I am hungry till I eat peanuts
Hoehae shaghala bhaghala	No matter how angry
Niko tayari, (kulipa) kulipa gharama	I am willing to pay to pay the cost
Sitasimama maovu yakitawala	I will not stand for evil to prevail
Sitasimama maovu yakitawala	I will not stand for evil to prevail
Ufisadi, ubinafsi ukabila	Selfishness is ethnic
Kuuza sura hawataki kuuza sera	Selling shape they don't want to
Undugu, ni kufaana	Sell policies
Sitasimama maovu yakitawala	Brotherhood is the same
Siatasimama maovu yakitawala	I will not stand for evil to prevail
	I will not stand for evil to prevail
Stanza 1	**Stanza 1**
Hard kuget wadhifa una-deserve	Hard to get a position you must qualify for
Bila cash ama kashfa	Without cash or scam
Hii society kenye wanaweza-	This society as well, they say
-Share ni nyungu ya busaa	Share is a ruling deity
Ama kettle ya shisha	Or a shisha[62] kettle
Mfuko zinasikia echo	The bags hear the echo
Utajua thamani ya mali na size ya kufuli, ay-yo	You will know the value of the property and the size of the filter
Hujaibiwa juu hauna kakitu worth	You are not robbed because you have nothing worthwhile
Risking jail time, police bullets for	Risking jail time police bullets for
Unaeza argue crime doesn't pay	You can argue crime doesn't pay
Lakini huezi dismiss justice ina bei	But dismiss justice doesn't have a price
Mwizi ana forty days	The thief has forty days
3-6-5 days later	365 days later he continues to grow fatter
Anaendelea ku-grow fatter	Do anything for power
Do anything for power	Ready to lose their heads for presidency
Ready to lose their heads for the presidency	Better see it for currency
Bora waione kwa currency	Why I'm not affected by turbulence
Sababu gani siko affected na turbulance niki-fly angani	When I fly in the sky
Nimezoea the same feeling matatu zikipitia pothole mtaaani?!	I'm used to the same feeling
Juliaani! Yeah Yeaaah!	Three passing through the pothole
	Street Juliaani Yeah Yeeeaaahh
Stanza 2	**Stanza 2**
Ndio wa raise funds	To raise funds
Itabidi u-raise hands	You'll have to raise your hands
Growing concern	Growing concerns
Breakfast za croissant	Croissant Breakfast
Hatutaki upunguze bei ya bidhaa	We do not want you to lower the price of the products
Tunataka opportunities ndio tu-afford hizo bidhaa	We want opportunities that will help us purchase those products
Walisema kutembea kwingi ndio kuona mengi	They said walking a lot is seeing a lot
Nimeshinda nikitembea maofisi na sijawahi ona kazi	
Siezi cheza golf venye Tiger Woods	

[62] Shisha is the Arabic term for a pipe used to burn tobacco, wherein the smoke is filtered through a water vessel before inhaling.

Mambo si bara bara Ching Wu Naomba journey mercies Chakula ifike tumboni ikitoka kwa sahani Policeman anapiga rungu mwalimu Daktari anamrushia teargas Na mtoto wake anarudishwa nyumbani hana school fees analipwa peanuts **Stanza 3** Sewer za State House na latrine za ghetto Ziupatana Nairobi river No more nita live by Hand-to-mouth Ushai sikia maskini anaugua gout? Nikiwa na nguvu ya kung'oa reli definitely Kuinua kura si nzito Ukiingiza kwa ballot box chagua kiongozi wa kweli Moha, John Allan Namu, Jicho Pevu Wakianika mkono refu ina pick-pocket wanyonge Navaa mask ka za goalkeeper wa hockey Hawaezi ni-Kerubo Kenya ni kama boxing, hakuna sub Work with what we have	I've walked around the office and I've never seen a job I cannot play golf like Tiger Woods Things are not mainland Ching Wu I pray for journey mercies Food should come from the stomach on the plate Policeman beats the teacher The doctor throws teargas at the police Their child is sent back home because of lack of school fees because they are paid peanuts **Stanza 3** The sewer at State House and the latrine in the ghetto All meet at the Nairobi River I will no longer live by Hand-to mouth Have you ever heard a poor person die of gout? When I have the energy to lift up a railway line definitely Lifting up a vote is heavy When you get to the ballot box choose real leaders Moha, John Allan Namu, Jicho Pevu They expose thieves at the expense of the poor I wear the mask of a goalkeeper They cannot make me like Kerubo Kenya is like boxing, no substitution Work with what we have

Figure 5.3. Lyrics to Juliani's 'Utawala' song.

Juliani engages in a dialogue with the audience in the stanzas, utilising the second-person pronoun. However, in the chorus, he applies the first-person pronouns. The chorus depicts Juliani's stance against societal inequities, as he repeatedly chants the phrase, 'Sitasimama maovu yakitawala' (I will not stand for evil to prevail). Juliani employs hip-hop techniques such as rhymes, metaphors and similes. He draws a comparison between the State House sewers and those found in the ghetto in the third verse. He states that all the waste is discharged into the Nairobi River. Juliani juxtaposes the political elite with the inhabitants of the ghetto slums; he envisions in his lyrics that despite these political discrepancies, they are

all inherently equal. Similar to the other stanzas, he includes both English and Swahili languages but excludes Sheng. This amalgamation of languages is not novel in the Kenyan conversation. Individuals, particularly young people, tend to incorporate both English and Swahili vocabulary into a single sentence. Juliani expresses this sentiment in the third verse, stating, 'Ukiingiza Kwa ballot box chagua kiongozi wa ukweli' (When you get to the ballot box, choose real leaders). The amalgamation of the two languages is advantageous and more effortless for rapping due to the occasional difficulty in translating certain English terms into Swahili and vice versa.

Does the song 'Utawala' then accurately depict the concept of 'peaceocracy' in the media? Based on the lyrical content, the song openly criticises corrupt politicians and unjust structures in the country. It does not make any references to peaceful concepts such as love, peace and unity, as can be found in Rufftone's 'Mungu Baba'. Juliani might have expressed peace by directly confronting the obstacles to peace, such as corruption, impunity and injustices. Juliani may have also viewed peace as an opportunity to amplify the voices of those who lack a platform, like his own, to denounce the corrupt political leaders. His lyrics suggest that perhaps by addressing the fundamental problems that undermine Kenyan society, true peace might be achieved. In addition to conveying a contrasting interpretation of 'peace' through the lyrics, the song also reflects the socio-political circumstances of the nation amid an electoral campaign. According to Ntarangwi's (2016) biography of Juliani and conversations with him, Juliani does not conform to the traditional expectations of a gospel singer in society. He frequently defies conventional norms and challenges cultural and societal expectations, as shown in his lyrics.

Orchestral Analysis of 'Utawala'

The musical structures here appear to mirror folk and reggae tunes. The first major 5^{th} interval appears notably captivating, at the very least. The juxtaposition of the strings with the drum kit appears significant. The guitar picking accompanying the rap verses and extending into the chorus may categorise this as African hip-hop. The harmonic progression appears beneficial, maybe evoking hymns for certain listeners, and is notably memorable in its resolution and repetition. The song commences with the chorus, set in the key of F major, accompanied by a staccato ostinato of strings. This key elicits feelings of peace and joy, conveying a sense of religious sentiments, however, the juxtaposing drum kits and staccato strings give the song a form of urgency and dissatisfaction. The discord between the key and the instrumental

arrangement may indicate two interpretations: firstly, that the lyrics serve as a clarion call for citizens to remain vocal against injustice and corruption among national leaders; secondly, that the song aims to convey a message of peace, seeking to prevent future post-election violence. In hindsight, this arrangement does reflect Juliani's position as a contradictory musician who composes music that does not quite encompass religious nuances, yet he is recognised as a gospel artist in the country. The vocals in the opening chorus are introduced as an interjection, like a significant announcement by Juliani to engage the audience, however, this is not apparent in the subsequent choruses. The drum kits and ostinato strings support each stanza.

Presented below is a segment of the musical transcription of the orchestral accompaniment, which was skilfully arranged by the Kenyan composer Ibrahim Sidede (b. 1988). Juliani collaborated with the Safaricom Youth Orchestra (Safaricom PLC 2021)[63] to deliver a live rendition of the song. Nevertheless, Sidede incorporated additional brass and woodwind instruments that were not initially present in the album, as seen in Figure 5.3. Sidede orchestrated the music for a full orchestra for the Safaricom music project in preparation for Juliani's performance alongside the Safaricom Youth Orchestra.

[63] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gMR8EdMubM

Utawala

Juliani
Arr. Ibrahim Sidede

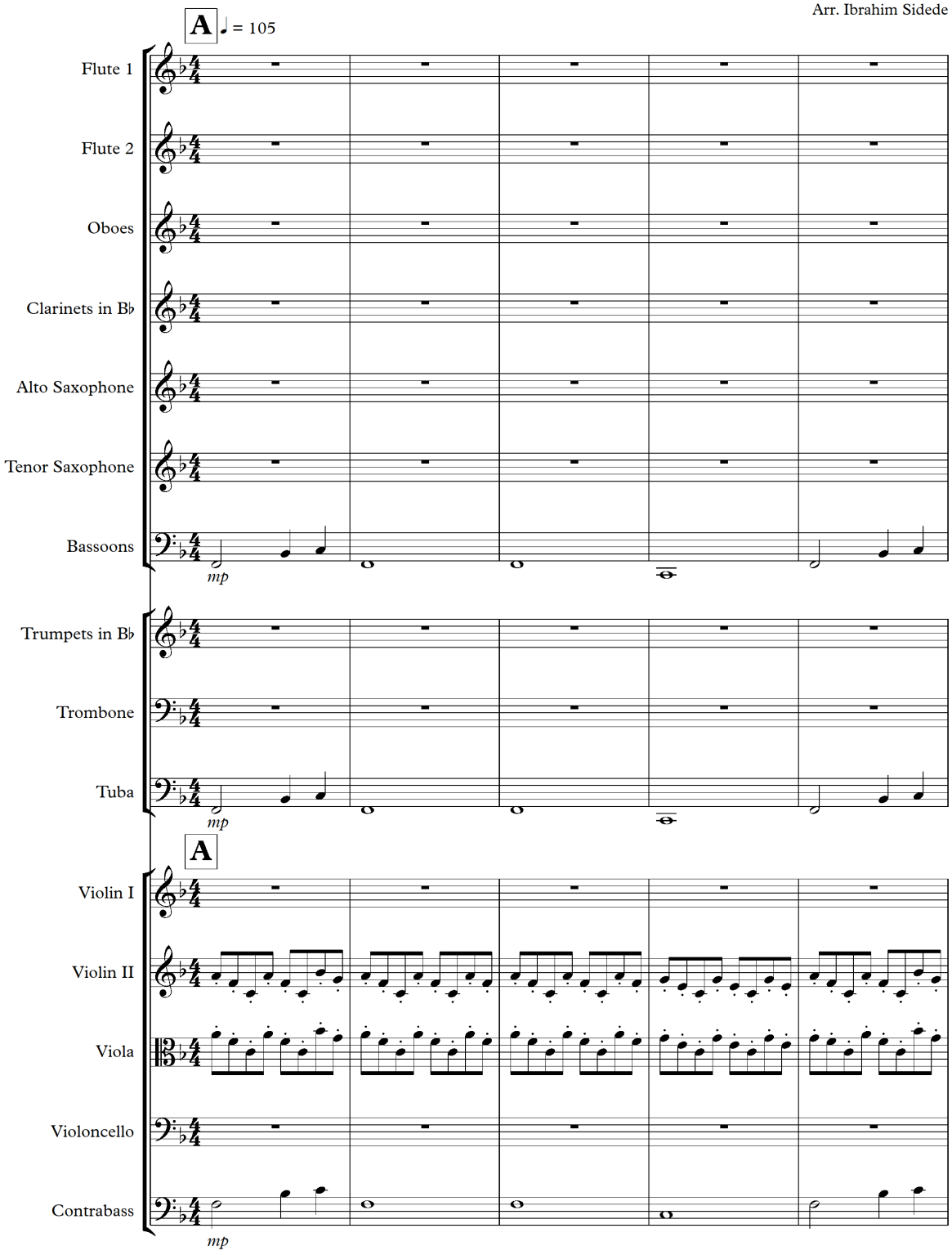




Figure 5.4. The Transcribed Orchestral Version of Juliani's 'Utawala' by Ibrahim Sidede.

Juliani has undeniably surpassed certain limitations of what Christianity encompasses, particularly in the public sphere. By shifting its central message from the Church to the public sphere, this approach challenges the notion of a distant God and instead highlights the idea of a God with whom individuals may engage daily in honest and open conversations. His music expands the boundaries of gospel music by incorporating themes of anxiety, frustrations and the complexities of life while yet honouring the biblical stories and themes that are prevalent in contemporary gospel music. The connection between Christianity and hip-hop is intriguing. According to Ntarangwi (2016: 144), hip-hop is a genre that primarily focuses on the individual perspective and reflects the experiences and aspirations of several youths, particularly in Kenya. Hip-hop and Christianity share a commonality because both emphasise the individual as the catalyst for personal growth and change.

Juliani's work and identity intertwine Christianity and hip-hop. Juliani's adherence to Christianity and his execution of a genre of hip-hop that effectively portrays the experiences of marginalised communities align harmoniously with the principles of Christianity. Hip-hop originated in environments characterised by significant socioeconomic difficulties and eventually gained popularity among individuals who experienced feelings of marginalisation. The connection between hip-hop and Christianity appeared to be inherently reasonable. If Christians aim to engage with marginalised communities and hip-hop serves as a means of expressing the experiences and desired goals of the same communities, then hip-hop becomes a valuable ally for Christianity, enabling it to be articulated and expressed. Contrary to viewing hip-hop as the opposite of Christianity, it serves as a valuable means for Christians to examine and articulate social realities beyond the limitations of the church. Juliani's capacity to integrate his music with his Christian identity is precisely why Nation TV sought him out during the 2013 elections. The lyrics he writes are candid, unadulterated and devoid of political correctness. Juliani's music has consistently upheld the truth, which makes him an inappropriate choice to endorse any political leader during a campaign.

Rufftone's Background

Rufftone, also known as Roy Smith Mwatia, is one of the early pioneers of contemporary gospel music in Kenya. He is also acknowledged in the music industry for his expertise in the Reggae/Dancehall genre[64]. Rufftone was born into a polygamous family with over ten siblings in Umoja One, situated on the Eastern side of Nairobi. In 1987, his family moved to the rural district of Kakamega, his father's ancestral home, because of their financial constraints in the city. Instead of deterring Rufftone from pursuing his music career, this experience provided him with a comprehensive understanding of both urban and rural aspects of life, both of which were characterised by challenges. To achieve financial stability, Rufftone's father established a music store in the central area of Kakamega city. He sold vinyl recordings with music by Michael Jackson, UB 40 and his preferred genre, Lingala music. Rufftone reminisces that his father would frequently play Lingala music, particularly the works of Kanda Bongo Man, a renowned Congolese artist, both at their house and in the music shop. The music shop provided financial support for Rufftone's family and enabled them to afford education. Rufftone also emphasised the significance of the battery-powered radio and its role inside their household. He claims that the radio was his mother's sole means of escaping poverty. The radio hosts were influential figures who had the power to transform lives, acting as pastors and counsellors. Fred Machoka was one of the prominent radio presenters at the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), who significantly revolutionised the radio industry during that period.

Rufftone commenced his musical journey in Kakamega High School, which he affectionately refers to as the 'Kakamega University' due to the extensive support and prospects it provided to the pupils. The school placed a significant focus on co-curricular subjects, particularly music, theatre, sports and arts. Rufftone took part in an inter-school rap battle but because of his consistently abrasive vocal style, his peers bestowed upon him the name 'Rufftone'. Afterwards, he enrolled in the Buru Buru Institute of Fine Art in Nairobi to pursue a vocation in Fine Art. However, he ultimately abandoned this pursuit in favour of embarking on a music career. Initially, he pursued a career as a secular Reggae artist. However, in 2004, he underwent a significant transformation and embraced Christianity following a life-changing

[64] Christopher Partridge (2017: 252-259) provides a historical account of the emergence of Reggae within the dualistic framework of post-colonial Rastafarian cosmology. These encompass Babylon, emblematic of oppression and servitude; and Zion, a symbol of hope situated in Ethiopia.

experience with Robert Kay, a renowned gospel music producer also known as R. Kay in the music business. R. Kay subsequently released two successful songs by Rufftone that gained significant popularity on the radio waves during the early 2000s. These songs are titled 'Mwikulu' (Heaven) and 'Tsinyanga Tsiwere' (The end time is nigh). These two highly successful songs were nominated for the prestigious KORA Music Awards, and prominent record labels in Atlanta expressed their interest in signing him up as an artist. Nevertheless, these music companies presented him with the demand to refrain from referencing the name of Jesus in his music, a condition that would jeopardise Rufftone's unwavering commitment to his Christian beliefs. He claimed that 'Jesus is the reason for my progress therefore, I cannot reject him in any manner'. He declined the opportunity to record and went back to Kenya. Rufftone also admitted that his interaction with the televangelist Teresia Wairimu from the Faith Evangelistic Ministries (FEM) had a transformative impact on his life. She said that Rufftone would become a prominent musician in the country. As Rufftone remembers, he immediately established his recording studio, Lampstand Records, after her prophecy. Through this platform, Rufftone has facilitated the production and guidance of young and aspiring gospel musicians.

In 2013, the Citizen Media House initiated a music project in collaboration with the General Service Unit (GSU), a law enforcement agency established to aid the Kenya Police Service. Recording studios were invited to submit proposals for a collaboration with the GSU. Rufftone, operating under his record studio called Lampstand, won the contract by submitting the lowest bid. As a result, he was paid to record the song 'Mungu Baba' with the GSU choir. Citizen TV broadcasted the song continuously during the whole election period in 2013, even during the vote-counting process. According to him, the song was considered a 'miracle' because he had faced criticism from other gospel musicians when he asked them to work together with him. Rufftone stated that it was only God's intention for him to undertake this project, as it marked his return to the public eye after a prolonged absence. In addition, he also contacted Levi Wataka, the conductor of the National Youth Orchestra, to include the orchestra in the song. Rufftone perceived that orchestras were not integrated into popular music, and he believed this would be perfect for the music video. Wataka transcribed the music for the orchestra that accompanied Rufftone in the official video for the song 'Mungu

Baba' (Lampstand TV 2013)[65]. I have used a section of the original score arrangement by Levi Wataka, as seen below in Figure 5.5, for my analysis.

Song Analysis of 'Mungu Baba'

The opening of the song evokes a lullaby-like ambience, characterised by softly played strings in a moderate dynamic[66]. The solo flute enhances the composition with a contrasting melody and rhythm, imparting a folk-inspired aural experience. The tympanum is faintly audible in the background, possibly serving as a transition from a lullaby-like ambience to a more vivacious sound. Reggae tunes are audible through the accompaniment of the drums, electric bass, electric guitar and keyboard. It's also worth noting that reggae is often rather bass-heavy. Most reggae songs put their bass prominently in the mix with low subs meant to move the dance floor. The music is in 4/4 metre, with a heavy emphasis on the backbeat. The strong groove present in the song easily audible, as it is characteristic of reggae music—a groove that can only make sense with a slightly slower tempo. Reggae songs range from about 80-110 beats per minute. The fusion of an orchestra, reggae beats and stadium chants renders the work an amalgamation of diverse sounds. The lullaby-like introduction is notably repeated near the end of the song.

The song comprises a chorus, a single stanza and a bridge. Figure 5.5 illustrates that the chorus is performed in Swahili, whereas Stanza One and the bridge are performed in English. This clarifies why only the chorus is translated. The chorus lyrics serve as a supplication to God for protecting the nation and as an appeal to the citizens to coexist peacefully and harmoniously. In contrast, Stanza One emphasises the importance of loving and serving one another, highlighting the fact that this generation has been specifically chosen by God. This stanza contains biblical allusions, specifically referencing 1 Peter 2:9-12, which states, 'But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light'. Nevertheless, I am uncertain whether Rufftone intended to indirectly write this lyric from a Biblical standpoint. The song commences with the chorus, performed by the GSU, in the key of C major. Rufftone delivers his lines of rap during the stanza and bridge sections, whilst the GSU chants join in the chorus and chant sections (Amen).

[65] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxpEEFiIgBg
[66] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxpEEFiIgBg

Figure 5.5 Lyrics of Rufftone's 'Mungu Baba'.

Lyrics	Translation
Chorus Mungu Baba twaomba, uilinde nchi yetu Tuishi kwa umoja Chuki si tumalize, tusameheane tupendane Ni wewe Mungu pekee Mungu Baba twaomba, uilinde Kenya yetu Tuishi kwa upendo Chuki si tumalize, tuungane tushangiliane, Ni wewe Mungu pekee	**Chorus** God our Father, we pray that you protect our country and live in unity We should stop hatred, forgive and love each other You are the only God God our Father, we pray that you protect Kenya and live in love We should stop hatred, unite and celebrate each other You are the only God
Stanza 1 Now me say Love, love, love one another Oh Kenyan youth me say now love one another Me say serve, serve, serve one another Oh Kenyan youth me say now serve each other We are the leaders of today, we are the kings of today We are the princes and the queens of now We are the ones that the Lord has chosen yes We are the ones with the power today yes	
Bridge My home, my Kenya, my land (Amen) My resident, my president (Amen) My town, my city, my crown, my love, my joy, my pride (Amen)	

The song incorporates elements of both orchestral music and reggae beats. The music commences with an orchestral prelude from bars 1-9, as seen in Figure 5.5 below. The strings and woodwind instruments are played in arpeggios, while the flute solo plays the melodic motif. The identical prelude is reiterated after the song as a postlude. The strings in the chorus perform the same notes as the GSU vocal ensemble, while ensemble sings in unison rather

than harmonies. Following the postlude, a violin solo performs the rhythmic variation of the flute solo motif (see Figure 5.6). The song conveyed a message promoting peace, love and unity, aligning with the media's portrayal of a 'peaceocracy' during the 2013 elections.

Figure 5.6 Excerpt of the Original orchestral arrangement of Rufftone's 'Mungu Baba'.



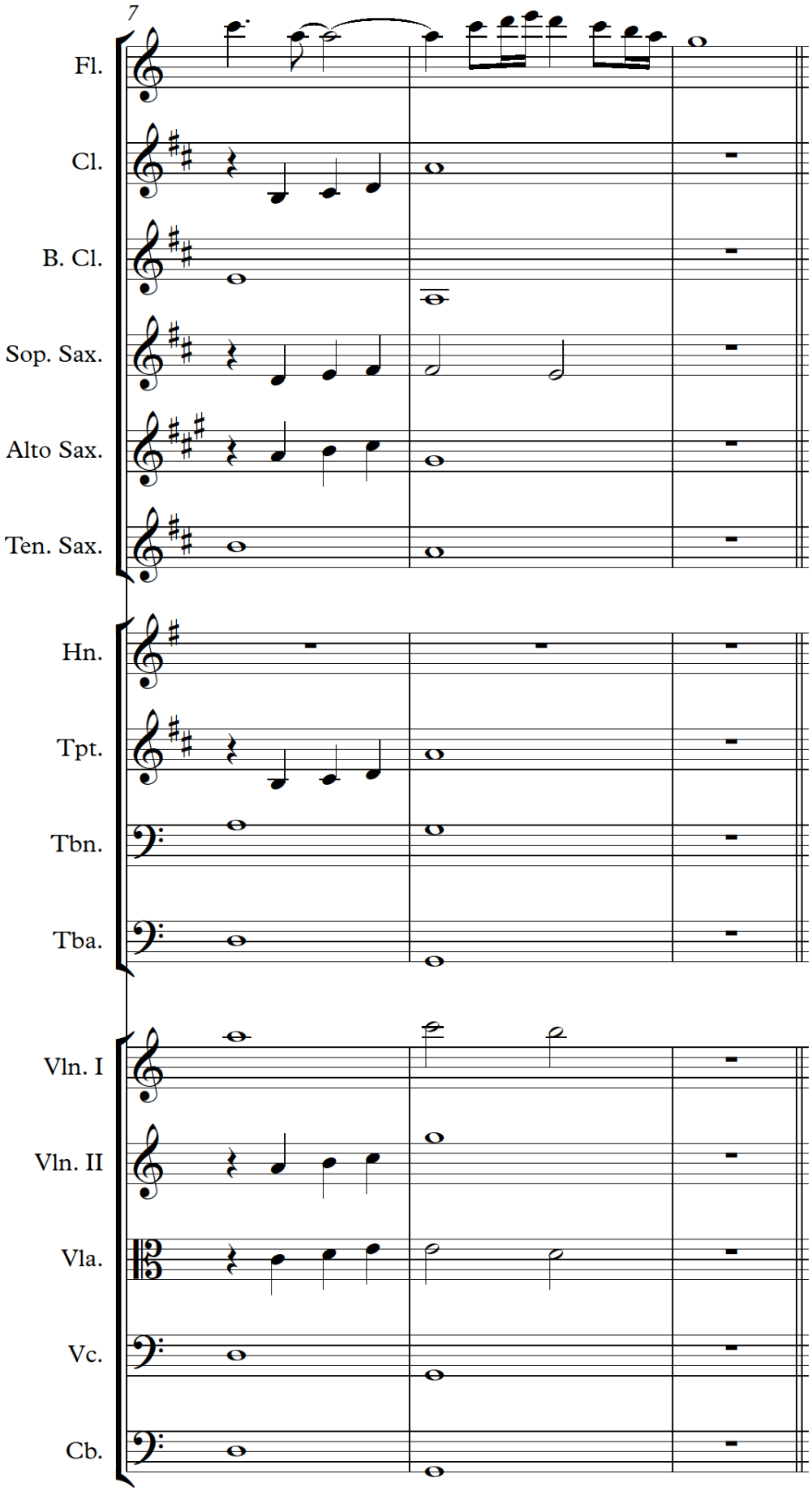

7
Fl.
Cl.
B. Cl.
Sop. Sax.
Alto Sax.
Ten. Sax.
Hn.
Tpt.
Tbn.
Tba.
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
Cb.

Figure 5.7. Transcribed Violin Solo.



A Comparative Analysis of UhuRuto and the Media in the Dissemination of Gospel Music

As mentioned previously, the ICC played a crucial role in the 2013 elections. Both UhuRuto and the media had to devise strategies to actively involve the populace and divert its attention from the heinous acts perpetrated during the 2007/2008 post-election violence. UhuRuto resorted to religious populism as their sole strategy to secure the majority of votes, while the media resorted to 'peaceocracy'. While the message of peace may have seemed fitting and applicable initially, it does have some constraints. For instance, it tends to exclude particular voices and restrict the ability of the opposition party to actively engage in the political process. In the 2013 elections, the opposition leader Raila Odinga received less airtime coverage in comparison to UhuRuto. This discrepancy could be attributed to the greater notoriety that UhuRuto had acquired due to their ICC accusations.

The media's inclination towards 'peace' rather than 'truth' was influenced by particular factors. Initially, there was a sense of apprehension regarding the possibility of violence. The concerns surrounding elections are typically influenced by past encounters with election-related violence and political instability. According to Dirk Moses (2011: 91), there exists a profound unease towards history, marked by a fear of its continuous repetition, which he refers to as 'a terror of history'. The 2013 elections centred on the potential reoccurrence of the previous violence. Secondly, there is the aspect of assigning individual accountability. Addressing the underlying causes of conflict or identifying those accountable for election violence is typically challenging. As a result, the media transferred the task of upholding peace to citizens. The citizen's initiative aimed to protect themselves from anarchy and disarray. Although these elements can serve as temporary solutions to prevent a conflict during an election, their long-term effects are typically overlooked. For instance, the individuals responsible for the post-election violence in 2007/2008 have not yet been fully held accountable per legal requirements. Therefore, the International Criminal Court (ICC)

was perceived as a post-colonial institution to penalise developing nations, such as Kenya. The attempts to get justice proved to be ineffective, mostly because of the prevalence of corruption and impunity. As a result, the Kenyan legal system was unable to deliver justice to the victims of this violence.

The religious populist strategy employed by UhuRuto proved successful and ultimately led to their victory in the elections. Nevertheless, it did not adequately encompass the entire range of religious beliefs in a democratic nation. Although Kenya has a Christian majority, UhuRuto's reliance on the church, particularly the Pentecostal church, as a focal point for their campaigns did not accurately reflect the entire country. As per the constitution, Kenya is a secular democratic nation, meaning it is not affiliated with any specific religion, including Christianity. Therefore, the political duo exploited the prevailing Christian majority to alter the desires of the general public. The prayer rallies and campaigns were organised to vilify the International Criminal Court (ICC). It was considered unusual not to be a Christian or a fan of the political duo during the 2013 elections. Gospel performer Githae played a prominent role in the Jubilee campaigns, which helped determine their theological stance. Githae's song 'Mabataro' was adopted as the official anthem for every UhuRuto campaign rally, and Githae himself attended nearly all campaign events. The composition of the song was not motivated by any partisanship; nonetheless, the lyrics were relevant to the current circumstances of UhuRuto. The political pair sought divine intervention for exoneration from the International Criminal Court, thus, the song served as a genuine supplication to God. Githae's exceptional talent as a gospel singer, both in terms of his lyrical abilities and vocal skills, led to him being sought after in political circles. Githae supported UhuRuto in the 2017 election and endorsed Raila Odinga in the 2022 election. Nevertheless, in 2022, a problem arose when he decided to endorse Odinga, who is widely known as a practitioner of witchcraft rather than a devout Christian. Githae explicitly asserted in an interview that he had the liberty to endorse any candidate of his choosing. Githae stated that his endorsement of Odinga resulted in the loss of multiple connections and opportunities to serve as a brand ambassador. In my perspective, Githae backed UhuRuto in both the 2013 and 2017 elections due to his relationship with Uhuru Kenyatta. Firstly, both individuals belonged to the Kikuyu ethnic group and were born and raised in Gatundu. After the political dispute between Uhuru and Ruto, Uhuru endorsed Odinga in the 2022 elections and Githae also switched sides to support Odinga. Githae's endorsement was mostly influenced by Uhuru Kenyatta, who had a crucial role in elevating his music career.

In 2013, Citizen TV and KTN enlisted gospel performers Rufftone and Juliani to compose music that symbolised peace. Typically, the media is used to providing secular singers with such opportunities, but in 2013, the situation unfolded differently. Initially, the prevailing religious discourse on prayer and forgiveness had gained widespread acceptance throughout the country. Hence, the media felt compelled to conform to this narrative, fearing that deviating from the religious sentiment could potentially incite violence. Furthermore, the media may have retrospectively supported UhuRuto in hindsight. Therefore, the concept of the media being impartial may not have been entirely coherent. Juliani's song 'Utawala' not only promotes peace but also serves as a socio-political reflection of society by addressing the social and political problems of the country. Juliani is not renowned for publicly supporting any political candidates; however, he does gain endorsements from affluent corporations through similar channels. He was recognised as a trusted companion and advisor to the deceased Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Safaricom Kenya, the largest telecommunications business in Kenya, Bob Collymore. The lyrics of Rufftone's 'Mungu Baba' were completely focused on promoting peace. Since 2013, Rufftone has gained significant attention and prominence in the political sphere. Lately, he has been endorsing Ruto's candidacy and presently has the position of an artistic representative in Ruto's United Democratic Alliance (UDA).

The three musicians attracted diverse ethnic and demographic populations. Ben Githae primarily attracted middle-aged people from the Kikuyu community, whilst Rufftone and Juliani have a strong appeal to the younger generation. The decision made by UhuRuto and the media to choose these musicians as ambassadors in the 2013 campaigns was not solely based on the persuasive impact of their lyrics and religious association. UhuRuto relied on the Kikuyus, who constitute the largest ethnic group in Kenya, to secure the bulk of votes in elections. Therefore, Githae was considered the appropriate musician for them. The media chose young musicians as they were representative of the bulk of the youth who were heavily involved in the post-election unrest. Hence, the music produced by Juliani and Rufftone would effectively disseminate the message of peace among the younger generation. According to Kimani Njogu (2013), the significance of the youth in ensuring a peaceful election is highlighted by the lessons learned during the post-election violence of 2007/2008.

Following the duo's electoral victory, political instability subsided, and the government resumed its operations while endeavouring to reconstruct a nation burdened by a past that would not easily fade from the populace's memory. The music disseminated during these elections continues to be broadcast on local airwaves, serving as a retrospective reminder to Kenyans of the 2013 elections that shaped the history of the country. During the campaigns leading to the 2022 elections, the political discourse underwent a significant transformation as Ruto encountered a profound estrangement with his political counterpart, Kenyatta, a largely unforeseen event. Ruto campaigned nationwide as a 'hustler', soliciting sympathy votes following his betrayal of Kenyatta for not supporting his aspirations to become the fifth president. In Chapter Six, I explore Ruto's utilisation of gospel music to construct his persona as a hustler who empathised with the struggles of the marginalised, drawing from his impoverished upbringing.

Chapter Six

Ruto the Fifth!: Hustlers, Dynasties and the 'Gospel' of the 2022 Electoral Campaigns

Introduction

This chapter examines the significance of popular gospel music in representing William Ruto's 'hustler' vs 'dynasty' narrative. I utilised Norman Fairclough's (1992) 'discourse as text' methodology to assess the themes present in the songs chosen as case studies. During the 2022 presidential campaigns, William Samoei Ruto and Raila Amolo Odinga were the main presidential candidates. Ruto campaigned with his political party, the United Democratic Alliance (UDA), as part of the Kenya Kwanza movement. On the contrary, Odinga carried out his campaign through his political party, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), as part of the Azimio la Umoja alliance. It is worth mentioning that Odinga did not utilise gospel music in his previous campaigns. This fact strengthens the argument stated in this chapter that the 'religious' narrative played a big role in Ruto's victory in the 2022 presidential elections. Because of the contrasting differences in the music utilised between the two candidates, I have gone ahead to apply Fairclough's (1992) discourse as text to analyse the speeches of the two candidates, which both held religious narratives and Biblical parables during their respective final campaign trails that were held on 9 August 2022.

In the Kenyan context, the term 'hustler' refers to young individuals who are facing challenges in their efforts to thrive in a challenging economic climate. They originate from impoverished or low-income households and are enthusiastic about participating in various activities to meet their financial needs. Conversely, 'dynasties' refer to affluent political families who have been privileged with power since Kenya's independence in the 1960s (Karanja 2022: 2). Ruto created the term 'Hustler Nation' to symbolise individuals, such as himself, who do not come from affluent or influential families. Despite his current affluence, he asserts that his father was poor. Due to his impoverished circumstances, he attended school without wearing shoes and worked his way up by selling chicken. His opponent, Raila Odinga, is the son of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, who was Kenya's first vice president. This makes Odinga a member of a political dynasty.

Regina Muthoni and Solomon Mkubwa, both gospel musicians whom I interviewed, supported Ruto's campaign with their songs titled 'Ruto, Kazi ni Kazi' (Ruto, Work is Work) and 'Mfalme wa Amani' (Prince of Peace). The two individuals presented their compositions in their original state without making any alterations to the lyrics. These compositions can also be classified as 'canned' songs[67]. Nevertheless, Odinga had a stronger inclination towards secular music. Diamond Platnumz, a secular musician from Tanzania, performed his hit song 'Baba Lao' (Their Father) as the main act. He modified certain portions of the lyrics by replacing them to align with Odinga's campaign. Out of all the secular musicians who performed at Odinga's campaign event, I specifically selected Platnumz's song due to its political importance in Kenya, Tanzania (his country of origin) and Africa as a whole. While Ruto utilised gospel music and Odinga opted for secular music, the lyrics of each song effectively depicted the two candidates as representing the 'hustler' and 'dynasty', respectively. In a nation where Christian principles are strongly emphasised, Ruto's adept utilisation of these pre-recorded gospel songs played a significant role in his electoral victory. The following section provides an overview of the 2022 presidential elections and the elements that influenced Ruto's adoption of the 'hustler' and 'dynasty' narrative.

The Genesis of the 2022 Presidential Elections

On 9 August 2022, voters across the country and in the diaspora headed to the polls for yet another general election. Nationally, the two front-runners—Deputy President William Ruto and long-time opposition leader Raila Odinga—were in a contentious race to succeed outgoing President Uhuru Kenyatta, who was completing his second and final term in office. These elections occurred at a time of significant economic discontent, with many Kenyans concerned about the rising cost of living, public debt and corruption. Given that Kenyatta was not up for re-election and that the country's ruling coalition (Jubilee) splintered, Kenya was anticipating leadership change. The question that dominated the country's election season was, 'Who would win the battle to succeed Kenyatta as president'? This, according to Saskia Brechenmacher and Nanjira Sambuli (2022), remained a pointed question because the incumbent had distanced himself from his deputy (Ruto) and instead endorsed his long-standing rival, Odinga.

[67] Eric Kasper and Benjamin Schoening (2018: 2) define 'canned' songs as pre-existing popular tracks that are used in campaigns without altering the musical notes or lyrics.

William Ruto served as Kenyatta's Deputy President for two terms, from 2013- 2022. In this political 'marriage', as the media framed it, it was determined that Kenyatta would support Ruto in his political ambitions to become the President in 2022. However, this was not so. The 'UhuRuto' brotherhood was dismantled when Kenyatta supported Odinga's ambition to become president in 2022 instead of Ruto. This move was certainly not expected in the political circles. Kenyatta claimed that it was because of Ruto's uncontrolled ambition and division within the government that their political partnership was dissolved. Instead, Kenyatta approached his opposition, Odinga and did a 'handshake' ceremony[68]. Isaac Amuke asserts that Uhuru and Odinga:

> Invoked the spirit of their fathers: Jomo Kenyatta and his first vice-president, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga. They said that the rain had started beating Kenya when their fathers fell out and that now the two sons would atone for their sins— and fix Kenya in the process. (2022: 17)

Kenyatta also explained and justified that he invoked the 'handshake' because Kenya was still experiencing an ethnic divide. This move caused controversy because Uhuru and Ruto's political relationship was also meant to reduce the ethnic hostility that had transpired as a result of the 2007/2008 post-election violence. Therefore, Uhuru's justification of his handshake to Odinga was simply the beginning of his systematic onslaught against Ruto. Uhuru transferred responsibilities that were initially granted to the Deputy President (DP) to the office of Fred Matiang'i, the interior minister. Ruto's in-tray became empty. In the wake of the handshake, Ruto knew that his road to the presidency had become much more difficult. Following this political 'betrayal', Ruto traversed the country, rebranding himself as the 'hustler' or the 'chief hustler'. This contrasted with the political dynasties he was competing against. 'Dynasties must fall!', as constantly quoted by Ruto in his campaigns, formed the 'hustler versus dynasty' rhetoric (Amuke 2022: 23). The two individuals who formed the 'hustler' motif were the 'mama mboga' (Vegetable vending market woman) and the 'boda boda' riders (motorcycles). According to Ruto, these two embodied the struggles of the common 'Mwananchi' (citizen), to whom Kenyatta and Odinga could never relate.

During his campaign in Nairobi's Dagorreti suburb in January 2021, Ruto addressed the crowd concerning the 'hustler' rhetoric:

[68] As a result of the handshake, the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) was formed by Kenyatta and Odinga. The BBI was a series of proposed constitutional reforms framed as an attempt to prevent future electoral conflict. However, In March 2021, the Supreme Court of Kenya declared the initiative unconstitutional.

> We are going to change this conversation. It is not going to be about 'tribes'. It is not going to be about leaders. It's not going to be about power. It's not going to be about positions. It is going to be about the hustlers—the ordinary people! It is going to be about enterprise—the wheelbarrow conversation. It is going to be about jobs, for ordinary people….(*Nation* 2021)

Ruto's hustler versus dynasty rhetoric shifted Kenyan politics from an ethnic to a class-based politics, setting up a clash between the rich and the poor (Karanja 2022: 1) (see also Robinson et al. 2020). However, this rhetoric faced some backlash from some government agencies. The National Cohesion and Integrity Commission (NCIC) proposed that a Bill should be passed in parliament to criminalise the 'hustler versus dynasty' speech. According to them, the rhetoric spreads 'hate speech' and could exacerbate a divide among the youth in the country. However, their attempt to criminalise it was not successful (Awino 2021). Ruto continued to uphold that he would not stop using the hustler versus dynasty narrative because most Kenyans are indeed hustlers (NTV Kenya 2020). Even after he won the elections in 2022, he started up a 'Hustler Fund' initiative that would lend money to business owners at a small interest fee.

Kenya Kwanza Final Campaign Trail

On 6 August 2022, the Kenya Kwanza political alliance held its last campaign at the Nyayo Stadium grounds in Nairobi (NTV Kenya b. 2022). Going by the political party's colour theme, yellow and green, the attendees and political participants were not left out. They came dressed in T-shirts and caps that matched the theme of the political party. This was a unified allegiance to the political mantra. The event could have been mistaken for a football match, only in this case, there was no opposing team. All the audience in attendance were there for one purpose, namely, to support William Ruto and his political alliance. The 'hustlers' showed up in numbers. Some carried along with them a wheelbarrow, which was the 'Kenya Kwanza' political symbol. The wheelbarrow signified the figure of the hardworking citizen.

William Ruto's entrance at the Nyayo stadium was that of pomp and grandeur. The Master of Ceremonies, John Kiarie (KJ)[69], welcomed his entrance with the common phrase 'Ni maombi' (It is prayer). Ruto's entrance to the Nyayo Stadium was accompanied by the gospel tune 'Mkono wa Bwana' (The Hand of God) by the Zabron singers. To emphasise the party's Christian values, Ruto's political allies each saluted the crowd with the phrase, 'Bwana Yesu asifiwe' (Jesus Christ be praised). Their short speech gave honour to God. Among them was

[69] John Kiarie, also known as KJ (his abbreviation), was a former comedian and a Member of Parliament for the Dagorreti South Constituency.

Johnson Sakaja, the current governor of Nairobi County. He quoted the book of Zacharia 5:6, 'It is not by power or by might but by the spirit says the Lord'. He further stated that they have stood with God and therefore, whoever is planning their downfall would not prosper[70]. Bishop Margaret Wanjiru of 'Jesus is Alive Ministry' (JIAM) was also not left out of these religious utterances[71]. She pleaded with Kenyans to be steadfast in prayer during elections but also to adhere to their democratic right to vote. As Ruto approached the podium to give his final speech, Solomon Mkubwa, a Congolese musician, welcomed William Ruto on stage with his gospel hit, 'Mfalme Wa Amani' (Prince of Peace). The lyrics showcase the hand of God upon those who diligently seek Him. Additionally, it portrays a 'grass to grace' narrative, which reflects Ruto's journey from a 'hustler' to a presidential candidate. Ruto's final campaign speech featured several Christian nuances and utterances. Ruto and his political allies engaged in overt religious populism through their remarks. Their candid recognition of their Christian convictions, which they assert 'govern' their political conduct, is evident here. This campaign trail was predominantly characterised by Christian narratives, evidenced by the citation of Biblical texts and public declarations of faith in God.

Below is the transcribed version of Ruto's speech:

> To the people of Nairobi, I stand before you today to thank the Lord as I am here because of God's mercy [loud cheers from the crowd follow this statement]. Because there is a God in Heaven, we are in the year 2022 successfully conducting election campaigns. My opponents claimed that we would not make it to the ballot, is it not a miracle that we made it? Is He not a marvellous God? Kenya does not belong to any individual or deep state; rather, it belongs to God. Enough is enough, and freedom is coming. The people of Kenya will prevail over the deep state and the system, and we are going to have a nation that leaves no Kenyan behind. It is not about changing the constitution or sharing political positions but creating job opportunities for the young people and building the economy of the country. It is about the empowerment of the 'mama mboga' (vegetable vendors), 'boda boda riders' (motorcyclists), and ordinary citizens. The people of Kenya should not be afraid because there is a God in Heaven to make sure that on the day of the elections, His perfect will shall be done. Choose the team that has a plan for the future of our country. We have come to declare in this Nyayo Stadium that on the day of the election, you will choose a team that has a plan to reduce the cost of living. The 'bottom-up' economy will be the way to go. In conclusion, we can all see from the horizon that this election is done, and the people of Kenya have finally decided to go

[70] Here, I assume that he is referring to the opposition party ODM.
[71] Bishop Margaret campaigned for the 2022 senator seat of Nairobi under Ruto's UDA, but she was not successful.

> forward. I promise you that the Kenya Kwanza team will not let you down. Our commitments will be fulfilled one after the other. (NTV Kenya c 2022)

Following his speech, he implored his supporters to offer prayers for him and his party leaders to secure victory in the elections. He expressed a strong belief and willingness to pardon the current president, Uhuru Kenyatta, for his previous act of betrayal and collaborate with the opposition leader, Raila Odinga. He pledged to uphold the principles established by his predecessor, Uhuru Kenyatta. The following part offers a background of Mkubwa, based on the conversation we had. This establishes the basis of his Christian convictions and his path towards his relationship with Ruto. I further analyse his gospel hit song 'Mfalme wa Amani' (Prince of Peace)[72], which functioned as Ruto's campaign theme song.

Solomon Mkubwa's Background

Mkubwa originates from Goma, the capital city of North Kivu province in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where Swahili is the predominant dialect. I conducted the entire interview with Mkubwa in the Swahili language (Mkubwa interview 2023). Mkubwa was raised in a Pentecostal family with parents who were devout Christians and experienced the power of the Holy Spirit. He claimed that he and his siblings are all musicians who commenced their musical endeavours in church choirs at a young age. Nevertheless, his father participated in extramarital relationships and fathered twin children outside of marriage. Tragically, one of the twins passed away at this period. Mkubwa's father consistently evaded his duty towards the twins, openly disassociating himself from them. In a state of rage and exasperation, the relatives on the maternal side of the deceased made a solemn promise to seek retribution on Mkubwa's family. This retribution was not physical but rather of a spiritual nature. The relatives of the deceased twin sought revenge by casting witchcraft against Mkubwa's family. Mkubwa's sister passed away under unknown circumstances and soon after, his hand started to undergo a process of decay. As a result, the physicians were compelled to perform a surgical procedure to remove his arm. He implied that his arm began to deteriorate after being pricked by peculiar 'spiritual' arrows during the night. Mkubwa further recounts:

> This life is spiritual, never adopt a lukewarm approach to Christianity, with one foot within and one foot outside of the church. If my father had not deviated from his religious beliefs, we would not have experienced the

[72] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHvWSh8YyaE

> intense struggle against evil forces known as 'spiritual warfare'[73] and as a result, I would not have suffered the unfortunate loss of my arm.

In his song 'Mfalme wa Amani', he addresses the perils of seeking guidance from a witch doctor to resolve issues, advocating instead for seeking solace in God. The process of amputating his arm had a detrimental impact on his self-esteem as a musician. According to Mkubwa, it was God who called him to sing gospel music, but he was frequently reminded by the devil about his arm. Mkubwa persisted in fasting and engaging in prayer, seeking divine intervention to bolster his resilience in conquering his diminished self-confidence. Even now, Mkubwa utilises his childhood suffering to direct people toward Christ. He also stressed the significance of prayer and wholehearted devotion to the Church.

Mkubwa deployed his music as a means of honouring God in Congo. The release of his debut song, 'Sijaona Rafiki Kama Yesu' (I have never seen a friend like Jesus), catapulted him to popularity within his local community. Nevertheless, his meeting with Angela Chibalonza (1976-2007) ultimately led to the establishment of his music career in Kenya. Chibalonza, a gospel artist from Congo, resided in Nairobi, Kenya, but frequently journeyed to Congo for her performances. Chibalonza, who assumed the roles of both a sister and mentor to Mkubwa, extended an invitation for him to reside with her family in Nairobi. During this period, Mkubwa worked as a domestic worker for her. In addition to escorting her to music concerts throughout Kenya, he would also perform household tasks for Chibalonza. He stated that 'God was instilling humility and patience during those early years of serving Chibalonza'. Mkubwa likened his relationship with Chibalonza to the biblical connection between Elijah and Elisha. Like the way Elijah transferred his mantle/power to Elisha, Chibalonza similarly prepared and handed over the mantle of her music ministry to Mkubwa. In 2007, she died in a car accident and during that same year, Mkubwa composed the song 'Mfalme was Amani'.

During the 2013 elections, Mkubwa was contacted by Rachel Ruto, who is the wife of Ruto and currently holds the position of Kenya's First Lady. She notified him that Ruto had been listening to his music and felt exceedingly blessed, especially by his song 'Mfalme wa Amani'. Ruto made a formal request to sing the song at the UhuRuto Jubilee manifesto event in 2013. Following this exceptional performance, he gained international acclaim and became highly sought after by churches worldwide. He has ministered in churches across America,

[73] Simon Coleman (2020: 172) defines 'spiritual warfare' in the Pentecostal circles as deliverance (exorcism) from demonic powers.

Europe, Asia and West Africa to spread the gospel of Christ through his music. He stated, 'Anything that Ruto comes into contact with becomes the greatest globally'. His affiliation with Ruto greatly propelled his music career. During our talk, he mentioned the Zabron Gospel Singers from Tanzania, who were invited to perform at Ruto's official events following his victory. Mkubwa asserted that this music ensemble achieved worldwide acclaim promptly upon their affiliation with Ruto. In 2013, Mkubwa established a close relationship with Ruto and his family and has since campaigned for him.

'Mfalme wa Amani' (Prince of Peace) Lyrical Analysis

The song is reminiscent of the 1980s Congolese music, particularly resembling Les Wanyika and Super Mazembe, two Congolese bands based in Kenya from the late 1970s and 1980s. The chord progression, tempo, and arrangement style closely resemble the song 'Shauri Yako'[74] (see the transcription on Figure 6.1 below). Notwithstanding these similarities, Mkubwa never acknowledged any influence from secular Congolese musicians in his music. From our conversation, he was notably conservative and fervent about the fact that Chibalonza influenced his musical approach. Despite the secular origins of the genre, gospel performers have successfully adopted this musical style, as seen with Mkubwa and his mentor Angela Chibalonza. According to Kidula (2015: 425), sacred music has evolved to encompass secular elements, making it challenging to differentiate between the two.

Kenya has a longstanding tradition of embracing Congolese music dating back to the early 1980s. A significant number of households in Kenya possessed or continue to possess vinyl records of Congolese music. During the 1980s, Nairobi served as the primary location for recording music in East African nations. As a result, many musicians from Congo migrated to Nairobi in search of better music opportunities (Kidula 2015: 408-409). Mkubwa profited from this as his Congolese predecessors had previously established a solid groundwork in the country.

[74] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndzi03HOPR4&pp=ygUMU2hhdXJpIHlha28g

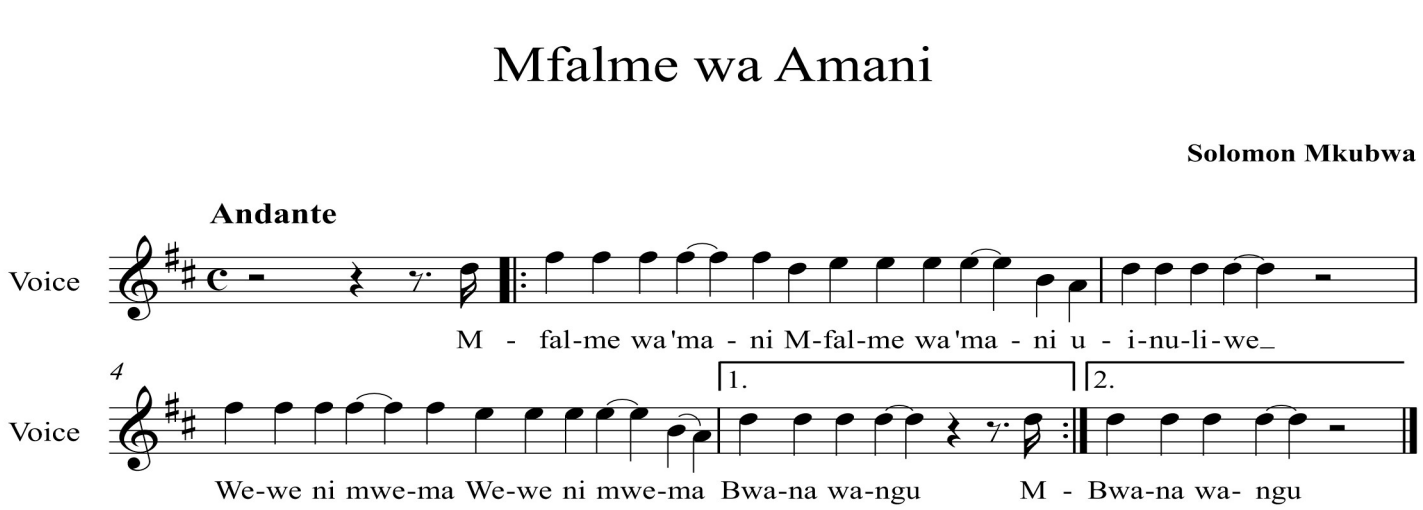


Figure 6.1 'Mfalme wa Amani' Chorus

My approach to the lyrical analysis of this song did not primarily arise from my discussion with Mkubwa because I observed his reluctance to discuss his music in connection with Ruto's campaigns. Hence, I had to deduce a succinct argument that elucidated how these lyrics portrayed Ruto as the 'hustler'. Mkubwa's song lyrics, like many of his compositions, draw inspiration from Biblical texts. He consistently keeps his Bible in the studio during the process of producing his music. On numerous occasions, he spontaneously crafted lyrics by rapidly perusing the Bible. According to him, music is the divine essence expressed through the Bible. The lyrics of 'Mfalme wa Amani' are as stated below:

Lyrics	**Translation**
Stanza 1	**Stanza 1**
Daudi kasema,nilikuwa kijana sasa ni mzee Sijawahi kuona mwenye ameachwa mimi Wala watoto wake kuombaomba mikate barabarani Mungu ni mwaminifu, kwa ahadi zake wanadamu Mungu ni mwaminifu, kwa ahadi zake si kama wanadamu Akiongea Yesu ameongea Akikuahidia kitu, Baba ameahidi na ujasiri Atatenda kwa wakati wake Ninamwita Bwana wa amani Ninamwita mfalme wa amani Ndio maana mimi ninaimba kwa sababu ya amani yake Ni uwezo gani, uwezo gani unaominga Baba Uwezo gani, uwezo gani, uwezo gani	David said I was young now I'm old I have never seen the righteous forsaken Or their children begging for bread God is faithful in his promises to us He is faithful, not like man When He speaks, Jesus has spoken When He promises, it is done He will do it in season I call unto the Lord of peace I call unto the King of peace I sing of his peace What power can oppose my Father's? What power?
Chorus Mfalme wa amani, mfalme wa amani uinuliwe Wewe ni mwema, wewe ni mwema Bwana wangu	**Chorus** Prince of Peace be lifted My Lord you are good
Stanza 2 Usilie, usilie, usiliwe wewe Usilie Bwana anakujua ndugu yangu Amesikia kilio chako wewe mama Unalia nini kwa wanadamu, mama yangu Wanadamu hawatakusaidia na kitu Wanadamu hawatakuwezesha kwa kitu chochote	**Stanza 2** Do not cry Do not cry my brother, The Lord knows you He has listened to your crying mother Why are you crying to the world, Mother? The world will not help you They will not enable you We have one that wipes our tears He is the Prince of Peace

Tunaye mmoja anayepanguza machozi ya watu wake Ni yule mfalme wa amani Ni yule aliyesema yote imekwisha Mama unayoyapitia ni yeye anayeyaona anajua shida yako mama yangu Anajua magumu yako baba yangu Ukiwa na shida usiende kwa waganga wa dunia Ukiwa na magumu usiende kwa wafumu wa dunia Muite mfalme wa amani, yeye anajibu maombi Ni uwezo gani, uwezo gani unaominga Baba Uwezo gani, uwezo gani, uwezo gani **Stanza 3** Mfalme wa amani, uinuliwe Bwana wangu yale unayotenda inashangaza dunia nzima Wanaokosa amani ndani ya nyumba zao wape amani Wanaokosa amani ndani ya kazi zao wape amani Ni wewe Bwana wa amani ya kudumu Ni wewe Bwana wa amani ya Afrika Amerika wanalia amani Tunawe Bwana mfalme wa amani Hakuna kitu kile kinachokushinda Bwana Yeye Mfalme wa Amani	He is the one who said "It is Finished" He knows what you're going through He knows your troubles, mother He knows your hardship, father Troubled? Don't go to the witch doctors Troubled? Don't look for worldly solutions Call the King of peace, He answers prayers What power can oppose my Father's? What power? **Stanza 3** Prince of Peace, be lifted, my Lord Your works astonish the whole world Those who lack peace at home, grant peace You are the Lord with everlasting peace You are the Lord of Africa's peace American's cry for peace as well We have you Lord, King of peace There is nothing too hard for you my Lord He is the Prince of Peace

Figure 6.2. Lyrics to Solomon Mkubwa's 'Mfalme wa Amani'.

The first stanza, for example, is a direct quote from the book of Psalms 35: 25 (New King James Version 1982). In this scripture, David narrates that since his youth, he has never seen the righteous forsaken nor his descendants beg for bread. David portrays God as the provider. Also, David, according to scripture, went through seasons of affliction by King Saul. Saul's jealousy led David to hide in the desert in fear of his life. It was in this situation that he composed Psalms 35. He trusted in God for provision in the dessert. Likewise, Ruto went through a similar situation. His campaigns were a contest between him and powerful dynasties, or the 'Sauls'. Also, the 'betrayal' he faced from Uhuru Kenyatta made Ruto look like the 'victim' who needed sympathy. God was indeed Ruto's only hope amid the political hurdles. Ruto's political allies also likened him to the character of David in the Bible, a humble shepherd who became king (Kenya Digital News 2023). David represents the 'hustler' because he came from a humble background; the Bible refers to him as a 'Shepherd

boy'. Members of the clergy also referenced these characters. During the dedication function at the State House, Reverend Teresia Wairimu was called upon to speak, and she narrated:

> Just like David, who used the five stones to kill Goliath, His Excellency the President used the five stones to win the elections, and one of them was the 'hustler'. (Pastor Ken Nyaga 2022)

In the second stanza, Mkubwa admonishes the audience not to run to witch doctors for solutions but instead to Jesus, the Prince of Peace. God is the only being who can answer prayers and give solutions. The aspect of consulting witchcraft in the lyrics reflected the campaigns of Ruto's opposition. Odinga has been known to consult witch doctors, a fact which he did not hide. During the elections, he openly spoke, 'Some people say that I serve the devil and consult witch doctors. And my question to you is, what is wrong with consulting witch doctors?' (Balindiway Media 2021). This statement made headlines across the country and sparked huge concerns within the church. It also made Ruto the most preferred presidential candidate. He was the 'clean' one, a man who professed his Christian values publicly. These statements helped to suggest that Ruto was the best option for the presidential seat. Unlike the first and second stanzas, where Mkubwa addresses the audience, the third stanza is a direct praise to Jesus as one who gives peace to all who ask for it. These lyrics convey that Ruto sought peace and solace in Christ to navigate the political upheaval caused by the ruling dynasties. The song's lyrics explicitly depict Ruto as the 'hustler' and Odinga as the 'dynasty'. It was also significant in the dissemination of the religious narratives enacted in Ruto's last campaign trail.

Regina Muthoni's Background

Muthoni was born in Kirinyaga County but was raised in Embu County (Eastern Province). She alluded that she is known as the 'Queen of Embu' because she is a prominent musician from Embu. Muthoni gained widespread recognition from her debut song, 'Yesu Ulishinda' (Jesus Won), released in 1991, which became an instant hit. Muthoni expressed, 'My journey in the music industry has been arduous, but my progress thus far is solely attributable to the hand of God'. Nevertheless, due to her limited financial resources, she acquired her first radio cassette player, which she would then carry around public markets while singing and spreading the message of the gospel. During this period, Muthoni became a member of the Full Gospel Church, although she did not reveal the specific diocese she joined. The church's music director expressed a desire to orchestrate her song 'Yesu Ulishinda' for the choir, but Muthoni declined. As a result of this, she faced social exclusion from the Full Gospel

congregation and ultimately relocated to another Pentecostal congregation. Nevertheless, her song ‘Yesu Ulishinda’ provided her with opportunities to go to other regions of the country, not just as a musician but also as an evangelist. She said that she acquired her first car and bought a piece of property through this song. So far, the majority of her fans at live performances have specifically asked her to sing ‘Yesu Ulishinda’. She expressed in Swahili, ‘Hiyo nyimbo haijaisha ladha’ (that song has not lost its flavour).

Muthoni’s venture into politics was entirely driven by divine inspiration. She asserted that she receives divine revelations for every political occurrence. This all began in 2014, during the UhuRuto regime, when Margaret Kenyatta (Uhuru’s wife) started the ‘Beyond Zero’ campaign to improve maternal and childcare across the country. Despite her diligent efforts, the song ‘Beyond Zero’ that she composed did not receive sufficient publicity. In 2014, Kenyatta implemented the ‘Mututho Law’, which prohibited the sale of illicit alcohol and Muthoni shortly composed the song ‘Kaa Sober’ (Stay Sober). Within this musical composition, she cautions the people of Kenya to abstain from using alcoholic beverages under any circumstances.

In 2022, she composed a song titled ‘Ruto Kazi ni Kazi’ (Ruto, Work is Work) to express her full support for Ruto’s campaign agenda. She asserts that she backed Ruto based on two specific justifications. Firstly, Ruto shares the same occupation as herself, being an evangelist. Secondly, Ruto possesses a deep reverence for God. Despite Ruto facing prosecution at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for committing crimes against humanity during the 2007/2008 post-election violence, Muthoni remained steadfast in her support for Ruto’s administration. She asserted that every individual is a transgressor and has failed to meet the godly standards, thereby warranting everyone to be granted an opportunity for redemption. She allocated most of her resources towards the production of the song. Muthoni pledged to emigrate from the country if Ruto failed to win the election. Following Ruto’s victory in the 2022 elections, Muthoni was extended an invitation to perform her song ‘Ruto, Kazi ni Kazi’ at a state event. During the occasion, she had the opportunity to meet Ruto and was thereafter awarded an appreciation amount of two hundred thousand Kenyan Shillings.

'Ruto, Kazi ni Kazi' Song Analysis

The song is performed in a contemporary Benga style and the lyrics are as follows[75]:

Lyrics	Translation
Chorus UDA chama cha mahustler Twaona kitaongoza Kenya Twataka bottom-up economy Maono ya William Ruto Kazi ni kazi!	**Chorus** UDA the party of hustlers We can see that it will lead Kenya We want a bottom-up economy The vision of William Ruto Work is work!
Stanza One Kauli ndio zetu Kazi ni kazi Hatuchagui kazi	**Stanza One** The promise is ours Work is work We do not choose work
Stanza Two Ruto akotayari Kuboresha Kenya, 2022	**Stanza Two** Ruto is ready To make Kenya a better place in 2022
Stanza Three Tuna tuma Ruto Akafanye kazi Waanze na bottom up	**Stanza Three** We are sending Ruto To do the work They should start with the bottom-up
Stanza Four Bottom up nikuinua aliye chini ili ainuke	**Stanza Four** Bottom-up is to raise those that are below to come up
Stanza Five Wana boda boda Fundi wa viatu na mama mbonga	**Stanza Five** Motorcycle taxis Shoemakers Women vegetable vendors
Stanza Six Mwimbaji wa Kenya Wahubiri na washirika	**Stanza Six** The singers in Kenya Preachers and members of the congregation

Figure 6.3 Lyrics to Regina Muthoni's 'Ruto, Kazi ni Kazi'.

[75] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QHz_oAWFM0&pp=ygURcnV0byBrYXppIG5pIGthemk%3D

It is important to mention that Muthoni did not perform this song during Ruto's campaign event on 9 August 2022. Nevertheless, I deemed it crucial to include this song in this chapter due to its potent and unequivocal expression of Ruto's political manifesto. Hence, I have utilised Regina Muthoni's released video of the song on YouTube for analysis (Regina Muthoni Official 2022). The complete recording has a duration of eight minutes and four seconds (Regina Muthoni Official 2022)[76], making it likely her longest song. The composition consists of a chorus and six brief stanzas, with the chorus being sung after each stanza. During the chorus, Muthoni reinforces Ruto's 'hustler' political rhetoric, which advocates for the bottom-up economy outlined in Ruto's campaign manifesto. This would assist the average citizen in navigating the challenging economic conditions, irrespective of their occupation. Muthoni interrupts after the chorus with the phrase 'Kazi ni kazi!' (Work is work!). Muthoni foretells that Ruto, through his UDA party, will undoubtedly assume leadership of the nation. She performs the chorus with her singing voice, but the stanzas have a vocal style that resembles interjections, almost as if they are spoken. The fifth and sixth stanzas describe the cohort of individuals affiliated with the 'hustler'.

The song is in the key of D-Flat major (C# major), see Figure 6.4 below, which is different from her other gospel songs that often vary between G and A major. Undoubtedly, Muthoni possesses a soprano voice, nevertheless, her vocal range exhibits remarkable versatility. She claims that she performs campaign songs in a relatively low pitch, specifically between the key of C and D major. Muthoni asserts that campaign songs must possess a profound quality, as the audience can only comprehend and connect with the message when it is delivered in a lower key range. Nevertheless, one of her gospel songs, namely, 'Yesu Ulishinda', is composed in the A major key. According to Muthoni, the use of a high key in this gospel song allows the audience to transcend into the spiritual realms. The use of a high key in the song elicits feelings of spiritual triumph, as she proclaims in her song that 'Jesus has emerged victorious in all of our conflicts'. Her vocal disposition transforms, with her assuming a manly persona in her campaign songs and a more feminine one in her religious songs. Muthoni justified these vocal modifications by alluding to the male-dominated nature of music performances in political venues. She explained that to be accepted and fit in, she had to adopt a more masculine voice style, which could only be done by selecting a lower key range.

[76] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QHz_oAWFM0&pp=ygURcnV0byBrYXppIG5pIGthemk%3D

The song ‘Ruto, Kazi ni Kazi’ plays a crucial role in promoting Ruto’s presidential campaign, particularly his political discourse. The song’s content surpasses ethnic boundaries. Following the release of the song, Muthoni received numerous phone calls from the Rift Valley Province, which is the home of Ruto. Muthoni was born and raised in the Mount Kenya Region[77], but her song traversed this area and beyond. Her utilisation of the Swahili language facilitated the widespread distribution of the song. As a gospel artist, Muthoni defends her involvement in politics by asserting that as long as the lyrics do not contain offensive language, there is no issue with performing for a presidential candidate of her choosing. She also drew comparisons between herself and religious figures like Pius Muiru of Maximum Miracle Centre, as well as Bishop Margaret Wanjiru of Jesus is Alive Ministries (JIAM), who contested for the presidential and governor positions in 2007 and 2013, respectively. If the aforementioned clergy members ran for political office, there would be no problem if she, as a gospel singer, campaigned for her preferred political candidate through her music. Due to the periodic nature of political music, she intends to create a new composition for Ruto’s forthcoming presidential campaign in 2027.

Muthoni’s approach to gospel music in the 2022 electoral campaigns differs significantly from that of Mkubwa. Muthoni’s campaign song lacks any Biblical allusions, raising the question of whether gospel music must necessarily adhere to Biblical verses or other religious nuances. Muthoni asserts that the absence of religious undertones in the lyrics does not preclude the song from being classified as ‘gospel’. She stated, ‘The intention of Ruto’s manifesto to elevate the destitute in society indicates that he is fulfilling a divine purpose, signifying that the song adheres to biblical principles’. Similarly, Juliani’s analysis of ‘Utawala’, in Chapter Five of this thesis, indicates that the song lacks religious connotations, yet nonetheless promotes biblical ideals, encouraging citizens to combat societal evils. Therefore, based on my research within the Kenyan context, a song may be categorised as gospel if it includes Biblical texts or religious themes; if the composer, typically the singer, is a Christian gospel artist; and if the lyrics reflect Biblical ideals and principles, even if they do not contain direct Biblical texts, performed by a gospel artist.
On the other hand, Mkubwa’s song had very strong Biblical references and religious nuances, yet it was not originally intended for political motives. However, it was appropriated to align

[77] The Mount Kenya region includes ethnic communities from Eastern and Central Kenya. These include the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru.

with Ruto's political discourse, as indicated in my analysis. Muthoni's song was specifically intended to support Ruto's 'bottom-up' agenda. It would be reasonable to anticipate that Ruto would extend an invitation to Muthoni for his final campaign event, however, this did not occur. However, after Ruto's victory, she was eventually invited to a state function. Based on my observation, Ruto's last campaign mostly focused on Jesus and the power of God. It revolved around giving glory to God rather than presenting himself as a 'god'.

Several factors may have contributed to Mkubwa's song gaining prominence in Ruto's campaign instead of Muthoni's. First, Ruto considered both proximity and musical preference to be of utmost importance throughout his political campaigns. Based on my interview, it was revealed that Mkubwa and Ruto had a longstanding friendship that predates Ruto's political endeavours. Mkubwa also mentioned that Ruto had an intense liking for his music from the beginning therefore, it was not unexpected to see him during Ruto's last campaign event. Regarding Muthoni, she has not had any significant interaction with Ruto. It is possible that Ruto may not have been interested in Muthoni's music (Contemporary Benga) in which his personal preferences may have influenced this.

Second, Kenyans have a longstanding tendency to prefer international music over local music. According to Jean Kidula's (2000) observations, Nairobi became the central location for recording music in East Africa starting in the 1980s. As a result, Congolese music became the dominant genre in Kenya's music scene. Furthermore, since the 1980s, Congolese music and bands have gained a reputation for spreading political messages in Kenya (Wekesa 2004: 107). Certain songs, like 'Mobutu' by Franco and TPOK Jazz, were composed in the early 1980s to express support for the Congolese dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. However, these songs were later recontextualised to show support for President Daniel Moi (Wekesa 2004: 107). Furthermore, the renowned Congolese singer Mbilia Bel, often known as the 'Songbird', collaborated with Tabu Ley's Africa International band to produce a tribute song titled 'Twende Nairobi' (Let's travel to Nairobi) dedicated to President Moi[78]. KANU, the ruling party under Moi's leadership, actively recruited Congolese artists to support their political campaign. The party sought the support of Congolese artist Samba Mapangala and the late Pepe Kalle, both from the Democratic Republic of Congo, to promote their campaign (Wekesa 2004: 107). Both individuals travelled across the country wearing KANU T-shirts,

[78] Both Mbilia Bel and Tabu Ley did a cover of the song 'Shauri Yako'.

promoting the party's principles and encouraging voters to support KANU in the elections. Hence, given these preceding occurrences, it is unsurprising to witness the use of Mkubwa's music in political spheres. In addition to its surging popularity, it is worth noting that his song 'Mfalme wa Amani' has garnered nearly seventeen million views on YouTube as of the present day (Wyldpytch Rekord 2013). On the other hand, Muthoni's song on YouTube has garnered a modest total of 28,000 views (Regina Muthoni Official 2022). However, it can be argued that Mkubwa's song has a higher viewership compared to Muthoni's due to its earlier production. Third and lastly, the issue of gender may have also played a role. Women have faced significant challenges and discrimination in both the music industry and political arenas, which are predominantly dominated by men in Kenya. As previously mentioned in my discussion with Muthoni, she has had to sing campaign songs in a lower pitch, in contrast to her spiritual songs. According to our interview, Mkubwa has never faced these challenges in his music career or his political engagements with Ruto. The next section presents a descriptive study of Odinga's final campaign trail under his Azimio la Umoja coalition. I also evaluated his speech, which contained religious connotations, although the music performances were devoid of religious themes, which was extremely intriguing. His incorporation of religious undertones in his discourse may have been a strategy to counter Ruto's religious populism in his campaigns; I will elaborate on this in the section that follows.



Figure 6.4 Transcribed 'Ruto, Kazi ni Kazi' Chorus

Azimio la Umoja Final Campaign Trail

The 'Azimio' political alliance conducted its final presidential campaign at the Kasarani stadium in Nairobi on 6 August 2022, in anticipation of the election day on 9 August 2022. Their political colours were themed blue and orange, with a huge poster on the podium labelled, 'Baba na Martha'[79] (Baba and Martha). Like the Kenya Kwanza coalition, which had the party slogan 'hustler', the Azimio la Umoja coalition also had a party slogan, 'Inawezekena' (It is possible). Based on my observation, this campaign had few religious expressions and instead focused more on self-promotion and messages emphasising heroism. This was apparent during Odinga's impressive arrival into the Kasarani grounds, accompanied by Emmanuel Musundi's remix, 'Inawezekena, Leo Ni Leo'[80] (It is possible today) (Azimio TV Official 2022). Also, Diamond Platnumz, a Tanzanian Bongo artist, energised the Kasarani grounds with his renowned tunes and exclamations, proclaiming 'baba' as the victor of the presidential election (Konte News 2022). Odinga followed shortly to make his final speech:

> Fellow citizens, thank you for keeping the flames of freedom alive in our country. Thank you for standing with me in many years of struggle to liberate Kenya. The journey has not been fought alone or felt lonely. You have fought together. Allow me to take this very special moment to convey my very personal and deep gratitude to my family for their enduring spirit in this difficult and upsetting time. They have lived through Jaramogi Odinga's[81] mantras, 'Freedom has a price'. My running mate, Martha Karua, is a freedom fighter who has stood for the Kenyan citizens, and this is what you cannot find on the other side[82]. Today, Martha and Raila are not running to win the election but to make Kenya a first-class global democracy and economy. To build a Kenya of one big tribe and not forty-five individual tribes. My dear Kenyans, I am here today to declare a celebration and to also sound a battle cry. As the Christian hymnal tells us, 'The long night is almost gone, and the morning soon will break'. I, Raila Amolo Odinga, have seen Canaan, the land of milk and honey, the land of no woman, no cry. The Land of Redemption song [Redemption song by Bob Marley was played in the background as Raila sang to the tune]. But we know the battle is hardest when victory is nearest. August the ninth marks the seventh multi-party election in Kenya. Historically, the number seven is

[79] Baba is a Swahili word for Father. This is a nickname given to Odinga because he fought for the democracy of the nation since the 1980s. He was imprisoned at the Nyayo Chambers for his attempted coup in 1982. Martha Karua was his chosen running mate.
[80] This remix was originally done in the Luhya language, but the Azimio team appropriated the song for political purposes. Raila Odinga is seen in the music video dancing to the tune and his vocal interjections are heard in the background. As a result, the song has gathered over two million views on YouTube (Azimio TV Official 2022).
[81] The late Jaramogi Odinga is Raila's biological father.
[82] 'The other side' means the Kenya Kwanza team. Odinga projects that his party was at an advantage compared to Ruto because he picked a woman as a running mate.

> symbolic of completion and a new beginning. God rested on the seventh day after completing his work. Joshua went round the wall of Jericho seven times before the walls tumbled down. On Tuesday, the ninth of August, we completed what we started on 'Saba Saba'[83] day. My dear Kenyans, in whose hands are your families safe? In whose hands do you feel will ensure the unity of the country no matter the election results? Is it the man who shook the hands of his bitter rival and brought reconciliation and healing? Or the hand of a warmonger, deviant and convicted thief[84]? Which hand will you trust to deliver social protection for the poor? Pharaoh has refused to let my people go. Today, I repeat the same declaration, 'Let my people go'. Free them from the bondage of thieves, liars and corruption. Dear Kenyans, you are soon entering Canaan and there are a few rules to consider. The first is reconciliation. At this stage, I want to pay tribute to President Uhuru Kenyatta for showing statesmanship, embracing dialogue and working together for the betterment of our country. I want to assure Kenyans that I will continue with the handshake doctrine for the sake of Kenya. I will shake the hand of my rivals and pay the political price if I must. I will shake the hand if I win or not. God bless you all. (Konte News 2022)

Odinga draws a parallel between himself and the biblical figure, Joshua, in his speech. Joshua, from the Bible history, is identified as the grandson of Jacob and according to the Book of Genesis 30:43, Jacob is described as a remarkably wealthy man. Thus, Joshua had an affluent background akin to Odinga. This unequivocally portrays Odinga as a member of a dynastic political family. Odinga utilised Biblical parables in his speech not to demonstrate sincere religious belief but rather to present himself as the heroic persona to the Kenyan people. This is because Odinga has openly admitted to seeking guidance from witchcraft, which goes against the teachings of the Bible. Thus, his utilisation of Biblical figures in his speech can be convincingly deemed as 'pretentious'. Platnumz closed the event with his 'Bongo Flava' hit song 'Baba Lao' (Their Father). The next section provides a background of Platnumz, his prominence in Kenya, and an analysis of the song 'Baba Lao'.

Song Analysis of Diamond Platnumz's 'Baba Lao'

Platnumz, born Naseeb Abdul Juma, is a Tanzanian secular artist renowned for his 'Bongo Flava' genre. 'Bongo Flava', also known as 'muziki wa kizazi kipya' (music of the young generation) in Swahili, emerged throughout the 1990s (Reuster-Jahn 2008: 43). This music originated from American Hip Hop but has gradually adapted to local preferences and

[83] 'Saba Saba' is a Swahili word for seven . The 'Saba Saba' movement was formed on 7 July 1990 to fight against the former president Daniel Moi's one-party system.
[84] The thief here refers to William Ruto following the accusations that linked him to the 2007/2008 post-election violence. Ruto and other suspects were then sent to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to answer to the charges brought against them.

circumstances. Artists and producers in Tanzania have broadened the music by including aspects of traditional music and popular African dance music (Reuster-Jahn 2008: 43). The lyrics of 'Bongo Flava' consist of Swahili language and colloquial expressions (Reuster-Jahn 2007: 225). The term 'Bongo' refers to 'brains' or 'messages', while 'Flava' signifies 'flavour' or 'enjoyment'. Various Tanzanian musicians would create music with socially critical and instructive lyrics, while others would compose self-centred songs that incorporated aspects of 'boasting' and 'dissing'[85], thus the name 'Bongo Flava'. The genre, 'Bongo Flava', has effectively solidified its position as a widely accepted and influential cultural phenomenon. According to Perullo (2005), it is a means of social empowerment that has allowed young people to establish a feeling of belonging with other young people in metropolitan areas and a channel to express their thoughts and viewpoints to the public. Platnumz has bolstered his worldwide acclaim by collaborating with renowned international singers, such as American R&B singer Ne-Yo, thereby enhancing the popularity of 'Bongo Flava'.

Platnumz identifies himself as 'A boy from Tandale' and labelled his third album accordingly. He was born and grew up in Tandale, a municipality situated in the Kinondoni District of Dar es Salaam. In his interviews, he declared that upon completing his high school education, he sold his mother's ring to gather cash to produce his first song 'Toka Mwanzo' (From the Beginning) (Neophytou 2021). Nevertheless, it performed poorly. In 2010, he unveiled his pivotal track 'Kamwambie' (Tell Them), which garnered him three Tanzanian music accolades. The 2013 release of his single 'Number One' was even more magnificent. Platnumz expressed his desire to expand internationally, which prompted him to improve his English skills and perform the chorus of his popular song 'Number One' in English (Neophytou 2021). In 2020, Platnumz achieved the milestone of becoming the first artist from sub-Saharan Africa to accumulate one billion views on YouTube. Additionally, he received his third nomination for the Best International Act category at the BET (Black Entertainment) Awards. He entered a recording contract with Warner Recording Group (WMG) through his record label 'Wasafi Classic Baby' (WCB). WMG collaborates with Platnumz's record company to establish additional avenues for East African artists who face challenges in obtaining radio airplay or securing record contracts. He stated that 'I can see myself changing a lot of people's lives' (Neophytou 2021). Apart from his contribution to the entertainment industry, he has been involved in Tanzania's political campaigns. Platnumz endorsed the late

[85] To 'diss' is an American slang verb widely used in HipHop culture. It means to put someone down or show disrespect (Reuster-Jahn 2008: 43).

president of Tanzania, John Pombe Magufuli in 2015[86]. He recontextualized his hit song 'Number One' by substituting the lyrics of the song. The final version constituted lyrics that supported Magufuli's political party Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) (The Party of Revolution). He changed the song title from 'Number One' to 'CCM Number One' (Diamond Platnumz 2015).

Platnumz is a regular participant in music events in Kenya and has also worked together with Kenyan musicians like Akothee. In 2016, they launched their debut single titled 'Sweet Love', which garnered a total of eleven million views on YouTube (Akothee Kenya 2016). Platnumz has also been invited to appear on other media outlets and local universities in Kenya. In 2017, Platnumz performed for the students at the University of Nairobi. Shortly after, Larry Madowo from Nation Media arranged a short interview and question-and-answer session between Platnumz and the students (Diamond Platnumz 2017; NTV Kenya 2017). Given his extensive connections within the Kenyan entertainment scene, it was not unexpected for him to be invited as the featured artist at Odinga's final campaign event in 2022. Platnumz showcased his 2020 chart-topping single 'Baba Lao' (meaning 'Their Father') at the campaign event. He placed greater focus on the chorus, the lyrics of which are as follows:

Chorus	**Translation**
Dangote baba lao (baba lao) Simba baba lao (baba lao) Chibu baba lao (baba lao) Mondi baba lao (baba lao) Eeeh Zombie baba lao (baba lao) Magufuli baba lao (baba lao) Makonda baba lao (baba lao) Wasafi chama lao	Dangote is their father Simba is their father Chibu is their father Mondi is their father Zombie is their father Magufuli is their father Makonda is their father Wasafi is their party

Figure 6.5 Lyrics to Diamond Platnumz's 'Baba Lao'.

The chorus centres on the portrayal of nationalistic and leading male figures in Tanzania and Africa. The mentioned individuals include Dangote, the wealthiest man in Africa; Paul Makonda, the regional commissioner of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, known for his outspokenness on political matters; and Magufuli, the former and late president of Tanzania.

[86] Magufuli won the 2015 presidential elections in Tanzania and was re-elected in 2020. In 2021, he succumbed to Covid-19.

However, during Odinga's final campaign event, Platnumz recontextualised the lyrics by replacing some words as demonstrated below:

Raila baba lao Odinga baba lao Martha mama lao	**Translation** Raila is their father Odinga is their father Martha is their mother

Figure 6.6 Recontextualised Version of Diamond Platnumz's 'Baba Lao'.

In these lyrics, Platnumz exalts Raila Odinga and Martha Karua as the father and mother of the nation, respectively. After all, Odinga's supporters had already given him the name 'Baba' (father). Odinga has played a significant role in Kenya's history, for example, he fought for a multi-party democracy in 1991 and in 1982 he attempted a coup against Daniel Moi's government. As a result of the attempted coup, Odinga was detained and tortured for almost six years at the Nyayo chambers (Odinga and Elderkin 2013). These 'heroic' political engagements have seen Odinga as an important political figure, but his failure to secure the presidential seat over the decades remains unfathomable. Odinga has run presidential campaigns since 1997 to 2022 and yet none of them has been successful.

The sound effects from Platnumz's live performance throughout the campaign were somewhat challenging to pick up. However, I noted that Platnumz performed the song with the musical track playing in the background, resulting in his vocals being overshadowed, which rendered the performance quite chaotic from my perspective. Notwithstanding this, I managed to identify parts of the lyrics as illustrated in Figures 6.3 and 6.4. This did not impede the audience's reception of the performance, as they were fervently chanting along and mimicking Platnumz's dance movements; the song has a rhythm that was both danceable and engaging. Even after inviting an influential singer like Platnumz and investing the 'supposed' millions for his performance in the campaign did not win him the elections. It was rumoured that Platnumz was paid 11.9 million Kenya Shillings for this performance (Mwangi 2022); still, after which, Raila did not win the elections. Following endorsement from a singer with greater acclaim than Mkubwa, one would anticipate Raila's electoral victory. The occurrences of the two campaigns demonstrate that religion is a pivotal aspect, if not the primary one, influencing the electoral process in the country. To shed light on this point, I examine the post-election period, characterised by music performances that were solely gospel, presented

through choral ensembles. I provide a detailed analysis of the electoral results announcements at the Bomas of Kenya, where Kenyans awaited with eager anticipation. Thus, gospel music served to entertain and ease the anxiety surrounding the anticipated results. As tensions escalated between the delegates of Raila and Ruto, the choirs intensified their performance to restore sobriety in the assembly. I examine one recontextualised song based on a prominent gospel melody in Kenya that was sung throughout this process to reaffirm that religious nuances are powerful instruments in mobilising political endeavours.

The Aftermath of the 2022 Election

> In accordance with the constitution and the law, I, Wafula Chebukati, chairperson of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), hereby declare that Ruto, William Samoei has duly been elected as the President of the Republic of Kenya under the provision of Article 138 of the constitution of the presidential elections held on the 9th of August 2022. (NTV Kenya a. 2022)

On Monday 15th of August 2022, William Samoei Ruto was announced as the winner of the 2022 presidential elections, making him the fifth president of the Republic of Kenya. Though the process was highly contested, the response to this win was met by celebratory applause and chant, 'Ni Maombi!' (It is prayer), from the delegates and political leaders who were present at the Bomas of Kenya (NTV Kenya a. 2022).

On the afternoon of 15 August, six choirs of 100 members—five from Kenya and one from Tanzania—entertained millions of individuals glued to their television screens following up on the declaration of the president-elect at the Bomas of Kenya. These included the NHIF choir, Safaricom Choir, Wazalendo Choir, Ninga A cappella group and Mtakatifu Kizito Choir from Tanzania. Marvin Lukulu and Daniel Ogetta (2022) articulate that, 'while some—especially on social media—praised the choirs for calming tensions with the upbeat religious and patriotic songs, others thought they were simply making the wait more agonising'. Given that the announcement that was to take place at 3 p.m. was made after 6 p.m., the intervening hours were punctuated with verbal and physical confrontations. A chaotic scene ensued, threatening to plunge the country into a constitutional crisis. However, the choirs continued with the performances despite the confusion. The choir's team leader, Thomas Wasonga, stated in an interview that 'it took a lot of willpower to continue performing' (Lukulu and Ogetta 2022). Wasonga, a retired music teacher by profession, was contracted by the IEBC to coordinate entertainment during the tallying process at the Bomas of Kenya (Wasonga interview 2023).

The choirs had also sung earlier in the week when the IEBC started updating Kenyans on the voting and counting process on 9 August. The choirs performed in turns except on the last day—15 August— when all the choirs were on stage singing together.

The two songs that set the Bomas of Kenya ablaze were 'Ebenezer' by the late Angela Chibalonza and 'Kenya ni Nchi Yetu' (Kenya is our country), originally performed by the Statehouse Choir (Mutembei TV 2022). The lyrics of each song serve different purposes; the first is a worship song while the latter is a patriotic song. However, the performance of each song set a precedent of peace and calm amidst the physical altercation. The gospel tune 'Ebenezer' was a fit for this occasion as it symbolised each political party's journey to the election. The lyrics read, 'This far we have come from, and where we are now, is why we call You Ebenezer. It is not because of my might but of yours. This far I have come, let me say thank you'. As it was a live performance, the arrangement of the song took a different twist, and in my view, this was done to suit the political narrative. Chibalonza's original version of the song is quite contemporary, filled with auto-tunes and synthesised instruments. However, at the Bomas of Kenya, the performances of these songs were arranged for SATB (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) and accompanied by the keyboard and bass guitar. This SATB transcription showcased the musical expertise of Kenyan scholars and the esteemed status of choral music as a fundamental genre for state events.

The soloist appropriated parts of the lyrics to suit the political narrative of peace:

Ninataka taifa langu lijengwe juu yako baba Taifa lililojengwa juu yako Yaweh Halivunjiki kamwe	I want my country to be built on you, God A country that is built on You Can never be broken

Figure 6.7 Recontextualised Lyrics of Angela Chibalonza's 'Ebenezer'.

The soloist incorporated contemporary vocal techniques, such as vocal interjection and melisma to the chorus section. The repetitive chorus emphasizes the main message of the song:

Chorus	**Translation**
Ninataka Ebenezer, nijenge juu yako Jiwe langu la pembeni, nakutamani sana, Jiwe langu la pembeni, nakuhitaji sana Oo Ebenezer, jiwe langu.	I want to build on you, Ebenezer I want you Ebenezer to be my foundation My cornerstone, I desire you so much Oh Ebenezer, my rock

Figure 6.8 Lyrics of 'Ebenezer'.

The choirs led the audiences in a serenade of these renowned melodies. People from both ends of the political spectrum were dancing and enthusiastically raising their hands to the music. The forum resembled a religious ceremony, with approximately one hundred choristers, clergy members and political delegates in attendance. The diplomatic community was included on this important day. The United States ambassador, Meg Whitman, and the British High Commissioner to Kenya, Jane Marriot, together with other international dignitaries, were observed dancing to East African gospel music. The event ceased to function solely as a tallying centre and instead transformed into a hub for entertainment and religious activities.

Following the resolution of the tumultuous situation, the head of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), Wafula Chebukati, declared William Samoei Ruto as the victor of the 2022 presidential elections. Ruto was summoned to the podium to get an autographed certificate and delivered a twenty-minute address to acknowledge his triumph. The religious occurrences undertaken at the Bomas of Kenya established an appropriate template for Ruto's speech, which closely resembled a sermon. In his work, Matt Woodley (2019: 2) defines a sermon as:

> A rare and daring art form. It is a combination of Bible study, theological reflection, creative essay, pastoral encouragement, prophetic challenge, loving appeal, Christian catechesis, and old-fashioned storytelling.

Ruto is often called an 'Evangelist' by his political colleagues due to his unwavering faith in the Gospel and strong connection with the Pentecostal Churches in Kenya. Martha Karua, Odinga's political running mate, mocked Ruto for his religious beliefs. In 2022, she expressed that Ruto should cease acting in a manner resembling that of a 'deputy to Jesus' (Kenya Digital News 2022). This comment generated controversy within religious circles, particularly among those who strongly endorsed Ruto's belief. The speech was a climax of gratitude, hope, unity and religious allusions, which I will quote extensively below:

> Thank you all very much your excellencies, Bishops, members of the clergy, my deputy president-elect and guests of the IEBC led by chairman Wafula Chebukati. I want to thank God that we are here this evening to witness the momentous occasion. According to Article One of the constitution, 'all sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya'. I want to thank God for getting us to this point and concluding this election. I know that there were predictions that I would not get to the ballot. But because there is a God in heaven, we are here. I want to confess that without God we would not have been here. My gratitude also goes to the people of Kenya. The millions who participated in our campaigns, on the 9th of August. We have raised the bar in these elections by not conforming to ethnic configurations as we have done in the past. Gratitude goes to the millions of Kenyans who refused to be boxed into tribal cocoons. I am not here to sell our ethnicity but our manifestos and plans for this great nation. Let me state that there are no losers. The people of Kenya have won because we have raised the political bar. The hero of this election is the IEBC, led by Chebukati. I say this with conviction because the IEBC amazed us all. All the results were in the public portal that every Kenyan could access. All you needed was a simple calculator to verify the results. I want to thank our religious partners who have been with us from the very beginning. For the first time, we have seen religious leaders at the tallying centre witness the activities of the IEBC and pray for the process. I am certain that their prayers will not be in vain. I also want to thank members of the diplomatic community who have been part of this activity. I want to thank my worthy competitor Raila Amolo Odinga for a campaign that sold an agenda to the people of Kenya. I assure Kenyans that I will work with all elected leaders to fashion a country that will leave no one behind…I want to thank my wife, family and many other prayer warriors in Kenya. I can confess that 'I have been prayed into victory'; it is God who brought us this victory…. (KTN News Kenya 2022)

A Comparative Analysis of Kenya Kwanza and the Azimio Campaign

The 2022 presidential elections and their outcomes were highly unforeseen. In the whole history of Kenya, there has never been a candidate who won the presidency after running for office only once. Ruto emerged victorious in his first presidential campaign, garnering over 7.1 million votes, surpassing Odinga's 6.9 million votes by a margin of over two hundred thousand votes. Previously, he assumed the position of a subordinate, initially during Moi's rule in 1992 and 1997, then under Odinga in 2002 and finally, he backed Kenyatta as his running mate in 2013 and 2017.

Ruto's race for the 2022 elections was that of faith, a journey which he categorically states 'took the hand of God'. Contesting against Odinga who had the backing of the incumbent government seemed impossible. It was clear from the onset that Odinga was the expected

winner of the elections. However, as a Kenyan political analyst, Mutahi Ngunyi predicted 'Ruto will not become president, but he will be made president' (The 5th Estate 2018). Here, the 'making' of Ruto as the president was to be done by the ordinary citizen, the 'hustler'. Therefore, it was the use of the terms 'hustler' and 'dynasty' that protected him from the grasp of the 'dynasties' (Kenyatta and Odinga). On the contrary, Odinga confidently travelled around the country, believing that with Kenyatta's support, he would easily obtain the presidential seat. He gradually immersed himself in a 'political cocoon', perceiving himself as a 'god' whom Kenyans revered. Needless to say, is that Kenyans have become more independent thinkers, as the Kikuyu Member of Parliament Kimani Ichung'wah stated that 'Kenyans do not need to be given direction because they already know where to go' (Kenyan Historian Official 2023). Politics in Kenya is greatly influenced by public perception. Historically, many Kenyans, particularly those in the Mount Kenya Region, have held an unfavourable perception of Odinga, which was demonstrated during the 2022 election. As a result, Kenyatta's partnership with Odinga was perceived as a 'betrayal', particularly among the Kikuyus in the area (Kenyatta being a member of the Kikuyu ethnic group). In addition, Kenyatta failed to deliver on his commitment to enhance the economic condition of both his constituents in Mount Kenya and the entire Kenyan population. Ruto's political campaign capitalised on Kenyatta's lack of popularity, as voters began to question the legitimacy of dynastic authority and the concept of state capture. They aimed to hold Uhuru Kenyatta accountable for his inability to foster economic growth in the area while benefiting personally at the expense of the people.

Ruto's 'hustler' rhetoric served two important functions. First, the message conveyed a strong sense of familiarity to the Kenyan people, assuring them that Ruto would always be by their side and prioritise their interests over those in positions of authority. Ultimately, dynasties were gradually declining, while ordinary citizens would persist. The various subtleties of love, understanding and optimism were intricately woven into this speech. Secondly, it portrayed Ruto as a victim, an individual who was marginalised by the incumbent government of which he was a part and in the perspective of Kenyans, victims are often seen as heroes. Although the intention behind the use of the 'hustler' rhetoric was to overcome the 'dynasties' and tackle economic inequalities, Ruto adeptly combined his rhetoric with religious subtleties, given his role as an evangelist and his public declaration of love and dedication to the church. He obtained the endorsement of the churches throughout the nation, particularly the Pentecostal churches. Throughout all his campaigns, he guided the people in prayers and

greeted them with the expressions, ‘Bwana Yesu Asifiwe’ (Jesus be Praised) and ‘God is good all the time’. In addition, he constantly bolstered his political statements by using passages from the Bible.

The Kenya Kwanza final campaign did not solely revolve around Ruto as a ‘god’ but rather emphasised God as their ultimate source of help. Their motivation was based on the scripture’s directive to prioritise the pursuit of the kingdom of God, with the promise that all other things will be provided as well (Matthew 6:33). Truly, they pursued the laws of God and as a result, they achieved a political triumph. Solomon Mkubwa’s campaign performance exemplified the party’s Christian principles. The lyrics of his song ‘Mfalme wa Amani’ were not modified in meaning or context, as is commonly done by most musicians during campaigns. The song explicitly conveyed the theme of placing trust in Jesus, who is acknowledged as the Prince of Peace. During my conversation with Mkubwa, it became clear that his participation in Ruto’s campaign was not driven by financial gain but rather by a longstanding friendship they have maintained since 2013. Mkubwa utilised Ruto’s campaign platform as a means of promoting the teachings of Jesus Christ. Regina Muthoni expresses the same opinions as Mkubwa. The production of ‘Ruto, Kazi ni Kazi’ stemmed from her authentic love for Ruto, his credo and faith in Jesus Christ. While she may not have been physically present during Ruto’s campaigns, her songs were well-received in the Rift Valley Province and received radio airplay. Like Mkubwa, Muthoni likewise expressed that her motivation was not financial gain but rather the belief that Ruto would righteously govern the country. Nevertheless, these political platforms have significantly increased the public’s appreciation for Mkubwa and Muthoni, particularly Mkubwa, since 2013.

The focus of the discussions around the Azimio final campaign event was centred on Odinga. The culmination of his speech was centred around his political trajectory, disparagement of his adversaries in the Kenya Kwanza movement and his self-aggrandisement as a messianic figure who would guide the Kenyan populace to an envisioned utopia. Platnumz’s song ‘Baba Lao’ praised Odinga as the ‘father’. He modified the words of the song to fit into Azimio’s political narrative. Nevertheless, it remains uncertain whether Odinga’s campaign team directed him to do it or if it was his own volition. Platnumz is a prominent figure whose music resonates with the younger generation in Kenya. As a result, his participation in Odinga’s campaign was a deliberate tactic to attract the youths’ support for the Azimio party during the election. Being a prominent figure on a global scale, Platnumz received a substantial amount

of money for his performance, indicating that his connection with Odinga was mostly based on financial transactions rather than personal ties. Platnumz showed no interest in Azimio's manifestos or proposals for improving economic structures. For him, it was solely for entertainment. After the contested elections between Odinga and Ruto, controversies emerged as to why both candidates selected foreign nationals as their main performers (Citizen Reporter 2022). This, according to Mkubwa, was simply people acting out of emotions and not an intended political move. However, the music used in both the Kenya Kwanza and Azimio campaigns served as a means of endorsement for both presidential candidates.

Following Ruto's victory in the 2022 campaigns, evangelical churches have assumed a prominent position. On 14 February 2023, Ruto and government officials organised a nationwide prayer rally at Nyayo Stadium with the specific purpose of invoking divine intervention for rain (Citizen TV Kenya 2023). Due to a severe drought in Kenya, pastors from Evangelical churches and gospel artists were summoned to guide Kenyans in prayer, praise and worship. Rachel Ruto and Dorcas Rigathi, the wife of Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua and an ordained pastor, respectively, also conducted brief prayer sessions. The 'Heaven's Fire Prayer Summit', an evangelical gathering, took place in August 2023 in Nyayo Stadium, with the endorsement of the First Lady, Rachel Ruto. The government has fully supported numerous prayer summits organised in the country. Ruto and his wife Rachel are both members of the Faith Evangelistic Ministries (FEM)[87], under the leadership of Reverend Teresia Wairimu, who they consider to be their spiritual mentor. Ruto and his wife serve as co-workers in the FEM ministry, with Rachel consistently spotted in the first row during Sunday Services.

Debates are ongoing in Kenya on the Christian rhetoric that is endorsed by the incumbent government. Certain clergy members hold a firm belief in the separation of the Church and the state, while others are against it. Although eighty percent of Kenya is predominantly Christian, the remaining twenty per cent of the population consists of Muslims and atheists. Therefore, which individual or group advocates for the interests and rights of the minority? For certain individuals, the numerical values are inconsequential as long as the nation is led by Christian individuals. According to certain Evangelicals, the church in Kenya is experiencing a significant and positive change. Similarly, several gospel singers suggest that now is an opportune time for the gospel music industry to thrive. Ultimately, the political

[87] FEM is among the biggest Pentecostal churches in Kenya and attracts international ministers globally.

narratives, religious views and moral stance of the president have a decisive impact on the direction and influence of a country in all aspects. Ruto appears to place the greatest importance on the preservation of religious nuances during his anticipated ten-year term.

Ruto's Kenya Kwanza on the Spiral

The 2022 elections unequivocally demonstrated that a significant portion of Kenya's populace had endorsed Ruto's 'hustler' narrative. He enjoyed the backing of both the younger generation and the churches, who had fervently united in support of him. After all, he professed to be an evangelist himself. Nevertheless, in 2023, there was a significant shift in politics, increased taxes, a sharp rise in living expenses, and a generally intolerable situation for the less fortunate population. In 2024, the situation deteriorated further when Ruto implemented the finance law, which aimed to impose additional taxes on Kenyans to resolve the national debt (Mbaku 2024). However, the financial bill was designed to exclusively favour individuals in positions of authority, such as Rachel Ruto and Dorcas Rigathi, who hold the 'unconstitutional' offices of the first and second lady of the Republic of Kenya. This included the allocation of millions of Shillings to their respective offices. The financial bill, released on 25 June 2024, sparked widespread protests among the Gen-Z population, who rushed to the streets to express their strong opposition to the bill (Mbaku 2024). The primary objective of Generation Z was to express their opposition to the financial bill, as seen by the prominent display of this message on their protest banners and various social media platforms; 'Reject the finance bill!'. In addition, the Kenya Police conducted a series of raids in several suburbs, resulting in the unfortunate loss of innocent civilian lives.

The ongoing protests have raised several inquiries; Is this a repetition of the post-election violence witnessed in 2007/2008? Was the hustler versus dynasty narrative merely a deceptive tactic to manipulate the intellect of Kenyans?; Did Ruto's utilisation of the church serve to conceal his deficiencies, as he did during the 2013 elections? An unexpected scenario also unfolded when the church, particularly the Evangelicals, chose to remain silent amidst the protests. This silence subsequently ignited a youth-led campaign known as 'Occupy the Churches' (Mbaku 2024). Under Ruto's leadership, churches have served as a venue for money laundering via the guise of 'fundraising' events organised by political figures. The church's integrity has been severely undermined by public scrutiny, particularly due to the clergy's frequent presence in the statehouse while accepting payments concealed in 'brown envelopes' (Mbaku 2024).

Several gospel artists, including those I interviewed, who supported Ruto during his campaigns, remained quiet throughout the protests, which may be perceived as a lack of adherence to their Christian values. Nonetheless, this did not prevent the public from appropriating certain gospel melodies to express their discontent with Ruto's enforced taxes, resulting in the public designating Ruto as 'Zakayo' (referring to Zacchaeus the tax collector, Jesus's disciple). Included in the selection of songs were 'Zakayo' by Tanzanian gospel artist Christina Shusho (Christina Shusho 2024)[88] and 'Shuka Zakayo' (Come down Zacchaeus) by Apostle James Ng'ang'a (Swift Media Ke News 2024)[89]. The songs originated from Luke 19:1-10, where Jesus commanded Zacchaeus, the tax collector, to descend from the sycamore tree and prepare a supper, as Jesus intended to dine at his residence. Following his meeting with Jesus, Zacchaeus distributed his money to the impoverished and pledged to compensate those he had wrongfully accused. By appropriating the two songs during the protests in June 2024, the demonstrators demanded that 'Zakayo' (Ruto) should descend from his executive position, heed the concerns of common citizens and unequivocally withdraw the finance bill that was poised to impact the majority adversely. Undoubtedly, Ruto and his political allies will face a challenging time for re-election in 2027. The clear messages from the protests strongly supported the popular demand for Ruto's removal from office, as seen in the online and physical slogans; 'Ruto must go!' (Mbaku 2024).

Given these occurrences, the church has, to a certain degree, distanced itself from Ruto due to the alleged 'betrayal'. This stemmed from his use of the church for political advantage and his failure to honour the commitments outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the church. The nation has observed mainstream churches refunding money acquired from Ruto via fundraising events. The church, particularly the Pentecostals, has commenced articulating concerns regarding governmental atrocities; this may also imply that gospel music might return to its original performative function of disseminating the message of Christ and fostering hope in society, rather than endorsing political candidates who eventually present themselves as leaders with egocentric motives. This may indicate that religion will not be the decisive element in a presidential triumph, but rather a demonstrated history of a candidate's consistency and ability; however, it may be far too soon to draw this conclusion.

[88] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHw7vSSxB-w
[89] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2o8BOzAbJg

Chapter Seven
Conclusion

The study's results focused on the following research questions, to which I provide a concise summary of the findings; to what extent does the Pentecostal Church facilitate the integration of gospel music and political campaigns?; what caused gospel music to become such an effective campaign tool?. According to Florian Carl (2012), the rise of gospel music in Africa can be ascribed to the rise of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Church (PCC) and the implementation of neoliberal reforms throughout the 1980s and 1990s. As a result of these stringent reforms, gospel musicians generated songs that mirrored the challenging economic circumstances. Likewise, the PCCs began delivering sermons on prosperity and hope to uplift congregants who were facing difficult economic conditions prevalent in many African countries, including Kenya. The PCCs have evolved into venues for political campaigns in Kenya, where candidates utilise the church as a platform, so merging gospel music with campaigning. In Chapter One, I provide an example of this emergence, recounting my experience at my local church where the Member of Parliament attended our service to campaign for re-election, followed by the choir singing songs of praise to express gratitude for the 'God-sent' politician. Gospel music has emerged as a potent instrument for political purposes due to the deep integration of the church in the nation's socio-political fabric and its role in shaping Kenya's popular culture. Therefor making gospel music a potent tool for disseminating campaign messages.

In what ways does gospel music impact and exert influence within political campaigns?; which themes predominate throughout these songs? The results indicate that gospel music plays three significant roles in presidential elections; as a socio-political mirror of the society; healing, peace and reconciliation; and endorsement of certain candidates/policies. Also, these roles were dependent upon the major political occurrences that transpired in each electoral year. For example, the electoral year of 2002 marked the beginning of a new democracy under Mwai Kibaki. The song 'Unbwogable' by Gidi Gidi and Maji Maji played a significant role in Kibaki's campaign to signify a new government that was emancipated from twenty-four years of Moi's dictatorship. In 2007, the post-election violence transpired, leaving the country in a state of disarray. In 2013, the election campaign narrative of Uhuru and Ruto was solely around the International Criminal Court of Justice (ICC). Despite their conviction by the ICC, the two won the 2013 elections by appropriating Ben Githae's gospel song, 'Mavataro' (My

Needs), which had Pentecostal themes of petition, forgiveness, repentance and prosperity. In 2022, the campaigns were based on the 'hustler versus the dynasty' narrative, which portrayed William Ruto as the hustler and Raila Odinga as the dynasty. The gospel music in the 2022 elections significantly reflected these themes in Ruto's campaigns, which I argued contributed to his electoral win. In analysing the prevalent themes in these gospel songs, I applied a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to the song texts. Specifically, I employed Norman Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which encompasses the examination of; discourse as text, the interpretation of meanings conveyed in the lyrics; the analysis of discourse as a practice involving its creation and consumption; and the exploration of discourse as a social practice. In my analysis, I also utilised John Richardson's (2017) recontextualisation approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). I contend that presidential candidates used gospel music and modified its meaning to align with their political narrative by appropriating its lyrics. For example, Ben Githae and Solomon Mkubwa's songs 'Mavataro' (My Needs) and 'Mfalme wa Amani' (Prince of Peace) were adapted to fit the political narratives desired by the presidential candidates during the 2013 and 2022 elections, respectively.

To what extent does the evolution of the media environment impact the utilisation and execution of gospel music in the context of electoral campaigns?; The media has been instrumental in spreading gospel music during Kenya's presidential campaigns. I have argued that the media utilised the concept of 'frame' theory to portray peaceocracy during the 2013 elections. The frame theory, as elucidated by Gamson and Modigliani (1987: 140), highlights the prominent and meaningful concepts in society, and the media is most appropriate for spreading these elements. KTN TV and Citizen TV, two Kenyan media outlets, commissioned gospel performers Rufftone and Juliani to compose music that embodied peace to prevent any recurrence of post-election violence. Juliani's song 'Utawala' (Prevail) mirrors the socio-political turmoil in the country. The song implores Kenyans to rise in opposition to injustices and unfairness by Kenya's political leaders.

This research has significantly advanced the field of religious popular music and politics in Kenya. I have made a concise connection between religious music and political campaigns, a precedent that has not been set previously. Nonetheless, I recognise that scholars such as Damaris Parsitau have published on religious music and campaigning, but not extensively. Her work lacks substantiated theories to support her arguments. My contribution, in contrast to Parsitau's work, is the establishment of grounded theoretical frameworks such as 'religious

populism', 'Biblical parables', and 'Critical Discourse Analysis'. I have conducted an in-depth sonic analysis of the songs pertaining to their affiliation with politics, which Parsitau does not address. Joyce Nyairo has authored works on gospel music and politics in Kenya, approached from a linguistic perspective, which facilitated lyrical analysis but did not significantly address the sonic aspect. I have extensively employed Jean Kidula's research, the pioneering Kenyan ethnomusicologist to investigate popular gospel music. Kidula has performed an exhaustive study on the historical aspects of gospel music in Kenya, meticulously analysed the lyrics and conducted a sonic examination of the songs. I found Kidula's work particularly compelling due to her understanding of Kenyan gospel music from independence in 1964 until the early 2000s. This research has built upon the foundation established by the aforementioned authors.

To address the knowledge gap in the existing body of research, I have employed conceptual frameworks such as 'religious populism', 'Biblical parables' and 'Critical Discourse Analysis'. Populism has been extensively studied in the African context, but there is a lack of research on the phenomenon of 'religious populism' within the same context. As a result, I have had to derive this framework and its applications from North and South America, and Europe through various publications cited in my literature review chapter. I applied the concept of 'overt' religious populism during the 2013 electoral campaigns and demonstrated how the lyrics of Ben Githae's song 'Mabataro' aligned with this framework. In my opinion, religious populism is the most influential paradigm for comprehending the connections and discrepancies involved in adopting gospel music into political campaigns. I shall elaborate more on this concept in my future research publications, as religion and politics are fundamental and pertinent subjects in Kenya. I employed 'virtual' ethnography in several electoral campaigns. I consistently relied on YouTube recordings of electoral campaigns. This validated methodology, as outlined in Chapter One, facilitated my online observation of the 2022 electoral campaigns.

A limitation that I faced was inadequate funding for my travel to Kenya. Also, only a small number of publications focused on the use of music in political campaigns in Kenya. One such publication was by Joyce Nyairo and James Ogude (2005), who wrote an article about the use of the song 'Unbwogable' during the 2002 electoral campaigns. Another limitation of this study was achieving a balance between music, politics and religion. This work encompasses three distinct disciplines. However, as it is a music thesis, I had to exercise caution to avoid becoming excessively engrossed in politics or theology alone. To achieve a

balanced approach, I incorporated theoretical frameworks from other disciplines, such as critical discourse analysis, Biblical parables and religious populism. Inevitably, it was the political events and occurrences that have significantly influenced the direction of my ideas. Furthermore, in the current discussions in Kenya, it is challenging to separate the contemporary church and politics because Kenya has a president who is a claimed evangelist and his wife a committed 'prayer warrior' and a member of one of Kenya's largest Pentecostal Churches, Faith Evangelistic Ministries (FEM). Finally, there were a few other interviews that I conducted but did not include in this study because they did not directly contribute to the music itself. For example, I interviewed Reuben Kigame, one of the pioneers of gospel music in Kenya and a 2022 presidential candidate (Kigame interview 2023). The disadvantage here was that Kigame's music did not play a substantial role in his political campaigns. Nevertheless, I want to write articles and book chapters that will incorporate the research participants who were previously omitted from this study, as they made significant contributions to politics through their occupations as musicians and clerics.

I would also like to point out some of the highlights of my study. First, in September 2023, I had a Zoom meeting with Joyce Nyairo, where we discussed my thesis. We reached a consensus that gospel music in Kenya has become a fundamental element and that my research will have a substantial impact on its transformation from being confined to the church to its integration into the public realm of politics. In addition, Nyairo graciously sent me via email a selection of her latest writings, including essays and books focused on popular music in Kenya. These valuable resources have been cited in my research. Another interesting highlight was that I had the opportunity to meet Gabriel Lynch, a very accomplished scholar specialising in political campaigns in Kenya. On 17 July 2024, she delivered a lecture at the political science department at the University of the Witwatersrand on the methodologies of conducting research during a political campaign. Following her presentation, she presented me with a copy of her book titled *The Moral Economy of Elections in Africa* (Lynch et al. 2020). Although the seminar was intriguing, I strongly believe that the presence of music performance in a political campaign would make it a little more exciting. The inclusion of music in political campaign research adds a layer of intrigue, which Gabriel Lynch expressed support for during the conversation we had. She had a strong interest in my musical understanding in the context of a political campaign and eagerly anticipated reading my thesis and future writings on this specific topic. Furthermore, on 29 July 2024, I had the opportunity to deliver my research paper on the significance of gospel music in the 2022 presidential

elections at the South Africa Society of Research in Music (SASRIM) conference, which took place at the Wits School of Arts. I was presented with thought-provoking questions that have subsequently enhanced this thesis. These inquiries include; the dangers and resistance faced by the public due to the 'religious' indoctrination by Ruto and the government; the significance of sound (harmonic and melodic structure) and lyrics in political campaigns; and whether the musicians were officially commissioned by the presidential candidates. All these concerns have been thoroughly addressed in the corresponding chapters of this thesis.

Up until now, the study of gospel music in Kenya has primarily focused on its role inside the church, as examined by Kidula, and its connection to politics as explored by Nyairo and myself in this research. It would be intriguing to explore the extent to which gospel music has permeated other public domains. For instance, one may conduct a study on the presence of gospel music in technology platforms such as 'Skiza' tunes and Spotify, where it is streamed. Gospel artists have encountered conflicts with payment and corruption from telecommunication firms, such as Safaricom, that distribute their music as cell phone ringtones as a means of generating income. Further investigation can also be carried out in the future about women's involvement in the gospel music sector in Kenya. Parsitau's (2011) research on women in the Pentecostal sphere in Kenya has successfully established a precedent, making my proposition feasible.

Ultimately, I would like to reflect on the possible limitations of the study, production and consumption of popular gospel music in Africa in the future. First, with the ongoing process of developing Artificial Intelligence (AI), there is a possibility that gospel musicians could be replaced by this rising technology. There is currently a strong and widespread protest in the European Union (EU) against the potential replacement of human creativity by AI (Warrington 2023). There is a specific push in the UK to take strict action against AI-generated music. Prominent players in the music industry have been urging Downing Street to strengthen regulations concerning this technology. Executives are concerned that AI-generated songs that imitate the melodies and vocals of musicians may reduce their earnings (ibid.). In April 2023, an AI-generated song imitating the musical style of Drake and The Weeknd received a total of twenty million viewers on various platforms, including TikTok and Twitter. Following a statement from Universal Records, several streaming sites were compelled to remove the song 'Heart on My Sleeves' due to its unauthorised use of the voices of two very successful artists. Universal Records deemed the music to be in violation of copyright law and a breach of their agreement (ibid.). Universal has previously issued a

warning about the extensive and enduring damage caused by AI to artists. They have also advised streaming providers to prevent AI producers from extracting music and lyrics from copyrighted songs (Warrington 2023). It is imperative to acknowledge that the process of creating music is driven by human creativity and it is essential to uphold fundamental rights (Warrington 2023). Artists and rightsholders should maintain authority over when and how their music is utilised by AI producers. These producers must obtain prior approval and provide suitable compensation for such usage while also being completely transparent about the content they employ. Further inquiry can be conducted to devise a course of action to tackle the challenges currently being faced. In addition to the aforementioned ethical challenges, my future research will address certain Biblical ethical concerns with the application of AI technology in the composition of gospel music.

Secondly, there could be a diminishing significance of gospel music as it gains more prominence in the political sphere. According to Lara Allen (2002: 10), a genre's existence may be at risk under dire situations when it gets politically entangled. Maina Mutonya (2003) highlighted that one of the most detested strategies employed by Moi's state choirs in Kenya was the alteration of Christian hymns to exalt the regime. However, it is important to note that in Kenya and other parts of the African continent, hymns were altered to convey opposition against colonial forces. Therefore, this was seen as acceptable. However, when the hymns were employed to exalt ordinary individuals as deities, as was the case during Moi's reign, it was considered unacceptable. Notwithstanding these concerns, there is an increasing acceptance of gospel music in secular spaces, such as politics, within modern Kenyan society, a trend that will likely continue in the foreseeable future.

This thesis has conclusively examined the influence of gospel music and Pentecostalism in Kenya's presidential campaigns. Chapters Four, Five, and Six provide a sonic and lyrical analysis, highlighting the underlying narratives that render them appropriate for electoral campaigns. Additionally, intriguing findings emerged in my research regarding the defining characteristics of a 'gospel' song, which I have discussed in Chapter Six. The interplay between religion and politics will persist as an ongoing discourse in the country, rendering this research a valuable reference for future scholars with similar interests.

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