THE USE OF LUO CULTURE IN GOSPEL MUSIC (1990-2014): A CASE STUDY OF THREE LUO GOSPEL MUSICIANS

By

MARY IMMACULATE ADOYO MUGA

REG NO. MTH/LMR/2325/13

This Dissertation submitted to graduate school in partial fulfillment for the requirement of the Master of Theology in History, Department of Biblical Studies, Religion and Philosophy of St. Paul's University, Limuru.

JUNE2016.

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SUPERVISORS:

REV. DR. EMILY ONYANGO

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is a product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration. It has not been previously presented to any other institution. I agree that this dissertation may be available for reference and photocopying, at the discretion of the University.

MARY IMMACULATE ADOYO MUGA REG NO. MTH/LMR/2325/13

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE ……DATE……

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the student under our supervision.

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2nd SUPERVISOR: PROF. ESTHER MOMBO.

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The acknowledgements would be incomplete if I did not mention the late Rev Philip Agik, my mentor. His inspiring words made me soldier on amidst tough and discouraging times.Lastly, I thank God for taking me this far.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mother Philgona Muga whose love and respect for education has brought me this far.

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ABSTRACT

Gospel music has tremendously changed and evolved influenced by historical, socio-political, religious and economic circumstances, indigenous music as well as gender issues. This study sought to deal with how gospel music in the study of the history of Christianity has evolved in its interaction with the culture of the Luo community. This thesisanalyses the interaction of Luo gospel music and culture from 1990 up to 2014.Relevant literature ongospel music was reviewed. Song text analysis was done on some Luo gospel music. The document analysis and historicalapproach to study were the main instruments of data collection. Gender issues were discussed in relation to Luo gospel music particularly focusing on female gender opportunities.Socio-economic and politicalinfluences on Luo gospel music in Kenya from 1990 to 2014were the main focus.It was established that Luo gospel music has undergone a lot of changes and continuity in terms of socio-political and economic context of the community. The song text analyzed have evolved according to the setting of the gospel composers. It has also been found that the Luo female gospel artist have been able to create public space for themselves in their performances although they undergo public scrutiny than male counterparts.Despite the socio-political and economic difficulties that the community has faced, the gospel artists have come up to inspire and encourage people to live a hopeful life. This has made gospel music to effectively communicate social, spiritual and economic issues making Christianity relevant. Theresults provide implications onthe future success of Luo gospel music. Future artists should consider infusing cultural aspects in their composition to minister to their audience. Gospel music as an aspect of culture is dynamic, creating the need for more research on its change and continuity to keep track of social, political, religious and economic trends in the context of Luo societal milieu.

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DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

Christians: Followers of Jesus Christ who believe in his teachings, and practice His doctrines.

Creativity: The ability to bring ideas together to form a new song or form a slightly different version of the original song using existing material.

Gospel artists: musicians whocompose and perform gospel music,

Gospel music: music performed by gospel artists that has Christian themes with reference to the Luo social, economic and political space.

Luo gospel music: Gospel music sung by Luo gospel artists, mainly in Luo language.

Contemporary Gospel Music: Modern day Christian music, performed by gospel artists.

Lyrics: words of a song

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definition of Gospel Music

The area under investigation is gospel music among the Luo community.Gospel music has similar elements of other forms of music as pop or secular music.These include rhythm, pitch, harmony, form, texture, and melody. What makes gospel music distinct from secular music is the lyrics or song text.

According toZindi (2003), gospel music is music that is associated with Christian worship. He points out that the music consists mainly of good tidings from religious doctrines, which adopt the teachings of Christ. So, gospel music touches on several Christian themes such as repentance, victory, deliverance and baptism, among others.Chitando (2002:14)refers to the gospel musicas musical products that are closely tied with Christianity.He suggests that gospel music is laden with Christian themes from Christian singers. These Christians singwith a view to preach the word of God through their music. His emphasis is therefore on the singer (messenger conveying Christian message through music) rather than the themes or the message itself.

Turner (2008)on the other hand argues that, gospel music is derived from the word gospel, meaning good news hence gospel music means the message of good news about Jesus of Nazareth in song.

Ojo (1998:211) using his Nigerian context, defines gospel music as a term that can be used to mean a distinct kind of music composed and rendered by men and women who call themselves Christians and refer to their music a means of ministering of Good News through song. He therefore does not divorce the message from the messenger.

The writer intends to use the definition of both Chitando and Ojobecause it underlines the individual artists' self-understanding and their interpretation of the value of their music,thus giving the room on how gospel music has used the Luo culture to reach out and spread the Good News.

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1.2 Background to the Problem

During the period under the study, gospel music was undergoing indigenization and internalization. This means that most of gospel artists produced songs relating to their context and also went beyond the initial western musical tradition which emphasized salvation and repentance doctrines to the global family and produced music that were incorporated in the church.

In 1990 the rampant death caused by the emergence of HIV and AIDS became a real threat to the human population, almost threatening to extinguish an economic active age group. In the same year, the political turmoil associated with the call for multi-party democracy in Kenya led to political unrest. It is in this context that the popular musicians shifted to the protest mode. It is during this decade (1990-2000) that gospel music began to be popular and became an integral part of the music of Kenya, with most musicians addressing the issues surrounding them (Paristau 2008: 50).

The popularity of the gospel music also emerged with the changing attitudes of recording studios.Initially the recording studios emphasized none commercialization of the gospel music. However with the emergence of new liberal recording studios and an oppressive social and economic environment the dominance of gospel music in the 1990 onwards was experienced (Paristau 2008: 56).

The acceptance gospel music of the 1990s by majority of Kenyans mostly featuring in radio programs, was greatly by the social, political and economic hardships in Kenya of that time as most singers, as Samwel Otieno related their message to the happenings of the day. This period also marked the emergence and rapid spread of the Pentecostal and charismatic churches. The Pentecostal movement brought with it, a fertile ground for youth identity and expression. This not only brought population growth to Christians but also the need to address the Christian needs.

Population growth also brought in development of liturgical music.Pentecostal and charismatic churches' emphasis on speaking in tongues, prayer, healing, religious ecstasy and music, also offered a message of spiritual and economic salvation to Africans in general; what is popularly known as prosperity gospel.

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1.3Statement of the problem

Gospel music is a contemporarymusic genre in the Luo community that has been undergoing changes due to exotic and indigenous cultures. The use of culture in gospel music from 1990 to 2014 which is the period marked by call for multiparty and liberation of the airwaves led to the change of political ideology and socio-economic situation. This change influenced the gospel scene. There is therefore the need to analyze circumstances that determine the use of Luo culture in gospel music.

1.4Objectives

1.4.1 Main Objective

To analyze how the Luo culture has influenced the development of Luo gospel music from 1990 to 2014.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To determine how the Luo cultures has influenced the development of the historical, socio-political and economic themes in the composition of gospel music.
2. To evaluate the extent to which Luo gospel music reflects gender opportunities.
3. To analyze how the influence of Luo culture in gospel music promotes Christianity in Kenya today

1.5 Research questions

The study is prompted by the need to bring out factors behind the popularity of gospel music within Luo community.

1. To what extent has the development of the historical, socio-political and economic themes in the composition of gospel music been influenced by Luo culture?
2. How does Luo gospel music reflect female gender opportunities?
3. What cultural aspects promoted Christianity in Kenya today?

1.6Justification

This study attempts tofurther scholarship on African culturalhistory especially in Kenya. This research seeks to fill the knowledge gaps on the history of the Luo gospel music. Several

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researches have been undertaken on in music in Kenya but none has been done on the influence of culture in gospel music in the Luo community. Most literally works have dealt with Luo secular music(Ochoti, 2012; Njogu and Mapeu, 2007; Nyairo and Ogude, 2005). The study will discuss gospel music as an important aspect of study of the history of Christianity among the Luo. Specific focuswas on economic and socio-political issues from 1990 to2014,the period that marks the development and evolution of gospel music in Kenya and the change of political ideology in Kenya especially with the call for multiparty.

1.7Focus of the Study

This study focuses on the musicological features of gospel music. Such analysis may enable religious organizations and gospel artists in Kenya and in the Luo community in particular to select relevant musical styles suitable for gospel music. The study examines mainly indigenousand few exotic influences on Luo gospel music, exerting particular thrust on gender, political and economic content on the gospel music. It relied primarily on electronically recorded sources, and written (notated) form though transcription is given. Gospel artists, both composers and singerswrote the songs.

1.7.1 Music in Luo Traditional Society

In this section the researcher gives a historical background to help in the understanding of not only the emergence of gospel music but also the evolution of interaction of gospel music and culture in the Luo community, in order to lay background to question one of the research. This is done by looking at the larger context in which the gospel music emerged. It assumes that developments associated with gospel music are better understood by appreciating the historical process that has shaped music performance in the Luo community. Although gospel music came into the fore in 1990s and 2000, it can be traced beyond this period, therefore neglecting the larger context within which gospel music emerged is doing injustice to history. Chitando (2002:11) also argue that there is a link between oral traditions and music in a given community for they are interwoven in a way. Therefore, a brief history of the place of oral tradition in the community and significance of music among the Luo community linking it with the oral tradition is outlined

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1.7.2 The Luo people

The Luo people of Africa live in the western part of Kenya along Lake Victoria (Jones, 1973:43). In today's administrative boundaries, it covers the Homa Bay, Migori, Kisumu and Siaya counties (formerly Nyanza Province). The name Luo according to Professor Tucker and Margret Bayan as quoted by Jones (1973) is applied to a great number of a Nilotic speaking tribe of one indistinguishable language which is Dholuo. The study will be done on the Luo people of western part of Kenya, former Nyanza province.

When writing about Siaya, David Cohen and Atieno Odhiambo (1989:16), outline debates and Luo ideas on their past as affecting present and forms a base for future. According to these authors, apart from the geographical location, the Luo have been re-working landscape over several centuries. They interact with the social desire, and intellectual process to produce broad collective identities, the multiple and overlapping settings of cultural activities (Cohen & Odhiambo, 1989:16). However, this does not relate to gospel music in the community, which the writer explored in this study.

Although they live within a geographical location, their cultural practices are not limited to physical location but rather accompany the Luo person wherever they go. This is why the researcher intends to select those to be interviewed across the country in spite of where they stay as long as they are Luo.

Since music is part of the oral traditions found among the Luo, it is in order to highlight some of its importance on the Luo traditional community before we embark on the music. Oral literature significant in the study of culture because culture has symbols that stand for the fundamental realities of human condition that appear in religion and myth. Literature generally uses such symbols directly; Luo literature especially expresses its originality and uniqueness in the sense that these symbols are not the same as those found I religion, though sometimes the concept is the same (Masolo, 1976). This shows that oral literature can be used to see the interaction of culture and religion, a concept that is useful in linking culture and Christianity especially using gospel music which is part of oral traditions.

In the understanding of oral tradition, scholars such as Onyango-Ogutu and Roscoe have compiled together a collection of tales that deal with issues that fascinated the ordinary Luo. Such tales give traditional explanation of the phenomenon as original home, great migration, death and the reason for work (Onyango-Ogutu & Roscoe, 1974).

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Using such tales will enhance the understanding of the relationship between oral traditions and its context. These tales correlate with music, because music interacts with its environment, beliefs and cultural practices. It is assumed by the researcher that such beliefs may affect the music composers and thus find their way to gospel music.

1.7.3 Role of Traditional Music in the Luo community

Music plays a significant role in most of the African traditional society. Akuno (2000), sees music as more than a body of sounds or concepts; it is experience bearing and communicating issues of socio- cultural significance to the community that practices it. She continues to argue that music in Africa is a multimedia, involving songs, dance and the instrument played simultaneously. Further, it involves the performer and the audience bringing in the content and the context of the music.

A similar idea is advanced by Bourdillon (quoted by Chitando 2002:25), that cultural workers do not operate in a social vacuum; that products of culture are found in a social context, and they are well defined. Nyairo and Ogude (2005), argue that music does not exist autonomously since it is able to shape and reflect environment from which they are produced. It therefore means that there is a close connection between the musician and the society. This brings the liberation nature of the gospel music as a theme that is portrayed by the performances.

People can learn music without necessarily knowing anything technical about it. This is because music structure can be carried sublimely and is resistant to change. The changes that occur are by cultural accident because they are determined by a cultural framework (Ochieng' 2002).

Among the Luo, music has played a significant role in an individual or group identity, in worship, entertainment and educational aspects not only familiar to the Luo community but across cultures.

Ochieng' (2002) have discussed the indigenous education among the Luo. They view it as a process of socialization and culturing, developing its members to acquire skills for the upkeep and continuity of the society. Music is often embedded in the socio- political, economic and religious milieu; the same milieu that provides the learning environment for children: the African child learns a great deal of life through music.

Music as a means of communication, plays a very important role in the daily lives in the African community. It is found in all religious rites and rituals, societal celebrations, conducted in all

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stages of rites of passage, in work, rainmaking, wars, dignifying chiefs, and it is inseparable from any activity (Ochieng' 2002). Music is also used during social occasions in performance of ritual, marriage, initiations, and other major events. During funerals, mourning songs and other types of music would be played. At the time a person dies the message about his death would be spread using musical instruments as beating of drums and blowing of horns and singing. The latter has been quite common in funerals with the coming of Christianity. Although a somber mood is expected among the Luo community during funeral, recreational music that the deceased liked may be sang in his or her honor (Darkwa, 1985).

Songs among the Luo are topical, depicting the core cultural concerns of the people. They are meant to correct a behavior by exposing the vices to the public, to bring out shame (Darkwa, 1985).

Songs among the Luo are used to punish wrong doers. For instance, if a person did what is contrary to the expected cultural norm, a song meant to expose him or her would be sung especially by children while gathering firewood or cultivating to expose and castigate the adults (Darkwa, 1985).

Among the Luo, musicians may use songs as a means of praise and insult. For instance a *nyatiti* player may sing in praise of generosity of an individual or make up some songs meant to rebuke mean members of the community. However, in the latter songs, the musician carefully chooses indirect words and illustrations. Songs used for praises were mostly done by the *orutu* players or singers. The orutu players may sing in praise of himself, his wife, parents and men who are concerned with the development of the people in the community (Darkwa, 1985).

Masolo (1976), echoes the point, pointing out that among the Luo, song and storytelling go together. A story teller knows well that music can leap the barrier of words and make a direct assault on the heart and senses. This therefore means that oral tradition in music can give useful insights on cultural production in the community.

Music and songs are used as stimuli during work. Most of the work and play activities were accompanied by songs. Individuals or groups of people working or children playing may sing in the process to avoid boredom. Most of such songs are directed to the working tools which are being praised in the process of work (Darkwa, 1985).

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1.7.4 The Origin of Contemporary Gospel Music in Kenya

Before 1987 most of the state-owned recording companies had foreign control, playing mostly foreign music. Promoters of foreign music claimed that most of the local elites never appreciated or requested for the local music. State owned radios and televisions programs hardly had any space for local music, claiming that they had too little stock of the local music (Kidula, 2000:408).

Nairobi became a recording centre in East and Central Africa. The cassette industry was established in Kenya to promote easy access of music to the public, who had little interest in the local music. The recording centres did not only record secular but also sacred music. At the same time, churches such as Pentecostal church and Baptist church had started their own Christian recording studios at Valley Road in Nairobi (Kidula, 2000:408).

Harrev (1989), noted that there was of lack of market for local music and the industry had to do much of marketing which did not yield much fruits. Although poor market was attributed to lack of local musicians, already in 1952 local music had been recorded by Jambo Studio to identify local talents when the famous song "Malaika" hit the international recordings. By 1984, Nairobi had become a known recording centre in both East and Central Africa

Prior to 1987 gospel music was developed along the denominational line. Most sacred musicians employed Kiswahili language as it was widely spoken and used as the national language in Kenya. Most of the gospel music such as Mary Ominde's "*Adamu na Eva*", composition depended on an individual socio-cultural background and one's religious imagination to reach biggest possible population (Kidula, 2000:408).

Gospel musicians used their perception to achieve the contemporary needs by use of lyrics, different styles and instrumentation that laced the ethnic and religious affiliation. The gospel music was socially accepted for it lacked political connotation (Kidula, 2000:408).

During this time, church choirs could do live performance in national and privately owned radio station, or prerecord their songs for future airtime. However church owned studios did not produce music for sale claiming that it was against their religious faith and that it was bad to sell something freely given (Kidula, 2000:408). The primary intention was evangelism and not commercial profit.

In 1990, Kenya experienced fastest growth in gospel music industry. Parsitau (2008:64), cites three causal factors underlying the growth: the decline on socio-political situation and economic

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environment, the emergence and growth of Pentecostal and charismatic churches of 1990s and the dawn to millennium in 1990 which was marked by the liberation of airwaves. King *et al*., (2008) attributes the growth of gospel music in the twentieth century to growth on Christian population which was associated with development of liturgical music. This got a great influence from the indigenous musical tradition.

This growth was also spurred up more by the Government of Kenyan (GoK) censor of local musicians and music, therefore non-Kenyan African musicians who settled in Nairobi dominated the scene. International culture became a device for curving out the market. The Congolese *Lingala* gained much acceptance due to it adaptation on the use of Kiswahili language which had become the Kenya national language and the Tanzanian musician came in handy to propagate the process of 'Swahilization' because their government promoted music than Kenya (Kidula, 2000:410).

Parsitau (2008) explains the thriving of gospel music of the 1990s as greatly springing from the socio- political and economic hardships in Kenya of that time; most singers related their message to these happenings. For her, Pentecostalism and charismatic movements in the church provided a fertile land for the growth not only for the gospel music but also for the expression of youth identity and public space for children and women.

1.7.5 The Dominance of Gospel Music in the 1990s

The social and economic challenges that were witnessed in Kenya in the 1990s were mentioned in the previous section. There was an intense increase in poverty level due to the natural calamities. The rampant death caused by the emergence of the HIV and AIDS scourge become a real threat to the human population almost threatening to extinguish an economically active age group. The political turmoil associated with the call for multi-party democracy in Kenya led to political unrest. It is in this context that the popular musicians shifted to the protest mode. It is during this decade (1990-2000) that gospel music began to thrive to became an integral part of the music of Kenya, with most musicians addressing the issues surrounding them, as clearly echoed by Chitando (2002:53) in Zimbabwe.

The changing attitudes by recording companies especially studios recording gospel music, the emergence of new recording studios and an oppressive social and economic environment are

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some of the explanatory factors behind the dominance of gospel music in the 1990s (Chitando, 2002:53).

Developments within Christianity in Africa are critical for an appreciation of the ascendancy of gospel music. In the 1990s charismatic or Pentecostal churches became the fastest growing brand of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa in general and Kenya in particular (Chitando, 2002:53).

The dominance of gospel music in early 1990s were characterized by the musicians' beliefs and practices, a wide area of the study that might not be included in this current study. Phenomenal growth of charismatic churches in Kenya in the early 1990s as noted by Parsitau (2008: 64) brought in African Christianity which has drawn many young members from the society particularly among student populations in universities and colleges, and among the young upwardly mobile members of the urban working class (Chitando, 2002:54).

Chitando (2002:54) notes that the Pentecostal or charismatic churches' emphasis on the speaking in tongues, prayer, healing, religious ecstasy and music, also offered a message of spiritual and economic salvation to Africans in general. They also present a great challenge to the mainstream churches. Van Dijk and Universitet (2002:13), note that the characteristic of this new wave of gospel music combined many features of the earlier charismatic leaders with explicit location in the modern sectors of life and with a clear use of the modern means of communication such as the media, video, radio and magazines.

Writing on Pentecostal churches in Ghana and Nigeria, Hackett (1998:263) suggests that music is one of the important ways through which charismatic churches curve out their identity and invade the public space. This made it possible in these two countries that gospel music became dominant with gospel singers becoming celebrities.

In Kenya just like most African countries, charismatic or Pentecostal churches provide the highest number of gospel musicians. Gospel music is, therefore, regarded as an important device in spreading the word of God, and to bring people to repentance. It also seeks to 'purify' popular culture. This has made these churches, to use Gifford's words (1990) in Chitando (2002:54) to establish themselves firmly on the religious map.

In Kenya, gospel music is heavily influenced by foreign styles and tunes but still maintains a strong Kenyan identity and has been culturally domesticated (Parsitau, 2008). Although the lyrics may change, the dancing style is Kenyan. This, therefore, means that a lot has been borrowed from the African cultural background in the music industry.

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1.8Scope and limitation

The study focuses onthe music between 1990 and 2014 from three popular Luo gospel musicians: Samuel Otieno Tito, Eunice Ogoma Kepha and Carroline Omwaya, chosen based on their themes. It concentrated on gospel musicrecorded in Dholuo, the language of the Luo. This therefore limits the study to the linguistic and cultural setup of the Luo community. This research emphasizes the experiences of gospel music in Nyanza, located in western part of Kenya at the shores of Lake Victoria.

This community is chosen because it is among the first in Kenya whose gospel music came to public besides, the Agikuyu and Abaluhyia communities. Although studies from other communities have been done, differences are bound to be there. The researcher will therefore use these communities as references where necessary.

Popularity of gospel music is linked to the developments of the secular music which little has been worked on. The gospel artists selected imply that areas like new compositions in the churches today, the theological ideas behind them and performance context are too wide to be included in the study thus further research is necessary. Although references might be made on the development of hymns and choruses; it will not form the core area of study. This regional study of the Luo community could also help to indicate the extent to which Christianity has interacted with culture among the Luo community through gospel music performances.

1.9Research Methodology

1.9.1 Data collection

The topic under the discussion was done as a case study of the Luo community in western part of Kenya(formerly Nyanza Province). The gospel music were from the following Luo gospel singers:Eunice Kepha Ogoma, Caroline Omwaya (Nyakanaan) and Samuel Otieno Tito, collected from music stores (Audio CD and VCD). They are chosen on the basis of their native location, age,gender, the type of instrumentation, genre and the emerging themes.Samuel Otieno who hails from South Nyanza employs *nyatiti*(a traditional lyre used in traditional music in the Luo community), in almost all his songs. His albums of gospel music date from 1989and he is still singing. This gives a good scope for analysis as it falls

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within the limitationof the research. Eunice Ogoma, from Central Nyanza largely uses Benga, a variant style of Luo dance music, in her gospel music. Her songs arepopular in Radio Ramogi morning programs. She began singing in early 2000.Caroline Omwaya commonly known as Nyakanaan is also from South Nyanza. Her gospel musicaddresses social ills affecting women in the Luo community. Her music is suitable for analysis of music and gender in Luo community. In studying these songs, analysis was done on factors that influenced their development, the major themes addressed and their impact to the community.

Qualitativemethod was employed through the use of interviews. Cohen and Manion (1989) explain that interviews are instruments used for collecting data from several individuals so as to come up with a generalization on a specific issue. They state that the research interview is a two person conversation initiated by the researcher for the purpose of obtaining research data through direct verbal interaction between two individuals.

In this study the structured interview through the use of written questionnaires was preferred. Respondents were purposively sampled in order to achieve the desired result. Nyanza's major town Kisumu provide most of the interviewees since these places are readily accessible and most of gospel musicians have settled there. The rural areas chosen onlywhen they are areas of residence of the Traditional Luo musicians and gospel music fans.

Historical approaches to gospel music were employed.As Chitando (2002:10) argues, gospel music provides an entry point to the study of culture in the contemporary society. This study employed a sociological analysis in trying to understand the dominant themes or social issues that the gospel artist seeks to address. Insights from sociology help to locate the status of gospel music and how identities are made among Luo community since gospel music shows the negotiation of Christian African identities (Chitando, 2002:10).

1.9.2 Data analysis

Reduction as a tool of data analysis was done. Selected data was sorted out, focused, discarded, simplified, abstracted, transformed and organized in order that the desired result

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with little if not non biasness is produced. The data was then organized, analyzed and compressed together to bring in conclusion and the necessary action (Kigunda, 2007:37).

Document analysis was done to relevant bookswere also analyzed to allow for the contextual analysis of the gospel musicians and help come up with factors that influence gospel music artists in their composition. Individual songs were also analyzed independently. The electronic media (internet) also provided information on Luo gospel music and Luo gospel musicians in Kenya.

Narratives from the gospel musicians werealsoused to come up with how the context and life experience of an individual musician affects the composition and song text. Electronic data for the gospel music was transcribed and translated where applicable and brief meaning given. The song text analysis was then done to see how they relate with the context of the gospel artist.

The discussion has been on the various definitions of gospel music as given by different scholars, the background information or the context at which the gospel music understudy emerged, the objectives and methodology to be used in the research. The next chapter reviews various literature on the Luo community and gospel music.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Related Literature on Gospel Music

The chapter seeks to cite views of various authorities on gospel music and related issues such as gender and socio- political and economic situation of the Luo community. The major gaps on the relationship between culture and gospel music are highlighted.

2.2 Gospel Music in Africa

King, Kidula, Krabill, and Oduro (2008), write about music in the life of African church. They give the five stages of music in Africa: *the prelude* (1417-1736), the first encounter with the African when the missionaries first came and chanted Christian songs. The second is *the foundations* (1737- 1850). Herein, African music was considered heathen and replaced by western hymnody. *The consolidation*, (1851-1918) is the third phase. This period is marked with the colonial phase in Africa. Most colonies used schools and churches for their administration. The introduction of the three C's: Christianity, Commerce and Civilization ensured that western culture was propagated. The mission schools were used to indoctrinate Africans in the religion language and culture of the colonizer. In these institutions the bible and the hymns were key to the instructions. Hymns particularly were used to initiate the converts into western musical tradition. Fourth, is t*he period of reorientation* is 1958-1982, marking the independence of Africa and the growth of churches. In this period, most Christians blended African musical traditions with western music. The period is further divided into several sub-stages, the first of which is alteration stage where most of western hymns were replaced or modified into

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indigenous forms. Then follows the imitation stage where tunes, texts and rhythms are locally composed music but they retain the western musical genre. There is the indigenization stage where tunes, texts and rhythms are produced into indigenous musical forms and styles. Most of these take the context of the producer or the composer and relates to the happenings around them. The fifth and final stage is the *internalization* where, the tunes, text and rhythms transcends the local and Western context to the global family and becomes incorporated into the life of the church. This division of the music in stages is explored by the researcher. The final stage (1958-1982), that of reorientation and in particular indigenization stage is used analyze the selected music. A part from categorization into stages, the authors do not relate the song text to the context in which they are produced, which is the focus of our study.

It is generally agreed that there is little literature on music. Emielu (2006), notes that African music has been and still is being influenced by foreign culture. Missionaries rejected African music and replacing it with Christian hymns and chants familiar with European missionaries. Africans in reaction to this tried to develop their Christian music familiar with their culture. However, indigenous music is still there and has not been swept out. Music in Africa has therefore evolved and it is still evolving, from the western tunes and text to local tex familiar with the local singers and listeners. How this evolution gospel music takes placein regard to its interaction with culture is the centre of this study.

Emielu (2011), later observes that popular music is characterized by indigenization and syncretism because African popular music is socially responsive, a phenomenon which is sustained through the interplay of cross cultural and transnational social dynamics.

Ojo (1998:211), writing from the indigenous Nigerian gospel music background, relates gospel music to national social reconstruction. He focuses on sociological issues rather than musicological issues. His work has no direct link with the ecology of gospel music in contemporary Kenya or the Luo community, since he has different human-cultural political history from that of the present study but informs this particular study in terms of sociological issues in Nigerian context that can be related to the Luo context.

Chitando (2000:), gives an informative source in the study of gospel music in Zimbabwe. Although the work is more focused on the study of religion, particularly on how Christian hymns

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have featured into the works of gospel musicians, it also examines the effect of church hymns on electronically recorded gospel music in Zimbabwe. His writing explores the themes that dominate Zimbabwean gospel music and the impact of gospel music on popular culture. These themes and their development relate to the social context of gospel singers hence relevant to current study.

Although Chitando has written extensively on gospel music, his emphasis is on the lyrics of gospel music, particularly its religious and Christian texts (Chitando, 1999 and 2000). These works also dwell considerably on how the lyrics of gospel music have adapted themselves to various fora and dispensations in an attempt to enhance its importance as a vehicle of religious and Christian instruction.

Chitando (2002:5), has given detailed approach on gospel music in Zimbabwe. He discusses the historical development, social, political and economic significance of gospel music in Zimbabwe. His method of the study is religious phenomenology, underlining that music provides an entry point in contemporary cultural production. On the historical development of popular music in Zimbabwe, he also outlines the emergence of gospel music in a politically and economically challenging scene of 1990. He also examines the music texts, performance of artists and audiences at gospel music concerts and television presentations. Through this he brings out the music themes and the construction of religious and other identities. Chitando's writings, though in a different national context are useful in this study on how gospel has impacted on the culture and how on the other hand, gospel music borrows from culture.

2.3 Gospel Music in Kenya

Njogu and Maupeu (2007:181), have discussed songs and politics in East Africa. In this contribution reference is made to the Luo, a case study of Owino Misiani, arguing that among the Luo, songs and music have been used to articulate political beliefs and that although songs are majorly for entertainment, they are also used for social mobilization. Music and songs are a powerful political tool for mobilization in all Kenyan communities.

In the same contribution is a discussion on Agikuyu by, Njogu (2007:157) who argues that songs and music have been used by the Agikuyu community to handle social issues such as HIV

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and AIDS. Music is thus a strong tool for social mobilization and addresses the social issues, a fact that can be used in gospel music as well.

While writing on the Ameru Lamont (2010:474) discusses the politics of the Ameru gospel singers. He argues that in as much as intention of Meru gospel singers prompts their audiences to think about issues of high priority in the national public sphere, for example, citizenship and human rights, they also reinforce other forms of oppressive sociality institutionalized by sexism, generational conflicts and the wider politics of belonging and identity. Gospel music in the Ameru community addresses moral debate brought by the successive economic activities. Although the article is on the Ameru community, the same issues could be related to the Luo community.

Kigunda (2007), focusing on music and healing in Charismatic churches among the Akamba in Kenya notes that Christian music and songs in church provoke the power of God that brings healing. This brings about the significance of gospel music in answering social issues affecting the community.

Parsitau (2008:69), discusses in detail the appropriation of gospel music in Kenya's political discourses. In her writing, she explains how gospel music has been used in socio-political scenes to influence change. However, this study tends to look at how the socio-political environment informs the artists in their composition of the gospel songs.

2.4 Thematic survey of gospel music

We have reviewed various literature related to gospel music and the community under the study. The intension of this section is now to discuss various themes that are generated by the gospel music.

When dealing with gospel music, much weight is put on the song text rather than the music styles. Gospel music as explained by most artists emphasizes on the identification of the lyrics rather than beats. Probably this explains why the various gospel music have fast and danceable beats, heavily borrowed from secular music. In addition, this might be an indication of the separation between musical style and its content in terms of song text. (Chitando, 2002:57)

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2.4.1 Emphasis on Spiritual salvation

According to Chitando (2002:57), a critical survey of most African gospel musicians reveal conversion and the salvation through Jesus Christ, admitting however, that this cuts across hymns and choruses mostly by independent artists. He further argues that for songs to be called gospel, they must have connection with Christianity throughout generations; that God gave forth his son Jesus so that all who believe in him may have eternal life (John 3:16). This definition adopted from Ojo 1998:211), where gospel music is described as a term that can be used to mean a distinct kind of music composed and rendered by men and women who call themselves Christians and refer to their music as a means of ministering Good News through song (Ojo, 1998:211).

2.4.2 Illness and Death

According to Chitando (2002: 58), the emergence of HIV and AIDS was associated with strange diseases and rampant deaths. As the HIV and AIDs entered its third decade in Kenya, most Christian churches, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), government, civil societies and other stakeholders were attempting to provide solutions. Gospel singers such as Esther Wahome who sang *kuna dawa (*there is medicine), were also attempting to give hope for Christians that there is healing in Jesus for Christians. This affirms what Parsitau (2008:50) had alluded to earlier that the thriving gospel music of the 1990s was greatly driven by the social challenges, and HIV and AIDS being one of them

2.4.3 Prosperity

Christianity as portrayed by gospel musicians is characterized by material prosperity. Gifford (1990), in Chitando (2002:64) sees the prosperity message as maintaining that God wants a Christian to be wealthy. As mentioned earlier, the thriving gospel music came as a result of hard economic times. The gospel message of prosperity was welcomed for it addressed the direct economic need of the people.

Chitando (1998), notes that there is a link between the theme of prosperity and the theme of providing ethical guidelines. He argues that it is those who observe divine precepts that prosper. Prosperity is meant for the Christians who avoid corruption and bad politics as opposed to those

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who live by the flesh. Most lyrics contend that you can follow Christ and make money because wealth comes through total surrender to Christ in faith.

2.4.4 Liberation

According to Chitando (2002:64), women played a significant role in traditional music context but with the emergence of urbanization, the patriarchal system excluded them. Continued use of negative terms discouraged women who wanted to venture in to gospel music. This means that the social context affects the gospel music.

Ochoti (2012), has examined women in the public space, how music has helped women to negotiate their pace. It is noted that most women have ventured into music claiming a considerable space. The author further notes that music has become a form of mass medium which helps women to negotiate for space in the community. Music can therefore be used by women to address pertinent issues and set critical agenda in the public space populated by people of different cultures and worldviews.

In conclusion, we have seen various arguments from diverse scholars on gospel music. Several themes have also emerged. In the next chapter, we will give a historical overview of Kenya in 1990-2014 touching on social and political issues of the time.

2.5Gender and Gospel Music

Walton and Muller (2005), in Gwekwerere 2009:3, deal with gender and music in South Africa. Although most cases these findings can be generalized across Africa, there is very little mention of gospel music. The other gender-related study isdiscussedbyGreen in Gwekwerere (2009:4),on Western perspective but does not discuss gospel music. Green concentrates on gender and music in the classroom where gender is discussed in relation to acquisition of musical knowledge and achievement.Accordingly,European men controlled all activities and deliberately excluded women from the public space in theatre, literature, music and other performing arts. In Africa, however, the opposite is true. According to Nzewi (2007:11),the female is considered as the larger and stronger spiritual force; the male is the lesser and weaker. The femaleis attributed to enduring while the male is volatile; the male ignites the action while the female accomplishes the process that ensures continuity.

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The respected role of women in the African perspective is further outlined by Rukuni (2007:53)who argues, "In African traditional systems, a man cannot be allocated land or a home, if there is no wife, because it is the mother that is central to the household. For Africans, mothers are always closer to God than Fathers, becauseof the life giving role they play.'' This may imply that women play a very important role in the spiritual and social matters. However, fathers come in to accomplish this role on behalf their families. Sperber (1996),inGwekwerere 2009:2-4 also discusses gender and music from a Euro-centric perspective. Thisstudy is a generalization on music and gender; there is noparticular reference to Africa or to gospel music. The study concernsfemale composers and their works. It engages in issues taken from Kenyan and Luo community in particular situation that will inform the study to a great extent.

Mombo and Joziasse (2011), express the narration of women lives both in the ministry and in the church. Their focus is not on singing or music but life experiences.The present study seeks to explore whether or not song text analysis expresses the experiences of female gospel artists.

Ochoti (2012), writing on music and gender among the Luo, analyzes the music of Achieng Obura on how music has enhanced women in public space. However, this is not related to gospel music.

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CHAPTER THREE

OVERVIEW ON THEHISTORY OF NYANZA FROM 1990 TO 2014

3.1 Gospel Music in Nyanza

The first big influx of missionaries in Kenya came in the second half of the nineteenth century. They werepredominantly driven by the idea that the faith and culture from Europe could benefit all humankind. This idea neglected the need for enculturation. Missionaries set up local congregations and churchstructures parallel to what was in their home countries (Kuhn 2001).

Being a Christian in the early years meant abandoning the "evil native" ways in terms of religious beliefs and whole life-style. Wearing clothes,an uncommon practice then in the community, became a mark of Christianity. Christians were to look different, use different music, play different games, and even smelled different from their neighbors (Kuhn 2001).

Mpaya (2013), notes that in1940 missionaries who had called African music wild and undomesticated, placed a strict ban on all forms of native music, musical instruments, and rhythmical devices, which they feared would encourage the people in their old practices. With time, there was an interface of Christianity and African life. African religiosity which saw the need for Africa-inspired churches came into being.

African inspired churches or African initiated churches or African independent churches (AICs) such as Nomiya Luo Church or "*I was given a message*", came in to reject the missionaries who used music in the mainstream churches to capture, tame or even prune the 'undesirable' cultural practices from the converted African. The AICs on the contrary, systematically placed African cultural sensibilities at the center of Christianity by weeding out Eurocentric aspects of

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Christianity and planting it in a new environment familiar with African Christians (Mapaya 2013).

This same approach was used in the Luo community where missionaries disregarded the importance of the traditionalAfrican music. They discouraged their followers in the main land churches not to use traditional music tunes and dance in their worship as these were heathen and evil. Even those who played guitar were considered hooligans and pagans by mission churches and would only be accepted in the church after conversion. Today, however, these traditional musical instruments are accepted in these churches (Kuhn 2001).

Protests by the AICs to challenge the missionary's attitude towards the traditional music laid a foundation for short (always repeated) choruses. When the wave of Pentecostalism and charismatic churches emerged, they encouraged short choruses (Paristau 2007). At this point Luo singers found the opportunity to minister to others through traditionally oriented gospel music.

3.2Socio-Political and Economic Situation in Nyanza from 1990-2014

This part will discuss the history of the Luo in terms of the Socio-Economic and Political issues of the period under study. Although the focus is on the Luo community, it is assumed that the Kenyan situation affects the Luo community.

Since independence, the Luo, who are today known to be the third largest ethnic group in Kenya after Kikuyu and Luhyia, have been losers in the ethnic competition for the political power to control state resources. As a result, they have had to endure economic marginalization. The traditional "tribal homelands" of the Luo in Kenya on the eastern shores of Lake Victoria fall under the former administrative Province of Nyanza, with its headquarters in Kisumu. The region is not totally lacking in natural resources that can be exploited for the purposes of wealth creation. The most visible of these resources include Lake Victoria, one of the freshwater lakes in the world. But since 1990 to date the fishing industry in "Luo Nyanza" remained undeveloped(Mboya, 2009)

When the first Kenyan president Kenyatta died in office in 1978, President Daniel arap Moi, succeeded him. During his tenure, Kenya was declared a one party state by the National Assembly in 1982 (Star Newspaper, May 2013).In 1990, Kenya experienced a political wave

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calling for abolishment of one-part state leadership. The prodemocracy movement which had earlier been spearheaded by mainstream churches and reformist lawyers was bolstered when two former cabinet ministers, Kenneth Matiba and Charles Rubia, publicly called on Moi to revise Section 2A of the 1982 Act that made Kenya a *de jure* one-party state, to dissolve parliament and hold a public referendum to chart the country's future (Kagwanja, 2005).

The two legislators dared to apply for a permit to address a public rally in Nairobi's Kamukunji Grounds on 7 July 1990. This move was welcomed by both Kenya's urban crowd and rural poor. However, their permission was denied, and the two were arrested and detained on 4 July 1990 under the Preservation of Public Security Act. People especially the youth became hardened(Kagwanja, 2005).

Preeti (2001:157), notes that on 7th July 1990, which came to be called *Saba Saba*, the ruling elite mobilized KANU youth wingers to reinforce riot police in dispersing a defiant crowd that attempted to gather at Kamukunji Grounds. More than 20 people were killed, 1,000 arrested. Among those arrested were Luo political leaders: James Orengo, Raila Odinga, and a number of lawyers (Kagwanja, 2005). It was earlier in the year, around February that the then Foreign Affairs Minister, Robert John Ouko, adored Luo leader had been murdered in unclear circumstances.

Preeti (2001:157) continues to note the same year, Bishop Henry Okullu of the then Church of Province of Kenya (Anglican), Maseno South Diocese, delivered a sermon hailing the collapse of the communist regime in Eastern Europe, and added that a similar fate awaited all other "dictatorships" the world over, Kenya included.

When Kenya become *a de jure* one-party state, the upset international community and creditors suspended valuable aid to Kenya. The country's economic situation deteriorated and the leadership found it difficult to meet its financial obligations (Preeti, 2001:158).

When Kenya received multi-party democracy in December 1991, state sponsored vigilant terror in urban centers aimed at derailing democracy. The tribal millitias started by Kenya African National Union(KANU) elites were meant to create havoc on rival ethnic groups. For example,

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the militia group of the C*hinkororo* from Kisii, and *Sungu Sungu* of Kuria waged war with their neighbors who are the Luo community. The Luo community stood out due to their political leadership to be opposition community(Preeti, 2001:158).

In 1992, Kenya first had its General Elections under democracy and President Moi still emerged the winner. In the years 1992 to 1997, Kenya was marked by the numerous splitting of the opposition parties. The Oginga Odinga Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD)-Kenya Party faced challenges when he died in 1995. He was succeeded by Kijana Wamalwa his second vice who broughtwith him the Abaluya force rallying behind him. However, Raila Odingaleft his father's party to begin a rather small party; National Development Party (NDP) which was registered in 1994 (Preeti, 2001: 162).

Preeti, (2001:162) noted that during this time, Kenyans became disillusioned because of the ever splitting opposition, and the harsh economic and social situation facing the country. In addition, the government was under both domestic and international pressure to change their constitution.Before this,International Monetary Fund (IMF) had withdrawn lending to Kenya. President Moi in an attempt to get positive recognition to the IMF delegation meeting in Nairobi called opposition leaders for negotiation to chat way forward but the opposition objected this due to the timing. Instead, they together with a group representing civil servants organized mass action campaign calling for constitutional reformswhich led to violence and civil unrest.

In the year 2002, Kenya had democratic multi-party elections, judged as free and fair by independentinternational onlookers.Hon. Mwai Kibaki, the then opposition leader,who had combined forces with opposition parties,defeated KANU party, ending President Moi's 24 years in power.The new government brought in economic liberalization in the country. This led to more affordable standards of living, compared to the previous regime (African Report No 137, 2008).

The 2007 political line-up resulted from the collapse of National Rainbow coalition (NARC) soon after its victory. President Kibaki after his election,had refused to implement the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which opposition had formed together and was to be

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implemented after 2002 elections which meant that they would share power posts equally between its signatories and carry out the constitutional reforms necessary to create the position of prime minister for Hon. Odinga. This brought division among the once united NARC party (African Report No 137, 2008:2).

In 2007, disaster occurred as around 1,500 Kenyans lost their lives following post poll violence over disputed presidential elections (Preeti, 2001). It is argued that Western Province and in the areas of Molo, Kuresoi and Mt. Elgon in the Rift Valley have had longstanding land conflicts between neighboring communities (African Report No 137, 2008:2).In the wake of the violence, these places wereseverely affected. In 2010,constitutional referendum, which aimed to limit the powers of the president was approved amidst controversy (Preeti, 2001:164).

In the 2012 Kenya's General Elections, it was reported that, the Luo community became victim of collective resentment because they had been at the forefront of Kenyans most important democratic struggles since independence. This made them have a feeling especially among their elite that as a community, they have served as the infantry in the struggle for the freedoms Kenya now enjoys. For example, the Luo's were among the first to call for multiparty democracy and the veteran Luo leader Raila Odinga had called for coalition to oust the President Moi from power. The reward for this has too often been seen as disparagement, mistrust, betrayal and violence both soft and hard meted out against their leaders for 50 years and this is also reflected in their economic growth (The Star, 4/ 5/ 2013).The elections in Kenya are important phenomenon as it portrays the political alignment of the day. Occasionally, electioneering period groups people according to their ethnic political positions.

Having looked at the emergence of multi-partism and Kenyan election, we now turn to look at the effect of politics on socio-economic situation among the Luo community.

Kanyinga (2006),analyses the relationship between ethnicity and resource distribution and,between ethno-regional imbalances and development in Kenya. He sees the disparity in development between and among the forty seven counties (former eight provinces) of Kenya, with some regions and ethnic groups collectively poorer than others.Some have fewer

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opportunities to improve their wellbeing and enjoy fewer services while others are generally better off and have more opportunities.

Muhula (2009), argues that ethno-regional political patronage remains a destructive aspect of Kenyan politics. It determines access to both political and economic resources. The result is economic inequalities seen in unequal distribution of the national resources such as infrastructure.

The national poverty estimates indicate that former Central and Rift Valley provinces with poverty indices of 31 percent and 44 percent respectively are the wealthiest provinces in the country. Both regions have produced a President at least once. The poverty indices in Nyanza and Western provinces are 61 percent and 65 percent respectively. These regions have never produced a President and are the poorest (GoK 2006). This indicates that the level of development of a particular region depends on their political standing.

Muhula (2009), comments that the ruling elites use political power to direct resources to areas that enjoy their support. These group-based advantages in economic and socio- political realms have provided the advantages that make horizontal inequality a persistent feature of socio-economic and political structure in Kenya. This inequality has led to unequal access to education, health, water and sanitation services and a disproportionately better quality of life in provinces associated with political allegiance.

Priebe and Gräb (2009), argue that such inequality brought by political standing translates intohigh malnutrition rates and high mortality rates of children in Nyanza Province.

It is against such background that the economic situation among the Luo community is discussed.

The Nyanza region is known to be one of the poorest in Kenya, with estimated 63 per cent of the population living on less than 1 dollar per day. The region has the highest HIV prevalence rate in Kenya, coupled with the lowest life expectancy in the country (43 for women, 37 for men). The region also has the highest rates of malaria contraction and malarial deaths. (Arrive Kenya 2013).

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The region also has the highest mortality rate of children under the age of 5 years (206 deaths per 1,000 live births). A child born in the Nyanza region is four times more likely to die before celebrating his or her fifth birthday than a child born in the Central region (where Nairobi is located) (Arrive Kenya 2013).

In the political and cultural debates on contemporary Kenya, ethnicity remains a salient issue. The Luo community have been perceived to be politically unified through the national voting trends. This is tied directly to their political opposition in independent Kenya (Carotenuto, 2006).

This has made the region to be isolated by the government in its development programs as it is seemingly opposing the ruling government. In one of the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission report (TJRC) it is quoted that:

> "…Perceptions of economic marginalization are deeply held in North Eastern and Upper Eastern, Coast, Nyanza, Western and North Rift. The Commission finds that economic and other policies adopted by the state during the mandate period resulted in the economic marginalization of these five regions". (TJRC: Vol. 4, 2013)

Dr. Korir (Standard Newspaper June 11, 2010) noted that Nyanza had been impoverished because of itspolitical affiliation. They are being poorly served by a government that was unnecessarily scared of their leaders. Although in past years, cotton had flourished on the expansive plains, produced mainly for export,this was considered uneconomical and was abandoned by the government, leaving people to languish in poverty.

In support on how political standing in Kenya affects development, Muga (Star Newspaper,January 30, 2016), addresses Political analyst Mutai Ngunyi, who made a sweeping statement in the media that the poverty in Nyanza and Western Kenya is due to poor leadership expressed by their political leader Raila Odinga who has little development agenda in his political intrigues. He argues that the difference between Central Kenya and Nyanza is that the latter has faced a kind of economic marginalization for a very long period. Therefore,the region's economy largely depends on the political standing of the region.

A part from opposition's political patronage that has led to marginalization in development in Nyanza, the region has also suffered other social calamities. Historically, the first HIV patient

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tested in Kenya in 1978 was from the region.Since then, there has been a high prevalence rate and especially among the community members around the lake.

The case of the Luo and, HIV and AIDS in the 1990shad historical justification. The skeptics argued against state-sanctioned measures to counter the disease in Kenya, given that the Luos, had been associated with dirt and were choleraic. Thiswas noted on the data on the prevalence of the disease that came out of the government's Ministry of Health and which showed that the Luo were the hardest hit ethnic group in the country. In the earlier political era, the Luo had been characterized by government officials as dirty and carriers of cholera.Therefore,the Luo in the 1990s HIV/AIDS had quickly become, besides the medical and moral problem that it clearly was for all Kenyans, a political issue(Mboya, 2009).

Although it cannot be refuted that the prevalence of HIV and AIDS has been politicked in Nyanza, the fact still remains that the region still holds high prevalence rate in Kenya.

The Luo community therefore portrays a community that has faced political marginalization which has gone down to affect both social and economic situation. It is in this context that gospel artist emerges in the community and their song texts reflect the happenings around them.

3.3The political and socio-economic factors that shape the context, form and features of gospel music among the Luo

3.3.1 Introduction

This chapter is meant to analyze and discusses the Luo gospel song themes from 1990 to 2013 in relation to the historical, economic, social and political situation experienced by the Luo community in the same period. It entails historical analysis of the context on which the gospel was composed and the song text analysis in order to show how the interaction and evolution of gospel music in the Luo community.

Music can be said to have been a powerful tool in economic and socio-political arena, in that it is used in as a means to get money and for social mobilization. Kaemmar (1993) agrees that music can indeed be used to mobilize peoplehence a powerful weapon. Pongweni (1982) likensmusic

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to the barometer,but used to measure people's moods.Jones (1992), lauds African music for its relationwith current events that usually carry political messages.

In the Luo community, a harpist used to play an important role in the community. Having learnt at the feet of elders, the harpist expressed people's philosophy in musical and poetic language. He drew his imagery from the environment around him and inspiration from the water, since the lake was important to the community (Odinga, 1967). Therefore most of these songswould accordingly relate to contemporary realities.

3.3.2 Song text analysis

Using the above arguments it can be said that most music and especially gospel music tends to address both socio-political and economic issues that are reflected in the world around them.

3.3.2.1 Political context of gospel music

Samuel Otieno Tito, one of the earliest Luo gospel musicians in the early 1990s when Kenya was experiencing turmoil. He was born and brought up in Mwanza Tanzania and moved to Kenya around 1960's and settled in southern part of Nyanza. He started his singing career as a secular musician playing mostly guitar. However in 1987 he got born again and changed from what he called filthy music to gospel music at around 1988 producing his first album in 1989. Currently he is a minister as a pastors in Global Pentecostal Ministries in KisumuIt is evident in most of his songs that they reflect both the political and social issues of his time. In one of the songs which appears in his first album, his says:

Joteko ema yako ngima, gin gi mor
E polo dala mar johawi x2
Jokinda ema kedo aminga
Kata lwenje biro gi geno loyo lwenje

The mighty are the ones who violently take eternal life,

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External life in heaven home of the blessed ones,
Those who persevere endure the fight for long,
And even if the war is fiercest they will definitely be victorious.

The words of this song reflect the political temperature of the time when Kenyans were looking for multi-partism which caused political unrest in the country. This songs directly attacked state sponsored violence on the opposition, and acted as an encouragement to the opposition to persevere in their fight for there is a reward for them at least if not in this world will be in the world to come. Paristau (2008:67) suggests that most politicians use gospel music to mobilize and draw their agenda. In this kind of the gospel music,the gospel musician uses the words in their surroundings which are also familiar with the bible to compost their songs with a meaning of the time.

Some of Tito's songsas *Piny Polo Ber* (Heaven is good)suggest the economic hardship that has been experienced in Kenya. The economic situation in the country had been shaped by the British colonial administration policies that argued that some communities were excluded from the mainstream development because they were not worth developing. After Kenya's independence, the first president Mr. Jomo Kenyatta continued with improving infrastructure left behind by the colonial government in Central Kenya to consolidate his power among the Kikuyu. He left the task of developing other districts were left in the hands of the members of parliament. This same approach was carried over by his successor President Moi. This kind of political patronage brought economic inequality in the country.The then Nyanza province suffered this blow just like other areas aligned to the opposition (Preeti 2001).

The following part of the song by Tito suggests the economic situation that was unbearable for his people. He tries to give hope for the heaven above against the hopelessness that the people were experiencing. At the same time he encourages people to brave on for they would soon leave this world to go to heaven. This song suggests the hard economic times and struggle that the community was going through. It is when the current situation is hard that people hope for the good place to come as a way of consoling themselves.

Polo ber wanadagie, polo ber wanadagie,

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Kata kapod adakie ekenya ka to chunya gombo paradise,
Chiegni duogo biro omowa jawar yesu nene osingore,
Ajiwo thuondi duto man elweny kiki uol kiki udog chieng.

Heaven is good we will live there, heaven is good we will live there,
Even when I still live in this Kenya, my heart longs for paradise,
Our savior will soon come for us as he promised,
I encourage the all the brave one in the battle,
That you should not be tired you should not withdraw.

After the chaotic 1990 to the peak of multi-party democracy acceptance, things did not go well as anticipated. From 1992 to 1997, the economic hardships and poor social conditionsushered in disillusionment among the people. As pressure mounted on the government from both national and international communities to look at the constitutional reforms for the benefit of all Kenya, the government turned violent to her citizens whowere already disillusioned.

Tito is seen to address the political hardship in Kenya and among the Luo community.Together with other gospel artists they demonstrate their concerns in the economic situation in the community. The artists have been in the fore front in capturing the suffering experienced by the majority of the community in different times of the composition of gospel music. They call on the community to stand firm and at the same time they assure them of the Devine providence.

3.3.2.2 Social context

The community, just like the larger Kenyan society, has faced unemployment. The high mortality rate among the active and productive members of the community has led to over dependency on the elderly members who have turned unproductive due to their age. The reality of HIV and AIDS has led to expensive medical care and funeral expenses. Agricultural productivity has also declined not only due to natural calamities but also the older generation left behind, are the ones involved in food production. In part of her song "Nyasaye Marahuma" sings of how God is able to feed her, cloth her and even pay her debts. Ogoma sings:

In ema itimona ng'uono maduong engimana Nyasaye ma jang'uono,
In ema ingeyo ng'uonona kata ka akosoni Nyasaye majahera,
Adiera in ema ijalima kinde ma adong kenda Nyasaye majalimbe,
In ema ingeyo pitha kata ka aonge chiemo Nyasaye majaritna,
In ema irwaka nanga kinde maduk olima Nyasaye majachiwo,

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Kendo in ema ichulo gopena seche majobendho oramo maonge kaka atimo,
Kendo in ema ikedo lwenjena magoyo ngimana Nyasaye majakedo,
In ema ichwero remo mar ngima kalvari misangoni oromo.

You are so gracious in my life God of Grace,
You forgive me when I am on the wrong God of Love,
You visit me when I have none to visit me God of visits,
You know how to feed me when have nothing to eat God my helper,
You cloth mynakedness, God my Giver,
Again you pay off my debtors when they can no longer wait,
Again you fight my battles that shake my life God my warrior,
You shed your blood of life on Calvary the full atonement.

The singer above suggest that occasionally, people may experience lack in one way or the other but God remains the provider in all circumstances.

Some respondents in the interview session as Ongunyo admits that there is rampant economic lack due to economic marginalization attributed to the central government in the past that still have impact on the community. A respondent (Ongunyo interviewed: March 20th 2015) observed that while coffee and tea farmers in Central Kenya had their loans waivered, nothing like that had ever been done to sugarcane farmers among the Luo community.

Some respondents on the other hand were pessimistic that the bad economic situation would ever change.They took solace in gospel music to have faith in God, never to look for more in the world (Willis interviewed March 20th2016).

The sociological analysis of the Luo community in the 1990s shows that it experienced a devastating effect of HIV and AIDS (Mboya, 2009). The gospel musicians made reference to the highest incidents of illness and death, at the same time calling upon God's merciful intervention. Tito sums up the tribulations of the Luo community from 1992 onwards. In part of his song "*Bilona lwenje*",(God fight for me) he bemoans the rampant deaths caused by the AIDS and HIV pandemic which almost threatened to extinguish the young generation.

It is during this time in the Luo community that the mystery of HIV and AIDS emergedtogether with several theories of infections of the health crisis. This was coupled with strong denial of its

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true existence. The community had embraced the common belief that Aids is *Chira*,a kind of curse coming as a result of the disobedience to the customs and rules of the community. This belief was more in the mind that in reality.Tito's song "*Polo Ber"*, Heaven is Good calls for change of mind, behavior and embracing Christ the savior for the healing. He sings:

Mad ikaw Yesu Jawar to inine koloko pachi,
Mad ikaw Yesu Jawar to inine koloko kiti,
Mad kaw Yesu Jawar to inine kitimo neno,
Mad ikaw Yesu Jawar to inine kochango dendi

I urge you to accept Jesus the Savior and you will see your mind changed,
I urge you to accept Jesus the Savior and you will see your behavior changed,
I urge you to accept Jesus the Savior and you will have a new testimony,
I urge you to accept Jesus the Savior and you will have him heal your body.

Many artists portray the reality of HIV and AIDS as a pandemic of eschatological proportion and always seeking Divine mercy. The chosen gospel artist under the study attained fame as they tried to give hope to the devastated community. Ogoma in her song "*Pinyni Rach"*(this world is bad) gives counsel to people both affected and infected by the disease to turn to God as the only solution.

Pinyini rach piny mamwaloni rach, jehova yie itera malo
Masiche odhuro tembe yimowa pile miyowa chuny lit ndalo duto
Piny agonda piny otimo mudho piny ochido kara ler ni kanye
Aluongo taya Jaherayie iwinja irie badi mondo ires jogi

Osiepe weyowa wede bende weyowa duto waneno kendo waywak
Seche orumo wagenuru dala kamakuyo ok nobedie
Osiepe weyowa wede bende weyowa duto waneno kendo waywak
Seche orumo wagenuru dala kamakuyo ok nobedie

Omiyo wanamor kawadonjoie polo Jerusalem dala maler
Omiyo wanarom kawadonjoie polo Jerusalem dala maler
Jowete wananere kawadonjoie polo Jerusalem dala maler
Nyithiwa wananere kawadonjoie polo Jerusalem dala maler

This world is bad the world down here is bad Jehovah please take me to heaven,
The troubles are numerous hurdles are weighing us down giving us heartache all the time,
This world is crooked, and full of darkness, the world is dark, where is light,
I call upon the Light the one who loves, heed to my cry and deliver your people.

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We mourn for friends and relatives are deserting us,
Time out, let's hope in Jerusalem where there is no mourning,
We mourn for friends and relatives are deserting us,
Time out, let's hope in Jerusalem where there is no mourning.

Therefore we will rejoice when we go to heaven, Jerusalem our good home,
Therefore we will meet when we go to heaven, Jerusalem our good home,
My brothers we will rejoice when we meet in heaven, Jerusalem our good home,
My sisters we will see each other when we go to heaven, Jerusalem our good home.

Ogoma, addresses the effect of the same disease, which is resulted into change in the attitude regarding sex and wife inheritance in the community. Large number of orphans being left led to overburdening of the old generation who would otherwise depend on their children for care; children headed homes and families when young orphaned children assume the roles of dead parents. Many parent had worries of losing their children at ripe ages. Due to over dependency rate poverty crept in and so strain of affording daily bread and health care to terminally ill relative became a big source of worry for the affected and infected. Some song texts address the social context directing the community to God as their only answer in the troubled times.

"Ngimana duto kawuono amiyo Nyasaye,
Paro machanda kawuono aweyo ni Yesu,
Tuoche maluora kawuono aweyo ni Yesu,
Weche machanda kawuono anyiso Nyasaye,
Nyithiwa duto kawuono anyiso Nyasaye,
Wechena duto kawuono atero ni Nyasaye."

I surrender my life to God,
My intellect, I leave to Jesus,
All my maladies, me I take to Jesus,
All my troubles, I tell God,
I surrender my siblings to God,
To God, I surrender all.

Analysis from song text shows that socio-economic problems such as HIV and AIDS and poverty shaped the content of a lot of music in the Luo community. The above songindicates that God is the only person who accepts and heals all manner of sicknesses. She urges the

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community to surrender to God all that is troubling them. These include poverty, disease and siblings orphaned by HIV and AIDS.

Since HIV and AIDS attacked mostly people of the prime age on whom the economic growth of the community depended, the effect had been economic hardships, forming a viscous circle and posing a cultural challenge in the community. In her other songs, Ogoma tries to mention these effects.They include hunger, huge debts, insecurity among orphans and widows, lack of proper clothing among others. She sings:

> *In emayiega pidha kata kaonge chiemo, Nyasaye ma jaritna,*
> *In ema irwaka nanga kinde maduk olima Nyasaye majachiwo,*
> *Kendo in ema ichulo gopena kajobendho oramo maonge kaka atimo,*
> *In ema ikedona lwenje magoyo ngimana Nyasaye majakedo,*
> *Kendo in ema ichuero remo mangima kalvari misangolilo.*
>
> You God accept to feed me when I have nothing to eat, my sustainer.
> You cloth my nakedness in the times that am visited with lack, my provider
> You pay my debts when my creditors insist that I must pay them,
> You fight my life battles you God, my defender,
> You shed your blood of life in Calvary, a perfect sacrifice.

Some respondents argued that their interest in gospel music was rejuvenated by gospel music sang at funerals and night vigils. (Onyango interviewed: Feb 12th 2016). As most members of the Luo community cared for their terminally ill relatives, travelled long overnight journeys to attend funerals for relatives, friends and colleagues, as they struggled to pay hospital visits and bills, they turned to gospel music for consoling messages (Aulo interviewed: Feb 13th 2016). This means that music which addressed the contemporary concerns of the people replaced the romantic love songs during funerals.

Local radio station such as Ramogi FM appealed to many people especially in its morning glory program when they air mostly gospel music. They mostly play Ogoma's songs that people agree that they are inspirational and helps them to face their challenges with hope (Oyier interviewed Feb 13th 2016).

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Apart from the inspirational morning songs local stations also offered its listeners to make request of the songs they would want to listen to and the prefer either Ogoma's songs or Caroline Omwaya. Most of these listeners who are facing challenges in life especially health and death related issues do request for gospel music. (Obwar, interviewed: May 3rd 2015).

A respondent confessed that he had lost a close friend through road accident and tuned in to a local radio station when he found Tito's song An Aseyie being sung and it consoled him giving him hope and courage to move on against difficulties he was facing (Owuor interviewed: January 24th2016). He sings it in part thus,

An aseyie kuom yesu Ruoth asingora mondo awuoth
Eyorene mi kasetho achopie e pinye mae polo
Piny polo ber piny polo ber
Ma Yesu miyo jomaler
An agombo mondo adonjie
Kama masira oongee a
A Yesu Ruoth a homboi
rita manguon akwayoi

I believe in Jesus, I promise to walk in his path,
That if I die I may I reach his home in heaven,
Heaven is good, heaven is good,
Which Jesus gives to his holy ones
I desire to reach there,
Where there is no trouble Jesus,
I beg you allow me to be there,
I am requesting for your care.

This has therefore showed the popularity of the gospel music in this period of challenge for it provides a solace in hard social and economic times and in as much as so songs can be politically placed like Tito's song, they have spiritual consolation to those in difficult situation. This confirms what Paristau (2008:67) had suggested above while discussing the causes for the dominance of gospel music in Kenya as decline in socio-economic situation.

3.3.2.3 Economic context

Apart from the devastating effect of the HIV and AIDS among the Luo community, gospel musicians also have themes like corruption, land grabbing and the insatiable love of wealth that is rampant in the wider Kenyan country and is reflected in the Luo community. This means that

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the gospel music among the Luo community tries to combine both eschatological and the present essence of the world as co-existence in a united tension. The following song from Ogoma is an example of a song which directly attacked the social ills in the community. At the same time, they admonished Christians against the love of material thingsnon lasting. This means that Christians should not allow themselves to be swayed by worldly pleasures as these do not make the different from the non-Christians.

Piny muneno dhano ogenoni pinyni lala nono,
Mwandu muneno dhano ogenoni pinyni lala nono,
Lope muneno dhano ogenoni pinyni lala nono,
Pesa muneno dhano ogenoni pinyni lala nono,
Geche muneno dhano ogenoni pinyni lala nono.
Omiyo bitelna Yesu lwanda, bitelna x2

"The world that people trust in will disappear,
The wealth that people trust in will disappear,
The lands that people trust in will disappear,
The money that people trust in will disappear,
The cars that people trust in will disappear,
Therefore guide me Jesus my rock."

Respondents argued that the rampant corruption and insatiable love of wealth are attributed to Christians who adore prosperity gospel, other than forsaking all for the kingdom of God (Atieno interviewed: Feb 14th 2016). Church leaders arguedthat since Kenyan population has 80% Christians and it is ranked as the most corrupt, then it means that many Christians have given into corruption and the rot in the society (Oyola interviewed: April2nd 2015)

Most of the gospel music in the Luo community such as Ogoma, Omwaya and Tito emphasize breaking away with the Luo traditional practices that are termed as backward and a hindrance to the spread of Christianity.

When looking at the current trends in African theology, for example Bediako (1995) call for Christianity in Africa to be truly, African aiming at integrating African Religion with Christianity. Most gospel musicianslike the African theologians do not despise culture. They do appreciate and still use some elements of the culture to make the gospel familiar and acceptable

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to the community,such as the use of local language and traditional music. This means that although they may regard traditional practices as bad there are some elements of the culture that they have retained their use for the do not contradict gospel teaching.

In this analysis I will start the discussion with the Luo traditional practices that most gospel artists consider as bad and should be left out; then will look at some of the culture that they have retained in their singing ministry.

In her song, Caroline Omwaya commonly known as Nyakaanan terms traditional beliefs and practices as evil. She associates them with backwardness, literally madness. In part of her song *Yesu Timo Hono*, Jesus of miracles she sings:

Jayalo Yesu golo ura gi lep ang'uola
Bishop Yesu timo hono gi lep anguola
Nyimine Yesu tieko gombo gi lep ang'uola

Preacher, Jesus is finishing backwardness with his tattered clothes
Bishops, Jesus is doing miracles with his tattered clothes
Sisters, Jesus is finishing mysteries with his tattered clothes

According to Nyakanaan, there is no need for Christians to live a backward life again for all these Jesus had done. Asked about *lep ang'uola* or tattered clothes during the interview, she argues that there is resemblance in the clothes Jesus wore at the cross with the type of clothes the traditional Luo society wore signifying that it is finished. Some fans agree that it is true there are some traditional practices that are so hard to do away with except by accepting Jesus as the Savior.

In the Luo traditional society, life was full of mysteries that were difficult to understand. The community also believed that there is a form of jealousy that made people not to love one another therefore instilling fear in the community. So they depended on the place of magicians to protect them.

Nyakanaan features some of these beliefs in her song showing how salvation through Jesus is the power above all these. She suggests that even after proclaiming salvation some magicians tried to thwart Christianity through their magic. In part of her song she sings:

Ajuoga sama uwacho weche marichoni jogo ma Nyasaye otiego,
Jobilo kata uneko aneka to Yesu commanda ochung e kedo,

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Ruoth otingo ngima manono ni jogo moyie kuome,
Tho e musalaba en fuwo ni jogo mapok owar.

The magicians say unpleasant words to those whom God has ordained,
The witchcraft even if you are killing, just kill but Jesus our commander is fighting for us,
Our Lord has eternal life, freely giving those who believe in him,
The death on the cross is foolishness to those who have not believed.

She also encourages both women and Christians that they should have no fear. Only Jesus would take care of their homes not diviners, magicians or man. This is so because in the community a widowed wife needed some man to care of her and her home through the practice of women inheritance. Inheritance had so much been valued in the community that women who abandoned the practice were said to be bringing bad omen in their own families. This created much fear and vulnerability amongst women. Her gospel music became a powerful tool for women to fight the tradition that made them vulnerable and rendered them powerless and hopeless without men. In part of her song "*Mae Yesu Makelo Ngima"* this Jesus brings life she says:

Mae Yesu makelo ngima, piny osando jatelo x2
MaeYesu marito miere piny osando jatelo
Adiera sama apake to aneno ngima piny osando jatelo
Mae Yesu ma golo gombo, piny osando jatelo '
Ma e Yesu makelo kuwe, piny osando jatelo
Mae Yesu masani orita piny osando jatelo
Ma e Yesu marito kiye piny osando jatelo
Mae Yesu ma pidho kiye piny osando jatelo

This Jesus brings life, the world persecuted the Leader
This Jesus cares for homes, the world persecuted the Leader
When I praise him I experience life, the world persecuted the Leader
This Jesus destroys lust, the world persecuted the Leader
This Jesus brings peace, the world persecuted the Leader
This Jesus now cares for me the world persecuted the Leader
This Jesus who feeds the orphans, the world persecuted the Leader
This Jesus who cares for the orphans, the world persecuted the Leader

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A critical analysis of the song text above indicates that the community did not accept that fact that women could even take care of themselves leave alone their orphans after the death of their husbands .

Even to date when one loses her husband, some men will come to them offering their help as they believe that the women without a man figure in their lives can do nothing. As such these women find such gospel music inspirational and will always want to listen to such songs to give them the strength to continue (Awino, interviewed: May 2, 2016).

Since the traditional practices upheld the power of men over women, girls had to live within the societal norm, which ensured that their development and roles occur within the social timeline at the expected time. A part from this, there is a clear demarcation of the role of girls and that of boys that made it near impossible for the girls or the boys to swop their roles even coincidentally.

Ogoma who started her singing ministry as a single lady had much to fight for in terms of girl child and boy child expectations in the community. She narrates that as she started gospel music, most men who dominated the secular music saw her as a threat in the music industry and used all means to stop her. According to her, the threat she posted was not because the gospel music would reduce the number of non-Christians and so interfere with the relevancy of the secular music but just because she was a girl, venturing into singing which has been the male domain for all time.

According to the traditional musicians they did not allow women in their singing and sometimes only a few were recruited to dance because the spirit of the song was bad. The words which they used were so filthy that most women would not want to voice them, the kind of dancing was so immoral that it was not meant for women. With this background, it was difficult for them to accept women singers and their opinion gospel singing and secular singing had no much difference in character except only in the wordings (Odhiambo Onyango, interviewed: Feb 20th2014)

To counter this, she (Ogoma) says that if secular musicians have composed songs to those whom they have loved and to those who have helped them, then it is in order for her to compose a gospel love song to God who has helped her. In part of the song she sings:

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An abiro wer an ating dwonda malo,
Makata piny duto odagi to an ayorgi ayora.
An abiro wer an ating dwonda malo,
Makata osiepe duto odagi to an ayorgi ayora.
Yawuoyi donge osewero adier, nyiri magihero e ngimagi,
An bende koro miyauru thuolo adwaro wero osiepna.
Jothumbe donge osepako, mana jotelo magigeno e gimagi,
Omiyo an bende miyauru, thuolo adwawero jaherana.

I will sing, I will raise my voice,
Even if the world refuses I will just face them.
I will sing, I will raise my voice even if all friends refused, I will face them too.
The men have sung love songs to the girlfriends of their lives,
May I also be given chance to sing for my friend.
Musicians have praise songs for the leader whom they value in their lives,
Therefore may I also be given a chance to sing for my lover.

Some respondents also agree that before the radicalization of the airwaves and the dominance of gospel music, the few local radio stations only had very limited chances for gospel music, only played just before death announcement or when Christians were given about thirty minutes to preach in the stations. However with this radicalization and emergence of the dominance of the gospel music most local stations have specified time allocated for the gospel music. Probably this is when the secular musicians found that the much airtime they used to enjoy had now been taken by the gospel music, bringing the supposed completion. However not all people enjoyed the secular music and so it is not competition but rather giving a chance to sideline (Were interviewed: May 3rd2016).

In the same song Ogoma also narrates the challenges faced by single ladies who do not seem to obey the social clock. When it looked like she was not going to get married within the expected age period, the community put pressure on her to be married. In her situation, even the most hated habit of girls getting married and failing to stay in the same making the come back to live with their parents was viewed as much better that not attempting marriage at all.

Sechego to anyuola bende penjore gima mona dhitedo kendo giwuoyo ahinya,
Bange gichako wacho ni gimoro rach koda anyuola joma ongeyo,
In mbeseni osetedo kendo moko duogo aduoga ango ma pod irito,
Koro wadwaro manyoni dichuo mondo okendi ndaloni koro kadho.

At the time the relatives were asking why I could not be married,

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After which they say that I seem to be having a problem; the relatives are "I know it all",
Your age mates have been married, some have even come back, what are you waiting for?
Now we want to give you a man to marry you because you are aging.

Gospel musicians therefore came up in their ministry not only to fight the bad traditions that should be replaced by the Christianity, but they also narrated in their songs some of the social injustices that are still practiced thereby creating awareness of the vices and the need to fight them for a healthy Christian living.

3.3.3 Summary and conclusion

In this section of the chapter I, have explored how the context of the gospel music artist influence their song text. This shows that through song text analysis, historical, political and socio-economic situations of the community can be found making gospel music a tool through which one can study history.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENDER OPPORTUNITIES IN LUO GOSPEL MUSIC

Having looked at the socio-political and economic context in which gospel music emerged,in this section, I will highlight the increasing profile of females in the gospel music industry.

We have seen in the narration of the gospel musicians that singing was majorly a male dominated field among the Luo. Attempt by the female artists to claim this space met negative stereotype community.

Female gospel musicians among the Luo, just like any other community have faced numerous challenges. A gospel artist (who did not want to be mentioned) shared that when she started her singing ministry, her parents did not support her, as they saw this as less serious career and after getting married she had to seek intervention from respected member of the society for her

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husband who termed music career as "unsafe ventures" to allow her resume her gospel singing ministry.

The economic inequality in the community places women at an economic margin, in that a lot of women who might be willing to join gospel singing always face financial challenges. Beatrice William, said that as an orphaned teenage, she had to live with Christians from church congregation. In this environment, she would be turned down whenever she expressed her dream of gospel singing due to her poor background. She narrates that due her poor background many of her friends wanted to hook her with a men to marry her so that she could have someone to depend on.

This economic difficulty is also expressed by Ogoma in one of her songs. She narrates that during her times of need many promised to come to her assistance but none honored the promises. Instead, they started wondering why she could not be married while her age mates were getting married and even coming back due to failed marriages.

E samoro igeno osiepe mago moheri ahinya kara giwuondi awuonda.
Osiepe nene osingona gigo mang'eny e ngimana kendo namor ahinya.
Bange kochopo kinde makoro koro amoko nene giloko paro
osiep koro olokona kido makoro kiaya ng'ama dikonya ere

Jomoko temo jiwa ni mondo adhach adhacha wan awana kanyakla
Osiepe moko bende jiwa ni mondo akas akasa pokna rita e dala
Yawa kata awuoth duk to an amor amora law naruakie dala
Nyithiwa kata anindo kech to mago ok ochuna chieng nachiem e dala

There are times you can hope in friends, but they are unreliable.
My friends promised many good thing in my life and I was so happy,
But later when I needed their promises fulfilled, they changed their mind.
They turned away from me, assumed me; where shall my help come from.

Some tried to encourage me: keep striving on that we are just together,
Some friends also encouraged me: just to put more, effort your reward is in heaven.
For me even if I walked naked, I will still be happy for I will be dressed in heaven.
My siblings even if I go hungry, I don't care for one day I will be fed in heaven.

When Nyakanaan in the song that I have quoted above encourages the born again Christians that it is Jesus who gives life, takes care of homes, cares for the orphans and feeds them; in a community where most women are not empowered, the wordings insinuate that women are ever

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looking for men for support and to care for them. A girl must be married to find a person to take of her. In case of a loss of husband, the woman must still look for another man to care of her and the orphans under her care.

Lilian and Hellen, both church leaders in the Anglican Church of Kenya (A.C.K) (Interviewed: January4th 2016) lament that most women who would like to produce their gospel music are economically challenged. Those women able to help are overwhelmed by the many development programs they are involved in. This, some men would want to interpret as reluctance to help because women are their own enemies.

This economic hardship coupled with government economic marginalization of the region, almost makes it impossible for a woman to rise against these odds of the community. We however, still havesuccessful female gospel musicians that have made it to the public space and gained economic empowerment.

The ideology that gospel music especially among the Luo represents a religious outlook has helped in facilitating the emergence of female gospel musicians in the community. Since they are understood as spreading the gospel through their songs, most gospel artists have found more acceptance than their secular counterparts.

Earlier on the dominance of the contemporary gospel music, I had cited Paristau (2008) who acknowledges that the growth of Christianity especially with the emergence of Pentecostalism and charismatic churches led to the growth of gospel music in Kenya. Majority of gospel musicians as Tito, Nyakanaan, and Beatrice William are from Pentecostal denominations while Ogoma, and Joan Onyango are from the A.C.K. When Pentecostal churches opened the opportunities to female ministry through gospel music, some artists, from the mainland churches braved the way and gained acceptance through their singing ministry. The major undoing with the denominational affiliation is that most of them do not feel obliged to support the artists, apart from being major markets for their music.

Female Luo gospel singers, just like any female in the community, do no regard themselves as being insulated from problems that face them as females. In the community as mentioned above, it was and still is not easy for females to venture into entertainment industry and their success is by God's grace.

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Song tracks of the Luo female gospel artists portray women issues, with an aim to addressing the entire community on the reality of the ills facing women (Beatrice William, interviewed: May 10, 2015). This same idea is echoed by Ojo (1998), with regard to the Nigerian context,where women have found gospel music as a way of self-expression and self-determination which aims at creation of more space for singing preachers through music.

Although it would be easy to argue that most female artists do no address issues like women violence which is found among the Luo community, it is good to appreciate that they have moved beyond the pulpit to bring out issues of concern in the community.

The indigenous evangelists trained by the white missionaries as evangelists were mainly men. Positions of leadership in church structures excluded women who are described as mere flock. Even churches in the former Nyanza Province inherited this kind of western gender tendencies that sidelined women from prominent leadership roles in the church. Gospel artists delinked themselves from this and began singing. Besides, this is also against the community's tradition where women could not take part in major decision making unless one was a first wife at an advanced age. Therefore, this shift is important for the development of gospel music in Luo community, churches as well as to the music industry in the country.

The liberative nature of the gospel singing has seen women not only break away from culture and tradition that has bound them for long. It has also opened new ways of preaching for women. Some bible texts such as 1Corinthians 14:34-35 indicate that women should not be involved in the business of public preaching. However, gospel artists regard their singing talent as a ministry calling for repentance and coming back to God. According to Beatrice William, a gospel artist does much work within a short period of time compared to an ordinary preacher, since they can reach a multitude of people and influence their lives through their songs.

The two female artist under this study portray a strict dressing code, arguing that they dress so to erase any thought that they can be immoral and that their moral standing is contradictory to the expectation of the society. In my opinion, the society still expects female artists to be saints and live extraordinary life. Though this might not be wrong in itself, it still illustratesthe challenges facing female Luo gospel musicians in the contemporary society.

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The gender opportunities outlined above are linked to the women other than men. Gospel music has given the women the opportunity to occupy the public space once dominated by men. Women issues have been aired through the gospel music creating awareness of their flight and fight. Gospel music has brought in liberation to the women in that they can preach through their songs without necessarily becoming pastors or church ministers to preach the word for the multitudes.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH ANALYSIS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 How gospel music has used culture

Evidence gathered in this study through interviews and gospel song text analysis shows that influence of indigenous traditions on Luo Gospel music are diverse. One is the use of a distinctive theme on which the musician develops improvisation or the antiphonal call and response pattern that is also cyclic in nature. Gospel music has call and response just as the traditional Luo music

Luo indigenous musical styles that have been adopted by gospel artists are both vocal and instrumental. The use of *orutu*, guitar and the *benga* form of music have traditional connotation in their rhythm and dance style and are still being used to date. Accordion is employed by Samuel Otieno Tito while Benga is employed by Eunice Ogoma Kepha. The gospel artists also

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admit that in as much as they would like to continue with some of the traditional musical instruments, the modern piano has all the elements of these instruments, creating no need of the instruments to be used again.

Just like the Luo traditional music, gospel music also has the composer who is the center of the music surrounded by dancers whose work is to dance to soloist who is the owner of the song. Using traditional connotations makes it easy for the target audience to identify with the songs and therefore it is easy for the songs to capture their attention and hence they are ministered to through the songs.

5.2 How Luo gospel music content has changed between1990 and 2014.

While the 1990s gospel music depended on the socio-political context of the day, the earlier gospel had lyrics which were more centered on religious concerns as baptism, victory, repentance and salvation. One gospel musician: Beatrice William interviewed: on 10th February 2014 noted that artists composed their songs according to what was happening around them at that particular time in relation to spiritual, social, emotional and economic realities. She observed that artists are forced to move with time and capture the current trends in the country and the community in particular, to avoid the risk of losing their audience or fans.

Samuel OtienoTito on the other hand argues that the socio- economic and political situation in Kenya and how it influenced the Luo community could not be ignored any longer as it was deemed to be at its worst. Having the same thoughts as William, the artist felt that it would be captivating to express discontentment towards the government through gospel music rather than secular which had been known for such; and most of them like the late Dr. Owino Misiani had been very critical of the government.

A very experienced gospel artist who wished to remain anonymous, agreed that gospel music had changed because of commercialization. He accused upcoming gospel artists of loving money and dragging immoral dances and 'hard' musical styles like rock into gospel so that the artists would gain money and celebrity status. Celebrity had become the goal rather that the message.

A renowned choirmaster Dickens Oyuga, interviewed on 17th February 2015 also pointed out that the influence and relevance of the gospel music had declined, as the gospel artists hurry in

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their composition and production with an aim of making money. This makes them produce songswhich do not minister.They lack time to meditate and read the bible to get the spiritual inspiration with good news message to pass.

Another choir master, Moses Oyuga interviewed on 18th February 2015noted that the gospel music has changed because today, some of non-Christian musicians sing gospel music for money. Thesetendencies have brought worldliness orientation in gospel music.

Joan Onyango,a gospel artist interviewed on 9th June 2015, suggested that if most gospel artists have their song texts analyzed, then it is easier to conclude that their themes reflects a shift, shaped by the other social, political and economic environments making up the history of Luo community from 1990s. It emergeed from the song texts that issues such as AIDS and HIV, poverty, corruption, political violence and hope for a better feature oftencaptured.

5.3 Factors that determine the features and changes in Luo gospel music.

From the interviews and song text analysis, there are several factors that determine the features and changes in Luo gospel music. Socio- economic and political environment was found to have a lot of influence as far as textual themes are concerned.

Analysis of gospel song texts, indicates that most issues raised have to do with poverty, corruption, political violence and HIV and AIDS.

Before 1990, most choirs such as the Malaika choir used guitars and drums for their performance and rarely was there any kind of dance during such performance. The emergence of keyboards influenced not only the choir but also the individual gospel artists.

Pastor Appella of Chrisco (Pentecostal) church interviewed on 20th May 2015 admits that the gospel music hassomehow been competing with secular music. The church has to adopt certain types of gospel music in order to attract and retain the youths in the church.After all, there will always be somewhere the same is accepted if you fail to perform such in your church. If the youth can't find it in the church then secular music will be a better option for them. He continues to argue that it is not only accepting the kind of gospel music that might be considered less serious but also the acceptance of the use of new and expensive musical instruments to attract the youth.

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5.4 Concluding Remarks

The research provided an overview of contextual setting of gospel from 1990-2014. The main research question focused on how culture has been used in the development of Luo gospel artist from 1990-2014. The study which was majorly done among the Luo community on gospel artist, traditional musicians, church leaders and gospel music fans.

In the document analysis together with interviews, it has been established that that the Luo gospel music has undergone a lot of changes and continuity in terms of socio-political and economic context of the community. The song text as noted above has also evolved according to the setting of the gospel composers.

It has also been seen that the Luo gospel artist have been able to create public space for themselves in their performers although women undergo public scrutiny than male counterparts.

Despite the socio-political and economic difficulties that the community has faced, the gospel artists have come up to inspire and encourage people to live a hopeful life, for God still cares and is in charge. This has made gospel music to effectively communicate social, spiritual and economic issues.

5.5 Recommendations of the study

1. More and more gospel artists should be encouraged to embrace indigenous music cultures in their music. This helps in the spread of the gospel since majority of the audiences easily identify with traditional aspects of music.
2. People in authority (church leaders or governments) should always take time and listen to every new gospel music for their contents will always be communicating ills in the society or challenges that the people are undergoing, that may require their attention and intervention.
3. Gospel music as an aspect of culture is dynamic so there is need to continually research on its change and continuity so as to keep track of social, political, religious and economic trends in the context of Luo societal milieu.
4. More studies should be done on the musicological features of gospel music and Luo traditional secular music in among the Luo community in order to establish creative inspiration and resources.

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5. Through this project new insights on how to preserve gospel music and lyrics should be developed.
6. Comparative studies within Kenya on how indigenous cultures have been affected by foreign styles could be carried out.

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Appendix i: Interview schedules

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GOSPEL MUSICIANS

1. When did you start your singing career and what led you to be a gospel musician?

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2. What are your views on the singing for God and for money associated with gospel music in Kenya today?

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5. What do you think is more important in gospel music between song text and the musical style?

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6. As a gospel musician to what extent has your music accommodated indigenous influence in terms of message and instruments?

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7. What aspects of your music do you consider to have been derived from foreign influences?

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8. Looking at gospel music since 1990, what do you think are the major changes that have occurred in terms of theme, form, musical and style?

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9. Are the Luo gospel musicians' torchbearers of the faith they claim to preach?

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SCHEDULE FOR TRADITIONAL MUSICIANS

1. When did you start your singing career and what led you to be a traditional musician?

   ……

2. What do you consider when choosing the traditional music theme?

   ……

3. What are the dominant issue that are found in your music?

   ……

4. In your opinion what is your view on playing music for money?

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5. Why do you think the *nyatiti* playing was never meant to be played by women

   ……

6. Are there other types of music that were meant to be performed by women only and why?

   ……

7. What makes your music different from the gospel music?

   ……

8. In your opinion what aspects of traditional music have been borrowed by gospel musicians?

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9. How have your music handled issues like HIV/AIDS

……

10. How has the traditional music responded to the socio-economic and political situations affecting the Luo community?

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHURCH LEADERS

1. As a church leader, what type (style) of gospel music do you encourage in your church, and why?

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2. What do you think is more important in gospel music between song text and the musical style?

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3. What are your views on the commercialization of gospel music in Kenya?

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4. In your view what are the Luo gospel thematic frames that are being handled by local artists today?

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5. How have gospel musicians in Luo community handled topical issues like ailments as HIV/AIDS, healing, poverty, prosperity and violence?

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6. How useful do you think the Luo gospel musicians have helped in the promotion of Christianity?

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7. Whom do you think is more effective as a preacher between the gospel singers and pulpit practitioners among the Luo community?

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8. What are the changes that have occurred in musical instruments and dances in gospel music in your church?

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9. To what extent has acculturation (borrowing from culture) occurred in the Luo gospel music, and what are your views on the same?

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10. What are the influences of the political, social or economic issues that are affecting the Luo community on the Luo gospel music?

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE GOSPEL MUSIC FUNS

1. As a listener what are you more concerned about in music, the sound itself or about the song text? Give reasons

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2. What are your views on the commercialization of gospel music in Kenya?

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3. Who is your favorite Luo gospel artist and why?

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4. Who is your worst Luo gospel artist and why?

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5. How do the Luo gospel musicians participate in the spread of Christianity?

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6. What are your views on the use of musical instruments and dances in gospel music by Luo gospel artists, and how has this changed over time?

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7. Looking at gospel music since 1990, what do you think are the major changes that have occurred in terms of theme, form, musical style and instrumentation?

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8. How have the Luo gospel musicians responded to political, social or economic issues that are affecting the community?

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9. How has gospel music responded to the socio-economic and political situations affecting the Luo community?

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10. Which are the traditional Luo practices being factored into gospel music?

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11. How are males and females portrayed in Luo gospel music?

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12. How do you think gospel musicians in the Luo community have handled topical issues like HIV/AIDS, healing, poverty, prosperity and violence?

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13. Which musical style do you think is the most popular among Luo gospel artists and why?

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14. What do you think is the most appropriate musical style to be used in Luo gospel music and why?

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Appendix ii: List of interviewees

Music Fans	**Date of Interview**
Edward Owuor	24th January 2016
Willis Onyango	12th February 2016
Judith Aulo	13th February 2016
Jane Oyier	13th February 2016
Jackon Oyola	2nd April 2015
Eunice Awino	2nd May2016
Joan Obwar	3rd May 2016
Traditional Musicians	**Date interviewed**

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Odhiambo Onyango	20th February 2016
Jared Ongunyo	20th March 2015
Moses Were	3rd May 2016
Church leaders	**Date interviewed**
Lilian Otieno	4th January 2016
Hellen Onyango	4th January 2016
PastorAppella	20th May 2015
Gospel Musicians	**Date interviewed**
Moses Oyuga	17th February 2015
Dickens Oyuga	18th February 2015
Beatrice Williams	10th May 2015
Joan Onyango	9th June 2015

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