Ethnic Nationalism: The Role of Kalenjin Popular Music

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Abstract

This paper attempts to critically review selected song texts in order to show the way music encapsulates pressing concerns of the members of what can be referred to as the “Kalenjin” community. It concerns itself with the question of Kalenjin nation formation, the contradictions arising out of the attempts at nation formation and more importantly, relate the significance and contribution of the music lyrics to national formation. The contests that arise out of creating a space on which to play out the Kalenjin identity is given prominence. The interest is on the ways in which musicians imagine the ‘Kalenjin’ nation. In other words, it envisages situations in which musicians participate in circumstances where identity is created and performed to prop up a loose politically and socially engineered edifice. The conclusions drawn is that, Kalenjin musicians employ their music to structure, shape and implant in their listeners aspects of ethnic consciousness and as a result compels them to imagine themselves as a nation. The musicians capture the societal symbols and myths in an attempt to consolidate the constructed unity. Similarly, the electronic media, specifically the vernacular radio station KassFm was found to play a significant role in the project of national construction. The paper concludes that the Kalenjin consciousness that has been created can, to a big extent, be attributed to the ethnic popular music.

Key words: popular music, ethnic nationalism, identity, Kalenjin
Introduction

Simatei (2008:2) while commenting on the Kalenjin popular music scene observes that, “One particularly salient feature of Kalenjin popular music since the late 1990s is its articulation and constitution of a “Kalenjin” consciousness”. The concept of Kalenjin itself is a problematic one. It is problematic in the sense that it does not refer to a fixed group of people but to a loosely, socially constructed edifice whose only relationship can be found in what Waterman (1997:49) refers to as a “dialect chain”. This means that members of what is referred to as the ‘Kalenjin’ are spread over a long linguistic continuum with language, culture and customs that change gradually to a point that they are almost alien at the extreme ends of the chain with very limited link holding them together.

There is need for a critical evaluation of the social myths and other social features which contribute to the prevalence of the themes. It is the themes which mark out the ‘Kalenjin’ space on which identity is negotiated and played out. This is carried out through an evaluation of how historical and mythical memory is captured and manipulated by the musicians in the attempt to (re)constitute a ‘Kalenjin’ nation. In other words, the focus is on how music serves as a vehicle for the reconstitution of a narrative that foregrounds the new nation. As such, it endeavours to show the means through which, music is implicated in the sphere of contest for creating and playing out the imagined identity.

The presupposition is that music is involved in the imagination of the nation and also serves as a mirror of the contents and form of that imagination. Consequently focus is placed on the significance of conflicting allegiance for the imagined constructed identity of the Kalenjin against the sub-ethnicities that refer to components that make up the ‘Kalenjin’ nation. The expectation is that the ambivalence of loyalty can only have strength for as long as there is no perceived external threat. In other words, the imagined nation is in reality a space in which new functional public spaces are created. In a way, the ‘Kalenjin’ nation is an imaginary entity created out of fear of domination by the “other”, where “the other” refers to any of the numerically dominant ethnicities in Kenya. The anxieties that inform the quest for national
consciousness is aptly captured by Richards (2005:21) who views national consciousness as “a transitional step, a site that provides a certain kind of awakening”. He writes:

Discourses of nationalism must be examined in terms of the environment in which and for which they are generated, [considering] the historical, political, social and economic contexts that are often the products of antagonism and contestation in fragmented societies (Richards 2005:22)

History as such is important in forging a nation in situations where members of what may be considered as one community, are constantly engaged in negotiations of both political and emotional nature in an environment which requires a choice between allegiance to the imagined constructed entity such as the Kalenjin and the smaller imagined sub-communities which constitute it. The sub-communities for the better part are self sustaining entities with their own social, economic and political structures which may not, necessarily, be shared by other sub ethnic groups which may aspire to consider themselves as members of the single Kalenjin society. For instance, in contrast to other Kalenjin sub-ethnic groups, the Nandi, one of the groups that constitute the Kalenjin unit had developed a relatively centralized government structure controlled by an orkoiyot, a sort of spiritual and political leader (Mwanzi, 1976).

The other sub-ethnicities operated independently under a loose leadership managed by a council of elders with each elder having relatively equal powers in regard to decision making. These differences in the structures of political leadership have at times contributed to intra-ethnic contests and mistrust. The contests are further stretched to involve those that exist between the constructed Kalenjin identity and the requirements of the allegiance to the larger post colonial state of Kenya, which is made up of many nationalities which are constantly in a state of contestation and negotiation for supremacy and/or visibility.

**Imagining the “Kalenjin” Nation**

Nationalism can be explained as a state of collective self consciousness. This means that individuals consider themselves as a part of a larger entity. The presupposition for the creation of a nation is the issue of common ideals developed and promoted for the common good which play a primary role in the creation and promotion of a cultural consciousness and identity.
Identity arises in situations where the promotion of common values give a foundation for harnessing of popular social, political and cultural energy in an attempt to instill a sense of self sacrifice for the common good of the imagined community. Brennan (1990:49) notes that, “The nation is an abstraction, an allegory, a myth that does not correspond to a reality that can be scientifically defined”. These ideas can be borrowed to explain the rise and development of the Kalenjin nation by virtue of its having a discernible socio-economic and political structure. In addition, is the fact that the Kalenjin as a homogeneous identifiable group, is made up of smaller groups aspiring to come together as a single entity. Consequently, the creation of nationalistic fervour rests basically on symbolic (re)presentations aimed at evoking a sense of unitary culture even in societies with diverse cultures. Nationalism thus becomes a kind of social engineering. As such it deliberately tries to put together various elements of history, myth and a common language towards the creation of a unified entity. The Kalenjin popular musicians have attempted to seize and manipulate this towards the generation of what may be considered a nation. The process of the generation of national identities implies political, economic, social and cultural self determination and in such situations, national cultural identity becomes a necessary component of nationalism.

Yet, Richards (2005:21) sees, “national consciousness as a transitional step, a site that provides a certain kind of awakening and not as an end of a process”. As such, his feeling is that, nationalism is conveniently appropriated for purposes other than the stated nationalist values and objectives. This argument implies that nationalism is a stepping stone towards the achievement of something other than the satisfaction of being patriotic to one’s nation.

In consideration of the fact that national pride develops in an environment of contestations and fragmentation and the resultant attempts at consolidation through negotiations, there is danger of contamination of the spirit of national formation and the shape of this identity because of competing interests of the different sub-ethnicities. In a society like the ‘Kalenjin’, the interests are overwhelming considering the requirement for an individual to delicately balance allegiance to the constructed monolith of the ‘Kalenjin’ vis a vis the small imagined sub-ethnic units to which they belong. This is further compounded by the requirements for due allegiance by the members to the nation-state of Kenya with its own set of demands and values.
Granted the diverse demands, it becomes manifest that members of a given community are involved in constant negotiations to strike a balance between the competing interests. The level of loyalty is always determined by factors that may not be visible. The invisible factors according to Premdas (1995) are what he calls mental maps that provide a blueprint for the direction and magnitude of the negotiation. He explains that:

In the heads of the citizens are ethnic maps that are constituted of the many solidarity communities, inter-group likes and dislikes and scripts that guide the choice of friends and neighbours. These maps locate the identity of the citizen in the wider framework of social order. (Premdas 1995:1).

Accordingly, the maps serve as windows and filters through which friends and enemies are identified, defined and sorted out. It is these maps that can be said to inform the Kalenjin perceptions and which are then appropriated by the musicians as a means of configuring group formation and solidarity. These are subsequently expressed as rival claims to those of other groups. Significantly, in a culturally pluralistic society like Kenya, “ethnicity is a politically charged phenomenon whose consciousness is situated into existence by ‘triggers’ such as group contact and policy choices by the state that in turn precipitate defensive group quests” (Premdas 1995:4). The result is that the ethnic group consolidates as a political unit, because symbolically, the group solidarity offers a possible protective buffer as well as possibility of material advantage based on identification with it. Man Like Rono, a popular Kalenjin musician came into prominence soon after Moi (former president of Kenya and member of the Kalenjin community) retired from the presidency has captured this this idea in regard to situation that the Kalenjin found themselves in after Moi’s retirement. At the time, the Kalenjin felt that they were under persecution from the members of the incoming political dispensation. His track entitled *Mongeusech*, which is translated as ‘let us protect ourselves from persecution’ capitalizes on the ‘Kalenjin’ post-Moi feelings of vulnerability to rally them to join hands. The singer exhorts members of the ‘Kalenjin’ to rise up and protect themselves in an environment of stiff competition and perceived persecution from other nations. The opening verse sets the ground for the justification of the quest by the various sub-ethnicities of the Kalenjin to consolidate as a
single national unit. In the song, he deliberately perceives Kalenjin as a homogeneous entity whose individual members have a stake, he says.

*Ohyee Kalenjin oh, O Kass bororiendo.*  Oh Kalenjin, listen people of our nation

*Agot ngomokass oh, ko kotai kiramwa*  Even if you do not listen, at least I have told you

*Agot ososwoon oh! Ko momi ng’ala.*  Even if you disagree, it is not a problem.

The musician through this verse prepares the ground for the imagination of a ‘Kalenjin’ nation in that, although he comes from the Kipsigis, a Kalenjin sub-ethnic group, he structures his lyrics in such a way that it addresses the emotional concerns of the various sub-ethnicities. In the process it brings them to a situation where they end up considering themselves as an important component of a larger construct that is Kalenjin. To him the nation and the people who imagine themselves as Kalenjin are one and the same. The suggestion is that whatever befalls an individual member is of concern to the entire construct.

The proclamation by the musician that he has done his part in speaking to the nation even if some members do not agree with him supports the assertion above. He sees himself as a member of the ‘Kalenjin’ nation and as such feels that he owes a debt to the nation by ‘educating’ them. The musician in that case considers himself as a social educator and critic. He thus feels, like all artists that, his duty is to streamline the society and offer a vision which the society is free to adopt or reject. The musician is however alive to the possibility of contests that his proclamations may arouse.

He is aware of the fact that not all members of the imagined nation may agree with him. This could be informed by the covert presence of latent intra-national contests that always emerge as soon as an external threat is overcome whose contests he is aware of. The notion is clarified in the following verse that traces the cause of the disjuncture in the imagined nation to poor leadership, he states:

*Emoni kimi, mako nekinye*  The society, has changed

*Balote bikyok, nekakobesiech,*  Our leaders are politicking and have divided us

*Kandoichuchok amobakaktech*  Our leaders, please do not neglect us
Osorwech woih, osorwech woi, protect us, protect us!

The musician recognizes the challenges of nation formation and points out that change plays a role in the form and content of the imagined nation. Nevertheless, he goes on to implicate the politicians/leaders in the problems that interfere with the creation of the nation. In a damning indictment of the politicians, he accuses them of being dishonest to the ideals of the nation and blames them for the failure of the nation to hold because of their selfish interests at the expense of the social good:

Kandoichucho amoalde bororienyo
Leaders do not betray our nation
Motingeusech, komometoi kinet
Even if we are harassed, do not neglect
the breast (that nourished you)

It is instructive to note the image that the musician has employed. He has used the mother’s breast to signify the nourishing qualities of the nation. The nation is perceived as the mother who offers both nourishment and protection to a helpless infant, in this case the leaders. It is the imagined ethnic group that has nurtured and protected them and as such, they are under an obligation to protect and defend it. However, there is a feeling, in the tone of the song, to suggest that they are not doing as much as is expected. The result is that their actions expose the imagined Kalenjin nation to external threats.

The threats are specifically those from other ethnicities within the state of Kenya and particularly those from the Kikuyu which is represented by the ruling elite of that ethnic group. The suggestion that they can be compromised to betray their nation alludes to the prevailing political environment where corruption is endemic and nothing is beyond its reach, where individualism overrides the interest of the ethnic group. However, this cannot be taken to mean that this state of affairs is limited to the Kalenjin nation. It only gains significance in consideration of the intention of the musician to bring together members of the Kalenjin sub-ethnicities who are in constant suspicion of the intentions and actions of the supposed leaders who represent the interests of specific sub communities. The musician typifies the betrayal as a form of auction

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where the leaders sell the community to the highest bidder with no regard to the morals and values of the society. These are things that are close to the hearts of members of a nation. The fear of betrayal from within is exposed by the musician to project the general apprehension of the members. Through his lyrics, he is engaged in the attempt to contextualize the fears of the Kalenjin’ nation vis-à-vis the hegemonizing attributes of the nation state and indeed of other ethnic groups which the Kalenjin society is in constant contest for resources and political space. The musician is a member of the nation as well as an actor wherein he tries to shape and direct social perceptions. As a social actor, the musician is involved in “read[ing] and manipula[ting] [available] signifiers in the course of interaction as he attempts to categorize others in a kind of negotiation” (De Andrade 2000: 272).

Ronoh’s arguments are taken to another level by Geoffrey Rotich of the Makiche Boys Band. The band is a new creation which came into being at the inception of the radio station Kass FM. It developed to take advantage of the publicity that the station offered. It is possibly as a result of this reason that the band concentrates on songs that promote Kalenjin unity in line with the statement of the station which aims at promoting understanding among its listeners. In a track entitled Kacher Kolenjin, which means, my challenge to the Kalenjin, the musician asserts that the “Kalenjin” nation cannot be seen in isolation from other ethnicities in Kenya. At any rate, what happens within the Kalenjin nation must put into consideration the actions of other nationalities. Just like Ronoh, he imagines the Kalenjin nation in his songs by addressing the edifice of the Kalenjin as opposed to addressing his own sub-ethnic group, the Kipsigis. He however places the Kalenjin nation in the context of other ethnic groups in Kenya. Of particular interest is his exhortion to the nation to compete with the “others.” He says:

- **Ongeistoegei chebetech bikcho**
  Let us avoid those who mislead us

- **Si kwo tai emet, kutinyo, bororienyo.**
  So that our land can prosper on one language, our nation

- **Ongisomesan lagokcho, koit yeite bik lets**
  Let’s educate our children to the level of other nations

- **Sikesoitaen eh, sikesoitaen kutinyo**
  So that they may bring us our share of the resources
The musician raises several fundamental issues as regards the imagination of the Kalenjin nation. Just like Ronoh, he is alive to the presence of forces that may be interested in dismantling the identity of the nation. He advises that such people should be ignored for the sake of the survival of the nation. Another significant issue he raises involves the centrality of language in creating the Kalenjin nation. Language to him is synonymous with the nation. He asserts that the nation “is because of language”. He ignores the linguistic variations which at extreme ends of the nation might be unintelligible and asserts that they are one, people of one language – Kitwek (speech).

The issue of competition with the “other” is also raised and he exhorts the people to educate the children so that they can also participate in the sharing of the nation-state ‘cake’. The line betrays the underlying reason for the creation of the nation. The insistence that children have to participate in bringing goodies to the nation informs the wish of getting to do what others are doing. There is an acknowledgement that not all members of the nation are able to fend for themselves. In such a scenario, able members are expected to assist the weak. This is a call to unity so that none is exposed. Brotherhood is thus given prominence for the stability and happiness of the nation:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Nemucheigei akine wee} & \quad \text{Those who are able} \\
\text{Ikonobu ngo’ ne nyerat} & \quad \text{Assist the weak.} \\
\text{Mabet kikimuin, wee kutinyo} & \quad \text{Be courageous and ignore what others may say.}
\end{align*}
\]

This basically implies that the nation is more important than what others may think. In other words, members of the nation are supposed to support each other without regard to the opinions of the “other”, in short the nation is supreme and in the words of Premdas, (1995:4) “ethnic group formation is expressed behaviourally as rival claims to those of other groups”.

There is also the feeling that the aspirations of the members who imagine themselves as a nation are not always the same as those of their leaders. There seems to exist constant trepidation about the commitment of the political leaders to the values of the ‘Kalenjin’ nation. It is this nagging
apprehension that informs the assertion of Jane Kotut of the Keiyo Stars Band in a track entitled
*Rift Valley*. Who says:

*Rift valley keii agenge Kalenjin*  
*Rift Valley moaldekei we Kalenjin*  
*Rift valley sinetab kugo ak kogo.*

Rift Valley we are one Kalenjin  
Rift Valley do not betray one another  
Rift valley the homeland of our ancestors.

She asserts that the ‘Kalenjin’ nation is a single entity. She thus imagines and constructs the ‘Kalenjin’ nation as such. Further, she recognizes the latent presence of subteranean mistrust among the various sub-ethnic nationalities and sees it as a weak point in the construct. It is the weak point that is of concern and the danger of betrayal and disintegration is real. To this end a strong appeal is made to historical links. The assertion that Rift Valley the land, is the homeland and the ancestral place of a common ancestor would likely appeal to emotionally sensitive nerve of members of the nation which invariably is expected to mitigate against the temptation to betray it.

Kotut further imagines a nation that is sovereign. It is sovereign in the sense that a situation is imagined wherein, the decisions affecting the ‘Kalenjin’ nation are made by the members of the nation without interference from the ‘other’. To highlight the significance of this, she uses the powerful image of castrating a bull.

*Rift valley molotwech ache kirginyo*  
*Rift Valley kilote ache kirginyo*

Rift Valley, do not castrate our bull  
We will castrate our bull ourselves.

The first line is clearly addressed to the ‘other’ not to interfere with affairs of the nation and that the members are capable of making their own decisions without assistance from anybody. This is an assertion of their right to make independent choices. Instructively, the image hits at the centre of the ‘Kalenjin’ psyche where cattle form the basis of their thoughts, actions and imaginations, indeed the bull is the protector of the herd and it is the prerogative of the owner to decide when and how to castrate it. Clearly, this is one way in which culture has been implicated in the creation of the Kalenjin nation. Ngugi (1981) has rightly made the observation that:
[A] Culture embodies a community’s structure of values, the basis of their world outlook and how they see themselves in relation to other communities… [It] is values that a people have that are the basis of their collective and individual image of self. (Ngugi 1981: 9).

As such, culture gives a basis for cultural identity which is then employed to harness the collective energies of members of a society to imagine a nation. Significantly, culture as a basis gives support to the contextualization of similarities which are then reified to justify exclusion or inclusion into a nation because the basis is on “difference founded on a fiction of origin and descent and subject to forces of politics, language and religion” (Esonwane 1993:57). In such a scenario, culture provides the yardsticks with which to measure the depth of “belongingness” to the ethnic group. The notion of culture, nevertheless, is not a perfect measure as to the level of ‘belongingness’ although it may contribute, at least initially to the creation of an identity. However it may provide the cement that holds the different entities together to the point of imagining themselves as a single entity. This idea is reinforced by Brown’s (1995) assertion that:

The legitimacy and the power of the invented nationhood does not depend upon its factual accuracy but rather on the power to select and deploy symbols which resonate with aspects of contemporary culture and to skillfully inculcate myths of organic unity through appropriate channels (Brown 1995:3).

The ‘Kalenjin’ musicians capitalize on societal symbols which are culture based and culture sensitive and which they subsequently appropriate to generate a bond that attempts to hold the various Kalenjin sub-ethnic groups together. In that case, McLeod (2000) asserts that in a post-colonial society with heterogeneous identity demands:
The sense of mutual belonging is always created by performance of commonly shared narratives, rituals and employment of perceived common symbol which guide perception of the individual member to look at things from the collective point of view (McLeod 2000:111)

And one of the strongest elements that is constantly alluded to by Kalenjin musicians is the Tulwop Kony (Mt. Elgon) story. Apart from its being perceived as the last place in which the members of the different sub-ethnicities dispersed, it also serves as a strong point of reference for Kalenjin unity. The musicians Mr ‘D’ and Margaret Chemeli, two Kalenjin musicians who came into prominence by singing love songs during Moi’s reign recognize the central role that the mountain holds in Kalenjin imagination and as a consequence, have given prominence to the issue of Mt Elgon in one of their songs. They valorize the significance of the place in attempts to generate a Kalenjin unity. In one verse of their song ‘Kibagenge’ which is translated as unity, they appeal for Kalenjin unity because, according to them, they are children of one family. In addition, the danger of separation does not only endanger one sub-nationality but the entire Kalenjin nation. The musicians say:

*Ngotkobesie  kiomok kelenjinok sei*  
*If you separate, you will be annihilated*

*Among’ichkei we lagochu*  
*Do not quarrel among yourselves*

*Sikosich bunyot ye’chute*  
*That you expose your weaknesses*

*Okwee oh lagokab Kapchii*  
*You are the children of one family*

*Kioyo-yopu boiyot agenge Kalenjin*  
*You are children of one father*

*Neking ’ete tulwet akopcheita lagok*  
*Who inhabited the mountain and set them forth*

The song as such capitalizes on the perceived common history of the Kalenjin people to generate interest in unity. McLeod has identified the importance of such commonalities in the generation of a common identity and asserts that:

The nation depends upon the invention of traditions which are made manifest through the repetition of specific symbols or icons. The performance of national traditions keeps in place an important sense of
continuity between nation’s present and its past and it helps to concoct the unique sense of shared history and common origins of the people (McLeod 200:69).

The musicians as such highlight and repeatedly employ appropriate symbols and icons that foster a sense of unity by appealing to the mythical and historical possibility of a shared origin.

It is the interplay of social symbols, icons and values which produces a culture which generates in the members of the Kalenjin nation a yearning for a sense of homogeneous identity. Gongoware has argued in another context that closely approximates the Kalenjin situation that:

Collective memories are conducts for the connection of past experience with present ones in the collective identity process; as it provides through narratives interactively exchanged an additional source of unity. (Gongoware 2003:486).

The import of the assertion rests on its concern with elements of historical past in contributing to the creation of the nation. History plays an important role in the generation of national imaginings because in the opinion of McLeod:

. . . [m]any national histories, certain events are ritually celebrated as fundamental to the nations past fortunes and present identity which directly connect the narration of history with the repeated performance of those symbols and icons (McLeod 2000:70).

In situations such as the above, the past is recreated to provide ground for the constitution of a social identity. It is through performance of social narratives that the nation begins to believe in homogeneity which is brought into sharp focus by the reference to common symbols. The repeated performance thus forms a basis for a focal point around which members of disparate sub-ethnicities gather as a single body because a lot of emotional significance is attached to the symbols.
For instance, Kipchamba arap Tapotuk in a track entitled *Koitalel arap Samoei* relates the circumstances surrounding the demise of the leader. Koitalel Samoei arap Turugat was an *orkoiyot*; a quasi religio-political leader of the Nandi (a sub-ethnic group of the Kalenjin). He led the Nandi people in a protracted insurrection against the British attempt to construct the Kenya-Uganda railway across their territory. He was assassinated in 1905 by a British army captain Richard Meinertzhagen after being duped to attend an ostensible peace meeting. The musician appropriates his position and subsequent death and imagines that he was fronting for the interests of the entire Kalenjin nation. The result is the consolidation and magnification of people’s perceptions towards the cruelty of the colonial government and can be stretched to include the present “other”. This would imply the the current political dispensation is viewed by members of the Kalenjin society as an act in exclusion from benefiting from state resources. The musician sings:

*Kingoit chumbeek Kenya*  
*When the Europeans arrived in Kenya*

*Kobargei ak Kalenjin*  
*They fought with the Kalenjin*

*Kiindojin borionoto Koitalel arap Samoei*  
*The battle was captained by Koitalel arap Samoei*

It should be noted that the war of resistance alluded to in the song is the one between the Nandi and the British. The singer has however chosen to imagine it as a Kalenjin war. To him, since the Nandi are a sub-nation of the Kalenjin then he projects it to involve all sub-nations that make up the Kalenjin construct albeit spiritually. The reason possibly is to set the ground to iconize Koitalel as a leader of the entire Kalenjin nation.

The historical allusion to the war and the subsequent spiritual co-opting of other sub-nations provides the ground for the generation of a shared history. The musician appeals to the emotions of members of the Kalenjin nation by projecting Koitalel as a Kalenjin martyr by stating:

*Kikibar anyun Koitalel*  
*They killed Koitalel*

*Laitoryantenyo we bichu*  
*Our king, oh people.*
In the imagination of the nation, the singer projects, the image of a Kalenjin first. The suggestion albeit subtle is that the first allegiance is to the imagined Kalenjin nation. The imagination of the nation thus would involve the culture, history and above all the will and wish to perceive of oneself as being a member of a larger entity known as the Kalenjin because “national history functions like a story of the tribe, providing the people with a sense of shared origins, a common past and a collective identity in the present” (McLeod 2000:70). These are the desirable components requisite in an effective process of national creation.

Conclusion
So far, the concern has been on the means by which the musician has captured and shaped the structure of the imagination of the Kalenjin society. It is apparent that musicians use their songs to not only implant ideas of ethnic consciousness on their listeners, but also reiterate the importance of that consciousness to the individual members of the society. The importance attached to unity among the various sub-ethnic groups has been shown to provide a basis for structuring the aspired identity. The electronic broadcast media is an important partner in the process of generation and transmission of the created identity. It also serves as a link not only uniting the various sub-ethnicities to imagine themselves as members of one but physically detached community, but also provides a platform on which the generated identity is performed and affirmed.

The musicians’ role in this process is the identification and reorganization of inherent contradictions that show themselves up in the process of ethnic integration. The musicians offer solutions to tensions which threaten to expand the divide that already exists among the various sub-groups. This has been done through highlighting of elements of similarity and projecting them as being the most desirable attributes of a member of the community. These elements so identified are structured in such a way as to reflect and give shape to the societal attitudes and its perception by the members of the imagined community. The elements that are foregrounded form a basis for the generation of a structured presentation of society’s perception of itself which forms the basis of the next section.
None
Discography


Texts


Simatei, P. T. “Kalenjin Popular Music and the Contestation of the National Space in Kenya” A paper read at the 12TH General Assembly of CODESRIA, Younde, Cameroun, 7th -11th December, 2008.

