

**TANGAZA COLLEGE**  
**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**

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**IDENTITY FORMATION OF THE YOUTH IN NAIROBI:  
THE ROLE OF TELEVISION**

Moderator

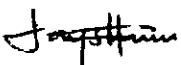
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A Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Communication.

**NAIROBI 2007**

## Student's Declaration


I, the undersigned, declare that this final project is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Degree in social communication. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed: 

Name of student; Stephen Murigi Mwangi

Date: 07 | 09 | 07

This Project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed: 

Name of supervisor: sr. Paola Moggi

*'Success is a state of mind. Failure does not limit us, the fear of it does'*

## Acknowledgements

I wish to express my appreciation to the people that have devoted their time to give me advice, generate ideas and journey with me. Through their opinions and shared experience, I have learned a lot.

I sincerely thank my moderator Sr. Paola Moggi for her commitment and patience in her effort to guide me through the entire project. Thank you Sister Paola for being a friend and shepherd, you are my rock. I also thank Ms Esther Kamweru in a special way for making me believe in myself. Esther, you are a manifestation of Gods creativity.

My greatest gratitude goes to my mother who even without completely understanding it gave me support as I ventured in the field of communication.

Finally but most importantly, I am grateful to the almighty God who has given me the physical health, spiritual nourishment and willpower to succeed.

To my graceful mother, we have both done it. I love you mum! You have supported me in all my endeavors and I shall be forever grateful.

Apart from teaching me how to throw my heart over the bar, you have taught me how to love and accept love. I owe you all I have and I hope you can accept this little gesture of appreciation. God bless you, my Nobel Peace Laureate!

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

Over the last decade, in relation to the liberalization of the economy and the airwaves, most Third world countries have seen an incredible development of media outlets, especially in urban centers. Because of global media monopolization and higher advancement in media technologies from the West, many African countries have found themselves receiving information and media content coming from the West.

This one-way flow of information has led to a kind of contemporary colonization, which is psychological in nature. Through the media, Africa has progressively embraced 'western'<sup>1</sup> values and ideals that have led to the loss of indigenous cultural identities in the continent. The urbanized dwellers are generally consistent with the style of life proposed by the media. Some of the youths even consider their cultural practices as backward, without first understanding what they represented.

Being a youth, I have noticed that, it has become very fashionable to be 'westernized'; to dress in the latest 'western' designer fashion, talk with an American accent and even adopt the western types of food.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Western', means here what the media portray as a western lifestyle

The mass media can be used both positively and negatively, and this applies for the consequent effects as well. My project suggests that we can use the media positively. It attempts to counter the effects of television resulting from the negative use of the media, effects such as identity loss and confusion, which ultimately leads to a low self perception or image.

### **1.0 Statement of the Problem**

The youth in Nairobi experience a more urbanized lifestyle than the youth living in the rural areas. Although they still have a cultural bond, due to the fact that they exist within ethnic borderlines, most of the cultural ethnic elements have been replaced by more contemporary and homogeneous elements. This is a result of a homogeneous urban lifestyle. It would be difficult for the Gikuyu community for instance, to go to Nairobi and move together into an area that has been designated for them only in an effort to maintain their cultural identities. This homogeneous lifestyle was as a result of a shift was by rural to urban migration. In my experience, many Kenyans have always assumed that urban areas have more potential in regard to climbing the economic ladder. Progressively this is leading to a situation whereby some traditional cultural aspects are eroding. This however is the end result of the basic problem, which is how the youth are being socialized in urban areas. The ideals they grow up with, affect what they perceive as important. In Nairobi, cultural values or parental guidance are coming in second place compared to what the media is presently advocating. Over the last ten years the media has become a major reference point for the

youth, which seems to orient who they are or want to become. Due to its influence the perception of young people has been distorted, their ideal self is based upon what is presented in the media.

Thus, most youth tend to describe happiness and success in a purely materialistic way and express “who” they are by defining “what” they are: a student, a corporate manager, a musician.

## **2.0 Description of the Study Locale**

The area under study is Komarock estate in Nairobi. It is an average middle class suburb located in the Eastland’s area of Nairobi.

The nature of the houses suite smaller families than extended ones. Most of the inhabitants pay rent or mortgage, and most of the youth live with their parents or at least a guardian. The houses are characterized by similar fencing, like many other middle class estates, and similarly the area has a mixture of both multi-religious and multi ethnic groups.

## **3.0 Objectives of the Thesis**

The project aims:

- To evaluate how media content influences the identity of the youth
- To analyze why the youth are influenced by television

- To elaborate a communication strategy in form of a television show, that advocates for the establishment of a positive self-image among the youth

#### **4.0 Scope and Delimitation**

This project is based on the social analysis of my long essay which investigated the effects of television on the self perception of the youth in Nairobi. As highlighted in Chapter One and Two of this project, the study proved that television was indeed a factor in shaping the identities of the urban youth and consequently their self perception.

This study tries to devise how television talk shows can be used as a communication strategy geared towards promoting the relevance of having self identity and not simply aping the identity of others.

#### **4.1 Locale**

The specific area of the study is Komarock Estate. However to get a broader feel and more insights on the patterns of the youth in urban areas, questionnaires were distributed to youths from different areas of Nairobi. This will be expounded on in Chapter Two.

#### **5.0 Limitation of the Thesis**

Identity formation or identity loss can be influenced by different factors, this project has focused mainly on a single factor which is television.

Although the initial field research has been carried out systematically, the number of respondents is limited due to time and resources. The audience research is also not very detailed.

## **6.0 Structure of the Thesis**

The thesis is organized into three chapters: Chapter One deals with the sociological analysis of the topic; it highlights the process of identity formation and the role of television in the same process in urban areas of contemporary Kenya. Through some literature review, the chapter presents in a logical and systematic form, the material adopted and gives the specific socio-cultural situation for which the communication strategy is elaborated.

Chapter Two contextualizes the reflection using data from field research. Here I will interpret the findings against the background of relevant communication theories. I will also elaborate data from my audience research, to elaborate the communication strategy.

Chapter Three will elaborate a television show plan based on the field research and some relevant communication theories. It will provide details of the planning for the implementation of the proposed communication project.

## 7.0 Definition of Terms

Since I have used my own personal experience as the starting point of this study, whenever inclusive language becomes difficult to adopt, I will use the male pronouns.

### *Identity*

This can be described as the knowledge and acknowledgement of one self, the self-realization of belonging to a society as well as remaining an individual.

‘Identity is that by which someone is what he or she is, that which characterizes them. It is all the characteristics, which distinguish someone from other persons or things.’<sup>2</sup>

### *Identity formation*

According to Erickson, identity formation employs a process of simultaneous reflection and observation. It is a process taking place on all the levels of mental functioning, by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves.<sup>3</sup>

### *Socialization*

Socialization is the process by which people become members of their society.<sup>4</sup> It is a subtle process that takes place at the unconscious level

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<sup>2</sup> A. Musschenga, Concilium 2000, *Personalized Identity In An Individualized Society*, pg 24

<sup>3</sup> E. Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, pg 22

<sup>4</sup> A. Berger, *Essentials of Mass Communication Theories*, pg 62

### *Self-perception*

The self-perception theory by Bem (1972) suggests that people have no direct knowledge of their own internal state but infer their existence from observation of their own behavior.<sup>5</sup> This is to say that the internal state is inferred from behavior.

### *Culture*

Culture is crafted in the people's attempt to come to terms with their environment. It is the sum total of their achievements, material and mental, undergirded by a system of values they consider important, indeed indispensable.<sup>6</sup>

### *Modernization*

"Derived from the word modernity, it is closely associated with westernization. It encompasses the supremacy of rationality, industrialization, capitalism and technology."<sup>7</sup>

### *Mass media*

The term mass media refers to the organized means for communicating openly, simultaneously and to a large number of people in a short time.<sup>8</sup>

Television is one of the technologies and forms of mass media.

### *Vicarious*

Felt or enjoyed through imagined participation in the experience of others.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Harre' & R. Lamb, *The Encyclopedic Dictionary Of Psychology*, pg 561

<sup>6</sup> W. Khamalwa, *Identity, Power, and Culture: Imbalu: Initiation Ritual among the Bamasaba of Uganda*, pg 179

<sup>7</sup> Cf. K. Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: A Reflection on the African Experience*, pg 265

<sup>8</sup> D. McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed, pg 17

### *Babi*

A slang word meaning Soft and babied like the American Babi dolls. It is used by the youth and commonly reserved for the well off in society. It also hails from the word Babillon seen by many youths to mean a society of western capitalist who gain wealth by exploiting the poor.

### *Globalization*

Particularization of the universal and universalization of the particular.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse-24/03/07>

<sup>10</sup> M. Amollo, African Traditional Media, Class Notes

## **Chapter I**

### **The process of identity formation in Africa**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the importance of identity and identity formation in any society. It sets the pace for understanding the changes of trends between the process of identity formation in the African traditional setting and in the contemporary society, and highlights the loopholes that have been consequent to these changes. It also introduces the media as a major player in promoting change among urban youth.

#### **2.0 Sociological analysis of identity formation**

The issue of identity has become pertinent and fundamental in this continent. By the time colonialists were leaving, most African people were left enslaved by a culture that had taught that their initial cultures were backward and their initial religions pagan. This issue had been discussed at length by different Pro-African scholars and researchers. Currently, this issue has shifted: “Are African enslaved or are they enslaving themselves?” The question is intriguing!

Even with the knowledge of our history, most people, especially the youth, have found it hard to rediscover themselves. This irony has motivated this topic.

There are different factors including the introduction of the media in the continent that have made it hard for the contemporary African youth to establish their own identity.

This chapter will clearly illustrate the role of the media specifically television in this. Due to its pervasive nature and popularity, television has become a common guest in many contemporary homes globally. Most people will rely on TV for information and entertainment unaware of the subtle influence it has over them. According to some scholars, television has more influential power because people experience it through two perceptual channels, i.e. visual and audio. Television has also become a major carrier of 'western' ideologies and worldviews. Without conscious awareness of the recipients, it has universally deposited these values into different homes.

This chapter will take the reader through a journey from the past to the present. The reader will have an understanding of the relevance of having a proper identity and the process of forming one, both in the traditional context and the contemporary one.

### **3.0 The Process of Identity Formation**

Identity is a consequence of the identity formation process, which is conditioned; this is to say that it comes about through interaction with significant others and the society as a whole. It is much more extrinsic than it is intrinsic.

According to Erik Erikson there are eight stages of human psychological development, during the adolescent stage the main task is to achieve an identity.

"Erikson's theory consists of eight stages of development. Each stage is characterized by a different conflict that must be resolved by the individual. When the environment makes new demands on people, the conflicts arise. 'The person is faced with a choice between two ways of coping with each crisis, an adaptive or maladaptive way. Only when each crisis is resolved, which involves a change in the personality, does the person have sufficient strength to deal with the next stages of development'. If a person is unable to resolve a conflict at a particular stage, they will confront and struggle with it later in life."<sup>11</sup>

### **3.1. Identity**

For William James, the father of American psychology, "A man's character is discernible in the mental or moral attitude in which, when it comes upon him, he felt himself most deeply and intensely active and alive. At such moment there is a voice inside which speaks and says: this is the real me!"<sup>12</sup>

In a nutshell this seems to capture the meaning of 'identity'. Human beings need to operate at an equilibrium, they need to know who and what they are, what they are doing and why. More importantly, an individual's identity gives the answer to who one is, it determines greatly his or her self-perception and the perception of others. Identity also gives one a sense of pride and inner peace for whom one truly is. Thus one

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<sup>11</sup><http://www.Perspective on Erik Erikson's Eight Stages of Human Development, 24/03/07>

<sup>12</sup> H. James, *The Letters of William James*, Vol: 1, , pg 199

person's or group's identity may be relative to another's, and the pride of gaining a strong identity may signify an inner emancipation.<sup>13</sup> Having an identity calls for the realization that what is important is within people and not without. An optimal sense of identity is experienced merely as a sense of psychosocial well-being.<sup>14</sup>

### ***3.2 Identity Formation as a Process***

Many people look at identity as a solely intrinsic process. This is not true; according to Erickson identity formation depends on both personal and social/environmental factors.

He says, "One cannot separate personal growth and communal change, nor can one separate the identity crisis in individual life and contemporary crises in historical development because the two help to define each other and are truly relative to each other".<sup>15</sup>

One of the main developments during this process is that a person discovers his own existence and place in society. Yet this is not a sudden discovery but a process, which may involve some conflicts within and without oneself.<sup>16</sup> The search for 'who you are or wish to be', may lead the youth to identify with someone else, who is considered a 'model'<sup>17</sup>

It is my personal opinion that even the so called intrinsic factors, such as cognition, are not that intrinsic but extrinsically conditioned: a well educated person

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<sup>13</sup> E. Erikson, *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, pg 21-22

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pg 165

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, pg 23

<sup>16</sup> J. Mbiti, *Love & Marriage in Africa*, pg 27

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, pg28

may reason very differently from one who is not, regardless of sharing all the other characteristics.

My approach to identity formation is mainly from the perspective of socialization, since one of the reasons that people live in the society is to help each other in having a sense of identity and belonging. The concept by Mbiti 'I am because we are and since we are therefore I am' captures this perfectly.<sup>18</sup>

Everyone needs to belong somewhere: it is one of the fundamental needs according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. "Identities are highly developed when people are young through enculturation into beliefs, values, behavior and rituals by those close to them."<sup>19</sup> The self, the human identity, is mainly a product of socialization and of the culture in which he or she grows up. It is through socialization that a person internalizes a worldview, a mode of orientation, and thus acquires a certain identity.<sup>20</sup>

The key thing about socialization is learning: a relatively permanent change is brought about through experience and interaction. In socialization learning may be observational, verbal, read or it may occur in other ways that characterize the socializing agents.<sup>21</sup>

#### **4.0 Significance of Identity Formation in the Traditional Society**

Long before scientism and the concept of rationalism, people believed very much in the spiritual powers of the universe and in God.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pg 117

<sup>19</sup> S. Bate, *Understanding Human Societies*, pg 22

<sup>20</sup> C. Mwikamba, *Wajibu*, Volume 6, No.4, pg 7

<sup>21</sup> A. Nzangi, *Psychology of Communication*, Class Notes, 2005

It was this rather simplistic (simplistic in a positive sense) approach to life that conditioned their identities. They lived for God, for themselves and for one another. In their context their lives were meaningful and full of purpose. “The African has a deep religious ontology, which integrally forms a continuum, whereby the living world is incorporated into the spirit world.”<sup>22</sup>

According to the oral literature (Orature) from my grandmother, knowing one’s self and place ensured that one did the right thing at the right time; everybody knew their place in the society. Children were children; they respected their elders because of this knowledge and acceptance without question. However, it is important to remember that not only did they not question the elders to why they were to respect them, they did not even question themselves, because of the clear understanding of who they were and what their relationship was to the other members in the society. Individual freedom in the traditional African society was limited, corporate existence was the norm.<sup>23</sup>

An identity also ensured that one knew where he came from and belonged, which was a unifying factor, based on mutuality. For the *Agikuyu* community it was a (*Moherega identity*) clan identity, which joined one group of several family units who had the same clan name and were believed to have been descendants from one family group in the remote past.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> C. Mwikamba, *Search for an African identity, Wajibu*, Volume 6, No.4, pg 8

<sup>23</sup> J. Mbiti, *Love & Marriage In Africa*, pg 29

<sup>24</sup> J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tradition Of The Gikuyu*, pg 2

#### ***4.1 Characteristics of Socialization in the Traditional African Context***

Just like in any other society, African Traditional societies have a variety of features and agents of socialization. However, not all features apply to all African communities, but generally apply to most.

Identities are generally formed subconsciously, people are not fully aware that they are forming or shaping an identity through exposure to some of the agents of socialization. However, most of the socialization is perceptual in operation, i.e. the agents are experienced through the five senses.

This is what characterized socialization in the traditional African context. The learning was done through dances and telling of stories, riddles and myths as a form of conveying information. The information was meant to pose a challenge to the young people, since most stories had the victory of good over evil as their morale. Learning was also observational, as one would learn by patiently watching what others did. Other ways that people were socialized were through taboos and sanction; people were explicitly told what they could or could not do.<sup>25</sup>

“Social role was also an important characteristic of the socialization; people manifest themselves outwardly in a diversity of natural duties, obligation and voluntary social roles. In the traditional set up people used to do this as well, people were incorporated through their place and their family, their life were structured by their responsibility.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Z. Samita, *Communication, Culture and Society*, Class Notes, 2005

<sup>26</sup> A. Musschenga, *Concilium 1-3, Personalized Identity In An Individualized Society*, pg 24

Initiation was also a great part of it because it marked the transition from childhood into adulthood. After being socialized for some time through childhood the identity of a youth was initiated and reinforced through an initiation ritual. Initiation was observed in many African societies, though not all. It partly involved Circumcision for boys and Clitoridectomy for girls and of education after the physical operation. Initiation was the separation from one status of life and incorporation into another higher status.<sup>27</sup>

“Initiation rites have symbolic meanings in addition to the physical drama and the impact, it brings with it religious meaning.”<sup>28</sup>

Initiation conveys new privileges and responsibilities, such as being allowed to get married and bear children, to fight for one’s community, to take part in family ceremonies and to possess property.<sup>29</sup>

#### ***4.2 Traditional Agents of Socialization***

The traditional agents of socialization common to most African societies can be defined as follows, though examples are mainly taken from two specific communities:

##### *Family*

The family is the basic social unit; it is the first socialization agent. Traditionally a child was born into a family he or she would learn to call “family” regardless of the biological connection.

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<sup>27</sup> J. Mbiti, *Love & Marriage In Africa*, pg 12

<sup>28</sup> J. Mbiti, *African Religion And Philosophy*, pg 117

<sup>29</sup> J. Mbiti, *Love & Marriage In Africa*, pg 12

Once one was born, he came into a cultural environment, which played an important role in his life, molding him into a member of a given cultural community.<sup>30</sup>

For the Agikuyu, education began at the time of birth and ended with death. The child was to pass various stages of growth and age groupings, with a system of education being defined for every status in life. The parents took responsibility for educating their children until they reached the stage of tribal education.<sup>31</sup>

The family did not live in a vacuum, it operated under a society which defined its role: although the individual was conditioned by the family, he was actually indirectly conditioned by the society: For the initiation of the *Bamasaba* of Uganda, Wotsuna says: “The society has multiple roles in the whole exercise, as it is the sponsor of the novices, the one who tests them, and one who confers status upon them”.<sup>32</sup>

There was a practice in the Agikuyu community, which was also shared by other communities; the child belonged to all the members of the community and not only to the parents.

Interaction was part of life. The individual in order to significantly exist in the African traditional society had to relate to others.<sup>33</sup> However, this was characteristic of other societies other than the African societies.

### *Religion*

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, pg 9

<sup>31</sup> J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: the tradition of the Gikuyu*, , pg 99

<sup>32</sup> W. Khamalwa, *Identity, Power, and Culture: Imbalu: Initiation Ritual among the Bamasaba of Uganda*, pg 139

<sup>33</sup> C. Mwikamba, *Search for an African Identity*, *Wajibu*, volume 6, no.4, pg 9

Socialization is linked to culture and religion. Everyone is socialized, but how that happens depends on the culture and the traditional practices of a particular community. Culture bears directly on the religion of that community.

The values and beliefs that were instilled by the family were derived from here. Religion is about things, which matter most to people, the people's aspirations are verbalized, expressed and re-enacted in religious idioms.<sup>34</sup> According to Kenyatta, the Agikuyu people maintained a close and vital relationship with spiritual entities.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Peer relationships*

Throughout and after initiation, the peers journeyed together in a road of self and communal discovery. Some of these customs still exist in some communities.

For the initiate of the *Bamasaba* in Uganda, the age mates are the people he now identifies with.<sup>36</sup> They also practice the *Isonja*, which is a public gathering of all those who intend to acquire identity as full members in the community. They identify with one another and they will conserve this comradeship throughout their lives.<sup>37</sup>

#### *Legal system*

Every society has its way of making sure that its norms and values are observed and not flouted, precisely because an individual is less than the society.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> W. Khamalwa, *Identity, Power, And Culture: Imbalu: Initiation Ritual Among The Bamasaba Of Uganda*, pg150

<sup>35</sup> J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tradition Of The Gikuyu*, pg 189

<sup>36</sup> W. Khamalwa, *Identity, Power, And Culture: Imbalu: Initiation Ritual Among The Bamasaba Of Uganda*, pg 139

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, pg 140

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, pg 179

The rules of the society that had to be followed to the letter were often passed on through myths and or enforced through; restrictions, punishment, and sanctions.

For the Agikuyu community, criminal and civil laws were established and procedures clearly defined. The rules and regulations governing the behavior between individuals and groups were laid down.<sup>39</sup>

### **5.0 Changes Affecting Socialization in the Contemporary Society**

Culture is dynamic and the sources of culture change may be internal or external. The environment itself is under constant change forcing internal readjustment, just as external contact could produce change.<sup>40</sup>

“The African world of contact and change consists of three distinct orders of cultural change: the African traditional culture, the western and that of transition”.<sup>41</sup>

Internal change may come from the realization that some norms do not serve the community well and should be changed or dropped. But the agents of change may be external. Among these agents, African societies can list colonialism, Christianity, formal education and the post independence state.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tradition Of The Gikuyu*, pg 189

<sup>40</sup> W. Khamalwa, *Identity, Power, and Culture: Imbalu: initiation ritual among the Bamasaba of Uganda*, pg 181

<sup>41</sup> B. Malinowski, *The Dynamics of Culture Change: An Inquiry into Race Relations in Africa.*, pg 64

<sup>42</sup> W. Khamalwa, *Identity, Power, and Culture: Imbalu: Initiation Ritual among the Bamasaba of Uganda*, pg 181

### ***5.1. Contemporary Agents of Socialization***

The basic agents of socialization such as the family, the society and religion still remain, but not with such a strong hold on today's youth. The legal system maintains its impact although in Kenya the legal system has been greatly compromised by corruption. Peer influence however still remains firm, and for the many urban youth the peers remain their main significant others. However, there are a number of specific modern agents of socialization that have cropped up over the years.

#### ***5.1.1 Formal schooling***

This is recent; it began during colonialism and still exists. Although a high number of people lack access to formal education it is among the most powerful agents of socialization especially in regard to attitude change.

"The system of formal education leaves the students no time to engage in social pastime as they are in school the whole day, five days a week."<sup>43</sup>

#### ***5.1.2 Modern Media***

The media has become a powerful agent of socialization in the contemporary society. It is everywhere; hence its influence is not limited only to a few. It is no wonder that we call this modern age the 'information era'.

The world is driven by information. The media can be seen as a tool of designing and disseminating this information. Communication and Information are not

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, pg 184

synonymous. Communication in cooperates much more than information, it is about interactions and relationships.

## **6.0 Media as a Contemporary Agent of Socialization**

Even without the introduction and popularity of the mass media in contemporary Kenya, the traditional agents of socialization had been crumbling. This was even more evident in urban areas and areas that had white settlers who had built schools and introduced the concept of formal schooling and Christianity. If the traditional agents were still intact, the probability of the contemporary media influencing attitudes and values of the urban youth would have been reduced. Socialization now is influenced to a large degree by popular culture and the mass media: rock musicians, sports heroes, actors and actresses, give young people ideas about how to behave, how to dress, how to relate to others, and what to become.<sup>44</sup>

In the urban areas parents are usually busy working, leaving the children in the company of the television or radio. The media, especially the television, is becoming more than a source of information; it is becoming increasingly entertaining and continually playing the roles of the traditional forms of conveying messages, such as storytelling. However, we can not go back in time or hope that things will never change because cultures are dynamic. The only thing that remains constant is change, though its speed can vary.

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<sup>44</sup> A. Berger, *Essentials of Mass Communication Theory*, pg 62

## **7.0 Conclusion**

It is in the nature of the human person to form an identity that is conditioned by his socialization. In the traditional African society the socialization agents were more social than technological.

In the contemporary society, some of them such as informal schooling, traditional religions, cultural initiation practices, customary marriages and laws have been washed away while others are eroding.

This shift has left gaps and loopholes that are being filled by contemporary agents, a major one being the media. Many of the youth in urban areas are turning to television for answers to their problems, for entertainment and companionship. To verify the influence that modern media exert on identity formation, the following chapter deals with a field research, conducted among the youth of Nairobi.

## **Chapter II**

### **Field Research**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the field research on how young people make use of the media, and investigates the possible influence of television on the identity formation process of the youth. It will also highlight an audience research on how the youth engage themselves in watching television.

This chapter begins with the description of the context of the research, namely Nairobi- Kenya's Capital City. It explains the sampling criteria used and the methodology chosen in the research. It will then highlight the procedure used in data collection and finally lay down the findings and outcome of the research. It will also narrow my research scope to Komarock Estate where my in-depth research was carried out.

## **2.0 Nairobi**

Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya since 1905. It is also the capital of the Nairobi Province and of the Nairobi District. It has the highest urban population in East Africa, estimated at between 3 and 4 million.

According to the 1999 Census, in the administrative area of Nairobi, 2,143,254 inhabitants lived within 684 km<sup>2</sup>. Currently 2,940,911 inhabitants live within a concentration of 4230/km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>45</sup>

Nairobi houses people from different ethnic communities and races. It is for this reason that an urban culture of commonality among the people living here has been formed. Over the last generation the youth have moved from their ethnic and cultural mentality to more “liberal” one, in the sense that, they discard traditional norms and adopt “modern” ideas. Just like in any other urbanized city, the people are more individualistic. Due to the economic situation, not many can afford to sustain the extended family that was characteristic of the traditional communities. The youth can only occasionally visit their rural areas, where there exists a structured socialization system, comprising of uncles and grand fathers for the young men and grand mothers and aunts for the young women. These relatives were traditionally entrusted with the responsibility of explaining certain situations of life, such as marriage and sexual matters. For financial sustenance within the nuclear family one or both parents work, hence they spend little time with their children. It is for this reason that the media is increasingly becoming a relevant agent of socialization.

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<sup>45</sup>[http:// www.nairobicity.org/population-27/03/07](http://www.nairobicity.org/population-27/03/07)

The main difference among the urbanites is the division into social classes classified as lower, middle and upper. The basis of these divisions is financial. This plays a big role as far as technological access is concerned. Being Nairobi the capital city of Kenya, the mass media is more pervasive here than it is in the rural area and other towns. Nairobi houses various publications, radio, television stations. Nairobi has 6 television channels in addition to the cable television received through subscriptions. It has 31 radio stations with two major commercial newspaper publications and many minor ones, including magazines.

Rural areas have a limitation in that they cannot access some of the media outlets and that most rural areas lack access and support of media technologies. Illiteracy is also rampant in rural communities, which limits access to information through publication.

### **3.0 Komarock**

Komarock is an average middle class suburb located in the Eastland's area of Nairobi. This middle class suburb has been in existence for over 20 years and most of the youths in their late teens were born here.

With a bad road and transportation network system, the estate has gone from middle high market to low middle market in the last decade.

The shopping centers are highly congested with bars that showcase mainly night discos and have cable television for customers to watch football. The youths in this area are initiated at an early state into drinking and drug use, such as smoking marijuana

with some of them dropping out of school altogether. Gangs are also common and *Matatu* high jacking and mugging have been blamed on the youth.

### ***3.1 Youth Culture in Komarock***

Even at the superficial level, such as dressing, the influence of the media on the youth is evident. Young men wear big chains and sagging pants with headphones in their ears. The talk among many of them is similar, make money, make money and make more money!

## **4.0 Research Hypotheses**

The situation of the youth reveals a sort of “identity crisis”, which could have found answers in role models proposed by the media. Therefore the field research aims at verifying the following hypotheses:

- The youth have access to television
- The youth’s favorite medium is television
- The youth usually use television for entertainment
- The youth have favorite TV programs
- Musical talk shows are among their favorite programs
- Musical talk shows can be used to promote a healthy self-image

## **5.0 Research Methodology**

I integrated quantitative and qualitative research methods. The qualitative research included participant observation complemented by in-depth interviews, while the quantitative method was in form of a survey, where self-administered questionnaires were distributed in different localities in Nairobi, to investigate how the youth used the media<sup>46</sup>. I have also quoted a national media survey conducted by the Media Council of Kenya<sup>47</sup> in the year 2006. It was a combination of both quantitative research in form of a survey and qualitative research in form of informal interviews.<sup>48</sup>

The participant observation and in-depth interviews were all done within the Komarock estate area.

The survey findings to show the trends, preferences and media use among the youth. The findings are then deepened through the already mentioned types of qualitative research methods. The observation was geared to investigate how the youth used the media, while my depth interviews were used to find out “why” the youth were using specific media

## **6.0 Sampling Criteria**

The survey adopted the non-probability convenience sample: the sample included young people within the age bracket of 13 – 28 of both sexes. For

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<sup>46</sup> See Appendix 2 for the Questionnaire

<sup>47</sup> The Media Council of Kenya is a non governmental body established by the Kenyan media fraternity to act as a self-regulation tool for the media in Kenya

<sup>48</sup> Media Council Of Kenya, *Baseline Survey*, pg 6

representation purposes, the survey comprised of different clusters in regard to social classes, religious and educational backgrounds. In 2006, The Media Council carried out a national survey of media in Kenya. The sample was drawn from the existing Enumeration Areas (EAs) in the districts created during the population and housing census of 1999. The EAs had average sizes of 100 households in the rural and 150 households in the urban areas.<sup>49</sup>

The sample size of the survey was determined to provide estimates at the national level and urban-rural levels. A sample size of 1120 households was used. The country was stratified into 10 stratas on the basis of the poverty incidence index, as poverty was considered to influence the ability of people to access media.<sup>50</sup>

My initial observation and interviews comprised of convenience samples from Komarock Estate: observation actors and interviewees were around 18 – 27 old, both male and female. The research focused on students, young employed and unemployed youths. It wanted to get views from people with the same social background – Komarock estate, but with different perspectives in relation to their occupation and gender. I also interviewed 19 youths in the Nairobi Business district. The respondents comprised of both male and female ranging from the age of 16-25 years. They were selected randomly.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, pg 3

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, pg 3

For the participant observation, 6 different family homes in Komarock estate were chosen. I was more of a moderate observer. The families in these homes were known to me, as were my interviewees.

## **7.0 Survey findings**

In the month of November 2005 all through to January 2006, 150 self-administered questionnaires were distributed in 5 different locations within Nairobi, including Komarock estate. 113 of the questionnaires were collected back with 110 valid. During the same time similar questionnaires were administered by students of the class of media research and compiled later on by Paola Moggi. The data from these 420 questionnaires were replicating the data I got from the 110 previously mentioned.<sup>51</sup>

Of the 1120 households selected by the Media Council for the survey, 1112 responded giving a response rate of 99.3%.

### **7.1 Demographic Data**

Most of the respondents in the initial survey that adopted a non probability convenience sample were aged 21-24 followed by 17-20 with 39.1 and 29.1 respectively. Out of the 110, 67 of them were male.

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<sup>51</sup> See Appendix I

*Respondents Age Bracket*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	13-16	22	20.0	20.2	20.2
	17-20	32	29.1	29.4	49.5
	21-24	43	39.1	39.4	89.0
	25-28	12	10.9	11.0	100.0
	Total	109	99.1	100.0	
Total		110	100.0		

*Respondents Gender*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	67	60.9	60.9	60.9
	female	43	39.1	39.1	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

*Respondents Occupation*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	student	68	61.8	62.4	62.4
	unemployed	18	16.4	16.5	78.9
	self-employed	8	7.3	7.3	86.2
	employed	15	13.6	13.8	100.0
	Total	109	99.1	100.0	
Total		110	100.0		

*Respondents Level of Education*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Primary	15	13.6	14.0
	Secondary	41	37.3	38.3
	College/university	51	46.4	47.7
	Total	107	97.3	100.0
Total		110	100.0	

## 7.2 Television Access

The research conducted verifies that the youth have access to the media. It shows that a high majority of them, 91% out of the 110 respondents, have access to television. This confirms my initial hypothesis that the youth have access to TV.

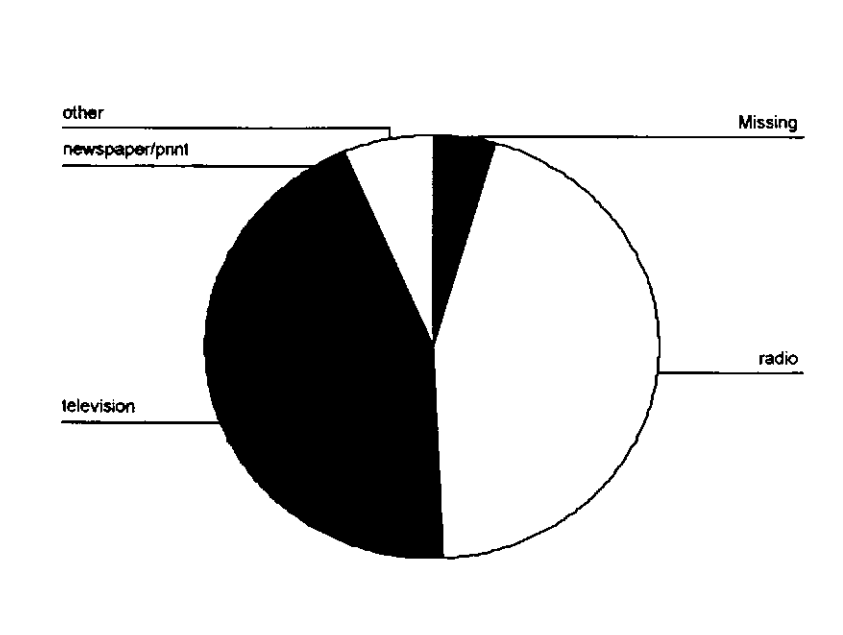
### *Access to TV in Relation to Age*

		Respondents age bracket				Total
		13 – 16	<b>17 - 20</b>	<b>21 - 24</b>	25 – 29	
Access to TV	Yes	17	<b>30</b>	<b>42</b>	11	100
	No	2	1	1		4
Total		19	31	43	11	104

### 7.2.1 Favorite Medium

My second hypothesis that television is the youth's most preferred medium was not verified by my research. 49% of the overall youth respondents preferred radio against the 44% who preferred television. However, the survey shows that television is the second most preferred medium.

This is expressed as follows in the pie chart below:



According to the survey conducted by the media council of Kenya, 42.6% of the entire Kenyan population watches television, 56% of the 42.6% are urban dwellers.<sup>52</sup>

### 7.2.2 Media Use

In regard to the different needs of the youth based on their gender and age, the youth use television for different reasons. My survey shows that most of the youth use television for entertainment.

24 out of 38 ladies responded to using television for entertainment while 30 out of 56 men responded in the same way. The survey also shows that most of the youth at

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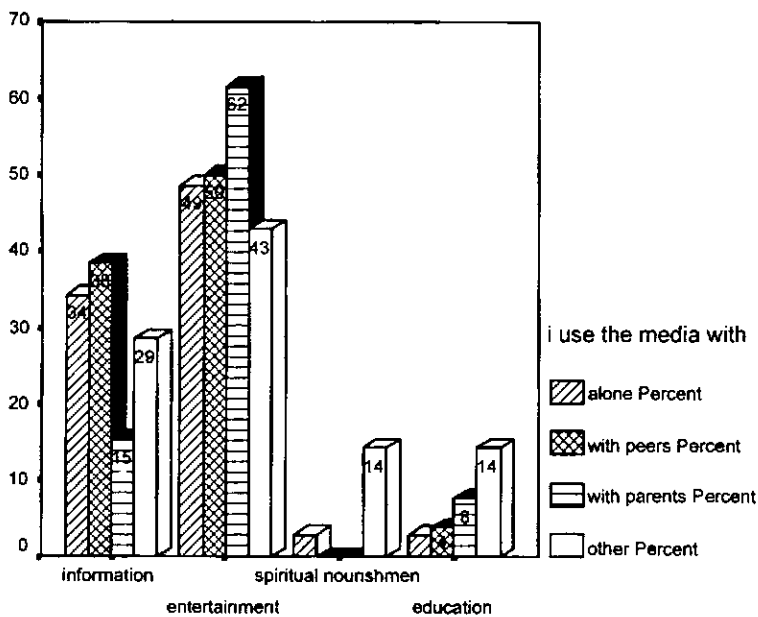
<sup>52</sup> Media Council of Kenya, *Baseline Survey*, pg 122

the crucial stage of identity formation between the ages of 13 – 24 used television for entertainment, and used it with their parents and their peers. The highest of these numbers, 46 out of 52, were living with their parents. The survey highlighted that 65% of the youth found solutions to their problems at times through television, while 76% said that they relatively believed in what they saw on television.

*Use of TV in relation to Age*

		Respondents	Age Bracket			
I use TV for	Information	13-16	17-20	21-24	25-29	
	Entertainment	12	21	18	2	53
	Spiritual nourishment		1	1		2
	Education	2	1	1	1	5
Total		21	28	39	10	98

*Use of media in relation to whom I use it with*



The graph reveals that the highest majority of youth using TV for entertainment watches television with their parents, which means that the level of influence may be reduced due to the fact that their parents may intervene and select what, is to be watched or question what is shown. They may engage their children in this questioning, raising the awareness of their children. They may also clarify any misconceptions that may arise by putting certain issues into the right context.

According to the survey conducted by the Media Council, the youth have more need for entertainment than the older members of the population. 71.3% of the population aged between 15-29 years said they needed information on

entertainment.31.3% of the 39.1% respondents coming from Nairobi aged between 15-29 shared that they needed information.<sup>53</sup>

### 7.2.3 Hours Spent on Television

Contrary to the assumption that the youth are highly exposed to the media, on average the youth spend only below 6 hours a week watching television.

According to the survey the younger youth within the age bracket of 13 – 20 years only spend between below 6 and 14 hours on television each week. This however, can be explained by the fact that 61% of the respondents were students. According to the survey conducted by the Media Council of Kenya in the year 2006, 74.1 % of the Kenyan population watches television daily.<sup>54</sup>

#### *Hours Spent on TV in Relation to Age*

		Respondent's Age Bracket				Total
		13 – 16	17 - 20	21 - 24	25 – 28	
Hours	Below 6 hrs	9	10	10	5	<b>34</b>
Spend on TV	7 – 14 hrs	8	7	9	5	29
	15-21hrs	1	6	<b>10</b>	1	18
	22-28hrs	2	5	8		15
	Over 28hrs	1	2	2		5
<b>Total</b>		21	30	39	11	101

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, pg 7

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pg 122

### ***7.3 Participant Observation***

In the month of February 2006, I visited 6 homes on various occasions during the evenings at around 6 pm to 9 pm for two weeks.

All the six homes I visited had a television set; all of the first-born sons also had one in their rooms. It was revealed that these were usually given to them after the families bought a new television set, especially after circumcision or completion of primary school with good grades that were worth the token.

Most youth usually had their television on, even when they were not necessarily watching anything in particular. Unconsciously, their radios were usually on in low volumes as well. Ladies seemed more interested in talk shows and soaps while the men were oriented towards news, sports and music video. When the youth had a chat, they usually talked about their favorite shows as well. The ladies seemed particularly interested in the fashion and relationship issues that were discussed at length in the talk shows.

### ***7.4 Interviews***

In the month of March 2006, I conducted 14 interviews consisting of eight males and six females from Komarock estate. Three of the males were students; one was a university graduate while the rest of them were employed youths. Four of the female interviewees were students at the tertiary level. One had just completed college and another was still in high school. All of my interviewees were of the age bracket of 18 –

27. All the interviews were informal and were collected either at the interviewee's home, a sports pub and some at cyber café in Komarock estate.

Most of the male interviewees preferred news, music and sports programs, they felt that news on television is more incisive, they also expressed that the satire in television news made it more interesting. They also expressed that the music on television had become localize in the sense that they could now watch the videos of Kenya local musicians.

Most ladies within the same age bracket however said that they preferred soaps and talk shows; they felt that talk shows were more realistic and helped in solving some of their problems. Some of them expressed that they liked the hosts of the shows and felt that they tackled relevant issues especially regarding relationships.

Contrary to the findings of the survey that television was the second most popular medium among the youth, the interviewees expressed that TV was their favorite medium.<sup>55</sup> Most of them said that they could not miss the musical program that airs on Nation television for two hours. They said that they loved the music especially from local artists. This means that most of them watch television for more than six hours a week, unlike the survey suggests. According to the survey more 21-24 year old youth watched television for more hours than the rest.

Most of the youth interviewed felt that television had an effect on the identity of the youth, although not always negative. Others saw television as a tool that had not capacity to influence. Though they seemed to agree that other elements, such as parents

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<sup>55</sup> Refer to the Pie Chart in pg 32

and peers, had had more influence on their won personal identities than television, they pinpointed a sort of disconnect between the youth of today and their other socializing agents, such as their parents and friends.

Employed youths and students felt that they spent fewer hours at home nowadays due to their busy schedule. They also felt that most young people were no longer in touch with their culture. They were of the opinion that this was what had made the effect of television greater. They felt that if people were more in touch with their cultural roots the effect of TV on their identities would be reduced. In regard to the question asked. Some of the youths responded in the following ways.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2007, I conducted 19 interviews in the Nairobi Business district (city center) to find out the favourite television stations in Kenya and the most popular programs for the youth. I interviewed 11 ladies and eight males that were unknown to me. It was very informal; the respondents were selected with convenience sampling, and were asked on their favourite TV station and programs. nine ladies said the preferred Kenya Television Network (KTN) while two preferred Nation Television (NTV). Out of the nine ladies, seven preferred the *Tyra Banks Show* which is a talk show. They also prefer soap operas. The remaining two of the nine preferred KTN's *Straight Up* which is a musical talk show. Out of the total 11 female respondents, two said that they preferred watching KTN news and game shows such as *who is smarter now*.

Four of the male respondents said they preferred watching KTN, three preferred NTV and one preferred Citizen. Of the total of eight male respondents, six preferred

musical shows such as the *Beat*, since they love watching emerging Kenyan talents, while the remaining two said that they only watched the news and sports programs such as foot ball matches.

Most of the programs selected by these youth, such as the *Beat* and *Tyra Banks*, run between 5:00 pm and 6:00 pm.

### **8.0 Insights from Communication Theories**

The above data reveals that in Nairobi, and in Komarock especially, the youth have access to the media. Television is one of the most favorite forms of media for the youth. The findings also show that the youth use television mostly for entertainment. Different genders also prefer different programming in relation to their needs. The ladies especially use television programs such as talk shows in pursuit of answers relevant to their own lives. Generally however, most of the youth enjoy music programs and also find role models on television.

This data gives more insight on what is happening on the ground and can further be expounded through different theories proposed by some media scholars. It is these theories and research data that orient my project

Media theories provide different frameworks for understanding how different media texts such as advertisements, TV programs and films might work on audiences.

### **8.1 Uses and Gratification theory**

Contrary to popular belief, the mass does not exist; there are rather segments of audiences with specific needs whether real or imagined. The field research clearly highlight that the youth usually use the media for entertainment purposes. This implies that the youth use the media and television in this case to satisfy a certain need.

The uses and gratification theory suggests that the audiences use the media to gratify different needs. It looks at the uses to which people put the media, the texts carried by the media and the gratification people get out of them.<sup>56</sup> People use the media for a variety of reasons.<sup>57</sup>

In relation to identity formation, the media communicate meanings; audiences on the other hand access the media to gratify certain needs. What is promoted or shown through television become very influential especially if the audience feels like they can relate to what is being expressed. For instance, acne is a skin condition that occurs mostly during puberty and may often initiates a psychological discomfort for the teen. If the youth starts to look for information to stop the problem or if he is anxious about it, any information about the topic becomes relevant to him, and he will try almost everything that is proposed to him to try sort out the problem and he will believe much of what is said about it.

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<sup>56</sup> A. Berger, *Essentials of Mass Communication Theory*, pg 99

<sup>57</sup> J. Watson, *Media Communication*, pg 62

The more the audience believes in what is presented by the media, the more he spends time with it in an effort to answer some of the questions they may be having, hence he gets socialized by it.

## **8.2 Media and Socialization**

The data has indicated that the youth are spending time with television. The principle of socialization is one of interaction and experience. A child sees, assumes and repeats. Socialization occurs over time, through interaction with significant others and through acquiring knowledge. We are socialized to take up certain roles, patterns, conduct or behavior<sup>58</sup>. The key word is “over time”. Most youth and many people as well are living vicarious experiences through the mass media.<sup>59</sup>

If the youth are spending a lot of time with television, then over time they consequently begin being socialized by it, it is a long time process<sup>60</sup>. Through socialization people learn norms and conventions in which to operate and to become part of a “society”. The mass media has also joined the list of agents of socialization; it has become a powerful agent due to the progressive exposure to it.<sup>61</sup>

As discovered in the research, in the urban contemporary society, growing youths rely more and more on the media for information, entertainment and role models.

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<sup>58</sup> A. Berger, *Essentials of Mass Communication*, pg 62

<sup>59</sup> P. Moggi, *Mass Media and Society*, Class notes, 2005

<sup>60</sup> D. McQuail, *Mcquail's Mass Communication Theory*, pg 460

<sup>61</sup> A. Berger, *Essentials of Mass Communication*, pg 62

### **8.3 Role Modeling**

Modeling refers to the social learning theory, which states that learning occurs through individuals observing and imitating other people's behavior.<sup>62</sup> During the process of identity formation, the youth identify some role models or people that they look up to. The research proves that most youth are very fond of celebrities such as television hosts and local musicians. My music talk show will bring together a group of local celebrities to discuss different issues on how the youth perceive and/or should perceive themselves. Based on field data and this theory, this choice will ensure that the interest of the youth is grasped. The youth will also be in a position to relate and hence it would be then presumably easier to shape their attitudes about life and about themselves.

Psychologists speak about media modeling and they say that the modeled behavior is presented in very attractive and grabbing ways. In their search for role models the youth seem to be very fond of media stars.<sup>63</sup> This is why I have opted for a musical talk show because most urban youths find music and media stars very attractive.

Characters presented by the media become the point of reference for the youth. Role modeling conditions the youth's choice, and the models of the media influence who they want to become. In search of an identity or to reinforce an already existing identity, these youth learn of what is "cool" and globally acceptable through television

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<sup>62</sup> A. Nzangi, *Psychology of Communication*, class notes, 2005

<sup>63</sup> P. Moggi, *Mass Media and Society*, Class notes, 2005

and try to fit in, by complying with some of the characters portrayed. They may look out for models to seek reassurance about their own lifestyles. Individuals are more likely to adopt a model that they perceive to have characteristics similar to them.<sup>64</sup> The youth may then find it more comfortable following what their local celebrities are advocating as cool. I feel that if some of our celebrities were to put effort in advocating for the youth to be real to themselves as they advocate for drinking and sex, the results would be just as positive. Positive in that it works.

#### ***8.4 Cultivation Theory***

Gerbner's (1973) cultivation theory suggests that the media, specifically television, can shape opinions, expectations and perception of the reality if its input is consistent over time.<sup>65</sup> Gerbner sees this as more of a long-term effect, one that is gradual and cumulative in nature. In this regard the media is in a position to promote a distorted perception of the reality, which would be accepted as true by the audiences if over-represented or consistently presented. The field research proves that the youth are constantly exposed to television. Most of my interviewees said that they could not miss particular shows; this is what 'consistent input' means. This theory simply means that consistent messages would exert influence over time. According to Gerbner, television is responsible for an acculturating and cultivating process according to which people are systematically exposed to selective views of society, a view that tends to shape their values and beliefs.

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<sup>64</sup> A. Nzangi, *Psychology of Media*, Class notes, 2005

<sup>65</sup> A. Berger, *Essentials of Mass Communication Theory*, pg 66

The whole concept of cultivation suggests that television fosters attitudes. Attitudes are beliefs that influence how one feels, thinks or behaves and some are an element of identity formation. They can be formed through socialization or experiences. This theory hence suggests that television can cultivate different ideologies among the youth that are exposed to it over time.

### ***8.5 Media and Ideologies***

Ideologies passed by the media greatly influence the perception of people including the youth. If a teenage girl grows up believing that the only way she can get a good job and move up the ranks is by being physically attractive, based on certain media standards and advertisements, she starts to build a certain reality of what a successful girl should look like. "The media promotes stereotypes"<sup>66</sup>.

Some media messages manipulate some of the psychological needs that the youth have, such as the need to be loved and the need to belong, which are fundamental for the youth especially during adolescence.

However, this is not to say that the media cannot be used to promote positive and socially conscious ideologies.

### ***8.6 Cultural Imperialism***

Through the process of Globalization, some cultures are replaced or modified to conform to the more modern cultures. The cultural imperialism theory asserts that

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<sup>66</sup> A. Berger, *Essentials of Mass Communication Theory*, pg 130

media texts that are produced in 'western' nations have come to dominate media channels all over the world.<sup>67</sup>

Through the content of the media some cultures are expressed as superior to others. Due to the linear flow of information from the north to the south, the developing countries of the south find themselves in a position where they are on the receiving end of foreign content that promote the cultures from where they were produced. The cultures expressed by the media are shown as more enticing, more civilized and liberal; these cultures therefore set the standards for the youth. Some of them will not want to even identify with their cultures.

This has been greatly expressed by different scholars. My literature review also highlights the effects of modernization. If the media is being used to showcase other cultures as superior, why can't it be used to showcase our own African cultures as superior? My project is an opportunity for Kenya to make its own media texts. It is one of the ways of reducing the effects of the one-way flow of information. Surely, our culture can also be presented as enticing and civilized. My project would highlight things such as what real civilization is: For me a civilized person is one who is comfortable in his own skin, and by this I mean being at peace with one self. A civilized person is one who also lives harmoniously with his environment, why would you bleach your skin especially if you are living in the Sub Saharan part of Africa. This is the long-term goal of my project.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, pg 71

Currently, there are some music talk shows such as *Vipi* and *Straight up* aired on KTN that target the youth. Although the format is similar to mine, my aims are different. These programs claim to be localized but present issues from a very 'western' perspective. They do not present real issues that affect the Kenyan Urban youth in today's society. They usually focus mainly on the entertainment bit because most of them are designed for profit and not social communication.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

My initial hypotheses have been verified and challenged during the unfolding of this chapter. I have learnt that the media has indeed become an agent of socialization, my proposal is to use television to socialize the youth but in a positive way. Personally, I feel that it is much easier to socialize the youth positively through television than to try to stop television from socializing the youth altogether.

The needs and gratification theory also suggests that the audiences have different needs. The data highlights that the youth enjoy music programs with the ladies being more interested in talk shows. My plan is to combine these two needs to come up with a music talk show. In this way I will be trying to satisfy the needs of both the genders. If the youth finds my program necessary and relevant, then I will be in a better position to influence their attitudes. That is why I have selected a musical talk show.

Based on the theory of role modeling applicable for the youth, my talk show will bring together different people the youth look up to as role models.

Based on research and theories from communication scholars, I have learned that the media promotes different ideologies most of them being negative. However, the media can also be used to promote positive and conscious ideologies. If we cannot get rid of all of the negative content we have on television, perhaps we can fight back through positive content. I am convinced that there is no better institution to criticize the media than the media itself.

Based on the cultivation theory, my program will appear recurrently at a particular time slot. The point is to ensure that my program is consistent. Based on the theory, this will enable me to influence the attitudes of the youth over time. It will allow me to subtly engrave the importance of being oneself in the mind of my audiences.

The audience research has guided me in coming up with a project plan that highlights the intricate layout that my project would follow. This will be elaborated further in the next chapter.

## **Chapter III**

### **Media Project**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

As highlighted above, the media and specifically television has become a strong socialization agent. Over the years, its power to influence has increased progressively in modern urban centers in Africa.

With this in mind and as a student of social communication, I have taken the challenge of using television as a tool towards positive social transformation. The following chapter is a layout of my project. It highlights the plan of my future production. My project will offer self- knowledge and self-appreciation lessons.

#### **2.0 Needs of the Youth**

The youth are always in need of role models in their effort to form and reinforce their identities. During their psychological development, the youth subconsciously look for role models of which to associate with.

The youth also have a great need of being accepted and appreciated by their significant others. However, some of the significant others, especially the peers, hold

attitudes that are shaped by other role models including those presented on the media. Usually you hear the youth talk about something being in fashion, this is usually a simplistic argument because what is considered as fashionable is usually perceived to be as such because of a particular role model especially a celebrity who introduces it as being fashionable and cool. From my experience, contemporary Tattoos of dragons, snakes and daggers were not as fashionable among the youth in Nairobi before the late 2Pac Amaru Shakur and 50 Cent.

My research has proved that the youth have a great need for entertainment. This need is usually satisfied by the media. Consequently, this suggests that they have to spend time with the medium that best satisfies this need. It is spending time with this media that ultimately gives it power to socialize them. According to the research a great number of youth can access television. A relatively great number also picked television as their most favourite media. It came second to radio in my quantitative research and first in my qualitative research.<sup>66</sup>

### **3.0 Television in the Process of Identity Formation**

Television is a very powerful tool especially because of its combination of audio and video elements. Because of these two elements, the message lasts longer in the mind of the recipient. “The most influential message is one that lasts in the mind of the recipient the longest, the message that last the longest is the one that enters the mind of

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<sup>66</sup> Refer to Chapter Two

the recipient through the most perceptual channels".<sup>67</sup> It can be used to create a deep and emotionally involving experience. It can be used to manipulate the feelings of the audience hence having an influence on their attitudes. Young people are generally very energetic and mentally active; the use of clips and audio maintains their attention for a longer time.

#### **4.0 Relevance of a TV program in addressing the needs of the youth**

Kenyan youths have not had their own platform to discuss issues that seriously concern them; most musical programs and entertainment talk show will highlight pseudo issues. We take in global material without highlighting their relevance to us from our modern African perspective which has limited us in being selective of what we take in from outside. Television can present role models mostly celebrities that the youth look up to and associate themselves with. These role models will also help the youth in answering some of the questions that they could be struggling with. These role models also help in reinforcing the attitudes that the youth may form in the event of watching the program. This is because the youth will perceive these new attitudes and values as 'cool'.

Television programs should be presented entertainingly because the youth will not pay attention to anything boring. Because the youth need information whether consciously or unconsciously, they will only receive it, if it is presented entertainingly.

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<sup>67</sup> D. Odipo, *Economy of the Media*, Class Notes, 2006

Television can socialize the youth positively as it interacts with them on a relational and interactive manner.

Television programs can be used to deconstruct the mentality of the youth who as I have mentioned above think that being westernized is synonymous to being cool. The project will make considerable effort to show that being African is extremely cool too. The program will be designed for the urban youth because they have the most access to television. Some of the issues presented such as use of Sheng maybe very irrelevant for the rural youth.

## **5.0 Project Strategy**

Since I have appreciated the fact that the youth have needs that can be relevantly addressed by television, and based on the theories proposed by scholars about media effect, I have come up with a program that will address the issues concerning the youth. For purposes of representing both genders, my program will be a composition of a talk show and a music show. Because it is meant for the youth, the program will be strategically informal.

It will bring together a pool of youth and local celebrities to discuss the different issues that concern the youth. According to the role modeling theory; this will make my message more effective. The youth will be in a position to relate with the guests.

This music talk show will run for a period of 3 months on a weekly basis. As the cultivation theory suggest, the more consistently the message is put across, the higher

its chance to influence. It should strike a rapport with the youth through use of entertaining material that will interest the youth and the celebrities invited as guests. Because the youth are more likely to listen to the youth, the guests and presenters will be young people. The languages used will also be a language usually used by the youth in a relaxed atmosphere. To keep the youth entertained, there will be a lot of music and celebrity information given. This element brings in the entertainment aspect. There would be no use of making a boring program for the youth. The program will run for 30 minutes because the youth lose interest at a fast rate. Being a youth myself, I know that young people easily lose interest. Instead of quantity I will go for constant quality. I prefer they tune in for half an hour every Friday for a month than just one Friday for more hours.

Many youths don't like reading much and that is why I have selected a television program instead of an article in a book or newspaper. Even though the youth read magazines, most of them just flip through, sometimes missing out on crucial details. I have also not selected radio because being a video student, I am convinced that the visual element added to the audio element that radio has gives TV much more power.

I have selected a music show instead of a drama or documentary mainly because of the interest element. Documentaries may appear much too formal. Dramas may hinder the music element. You cannot simply interrupt the drama to run a music video.

## **6.0 Primary Target Audience**

My target audiences for this musical talk show are the urban Kenyan youths. These are the youth ranging between the ages of 13-28.

They have been selected because of the psychological and physiological stage they are in. Moreover they result most easily influenced, for the fact that they are greatly exposed to the media and disconnected with some social institutions such as extended families.

## **7.0 Purpose**

- To build awareness and sensitize on the importance of having a healthy self-perception
- To Entertain

## **8.0 Communication Objectives**

- To leave the audience with a feeling of self fulfillment, assurance and worth
- To give the audience a sense of confidence and encouragement in discovering and rediscovering themselves
- The youth will feel challenged to evaluate themselves and what they find important.

## **9.0 Format**

The program will be a music talk show. It will comprise of music and informal interviews about selected topics.

This music talk show will be a serial in nature. It will air weekly. This program will be aired once a week preferably Friday at 5:00 pm to 5:45pm on KTN. According to research undertaken by The Media Council of Kenya, KTN is the most popular television station currently.

## **10.0. Program Content**

The program will be Entitled *Ndani yako* which simply means within you. This is because it deals with the inner self people. It dwells more on what is inside a person than the superficial exterior.

It will be hosted by a young male and female continuity presenter who will be the only presenters for the show whenever it runs.

The key elements that will be used in this musical talk show include interviews, call- ins, opinion polls and music. The interviews will be used as elements of intensification as well as relational elements, since most interviewees will be young urban youths most of them being local celebrities. Music is a great element in such a project. Apart from it being a music talk show, my research showed that most youth love music. However, the music will be carefully selected in such a way that it will not propagate what is it's supposed to be fighting against. We will not have songs such as '*Under 18*' which glorifies sex and alcohol.

Most of the information will be gathered from the interviews and occasionally scientific research, especially in regard to the effects of the media or in an attempt to represent diverse cultures. It will be carried out in the field and presented as clips.

This project will also incorporate a lot of creativity in regard to the shots and topics. The music talk show will be presented in English, Kiswahili and Slang as these are the languages commonly used by the youth in the urban areas.

It is my hope that this project proposal will help me in the lobbying of media houses specifically KTN to produce and air '*Ndani Yako*'. When accepted, I will implement this project as laid down below.

### **11.0 Debut Program**

The first episode of *Ndani Yako* will bring together 3 celebrities<sup>68</sup> to discuss the relevance of using Kiswahili or vernacular languages based on how they themselves were brought up and how they would bring up another generation.

This episode will feature Sheila Mwanyigah from Easy FM, DJ Styles of Capital FM both who use mostly English in their presentations and Zaka from Ukoo Flani Mau Mau who usually uses Swahili and '*Sheng*' (Slang) in his music. It will also invite a group of youth from the university to be in the audience. They will be given a chance to ask questions making the show as interactive as possible. Assumably, University students as an audience will also be in a position to give the topic an academic or systematically thought out perspective. This audience will be composed of youth

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<sup>68</sup>Celebrity derived from celebrated, referring to a popular person in their context

coming from different social standing, mainly Eastlands and Westlands. This is because of the popular belief among the youth that English is usually reserved for the 'Babi' from the up market areas such as Westlands and Swahili for the youth from the Eastlands area. Having an audience also makes the show livelier. It gives it a youthful energy. It is also more involving since, the audience at home will be invited to appear as studio audiences in following shows. This gives them something to look forward to.

The aim of this episode, which will not be revealed to the guest or audience, is to find out whether or not it matters which language one uses as opposed to advocating for the use of a particular language. This will give more information about what the youth think of themselves and how they perceive one another.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

The media and television specifically, has an influence on the identity formation of the youth, since it has become a great socialization agent in the modern times. Due to a shift in lifestyle patterns in modern Africa, there have been loop holes formed especially in the communication of how one is supposed to live and perceive himself in society.

The three chapters of my project have systematically journeyed from an assumption to the ultimate planning of my project with a number of set objectives in mind.

### **Evaluation of the Objectives of the Thesis**

The project aimed at:

- Evaluating how media content influences the identity of the youth
- To analyzing why the youth are influenced by television
- To elaborate a communication strategy in form of a television show, that advocates for the establishment of a positive self-image among the youth

This project is an incisive continuation of my long essay that was set out to research on the effects that television has on the self-perception of the youth.

Through my personal experience as a youth and scientific research, I discovered that television is indeed a major factor in shaping the identities of the youth in the urban areas.

This project was able to highlight how the media influences the identity of the youth by the very fact that it has become a modern agent of socialization as expounded by Chapter One of this project. Through research and application of relevant media theories, this project has also shown why and how the media influences the youth. With this information, I have come up with a project that is geared to use television in promoting a healthy self-image.

### **Challenges of Implementation**

The main challenge of implementing my project will be financial. It is expensive to initiate and sustain a talk show. Because of the competitive state of affairs in the industry, most television station may want to steal the concept. Some may wish to buy it then alter it, turning it to another superficial talk show all in the name of profit.

It will be a challenge to have this project proposal genuinely adopted and financed. It is also a challenge to get the necessary material to be aired. Having mostly local personalities such as musicians as my guests is also a difficult task, because some may want to get paid for their appearances. Other celebrities may miss the concept behind the show altogether. The program has to remain fresh and creative if it is to maintain the interest of the youth.

## **Recommendations**

More research can be carried out to identify other effects of television. A wider and more intricately detailed audience research should also be carried out to be able to identify more specific needs that the youth. This allows for a more impact full strategy when designing the project plan.

Identity formation is a vital process, all media, and not just television, should tackle this issue. Media practitioners who have Kenya at heart should aim at improving the self-image of our youth. In my survey, there was a high number of respondents that chose radio as their favourite medium, radio should then be incorporated in this campaign in an effort to reach more youths.

*'Ndani yako'* will also consider having other personalities other than just musicians. This will help it overcome the challenge of egoistic guests as well as ensuring that the program does not run out of people to invite.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**KBC** -Kenya Broadcasting Corporation

**KTN** -Kenya Television Network

**NTV** -Nation Television

**MCK** -Media Council of Kenya

**EAs** - Enumeration Areas

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## APPENDIX 2: SURVEY QUESTIONS

### TANGAZA COLLEGE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

*Dear Friend:*

*We thank you for accepting to participate in this research study that we are conducting. It is aimed at investigating the use of media among the young people. Your kind and honest response is needed. There are not right or wrong answers; your opinion is what matters. Your answers will be treated as confidential. Please do not write your name. What you tell us will help us, other young people like you and their parents to understand the world of the youth. Thank you for your time.*

**INSTRUCTION:** Please tick the answer that best applies to you.

1. Do you have access to:-

Radio	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	DVD player	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	CD player	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newspaper	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Magazines	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	MP3 player	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

Others (specify).....

**2. Which form of media do you prefer? (Number your three most favourite and write the number in the box)**

Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	Magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>	Video shows	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cinemas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify).....	

Why?.....

**3. Do you have your own?**

Radio	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	DVD player	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	MP3	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newspaper	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	CD player	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Other (specify).....

**4. How many hours on average do you spend on consuming the media? (Per week including weekends)**

	Below 6 hrs	7-14 hrs	15-21 hrs	22-28 hrs	Over 28 hrs
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cinema	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disco	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CD player	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DVD player	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mp3 player	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (specify.....)

**5. What do you use that media for? (Number in order of priority and write the number in the box)**

	<b>Education</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Entertainment</b>	<b>Spiritual nourishment</b>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Television	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video (At home/showroom)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cinema	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disco	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CD player

DVD player

Other (specify).....

**6. List three programs that you enjoy most in order of priority**

- (i) .....
- (ii) .....
- (iii) .....

**7. Which is your favorite music? (Please tick only one)**

Reggae  Techno  Gospel

Hip-hop  Salsa  Local music

Soul  Zilizopendwa  Classical

Rock  Rhythm and blues  African music

Others (specify).....

**8. Who are your favorite singers (Name three in order of priority)**

- (i) .....
- (ii) .....
- (iii) .....

**9. Whom do you generally use the media with? (Please tick only one)**

Alone  With parents

With peers

Others (specify).....

**10. Who choose what you watch / listen / read to? (Tick only one)**

Myself  Friends  Sisters

Parents  Brothers

Others (specify).....

**11. Do you believe in everything you get through media? (Tick only one)**

All of the time  Sometimes

Most of the time  Never

Why?.....

**The following are some attitudes about life. Express your agreement or disagreement with these statements by circling the appropriate number.**

**12. I consider myself happy when (1-not sure 2-strongly disagree 3-disagree 4-agree 5-strongly agree)**

I have a lot of money	1	2	3	4	5
I dress well	1	2	3	4	5
I have a girl / boyfriend	1	2	3	4	5
I go out for a snack	1	2	3	4	5
I pass my exams	1	2	3	4	5
I have faith in God	1	2	3	4	5



**18.** I am in

(a) Boarding School

(b) Day school

**19.** Where do you live?

(Specify).....

**20.** I live with (**Tick only one**)

Parents

Relatives

Friend

Grandparents

Alone

In a hostel

### APPENDIX 3: DEBUT PROGRAM FLOW

Slot	Content	Time
Opening	Signature tune	10 Seconds
Beginning of Show	Introduction of the show and topic	1 Minute
	Introduction of the guests	1 Minute
	Music video- <i>Mizani</i> by <i>Wenyeji</i> , <i>Ukoo Flani</i> from Eastlands	1.5 Minutes
Beginning of interviews	Reintroduction and contextualization of topic	2 minutes
	Interview continues	7 minutes
Break		45 Seconds
2 <sup>nd</sup> Half	Reintroduction of topic	30 seconds
	Music Video- <i>Westi (No Haters)</i> by <i>Kantai</i> from Westlands	1.5 minutes
	Call-ins	3 minutes
	Questions by Guests	3 minutes
	Response to Call-ins and Questions from Guests	5 minutes
	Closing of Interview	2 minutes
	What's up- Entertainment Guide	2 minutes
Closing	Music Video- <i>Punchline Kibao</i> by <i>Ukoo flani Mau Mau</i>	2.5 minutes

## APPENDIX 4: SURVEY ON MEDIA AND YOUTH

January to March 2006

Questionnaires distributed as part of the course Media research I

Data processed by Paola Moggi, CMS

### respondents age bracket

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	13-16	79	18.8	20.7
	17-20	151	36.0	39.5
	21-24	114	27.1	29.8
	25-28	38	9.0	9.9
	Total	382	91.0	100.0
Missing	System	38	9.0	
Total		420	100.0	

### respondents level of education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	primary	40	9.5	10.6
	secondary	128	30.5	34.0
	college/university	208	49.5	55.2
	6	1	.2	.3
	Total	377	89.8	100.0
Missing	System	43	10.2	
Total		420	100.0	

**respondents occupation**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	student	268	63.8	69.4
	unemployed	40	9.5	10.4
	self-employed	31	7.4	8.0
	employed	47	11.2	12.2
	Total	386	91.9	100.0
Missing	System	34	8.1	
Total		420	100.0	

**respondents gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	196	46.7	53.1	53.1
	female	173	41.2	46.9	100.0
	Total	369	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	51	12.1		
Total		420	100.0		

**media helps solve problems**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	all the time	36	8.6	9.8
	most of the time	77	18.3	21.0
	sometimes	215	51.2	58.7
	never	38	9.0	10.4
	Total	366	87.1	100.0
Missing	System	54	12.9	
Total		420	100.0	

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