Ugandan Superstar!

- an anthropological study of youth, music and social becoming in Kampala, Uganda

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Front page photo: Bobi Wine accepts the award for Best Artist of the Year at the 2006 Pearl of Africa Music Awards. Photo by Gitte Christensen.

Abstract

Musik og populærkulturs rolle i unge Afrikaneres liv har været et overset emne inden for antropologien. Derfor vil jeg undersøge dette felt med udgangspunkt i to forskellige antropologiske tilgange; ungdoms-studier og antropologi af musikindustrier.

Dette er et studie af social tilblivelse. Det udforsker, hvordan unge mænd håndterer marginaliserende kræfter i søgen efter individuel, social autonomi og kollektiv, kulturel autonomi ved at blive kunstnere og arbejde med musik i Uganda. Det udforsker, hvordan de anvender forskellige ressourcer og kapitaler med særligt fokus på opnåelsen af den *'respekt',* der er forbundet med at være top-kunstner.

Studiet et baseret på 5 måneders feltarbejde udført i perioden august 2006-januar 2007 blandt unge kunstnere i Kampala, hvor jeg anvendte antropologiske metoder til dataindsamling i form af deltager observation samt forskellige former for samtale og interviews.

Jeg indleder specialet med at skabe en analytisk og empirisk forståelse af 'ungdom' i Kampala og pointerer, at det er nødvendigt at anskue kunstnernes sociale tilblivelse både som en søgen efter individuel, social autonomi og kollektiv, kulturel autonomi. Unge mænd befinder sig i periferien redistribuerende sociale og politiske patrimonelle netværk. På samme tid oplever de, at deres uddannelser er værdiløse på et arbejdsmarked, hvor det er nødvendigt at have 'forbindelser'. Unge mænd bliver ofte i både globale akademiske diskurser og i lokale offentlige diskurser kriminaliserede og anset som asociale. At blive musiker er en alternativ vej til social tilblivelse. Jeg belyser de seneste 15 års udvikling i Ugandas underholdningssektor med særlig fokus på populærmusik ved at anvende Alex Perullos begreb 'music economy'. Væksten i denne sektor er i høj grad skabt af unges opfindsomhed i deres søgen efter social tilblivelse i samspil med økonomiske betingelser. Jeg bruger Pierre Bourdeius kapitalbegreb til at belyse, hvordan kunstnere anvender ressourcer til at blive top-kunstner i musikfeltet via den symbolske kapital *respekt* samt social og kropslig kapital. I 'the soap opera of music' strides kunstnerne om at have mest *respekt* og dermed være *nummer ét* top-kunstner. De forskellige kapitaler gør det muligt for kunstnerne at fuldbyrde deres sociale tilblivelse i musikfeltet. Selvom top-kunstnere opnår status i musikfeltet, anser mange dem for stadigvæk at tilhøre en farlig og afvigende gruppe unge mænd i samfundet. Kunsternes berømmelse i musikfeltet kan dog nogen gange, og i højere og højere grad, konverteres til anerkendelse i samfundet som helhed. Dette opnår de delvist ved at appropriere og re-

præsentere elementer af global populær og ungdomskultur samt ved at kropsliggøre social og fysisk mobilitet gennem forbrug af varer, der er forbundet med modernitet og 'det gode liv'.

De unge kunstnere i Kampala har skabt en vej til social autonomi, der omgår de marginaliserede kræfter, og har på samme tid været frontløbere for skabelsen af kulturel autonomi for ugandiske unge.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> *'I live my life like a superstar*
> *Blessed are those who believe*
> *But they need to see...'*

> Ziggy Dee, Ugandan artist
> in the hit song Eno Mic from 2003.
> *(for full transcription and translation see Appendix A)*

This is a study of extraordinary young men in Uganda. They are healthy and well fed. They wear designer clothes, drive expensive cars, and spend a lot of money on drinks in VIP sections of fashionable hotels and night clubs. Others look up to them, *respect*[1] them for their accomplishments. They are having a good time. The reason for all this is music. The young men in this study have built a world of luxury and fame around themselves by *going into music* –by becoming artists. This study is based on 5 months fieldwork carried out in the period august 2006-january 2007 among young artists living in Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

1.1 Analytical positioning

Recently, scholars have emphasized the need for more research on the roles that popular music play in the lives of youth in Africa (Prince 2006: 127, Perullo 2003, 2005, Lukalo 2006: 30), and this study is a partial fulfilment of this need. It looks at how young artists make a living by doing music and how their livelihood is carving out new realms of expression for youth. Unlike much anthropological writing on youth from Uganda and Africa in general, this thesis does not pay much attention to religion, war, development and public health issues (cf. Mulamila Olsen 2006, Wimberley 1996, Bohmer & Kirumira 2000, Parikh 2000). While this might not be something new from Africa, I hope readers will consider it to be *something else* from Africa.

Youth in Kampala, are experiencing social pressure in the form of different marginalising forces in their everyday life, some of which I will explore in this thesis. Though Kampala is a

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[1] Emic terms are in italics

growing African city, and a regional centre for economic, social and cultural development, 70 % of its population is estimated to be poor (Otiso 2006:63[2])

In the 2002 census, 78.5 percent of the total population in Uganda were children or youth under the age of 30 (UBOS 2006a: 9). Youth, defined as people between 18 and 30 years of age made up 22.4 percent of the population (ibid). In other words, children and young people make up a huge part of the population, and most of the children and youth in Kampala experience marginalisation because of the scarce economic resources of living in the city. A number of studies have shown how the working of patrimonial networks in a scarce economy deter African youth from becoming social adults and keep them 'in the compound', subordinated to parents or *'big men'* (Tranberg Hansen 2005: 8, cf. Vigh 2003 Utas, Christiansen, Vigh 2006, Perullo 2003), and also Ugandan youth encounter these marginalising forces and the problem of social becoming. It is in this context that I explore youth's involvement with the local popular music industry in Kampala.

Studies of music in Uganda have often sprung from ethnomusicology and primarily focused on 'traditional' or 'cultural' music as performed in pre-colonial times and the instruments and tonalities of this music (Cooke, 1999, 2000, Wachman 1952). Very few have attended to 'the most protean, adaptable, transferable of arts' (Barber 1997, 1); popular music, and what role it plays in everyday life of Ugandans (cf. Ssewakiryanga 1999, 2004, Nannyonga-Tamuzusa 2002).

But the entertainment sector in Uganda has grown rapidly and become more commercial, and to some extent professionalised, within the last 15 years, magazine editor Kalungi[3] explains:

'There used to be very little entertainment in the last twenty years or so. Okay before that, you know, there was so much insecurity in the country, you know. We had to be home by six because of curfews. So to speak. So there was really, really not much entertainment. But it has gradually developed. I mean expanded… Exploded, actually.'

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[2] Otiso refers to the poverty line, 'which in the 1990s was $ 171 per person per year' (Otiso 2006:63)

[3] As a rule, I have not anonymised the people features in this thesis. They see themselves as public figures with public lives. I have, however, chosen to leave out names and blur identities in passages that I deemed could harm my informants. Further, I use the stage names and every day nicknames of informants, rather than Christian names, because these are the names they use themselves.

In this *'explosion',* youth have played a pivotal role, both as producers and consumers of popular music. This thesis seeks to fill some of the gaps on literature on Ugandan popular music, by giving insights into practices of young actors who do music for a living.

The goal of this thesis is to shed light on the way a group of young men in Kampala make use of popular music as a means to social becoming, and thereby contribute to anthropological debates on African youth and their social becoming and to an emerging anthropology of African music industries.

The lives and musical careers of the Ugandan superstars capture a duality in the search for social becoming of youth in Uganda. Firstly, the young artists seek to gain an individual, social autonomy that enables them to be recognised and act as adults in society. Secondly, young artists are etching out new realms of expression for youth in a more collective search for cultural autonomy.

This is a study of social becoming. It explores how young men deal with marginalising forces in their search for individual, social autonomy and collective, cultural autonomy by becoming artists and working with popular music in Uganda. It explores how they employ various resources and capitals, paying specific attention to the notion of 'respect' associated with becoming a top-artist.

Alex Perullo writes about music and cultural agency of young people in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania (2003). He defines popular music as: 'any music that is recorded or performed for commercial purposes. Commercial, in this sense, refers to music designed for popular appeal and financial profit' recognizing 'the diverse and unique ways that performing at a club, airing songs on the radio, or selling cassettes influences and inspires people in everyday life' (Perullo 2003: 30-31)

This definition takes into consideration the many lives and social and economic processes that are involved in making popular music happen, apart from the musical expression itself and the performance of songs. Thus, the realm of the popular music becomes a social space which can be studied, rather than a cultural text of lyrics and musical sounds.

Perullo suggests that an anthropology of African music industries could be a new field of study for anthropologists and ethnomusicologists, that examines 'the complex intersection of music with culture, technology, politics, economics and society' and focuses on 'the people

who work within the popular music scene and the ways that they use music for social, political, and economic objectives' (Perullo 2003: xii).

1.2 Fieldwork and data

The ethnographic data used in this thesis has been generated during a 5 month fieldwork in Kampala, Uganda in 2006. In the largely rural Uganda, few urban spaces are big enough, and affluent enough to support an 'entertainment scene' and Kampala has become the natural centre of entertainment and music in Uganda, which is why this study focuses on artists living in the central region of Uganda, most of them belonging to the Baganda tribe[4].

I worked with solo artists and groups of artists between the ages of 18 and 35 who had music as a main source of income, and who had started their careers as karaoke artists. I learnt about their life worlds by following them in their daily work, using qualitative research methods of participant observation and interviews (Hastrup 2003). On the local music scene, young men are most visible and perceived to be bigger stars than their female counterparts. I predominantly worked with young men in the field. In this thesis I have picked out a few voices of the many in Ugandan popular music by youth and youngish people, to represent some more general tendencies within the field.

My focus on youngish urban artists and urban music in Kampala neglects the many smaller towns and secondary schools where many aspiring artists start their careers, polish their talent and practice their performance skills, before heading to Kampala to pursue their dreams of becoming stars. Lastly, this study deals with secular music. Gospel music is a popular genre in Uganda and though some *top-artists* occasionally release religious songs, they certainly do not belong to the genre of gospel music.

1.3 A brief outline of the following chapters

In chapter 2 I will explore the concept of youth as an analytical tool and as lived by young Kampalians. I present the social context of youth by examining some of the marginalising forces that they encounter in their every day life. Further, I will examine youth as a gendered experience and focus on masculinity and social becoming. This chapter builds an analytical

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[4] The Baganda (singl. Muganda) are the largest tribe in Uganda, subjects of the Buganda kingdom, speaking the language Luganda. The things, culture and practices of the Baganda is referred to as Kiganda or simply the root word Ganda.

approach to the study of social becoming as well as an empirical background for the young men in this study and their choice to '*go into music*'.

In chapter 3 I will give a more detailed account of how the data for this study was generated and explore some methodological issues related to my social becoming in the field.

In Chapter 4 I will introduce Alex Perullo's concept of 'music economy' for an exploration of the economic aspects related 'explosion' in the Ugandan music industry from the 1990s and onwards. It sheds light on how a market driven music economy contributes to the social autonomy and cultural autonomy of youth. This chapter explains the phenomenon of social becoming through music as a new trajectory for youth, conditioned by the commercialisation of music through commercial radio and karaoke performances.

Chapter 5 looks at the economy of practices by *top-artists* and their crews. By applying Bourdieu's notion of capital, I focus on how artists generate resources in the form of the symbolic capital, *respect*, which is not controlled by parents or elders, through different kinds of investment and building other kinds of capital as well as through contests of symbolic capital. This chapter gives insight into how the young men of this study accomplish social becoming by being artists.

In chapter 6 I examine whether the symbolic capital of artists can be converted into recognition in wider society. Here, I explore the way artists and others categorise them as deviant and dangerous individuals, and how the meaning of this categorization might change over time. Further, I explore how *being bad* might contribute to social becoming for young men.

To fully understand the social becoming of artists and their strategic *badness*, it is necessary to explore the links between local experiences and global flows of popular culture, which is the subject of chapter 7. Here I link social becoming of youth to ideas of mobility and modernity by employing Jonathan Friedman's conceptualisation of consumption and the quest for 'the good life'. I argue that becoming *somebody* and a *top-artist* is linked to notions of mobility and the appropriation, re-presentation and consumption of elements and images picked from global popular music.

Lastly, I sum up central points and suggest a few topics for further research.

Chapter 2: Youthhood in Kampala

Phantom Lovins walking down the street in *the ghetto*. Photo by author.

On a wall outside 'Movieworld' in Kamwoyka, a youthful Bobi Wine smiles confidently at costumers and passer-bys, his arms crossed, silver earring shining and short dreadlocks smartly fixed. Behind him a hemp-leaf and an orange-red fire accompanies the titles of the young man smiling from the wall: 'Firebase' 'Grandfather' and '100% bad news'.

At age 26, the singer, composer and producer Bobi Wine is the grandfather of no one, but insists to the public that although he is a young man, his brains are 45 years old (cf. Ssejjengo 2006: 6). Growing up as one of the oldest sons of a single mother, he started his musical career in high school in the mid-1990s where he and a group of friends formed the Firebase Crew. He describes himself in high school as a *thug* who was up to all kinds of mischief, and

that label has stuck to him and his crew ever since. 'A strong mind and a weak heart' is the constitution of a man who is a *thug*, but not a thief, he says, someone who has to fight his way through life, even after attaining stardom as an artist. Though he wanted to study law at University, he ended up in Music Dance and Drama at Makerere University in Kampala, and claims to be the first Ugandan musician with a degree. He takes his music *serious* and has few illusions about the 'art' of music; he says he is in it for the money. Through university he continued to record and perform music which was *strictly ragga* and *dancehall,* getting a few minor hits, and hanging out with the Firebase crew in their local *ghetto*, the shantytown area Kamwoyka. When he tried his luck as an actor on stage, he met the love of his life, the actress Barbie. Though they are not yet officially married, they live together with their son in a house in a Kampalian suburb.

   In 2003 Bobi's older brother, Eddy, returned from the US with studio equipment and the knowhow to use it, and Bobi's career took flight. He appointed himself President of the Ghetto and members of the Firebase Crew ministers of his cabinet. Releasing hit after hit as a single artist or in collaboration with other artists or members of the crew, he has steadily made his way to the top of Ugandan music. His voice is blaring from radios and sound systems all over town and high ranking army officers and the corporate class readily pay for VIP performances to dance to his tunes. On the way to stardom, the themes of his lyrics have changed, as have the beats of his music, to appeal to a wider audience. His popularity has taken him around the world to perform for Diaspora audiences, and has earned him the spot as *top-artist* as well as the title as Artist of the Year 2006. I bump into him having afternoon snacks with his crew at the fancy hotel Serena's restaurant. My birthday is just a few days away and I am there to make reservations. We have met a few times before at shows and in the club, so I hang out and chat for a while. There is this energy around the table, of young people really going somewhere, becoming something big. They are dressed casually in t-shirts and baggy jeans, except from Bobi who is in all black, plenty of shiny and sparkling jewellery and has smoothly hidden his dreads in a turban. They certainly stand out from the rest of the clientele, which mostly consists of older expatriates and business men in expensive looking suits.

He teasingly comments on my birthday plans: 'You didn't invite us to your birthday! Do you think we will eat so much?'

'Er…uhm… ' I answer feebly, embarrassed and a bit proud that these guys would even want to be invited.

He asks me how old I will be and I answer, still slightly embarrassed: '25'

'Please,' he sighs, pointing at himself: 'others are going on 45!'

Far away from *the ghetto:* the restaurant at hotel Serena. Photo by author

So how is it, that a young man of 26 can be considered a 'grandfather' and also claim to be 45 years old? In the following chapter I will explore the meaning of social becoming and age in Uganda and the experience of youth in Kampala Uganda. Further, I will highlight youth as a gendered experience. I will present some of the reasons that young men '*go into music*' rather than follow paths laid out for them by parents or kin.

2.1 An analytical approach to youth

The study of Youth is emerging as a separate branch within anthropological studies on Africa (see Durham 2000, Vigh 2003, Utas 2003, Sommers 2001, Christiansen, Utas &Vigh 2006, Perullo 2003, 2005 Helgesson 2005, Stambach 2000).

Rather than defining youth from a purely chronological perspective, like most statistical studies do, these studies view youth as socially constructed categories that are diverse and different with different groups and in different times (Helgesson 2006: 7). Age is situational and a social construct as is also reflected above in Bobi Wine's 'age schizophrenia'.

Chronological age is a backdrop for social age in terms of defining and measuring appropriate periods of childhood, youth and adulthood. Further, in a number of contexts chronological age determines social action –for instance in quantitative studies, legal matters; determining if you can vote or go to jail, development discourses; whether you can be a beneficiary of a NGO programme or not (Utas 2003: 24) and educational matters; when you are eligible for schooling and under which conditions.

Here, however, I am primarily concerned with the social aspects of age, since they seem to be a factor in the experiences of young artists in Kampala, as highlighted above.

Utas defines the entry into youthhood as the time when actors gain 'aspirations to become an agent within the public arena, i.e. the obtaining of a distinct voice in the decision-making processes of the lager society' (Utas 2003:31). The experience of youth is then, characterised by the wish for – and ability to exercise - agency in social and cultural matters.

In social scientific literature on youth, there are two main approaches to understanding youth. One branch, of classical anthropological studies, examines youth or adolescence as a transitional life-stage, a process of becoming an adult. The other approach, more recent and intertwined with sociology, looks at youth as a social position within societies, as youth culture(s). In the following I will highlight some analytical features of the two approaches and link them to experiences of the artists in Kampala.

The two approaches have, as a rule, different empirical backgrounds. Studies of the process of youth often have their empirical roots in relative poor settings, where youth are marginalized and do not control resources to make their own life choices, while studies of the position of youth have vantage points in relatively affluent settings, where young people relatively freely make life choices (this distinction is also made by Vigh 2003, Christiansen, Utas Vigh 2006, Utas 2003). This analytical duality in understanding what youth is, who

youth is and what youth can be underlines that youth is a social shifter (Durham 2004) which is a 'social effect of power' (Utas 2003: 34, cf. Durham 2000)

The two different analytical approaches correspond to a duality in experience by the young artists in Kampala. They struggle against marginalizing forces to become men, and at the same time they are the creative agents of music that other young people relate to.

Youthhood is, like so many other things, a gendered experience. Recent studies on youth and agency in Africa have focused on the experience of male youth without much attention to female experiences of youthhood (Sommers 2003, Utas 2003, Vigh 2003), and this study can be accused of doing the same. The following 'general' discussion on youth is actually a discussion on male youth and their predicaments in attaining what I call social- and cultural autonomy[5]. I suspect that the experience of becoming an adult is very different for young women.

In Kampala, as in other places in Uganda with patrilineal kinship organisation, male youth are expected to perform to attain adulthood (cf. Meinert 2005). They are expected to establish an independent household, pay bride price and provide for their family, all tings that require considerable economic resources. Female youth can attain adulthood by moving from the family home to a boyfriend's or husband's home (Meinert 289: 2005). Though practice for social becoming among both male and female youth is somewhat more complex in practice, it suffices here to note, that the process differs between the genders, and that male youth may feel at bigger pressure to perform and to assert their social autonomy as adults.

2.1.1 A search for social autonomy

Classical anthropological studies on youth or adolescence (Malinowski 1960 (1929), Mead 1975 (1928), Turner 1967) regard young people as social actors who are not quite full members of society - yet. Youth is 'betwixt and between' in a transitory, liminal life-stage (Turner 1967), and in order to become adults, they must undergo different rites of passage.
In this approach youth is understood to be a process of transiting from one relatively stable life-stage to the next, and actions of youth is interpreted as rehearsals for life as an adult; 'the real thing' (Bucholtz 2002: 532). They are not 'real' actors, they are acted upon. As a consequence youth are viewed as having limited resources and limited abilities for acting consciously in their social worlds because they 'know less than adults' (Wulff 1995: 11) (or,

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[5] For an exploration of the term 'autonomy' see Cullberg 1988 (1975)

their knowledge is less legitimate than the knowledge of adults). Youth are, in other words, what they are as a function of what they are aspiring to become - a social category defined by its relation to other categories.

By going through a liminal period of youthhood, the process of becoming an adult, actors gain the social autonomy of a full member of society 'with a distinct voice in decision making processes'. Yet, Mats Utas writes about youth in Liberia, and I think this holds truth for Ugandan youth as well:

'[T]he liminal period seems to vary depending on each personal situation. Appropriating the right support, both economic and socio-cultural, and from parents and society, would generally implicate a short period of youthhood. However, for a large proportion of the (…) population, youthhood actually becomes and extended struggle, played out over many years and met with growing frustration' (Utas 2003: 32)

This struggle is certainly the experience of Phantom Lovins, from Bobi Wines Firebase Crew, who is working on his first album:

'If I had very nice support, I don't think I would have been the man I am today. I would have been somewhere*, at least. I think, I* should *have been somewhere. But you know Africa. You have to fight your own way. As a man.'*

For urban, Ugandan youth, transiting to adulthood normally means establishing an independent household, getting married and establishing a family. But building a house and paying bride wealth and supporting children is an expensive enterprise, and because of the scarce resources in the urban economy youth can get 'stuck' in the undesired and liminal category of being young and their expected life trajectory comes to a halt (cf. Tranberg Hansen 2005). In the extended struggle to become a man, young men are still depending on – and limited by parents or other patrons.

In this frustrating situation of discrepancy between chronological age and social age in the process of becoming an adult, youth find alternative paths to gaining social autonomy. For the people featured in these pages, *going into music* is one such path. 28 year old Lyrical G has *gotten somewhere* by rapping on stage for the last 10 years. As he says, his family '*can't say*

shit', and his father recognises his independence by using his stage name Lyrical G rather than his birth name Geoffrey:

'Before my dad was always asking me: 'Is that what you're going to do? Blablabla!!!' Now he can't say shit, 'cause I don't ask him for money. I don't live with him. He used to say that shit *when I was living with him. When I left the house, he was broke, and I was making some money. I was always at concerts making some money. He* knows *that I haven't asked him [for money] for more than two years. How is he going to start? He can't start with me, man! He'd rather not even try. He knows. He was introducing me to his friends: 'This is LG, this is Lyrical G'. (...) I don't have to walk around looking for my family to tell me how to live.'*

2.1.2. The search for cultural autonomy

More recent studies of young people in predominantly affluent, Western settings have introduced youth as a social category in its own right, with its own 'youth culture' (Wulff 1995, Amit-Talai & Wulff 1995), and in some cases adherent 'sub cultures', 'tribes' or 'scenes' (Hesmondhalgh 2005). This way of looking at youth introduces a kind of cultural autonomy that reflects youth 'communities' as sites of agency – creating their own 'world-views, styles and practices' (Christiansen, Utas, Vigh 2006: 15)

   The relationship between youth culture and popular music has often been the subject of studies in affluent societies, dealing with consumption and identity formation (Hesmondhalgh 2005, Bennett 2000). In such studies there is often a one to one correspondence between 'sub-cultures' and musical genres, and the music that youngsters listen to and identify with is thus an expression of the cultural autonomy of youth. In studies of non-Western, this dimension of youth has often been ignored because young people in less affluent societies rarely control the resources to sustain and consume cultural products. The musical careers of the young artists are reflecting an emerging market for popular cultural products, like music, specifically targeting youth and carving out of a cultural space for young people in Kampala. The choices of the people featured in this study to *go into music* does not only reflect a search for social autonomy but also a search for a collective, cultural autonomy.

Artists in Uganda are both searching for their own individual social autonomy, to become men, and searching for youth's cultural autonomy, as a specific *sound* or *tradition* for Ugandan popular music by youth, with youth as one of the target audiences.

At the same time they are seen by their surroundings both as unfinished adults who still have a lot to learn about the ways of the world, and as youth who might have more on common with other young people in other countries than elders in their own societies.

In other words, the experience of youth and the socially constructed meaning of youth in Kampala might be changing from marginalised to 'center stage', or at least experiences and meanings are being contested center stage by youngish artists (Hesmondhalgh 2005), who are becoming *big men* and '*stealing the show'* in the public sphere.

2.2 Marginalising forces I: Instability and 'kiwani'

This section is about everyday life of youth in Kampala and some of the marginalising forces that youth meet in their social becoming. The following story of Chagga exemplifies how the modus operandi of Uganda's political and social life makes the lives of actors with few resources and *connections* a constant struggle to even grasp what is going on. Chagga started his musical career in church. He stayed with his uncle's family in Kampala and was forced to sing in the church choir. With time he realised that he had a special talent and he loved music. In secondary boarding school he started rapping and became a member of the Bataka Squad, which became one of the most popular hip hop groups in the late 1990s Kampala. In 2001, however, Bataka was breaking up and Chagga's friend and up-coming ragga solo artist Chameleon offered him to go on stage as his back up singer.

'He said: 'Now you come,' he had a bike to take us home from the venue. So I didn't even go back with the Bataka from then,' 26-yearold Chagga remembers with a characteristic smile. Chameleon, with Chagga as a backup singer, went on to become the first superstar and *top-artist* in Uganda, and one of the most popular artists in the East African region. Chameleone and his Leone Island crew completely dominated the local music scene in the early 2000's.

But after 5 years of singing hooks and harmonizing, Chagga left his friend and boss, Chameleon, in 2006, to pursue a solo career. This did not go down well with the crew, and they attempted to sabotage his name and solo career.

At a big show a fist-fight came up between Chagga and the deejay of the Leone Island crew. Both the involved parties reported the matter to the police, but it was DJ Future who

pressed legal charges against the newly 'Mr. independent' Chagga. A few months later, sipping a lukewarm beer in the early afternoon, he told me how his lack of network and inability to bribe his way out of trouble almost landed him in jail:

'So me, I didn't know anyone in court, I just go there ask them for my case. Don't you see, (...) they [Leone Island], wanted to take me back to prison by conning me. [They had] a big man*, that prosecutor. So I came to the court, the day I was supposed to come back for reporting. I came in the morning roundabout 9. So I was there, it became two [o'clock]. Then I went to ask: 'Where is our court sitting?'*

So that prosecutor told me that: 'Your court did not [sit]... the judge didn't come, so you're supposed to come back tomorrow. Your court will sit tomorrow.'

Then I told him: 'Whenever we come here, there's a paper that they give us, having the dates of when we are supposed to come back. Why don't you process that paper for me? And put the dates; that I'm coming back tomorrow. 'Cause me, the paper I have says that I'm coming back today.'

So the guy told me: 'Nooo Chagga, it's okay! Me, I'm the one working on your case, I'm the prosecutor! You go, you'll come back tomorrow, 'cause right now, I don't have where to process that paper from.' - Like even laughing at me as a friend.

I said: 'Okay, let me go.'

So I was staring to drive. Then there was a prison woman who had asked me for my new CD, and I had the CD in the car. So I went in the car, then I came back to bring that CD to that lady. When I came back to give that lady the CD, then she told me: 'Eh Chagga! Why aren't you in court?'

I told the lady: 'They've told me to go [and] that I come back tomorrow.'

The lady told me: 'Don't be stupid! You're supposed to be in court, that's a con-plan! Run!'

(Exclaiming, raising his hands to his head:) *Ajajaj! Then I entered the courtroom. The court had already sat! So they were there, putting the case on me. Even the guy who had told me to go home was there, on the table with the judge. When I entered, then the judge asked me: 'What? Where have you been?'*

Then I told the judge: 'I was around.' I couldn't tell the judge that that guy [the prosecutor] told me to go home, 'cause that guy is part of him [the judge]. They sit on the high table. (...) The guy (sighing, shaking his head:)… *They were just issuing my arrest warrant. So the guys*

[his former crew mates and the prosecutor] wanted me to keep the court bond. Then the judge signs for my arrest warrant and the next day - my coming tomorrow - was to arrest me. The guy [the prosecutor] was telling me that: 'Come back tomorrow.' Then they were going to arrest me there and then.'

As so many times before, Chagga's talent helped him out. A fan of his music warned him against the plans of the prosecutor. But the story is symptomatic of a society where most people are convinced that both the legislative, the executive, and the juridical powers can be – and has been – bought and sold. Most of the people I worked with felt uneasy around civil authorities. Growing up in the 80's and 90's, as my informants did, many of them have firsthand experience of harassment, assaults or executions performed by guerrilla warriors, soldiers or military police on themselves, family members or friends, and of running and hiding from battle sites in the city or in the country side. Though central Uganda has been relatively peaceful for 20 years, feelings of insecurity and mistrust are still deeply embedded in Kampala's citizens.

A central source of insecurity in the lives of youth is the patrimonial organization of political life in Uganda (Chabal & Daloz 1999: 5). Many of the young artists have experienced personal social deroute due to political and social changes and break-downs in patrimonial networks. Parents who were esteemed civil servants could be excluded from working in the public sector under the next regime. Children of local politicians or soldiers could face exile. Since most patrimonial networks have 'people in politics' on top, almost all children in Kampala grow up very aware of these networks and their patrons, known as *big men*.

Young people in particular are vulnerable because they often do not control the resources necessary for bribes and are considered as social juniors, dispensable. They take up positions lowest in age-power hierarchies, on the fringes of patrimonial networks, benefitting little, but putting a lot of effort and labour into *getting connections*.

Thus, the young musicians have grown up in a city where it rarely pays to rely on traditional patrimonial networks and age sets for social advancement, and corruption and *con-plans* are perceived as a annoying but normal part of life.

In the hit song Kiwani, Bobi Wine describes the lifestyle of Kampalians as *'kiwani'*, slang for frauding, lying or conning:

Bobi Wine in Luganda:

With Kampala's poverty you need to be ingenious.

If you don't play the game, you cannot survive.

This goes for both the ghetto people and the well to do.

Every place you turn it is the way of life.

(Bobi Wine & Firebase Crew, 2007, for full transcription and translation see Appendix A)

This *way of life* is a part of everyday practice which with a great force marginalize those who are poor or have limited connections in patrimonial networks – those in the bottom of age-power hierarchies. The *kiwani way of life* is extended to the legislative- the executive and the juridical powers, as Chagga's story shows, as well as prominent institutions in civil society such as the press. To get ahead in the game, you need to be ingenious and able to take advantage of any situation, like Chagga's former crew and the prosecutor did above. And that is, in many cases, exactly what the youth who are *going into music* are doing. By earning a separate income and not depending on the relationship to parents or kin it is a way of breaking the dependency on patrimonial networks in the quest for social autonomy (even if this might not exempt one from being victim of frauds like the one above).

2.3 Marginalising forces II: Education and the job market

For many Ugandans, education is a certain path to adulthood and social autonomy (Meinert 2005), but for Kampala's youth the 'magic' of school diplomas and other *papers* is fading[6]. The implicit promise of a formal job if one invests in education has been broken, and again, youth experience being 'stuck' in a position where they are unable to attain the resources needed to perform socially as adults.

   The government of Uganda launched Universal Primary Education 1997 which made primary school available for almost all children in Uganda. Ten years later free secondary education started. Higher education has undergone privatization and today colleges and universities are scattered throughout the country. Makerere University and Mbarara University of Science and Technology, remain the most prestigious national institutions for

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[6] An analysis of education as a capital resource defined by its scarcity see Bourdieu 1986: 243-248

higher learning. Since the mid-1990s Makerere has opened its halls to students on private scholarships (now over 33,000 students), taking the first steps towards becoming an institution of mass education.

Obtaining an academic degree has gone from being an asset that only the elite could gain, to something that some middleclass youth could attain if backed by their families. The status of a university degree, however, remains elite. In practice, the formal job market in Uganda is not able to accommodate the increased output of candidates from the institutions of higher learning. Young degree holders suffer from underemployment and over qualification, and are once again, 'stuck' as dependants on parents and kin.

Nubian Li who became famous singing duets with Bobi Wine, the Firebase President, is a graduate from Makerere. He finished his studies before becoming a professional artist, because he felt that he needed to get *the papers,* the certificate of his degree being a reification of the investment that his family has made in him over the years. *'In Uganda you really, really need to please your parents. Your mum will be like: 'I want you to be a doctor'. Then you're gonna go in for sciences,'* he says. His older brothers decided his field of study as well as the timing, because they were the ones paying for his education:

'You know, I did b-comm[7]*. [at Makerere University] But it wasn't my choice. And my brother's like: 'You're supposed to do this!' And they were paying, it wasn't me paying. They're like: 'You do this, or we're not gonna pay for you.' So I'm like: 'Okay. I need the paper, I'll do it.' But now, with music, I'm doing what my heart wants. Yeah. It's my passion.'*

Nubians experience with higher level education points back to the age-power hierarchies introduced earlier in this chapter. Because of his limited access to resources he was unable to make his own choices when planning his future career. The aspirations to 'obtaining a distinct voice in decision making processes' were overheard by his family. After his studies he put his heart into music and in this way has not only gained economic independence from his family, he has also asserted his social autonomy by making his own life choices.

Phantom Lovins is a freshman student in Music Dance and Drama at Makerere University, but has little faith in *the papers* he is working to attain. In Uganda, 58% of the unemployed population are youth between 18 and 30 years of age and the unemployment rate is much

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[7] Business and Communication

higher in urban areas than in rural areas (U.B.O.S. 2006b), so Phantom sees few prospects in a future on the formal job market. As an artist, however, he is able to fend for himself gaining a degree of social autonomy from his family:

'You'll go, you'll study, you'll have your degree. This is Uganda, man! And you'll sit back for years and years looking for a job. But now I'm doing something for myself. I can achieve to buy myself a shirt and trouser and a pair of shoes - other than, I mean, relaxing back, feeding on my parents, you understand? (...)I mean most people do that, (...) they keep under a family. I also keep under family, but I've decided to sing, because I want to do something for myself, you understand. As I go to school, I also do something for myself.'

Rather than *sitting back* or *relaxing back*, accepting the structural marginalisation, social injustice of patrimonial networks by *keeping under a family* and the dynamics of educational politics and the job market, Phantom Lovins has taken control of his future by going into music[8]. Here, he has the opportunity to do something for himself, to become *somebody of his own self*.

The value of a degree in the world of corruption and '*kiwani*' is fading, which is why some young artists question the value of education all together. Rather than sitting back and accepting structural marginalisation, they see going into music as an opportunity to become *somebody* only relying on their own individual abilities and ingenuity.

But while attaining a degree might not have much value in a future as an adult, going to school and being *on Campus* at an institution of higher learning has taken on its own value. As more youth experience the relative freedom of attending secondary boarding schools and University by living away from parents in hostels or in flats shared with friends, the experience of being young changes towards greater social and cultural autonomy. As Wulff writes, on youth predominantly in affluent societies, prolonged education might also prolong 'the state of youth' (Wulff, 1995:7)

2.4 Marginalising forces III: Global and local discourses on young men

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[8] For an exploration of equivalent 'discursive metaphors' by youth on being 'stuck' and marginalised in Zambia see Tranberg Hansen (2005: 10)

Young , urban African men, on the fringes of political and social networks, out of school and out of jobs, at the bottom of age-power hierarchies are most often represented as threatening the order of the societies they live in (Sommers 2006).

In the article 'Fearing Africa's Young Men' (ibid), Sommers examines the way that young men are depicted in literature on African youth and concludes that especially urban '[y]oung, Sub-Saharan African men are fearsome. (...) Young men in a bar in a poor urban neighbourhood are automatically considered the robbers of the wealthy' (ibid: 138). Young, African, marginalised, unemployed men are represented as 'loose molecules' that inhabit a sordid urban wasteland, devoid of dignified life opportunities (Kaplan in Sommers 2006: 138). These young men are uncontrollable and angry and therefore a threat to their surrounding societies. This discourse partly draws on the concept of youth as a transitional life-stage, where the transiting subjects, in this case young men, are understood to be in a state of liminality and to some extent 'pollution' (Douglas 1966, Turner 1967). If they are not controlled and handled carefully they might 'explode' and cause harm to the whole society. Youth is 'stained with the mark of danger', as Sommers writes (Sommers 2005: 139).

This discourse on youth and danger is reproduced locally by newspapers, government officials and many others. As in other East African cities (see Perullo 2003: 354-358, 2005: 76), male unemployed youth hanging around in – or migrating to[9] - Kampala trying to make a living, are seen as troublemakers and criminals. The discourse on youth as enemies, rather than part, of society, is causing what can be termed as 'moral panic' (Cohen 1972, Gode & Nachman 1994).

Police arrest youth for being 'idle and disorderly' and for 'loitering' in the streets of Kampala (Mambule 2007). Further, youth are often represented as rowdy, demanding and uncontrollable in relation to the frequent and often violent strikes and demonstrations in secondary schools and universities (cf. Abdallah 2005, Mills 2006). The dangerous youth are locally categorised as *bayaye[10]*, a slang word tracing its origin to the civil havoc of the Idi Amin era, referring to 'the unemployed, orphans and drug addicts' (Kasule 1998: 39). *Muyaye* is normally translated to *'hooligan'* or *'thug'*, someone who is out of control, who does not respect the social order.

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[9] See Meinert 2005
[10] Singl. Muyaye, pl. bayaye

Youth are generally regarded as being unable to control their sexuality and feelings, and being unwise to the ways of the world. In schools, churches and NGO programmes, youth are constantly impelled to control their urges (cf. Wimberley 1996, Stambach 2000, Mulamila Olsen 2006) and '*stay clean*' and '*serious*' under the guidance of parents, clergy and teachers. The positive image of youth as *clean* and *serious* emphasises the need for youth to abide to the rules and regulations that their seniors have instituted.

The popular young artists in Kampala are famed for *not* abiding to the rules, and not following prescribed paths, and they are classified with the social deviant stereotypes as *bayaye.* But being out of the control of elders and institutions, also means social autonomy for them. And some artists pride themselves with being *thugs*, like Bobi Wine in the beginning of this chapter. In chapter 6 I will take a closer look at the distinction between being *bayaye* and being *serious* and how the young artists use these categorisations and discourses on youth in their social becoming.

2.5 'Respect' – ordering hierarchies of age

For the young artists in Kampala issues of social becoming are encompassed by one word: *Respect.* It structures relations of power in any interaction hierarchically.

Nubian Li explains how *respect* works in practice while hanging out one evening at the Firebase ghetto. Sitting on the wall behind us a couple of the Firebase boys are chanting fragments of 'Here Comes the Hotstepper' (Ini Kamoze 1994) and sharing a joint, and from the street we hear children's voices:

Even the little kids here have respect. ...a little kid can't send you for anything. Like: (frowning in a demanding tone:) *'Nubian, you go buy me a soda.'*
Unless you're going to the shop and you're like: 'Let me go get a drink,'
and they're like: (in falsetto, copying a child's voice in a pleading tone:) *'Oh! Help me too, you get me a soda.'*
But then, Nubian can send a little kid like (waving the imagined kid over): *'Hey, you go get me a soda.'*
Cause they have respect. But a little kid can't do that. Yeah. I can't send Bobi for soda like: 'Bobi, you go to the shop, buy me a soda.'
Nanna*: Why not?*

Nubian Li*: No...unless he's going to the shop.*

Nanna: *No? Why - why can't you do that?*

Nubian: *Because of the respect*

Nanna: *But he can ask you?*

Nubian*: He can ask me. But he never does it* (laughing softly). *If he did, I would. Yeah. But for me I, feel I can't do it [ask him].*

Little kids have to *respect* their elder's wishes, and do as they are told if an elder instructs them. So Nubian can send a kid for a soda because he is older. Though Nubian Li and Bobi Wine are probably almost the same age and very good friends, the relationship between them favours Bobi as the person who deserves the most *respect* because of his social autonomy as 'boss' of the crew and status as 'Firebase grandfather'.

    Respect socially orders age into hierarchies. It is the social practice of the 'effects of power' in socially constructed generational categories. But *respect* is not only an age-power relation. It also works in gender-power relations, which I will turn to next.

2.6 Masculinity and the respect of a man

In this chapter, so far, I have focused on (male) youth and the experience of being young in Kampala. To escape marginalizing forces they seek to become *somebody*. But they do not just struggle to become adults; they struggle to become *a man*. The music ethnologist Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamuzusa (2005), writing about traditional drumming and dancing in central Uganda, writes that life at the royal court in pre-colonial Buganda works as a model for understanding gender relations in the area today:

' [E]very male is not necessarily a man and, not every female is a woman. In the Baganda's conceptualisation, man and woman genders relate to power relations, who holds power and who does not.' (Nannyonga-Tamuzusa 2005: 18)

Going into music is closely related to becoming a man for young male artists who seek to gain social autonomy not only in age-power relations but also in gender-power relations.

Again the term *respect* is central to understanding these relations as the song 'Adam ne Kaawa' (Adam and Eve) professes[11]:

Nubian Li in Luganda:

A lady, even if you have much respect and you have no husband, [then] your respect is worthless.

You must know that you can only get respect because of the man you are married to

Even if you are the one that married the man and also pay the house rent when he has no money

Because he is the husband and you're the wife, his [name] is always the family name.

Even if a lady has so much money and is so rich, you need support and defence. The husband is the support and also the defence, that is how God made it

This started with our grandparents Adam and Eve, because in Eve is Adams rib and this is how it is, because that is how it was, and it will always be like that.

Bobi Wine in patwa[12]:

Ay, ay, ay Woman! You better know that God had a plan to put a difference between man and woman

That is why he made the man head of the house and the woman to bear children.

Check in the Bible: man is made in the image of God and the woman in a man's image

That is why I want to let world know, say, if a woman meets a man, she is to give respect, remember:

Woman beautiful, man is a warrior, woman powerful, man is superior, woman expert, man is a senior, woman talented and man is a genius.

Woman precious, but man is courageous, woman fight, still man victorious. Woman there, but man was there. That is why woman is queen and man is a King

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[11]Analysing music and songs in terms of textual analysis as 'speaking for the people' and reflecting 'un-represented feelings' is not all there is to the lyrics of a song. Songs are written by specific actors in specific context and with a specific audience in mind. This anthem of Kiganda gender identities has to also be seen in the light of the fact that adult men represent at considerable purchasing power in Uganda, and that promoters, radio programmers, radio deejays, corporate marketing executives, bar- and club owners; the people who control musical outlets, are mostly adult males. Previously to this song, Bobi Wine released the song Omwana Wabandi about the need for men to respect women (Bobi Wine and Firebase Crew 2006, Omwana Wabandi).

[12] Patwa refers to Jamaican Creole, which the Ugandan artists often mix with Rastafarai vocabulary.

(Bobi Wine featuring Nubian Li, 2006, for full translation, see Appendix A)

'Adam ne Kaawa' imposes a hierarchical moral order of *respect* between men and women in a time of confusion and ongoing negotiations of gender roles. It naturalises an ideal order between men and women by invoking traditionalism and religion. Though this might seem like a provocative reasoning (especially for the young Danish anthropologist) this is quite a common one, though maybe especially among older and rural populations.

But what the song highlights is an understanding of *respect* as ordering not only hierarchies of age, but also hierarchies of gender, with reference to an idealized past. A woman can, because of her gender, not be respected and not own respect, unless she is respecting a man by being submissive and deferential (Kyomuhendo & McIntonsh 2006:2). A man, regardless of his social position in society, is always senior to a woman. And that is a natural and biological order.

This outcry for reinforcing traditionalistic values comes at a time when gender roles, -identities and gender relations are being negotiated and re-negotiated by urban youth.

In urban Uganda, gender roles have changed radically since 1971 (Kyomuhendo & McIntosh 2006: 16)[13]. Through decades of war and civil unrest, women have found themselves in positions hitherto inhabited by men; as heads of household and wage earners in the Urban economy. They are increasingly speaking up in public about their 'rights' and refusing to do as they did before – stay in the home, accepting exploitation as 'domestic virtue' (ibid). Where women were more confined to domestic spaces before, and women working in public spaces were associated with uncontrolled sexuality and prostitution (ibid: 17), they are now claiming public attention in a wide range of roles; as professionals, students, artists etc. To young men who have grown up with the expectations and pressures of performing as head of the household (and I suspect also to young women), the changing gender roles are sources of emotional insecurity and confusion. Spaces and social positions of power that were before perceived to naturally belong to men are now a question of negotiation.

To overcome what they feel as a hindrance to their social becoming as men, they harbour a kind of hyper-masculinity that embraces all the 'old traditions' of being a man, even if women are the main bread-winners and pay the rent as in the song above.

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[13] In practice, gender relations are, of course, diverse and constructed through everyday interaction and the grand overview presented here is simplified to highlight the experiences of the young artists featured in these pages.

But not all songs are traditionalist nostalgia imposed on present and future conditions. Other representations of masculinity and what it means to be a man, presents a different picture: some men are *real men* and can handle women embracing the freedom of modern life in the city. Others who can not keep up with the changing gender roles are simply not *men enough.* In the hit song 'Aweete', direct translation 'let him turn and go' meaning 'kick him out', Bebe Cool reminds women that they do not have to stay with men who are mistreating them or who cannot fulfil their needs and desires for life in modern luxury. After all, it is *their* life.

 Bebe Cool in Luganda:

If you are fed up   - Let him turn and go (kick him out)!

 If he is not man enough - Let him turn and go!

If he is annoying - Let him turn and go!

It is your life, so it is not a crime

For what reason are you quarreling with him?

There are lots of people admiring you

Do not even go back to him for the money

If he is mistreating you, tell him it's over.

So my friend, check what kind of partner you've got

If he really loves you, he will give you the nice things you ask him for.

In case he despises you, drop him and get a real man

In Kampala there are lots of real men

Charlie Lubega and Sekyanzi[14]

When you smile to these ones, they give you ten

 As for me Bebe Cool, when you please me, I will take you abroad when its time to give birth[15]

It is hot, the game is on

The ladies are breaking down on the rhythm

(...)

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[14] Charlie Lubega and Elvis Sekyanzi are the owners of Kampala's two most fashionable and popular night clubs, Ange Noir and Club Silk, respectively.

[15] Among the Uganda elite it is quite normal for women to fly out of the county to give birth at hospitals that have higher standards than local hospitals. What Bebe Cool aptly gets around without saying directly is that *pleasing* is the same as having a sexual relationship. More on 'hidden languages' in chapter 5.

If the Kitchen is full of smoke and you are suffocating
Get out and leave it to those that can take it!

(Bebe Cool 2006, for full transcription and translation see Appendix A)

Here the superiority of a man is not a natural order, but something he has to work for. This uncertain masculinity is closer to the experience of youth in Kampala. They do not only struggle to become adults, they struggle to become men. As the chorus goes: '*If he is not man enough – kick him out',* and this puts an enormous pressure on male youth to prove and perform their manliness and manhood. This experience of masculinity and manhood is, according to Silberschmidt writing on gender in East Africa, a general phenomenon:

'[W]hile masculinity is power, masculinity is also terribly fragile because it does not really exist in the sense that we are lead to think it exists, that is as a biological reality (...) this is because the male gender is constructed around at least two conflicting characterisations of the essence of manhood. First, being a man is natural, healthy and innate. But second, a man must stay masculine. He should never let his masculinity falter. Masculinity is so valued, so valorised, so prized, and its loss is such a terrible thing that one must always guard against loosing it. (...) as a result men should always be on guard to defend and demonstrate their masculinity' (Silberschmidt 2004: 242)

Kampalian youth, in the face of the marginalising forces in their lives that deter their social becoming as a man seek to demonstrate their masculinity in ways that do not requite them to build a house or pay bride price. One of these ways is through sexual conquest, which is part of the hyper-masculinity of the young artists. '*They are just throwing a stone into the bush to see what comes out'*, a friend told me, trying to explain why some young men come on to most of the women they meet. Earlier, the wealth, social value and *respect* of a man, would be reflected in the number of wives he had. As Silberschmidt continues:

'While *sexual potency* gives social potency, value and self-esteem to men, *sexual modesty* gives social value to women' (ibid).

A way of gaining *respect* for young men is to have many sexual partners and girlfriends, proving to others that they are *man enough* to *handle* many women at once. In the following chapter I will explore this further in relation to anthropological method and fieldwork, but for

the time being, my point is that sexuality can be a source of masculinity and thereby *respect* and social autonomy for male youth in Kampala.

2.7 Wrapping up youth

'Youth-studies' are emerging as a part of studies on Africa, and my study is part of it since it revolves mostly around young men making a living by doing music in Uganda.

Youth is often considered a threat to their surrounding societies, if they are not under the guidance and control of elders, both in academic discourse and in their local societies. Despite economic growth in Uganda and in Kampala in particular, youth remain subject to marginalising forces and daily insecurities, having few options to gain social autonomy and few means to 'grow up' and become full members of society.

In these perceptions gender plays a pivotal role since young men and young women experience youthood differently since gender, as well as age, is related to hierarchies of power in the notion of *respect*.

Sommers (2006) notes that unemployed, marginalised male youth are not by nature either delinquent or the leaders of tomorrow. It all depends on the way they are engaged by their surrounding society. Youth are, he writes, able to contribute positively to these because of 'their energy, enthusiasm, creativity, resourcefulness, and adaptability'(Sommers 2006: 154). In the same vein, Alex Perullo shows in 'The life that I live', that the music economy of Tanzania provides youth with new ways of getting by in an urban setting. By going into music youth,

'(...) create opportunities to better their social positions. They do not simply become socialized "into the dominant culture," as some authors have argued (...)or lost within the social and economic problems of an African City. Instead youth influence and shape society – just as they are being shaped by it – as they strive to make space for themselves in an urban environment. In this regard, youth, particularly in urban areas of Africa, are constantly negotiating with and altering other areas of society" (Perullo, 2003: 358)

Going into music is a way of overcoming the marginalizing forces in the lives of youth. Rather than *sitting back* and accepting the collapse of the social structures that would have granted them adulthood they perceive themselves to be contributing actively to improve their life possibilities by *'doing something'* for themselves and becoming *self made* men.

Some young people, fed up with their limited opportunities for self-realisation and social becoming within kin based political and economic patrimonial networks and disillusioned by the low value of their expensively bought education, find an outlet for their ambitions, creativity and hopes in music. They become artists, backup singers, instrument players, dancers, deejays, television presenters, club personnel, producers, sound technicians, MCs[16], cameramen, journalists, event managers, and every other professional position they can imagine would be needed in a music industry.

Farouk, a 21yearold sound technician, told me about the relationship between *culture*[17] and going into music:

'Today, I think culture is not strong, so you have to look for your own way. Even if you grow up here in the ghetto, if you work hard, you can become a man of your own. For us, that is music.'

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[16] Master of Ceremonies

[17] When I asked Farouk what *culture* is, he told me that I was the way *'long-time-ago people lived'* and made sense of the world. *Culture*, here, is a romanticised ideal past – which I will later refer to as 'traditionalism'

Chapter 3: Anthropological Methods and a Problem of Reciprocity

3. 1 Getting into music

It was easy for me to get *into music*, as the people I worked with, called it. During a visit in 2004 a friend of mine working as event manager had introduced me to the local music scene. When I returned to Uganda in 2006 I had initially planned to do fieldwork with a local NGO, but my focus changed when my host organisation ran into financial trouble. The local superstars and their work were present all over Kampala, through radios and cassette tapes being played at top volume, at huge music shows during weekends, in newspapers and tabloids, in conversations and gossips between friends and colleagues and when the artists themselves raced trough the city in their flashy cars. They seemed to rebuke stereotypes of African youth as silenced and marginal. I became interested in how these young people had become so famous and how they themselves perceived their fame.

My 'stalking culture in the wild' (Bernard 2002: 324) started in public, where the Ugandan superstars perform their music. I went to stadium shows, launch parties, corporate events, small karaoke bars and club nights, and from an observing position I was able to pay great attention to the individual performances of artists, how they move, how they relate to the crowd and their deejay or band. I also focused on the physical layouts of performance venues; of stages and backstages, VIP areas and *general happiness*, spaces reserved for the general crowd.

With time I learnt that performing is quintessential to being an *artist*; it is where artists sing their songs, show off their styles, entourage and performance skills, face their fans, and where fame is contested in the order of performance. And because of the insufficient enforcement of copyright law, performances are ultimately where artists gain their livelihood. In chapter 4 I will explore the importance of performance a bit further.

At most shows and performance venues, there is no secluded backstage area. Before and after performing, artists hang out in an open area behind the stage or in the VIP section of the night club, where they drink and chat with their friends and crew or the occasional fan. This made it possible for me to approach potential informants after their performances, explaining the aim of my research and my interest in them as artists. Some were not much interested, but most welcomed my idea and agreed that 'something objective' should be written about music in Uganda. I asked them if we could arrange that I could tag along in their work to learn what

it meant to be an artist in Uganda. Along with the male *top-artists* and the people around them, I also worked with more loosely knit groups, independent artists and a few young women.

A few months into the fieldwork, I had established contact with key informants, who were all prominent figures in the music field and were characterised as *top-artists,* meaning that they were among the most popular and prestigious artists in Uganda at the time. Around the *top-artists* are entourages of male youth; aspiring artists and close friends or kin, who fill a number of functions related to the top-artist. These entourages are called *crews* and can be closely knit units with a strong identification with the crew or more loosely bound networks that the *top-artists* in some ways patron. Though the crew members that I met were all male, I learnt that young women also form a part of a top-artist's entourage. They come along as girlfriends to the *top-artist* or as dancers. I will write more about crews in chapter 6. By gaining access to the life of *top-artists*, I also got involved in their crews. Crew members became very valuable informants to me, as they usually had less hectic schedules than *top-artists* and had more time to hang out.

Most of the people I worked with started their musical career as teenagers, while in secondary school. Some come from relatively poor and-or single parent families that have struggled to pay the children's school fees , while others come from affluent elite families and have attended high profile boarding schools at home or abroad. What they have in common is their musical careers. My fieldwork deviated from the classical anthropological fieldwork, studying one group and one location, by dealing with a group of people who share a profession, but do not necessarily meet, interact or even believe they belong to the same group of people. Rather than a fixed social group the artists constitute a 'community of experience (Vigh 2003: 18, Vigh 2004: 120) By following one informant at the time, I tried to identify common traits in their lives[18]. I discovered social networks between artists (as well as their friends) and realised that although some *top-artists* view themselves as bitter rivals to the title of *top-artist* they often shared backgrounds in schools or singing groups. In my fieldwork I worked within the networks of key informants by letting them introduce me to new potential informants.

Hanging out (Bernard 2002: 346-47, Utas 2003: 9) with key informants granted me access to recording sessions in studios, hanging out with friends, running errands in the city and

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[18] Which might also be called 'multi-sited fieldwork' (Marcus 1998)

performing at different venues, thereby gaining the insiders' view on these events. By hanging out with *top-artists* and their crews, I learnt about their lives off stage; the small pockets of privacy, getting ready to go out, driving from one venue to the next, in back stage areas or dark corners of the club. In this way I learnt about the social organisation of the music field, practice among artists and other actors in the music field as well as daily concerns of youth in Kampala.

3.2 Conversation and interviews

Many conversations in the field took on the form of gossip or field conversations (Kongsbak 1995, Wadel 1991:49). Kongsbak defines gossip as: 'an exchange of knowledge about the private affairs of a person who is not present'(1995: 84). Kampalians pride and shame themselves with gossip (Buwembo 2002:48-49), and most of the people I met were experts in intrigue, strategic information management and keeping their own private lives blurred to others (Mulamila Olsen, 2006, Haram 2005). In other words it was easy to get eye-witness accounts and hear-say of events that had happened to others, but hard to get people to talk about their own personal experiences. Artists are prone to be the objects and carriers of gossip because their private lives are perceived as belonging to the public, via tabloids, TV shows and magazines, and their lives are played out in public spaces like concert venues, bars and night clubs. Furthermore, gossip works as an informal PR strategy for some artists.

The *top-artists* and *the sagas* of their lives, their internal feuds to become the *number one top-artist*, are mirrors for other artists as well as people who are not *in music*. By telling and discussing the outrageous, and sometimes made up (by the main characters or by others), legends, people reflect on the struggles of the artists and relate them to their own lives.

Through gossip people create and show off social relationships (by gossiping and having legitimate knowledge of others), cement their social positions as being in the know, promoting their own deeds and values, valorise or discredit friends' and enemies' actions. I learnt about how people categorise each other and some of the concerns that might lead actors to label others as *serious* artists*, top-artists* or *spoiled, muyaye* and *hooligans* through gossip.

It was not easy for me to discern which part of the *sagas* were true, but I used gossip strategically by confronting informants with gossip about them, as a means to make them talk about their own experiences. Further, the *sagas* hold value in themselves whether they have actually happened or not, because the implicated parts use gossip either as an instrument to

gain status and because rumours, and gossip is taken very seriously as it '*can lead to your downfall',* as a music journalist put it. In Kongsbaks words, gossip is an 'information game' (Kongsbak 1995: 89) where knowledge is power, but it also takes a personal stake to get in the game.

Apart from field conversations and gossip, I conducted 10 taped semi structured interviews (Kvale 1996: 129) with artists and crew members, alone or in groups. I also interviewed two journalists, two producers, one sound technician, a deejay and rapper and the chairman of the most prestigious music award show in Uganda, Pearl of Africa Music Awards.

Due to the often hectic lives of the people I worked with, most recorded interviews were carried out spontaneously upon realising that both parties had time to spare. Thus, most interviews were carried out at bars, *bufunda* (shop-cum-bars), offices or just hanging around at the studio. I conducted the interviews where the people I worked with found it convenient in an informal atmosphere, resembling the 'den of trust' that intimate gossip creates (Kongsbak 1995: 87, my translation). Further, I recorded some sessions and group discussions at a hip hop workshop organised by the Hip Hop Canvas.

Some of my most valuable semi-structured interviews and field conversations were, however, not taped. After several months of participant observation, most of my key-informants declined my request for a taped interview. I got the impression that my request betrayed our friendship and trust. The *top-artists* are used to journalists being the only people who ask for formal interviews, and *top-artists* have an ambivalent relationship to journalists as they are considered both to be helpful when promoting oneself and a nuisance. In the presence of journalists and photographers, they feel that they can not relax, as one of them said; they '*have to put on a certain face'.* I was not interested in being perceived as a journalist in the music field, and did not insist on taped interviews. Even artists, who agreed on recorded interviews, sometimes expressed their worries that I could use their words against them by leaking stories to the local tabloid press. Thus, many of my most important conversations were not taped. Younger, upcoming artists and crew members were, on the other hand, often eager to participate in interviews for the same reasons.

3.4 Positioning in the field

Who I was to my informants shaped what parts life I gained access to while I did fieldwork, and thereby what data I generated. Although I always presented myself as an anthropologist

who was interested in local music, other aspects of my identity than being a social scientist came into play in the field. This section is written with the comfort and luxury of hindsight. The actuality of my fieldwork was a quite confusing work in progress, including a constant negotiation of relationships with both my surroundings and within myself, as well as a process of learning other's understanding of my participation in the field.

It is generally accepted as a positive trait to be able to obtain a 'local role' in a family setting, as either daughter, sister or mother, or in public spheres, as occupier of a local profession, during field work (Wadel 1991: 34-4050). A local role allows us to participate deeper in our field and learn more. The development of local roles is, however, a dialectic negotiation between the anthropologist and her informants, something that we can influence but not quite be in control of. We are expected to have positive, platonic feelings for the people we work with, as are they (Kleinman & Copp 1993: 2). Some anthropologists become parts of local lineages and clans, build houses for themselves and bring their own families to the field (Ton Otto 1997, Sjørslev 1988, Meinert 2001:24-29).

My concepts of ethical fieldwork and reciprocal relationships (Kottak 2000: 48, Statens Samfundsvidenskabelige Forskninsråd1997) were challenged by a set of informants who had never been taught how to behave like 'informants', and a field where actors constantly looked for the opportunity to prove their social potency to their surroundings. It meant that I was daily confronted with sexuality, mine as well as others, working in a sexualised field where young men eagerly try to define and express their masculinity.

3.4.1 Working the field or getting 'hooked'?

As a young, single white woman working in a male dominated field in Uganda, local concepts of gender roles and gender relations influenced my position in the field.

In Kampala as well as in many other places in Africa, an aspect of relationships between men and women is the exchange of sex for money or favours (as Bebe Cool's promise in the song 'Awetee' in the previous chapter, cf. Cole 2004, Wimberley 1996: 58-59, Wojcicki 2002). Transactional sex are 'non-commercial, nonprofessional sex-for-money exchanges' (Wojcicki, 2002:68), but I would like include exchanges of sex-for-favours. In this kind of relationships, romance or emotional attachment might not be the main reason for entering a sexual relationship and sex is exchanged for luxury gifts like jewellery, clothes, phones, or

money for school fees, house rent, to go to *the salon*[19] or for *airtime*[20]. But favours such as appointments to professional positions, promotions, outings to prestigious restaurants, night clubs, hotels and bars, driving to- and from family visits or errands in town are also part of sexual exchanges. Usually men give gifts, money or favours to women wooing them into sexual relationships, though many young men dream of having *'sugar mammies'* providing them with a luxurious lifestyle in exchange for the occasional *hump* (cf. Kasule 1998:39).

From my time in Kampala I learnt that sex is a common object of exchange within married couples, at school, between neighbours, at work, at music shows and in clubs and bars. This means that if two people of the opposite sex are seen doing activities that are normally associated with transactional sex, others assume that the two have a sexual relationship. If a man is seen publicly with a pretty woman, the existence of a sexual relationship is almost automatically implied (cf. Mulamila Olsen 2006, Wimberley 1996:23). This means that transactional sex, or the expectations thereof, creates sexualised relationships in many spheres of urban life, including my fieldwork. By a sexualised relationship I do not mean just having sexual relations. I mean relationships where the sexualities of the involved actors come into play and form basis for interaction.

Though pre-marital and extra-marital sex is not allowed and looked down upon in some circles (like religious and development and public health discourses), sexual exchanges outside marriage seem to be quite common and having multiple partners is rarely sanctioned, as long as it is done discretely. These affairs usually go on outside the public realm and outside the family home, in rented rooms in lodges or in college dormitories. Further, they might also be played out in night clubs, at music shows or in bars. These places have an air of scandal about them for many 'respectable' women, and *official wives* are not expected to go to such places, especially at night, though they do not seem equally scandalous for men. These spaces of love and sex are also the working spaces of artists and in some way they personify 'unrespectable' relationships. In their lyrics, performances and behaviours and they embrace sexuality and sexual practices related to different gender roles (cf. Bebe Cool 2006, Ziggy Dee 2003 in Appendix A).

Due to their fame and wealth, the people I worked with were often approached by female fans who wished to engage in a sexual relationship in clubs or bars or after performing. Some

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[19] Hairdressers and beauty parlours are called Salons in Kampala
[20] Credit for mobile telephones

informants managed several sexual relationships with *girlfriends* who they brought with them to performances along with their crews, though they co-habitated with *official wives,* who rarely or never participated in their husbands' public lives[21].

In the music field, as well as some other parts of society, it is prestigious to be seen as having a relationship with a white person. To *hook a muzungu* is considered an admirable - as well as a newsworthy - deed (Bukedde 2006: 16, Red Pepper 2003: 8, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, Batte 2005)[22]

Because of the sexualised relationships of exchange, the spaces in which I worked, and the informal way I approached potential informants, many of the people I worked with saw me as an attractive, potential *girlfriend,* and some admitted that they had initially accepted to participate in my study with the hope of developing a sexual relationship. Though key informants might not have expected me to consummate a sexual relationship with them, they often complemented me as being 'sexy' or 'very beautiful' and came onto me straight, addressing me as *Princess,* which is a common nickname for *girlfriends* or a girl one wants to make a good impression on. Most interaction took place in a playful and flirtatious tone. Some people in the music field identified and nicknamed me along lines of 'white' sexually inviting stereotypes within global popular music discourses with nicknames like "Shakira", "Mariah Carey" and "Jennifer Lopez"[23]. Some of the people I worked with might have misunderstood my research project as an excuse to '*get close*' to them, and were quite disappointed when I rejected their sexual offers after they had let me into their lives. Somehow, their favours of taking me out, inviting me along for shows and parties and giving me a ride home was not answered in the way they expected. In other words, sexualised relationships posed some quite challenging questions of ethical reciprocity and the limits of participant observation in research.

Much gossip derives from guesses and rumours of others' sexual relationships, and I walked, quite unknowingly, straight into the role of a promiscuous woman, because I was seen with many different men, doing things associated with transactional sex, such as driving,

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[21] At the time of my fieldwork many of my informants had started families with women whom they had lived with for several years, but whose family they had not yet been formally introduced to in a ceremony of traditional wedding. This, in the eyes of traditionalist Ugandans, makes them less adult and less respected and respectful than officially married couples.

[22] An interesting topic of research in relation to popular culture and postcolonial imaginaries would be how 'white' and 'black' sexualities are constructed in public discourses in Uganda, but it lies outside the scope of this thesis.

[23] American and Latin-American pop starlets

drinking, eating, talking and sometimes even dancing. I worked at times associated with secrecy and love affairs; at night, during the working hours of the people I worked with. And I worked in places void of 'respectable' women; were the artists work and hang out; at restaurants, bars, music shows, clubs, hotels, informant's cars and so on.

3.4.2 The social becoming of a Girlfriend

Being considered a *girlfriend* had challenges. I repeatedly turned down sexual offers from informants and questioned my own ability to communicate what I wanted from them, and I was regularly confronted with gossip about my personal and sexual life. Further, it was undeniably confusing to be in the social role of *girlfriend* and also be an anthropologist, both emotionally and academically. But, with hindsight, I see that this positioning within the field also offered unique insights and accesses.

Being seen with different prominent figures cast in the role of *girlfriend*, and at prominent events in the music field made me a celebrity in my own right, of sorts. A few times I was contacted by complete strangers who wanted to be part of my project, but they vanished when they realised that I did not facilitate contacts to the US or UK, and, more disturbingly, I had a few experiences with strangers stalking me from public places to my home. I became a target for gossip and local tabloid press (Bukedde 2006:16, Rwanyekiro 2006) and was I surprised to repeatedly see myself on TV in local entertainment reports[24]. Later, I had the city's most notorious paparazzi *on my case*, eager to catch me in an unflattering situation. My experiences with being someone who stands out from the crowd opened up new understandings of actions and practices of artists and opened up conversations about image- and information management as well as practices related to the press.

As a *girlfriend* I became a definite and recognizable person to others. Being so-and-so's *girlfriend* connected me to the social world of music and made me a player in the field of music, giving me my own stake and interests, rather than the disassociated outsider. *Girlfriends,* even temporary ones, usually come with the crew to shows and night clubs and hang around, waiting for their performing boyfriends to be done with their work. By being the *girlfriend* of a *top-artist*, I was able to establish close platonic friendships to members of the crew. In course of my fieldwork I more than once had the feeling of being Wendy in a

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[24] I later learnt that the producer of the TV show in question had a crush on me and wanted to *promote* me by putting me on TV.

Ugandan version of Peter Pan. In the field note below I have followed Darius and his crew to a Christmas party where he is performing. Though I explain that I have a stomach flu, he insists that I have to eat with him:

I walk past Darius who is standing in line for the buffet and he looks up, handing me a plate, but I say: 'Just bring me a piece of turkey, please.'

'But you have to eat,' he insists again.

'Just bring me a good piece, will you?' then I walk back and sit alone on the table in the corner. I feel stupid alone. Just take the notes. Stop being such a girl.(…)

Darius balances an overfilled plate through the room and sits down next to me. He could have sat anywhere else on the table. Then a huge piece of white meat, what looks like half the breast of a turkey, lands on the bread dish in front of me. Darius grunts encouragingly and starts eating. I'm fighting back tears, touched by his kindness. He remembered the goddamn turkey and gave me the best piece. I can't even explain what I'm doing here, and he gave me the best piece. I chat a bit with the big reggae dude sitting to my right and find out that he lives in Sweden.

I toy around with the meat and give up halfway. It's so obvious that everybody else on the table thinks Darius and I are lovers. And judging on my feelings, we might as well be.

Although talking to someone else I feel like I'm with Darius and the closeness makes me a bit flustered. His glances at me tell me that he is feeling the same warmth between us. He leans in and tells me: 'They wanted me to perform during dinner, but I can't do that. I don't want them to be busy eating.'

We talk a bit more, on how the boys in the crew are doing and I surrender to the soft lights and soft dinner music. Darius starts poking my piece of turkey. It doesn't feel weird at all that he's eating off my plate.

Fighting with the turkey with one hand on the back of my chair he says: 'I love turkey'

'Just take the whole piece, I'm done.'

'No,' he insists, leaving the meat on my plate.

'Come on, don't be shy' I playfully urge him.

He looks up smiling,

'I love Turkey,' and then puts on an annoyed grimace as he in a sudden movement thrusts his fork deep into the meat and moves it to his plate 'and I hate you!'

Amused with his little play I smile: 'Why would you wanna hate me?'

He drops his voice, his mouth close to my ear: 'I love turkey and I hate you because your boobs make me go crazy.' He then turns his attention back to the turkey.

I blush violently but take no offence. They're just playful words. Given the intimacy between us, this is not breaking the etiquette. I look down on his hand on the white damask and smile.

Someone behind the stage signals Darius and he turns to me:

'I'm going back stage, but can you make sure the boys get in? I want them to eat and sit at the table.'

I comply, and he walks off.

I get up and walk to the foyer where the band of Boys, blazing high, are hanging out, some of them chanting dancehall rhymes. I make sure they all get plates and cutlery from the smartly dressed waiters. The boys are excited and cue up for the buffet. Geofry looks up at me with big, round insecure eyes: 'Nanna, do you think it's okay?'

I smile and tousle his hair: 'It sure is.' It sure is now.

(Field note December 2006)

From a methodological point of view the problem of my role as *girlfriend* is one of distance and relation in the field (Gammeltoft 2003). Being scattered between a romantic intimacy and emotions and the analytical distance in my notebooks, I realised that working the field might not be a clean cut enterprise with well defined roles and boundaries, but a complex negotiation and social becoming in a foreign environment. Intimacy – or relation – is not necessarily a physical move and neither is distance.

Sometimes, when I stressed my identity as a researcher and an academic as a way of asserting distance between myself and informants, the people I worked with simply refused it or found a way to work around it. Below is an entertaining example of the negotiation of roles – and intimacy- where both researcher and informant are using role repertoires strategically to get what they want from the other.

B: *How's your research, what did you find?*

Nanna: *I can't say yet, really.*

We chat about my fieldwork and what I've been doing since the last time we hung out until he asks me:

B: *So you wanna fuck?*

Nanna*: Not really. I want an interview and a ride to Mbale[25].*

B: *Yeah…we're going next week…That would actually be the best time to go and see how we work up-country. It would be good for your research.*

He then goes back to sweet talking me and proposes to start an affair

B: *(…) with the respect and love, I mean. Not the strings. So what do you think?*

Nanna (now quite shocked): *…this is by far the weirdest conversation I have had this week.*

B: *Yeah I know what you mean.*

Raising my eyebrows, not believing: *You know, what I mean?*

B: *I think so…*

Nanna, frustrated: *Don't you think it would be a problem for me to sleep with you, if at the same time I'm studying you? Can't you see the ethical issues here? It'll look like I'm abusing my power or like, I'm paying you with sex for information. They'll laugh at me when I get home, like I'm not a serious scholar!*

B: *No, Baby! Not if we're both okay, things always happen like that… You can study me. Let's go to Mbale.*

(Field note December 2006)

B casted me within his own social world as an attractive woman and potential *girlfriend*, but at the same time he uses my identity as a researcher as an excuse for us to *'go upcountry'* and spend time alone. I, on the other hand, try to ignore the flirtatious tone by neither accepting nor denying his offer, using my role as researcher as a shield against sexual advances. Again, this reflects my access to the field as conditioned by my ability to engage in sexualised relationships.

3.4.3 'Let's talk about sex'

Fieldwork as not only a gendered but a sexualised enterprise has been widely ignored in literature as well as in the education of anthropological fieldworkers (at least in my experience). In an unarticulated way anthropologists learn that 'sex with the natives' is an improper exploitation of our superior positions as scientists and that undertaking sexual activities with the natives will at best lead to ridicule and academic downfall (cf. Malinowski,

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[25] Fort Portal is a provincial town in eastern Uganda

see Kulick 1995:2-3). Some authors have, however, described some ways in which sexuality, sexual relationships and sexual acts can be part of being an anthropologist in the field (Kulich 1995, Dubisch 1995, Rabinow 1977: 68-69, Bernard 2002). The message is clear and pragmatic: 'Do nothing that you can't live with both professionally and personally.' (Bernard 2002: 354)

In my fieldwork sexuality became not only a part of being in the field, but also crucial for the local roles that opened up for me in the field and consequently, the type of data I generated with the people I worked with.

That age, 'race' and gender influences the repertoire of roles we can play upon in the field is widely accepted, but what if sexuality and the willingness to engage in sexualised – or sexual - relationships becomes an important feature of doing fieldwork? Is it wrong just because it has something to do with sex? Is having sex in the field the same as going native? The unspoken rules on sexuality, proper research methodology and local roles were challenged working in a field where sexuality and masculinity was constantly at stake.

I do not claim that the sexuality of the fieldworker nor sexual encounters in the field are always relevant anthropologically, but that in some fieldworks, and in some anthropologies, sex and sexuality are central to the generation of anthropological knowledge. To ignore it and silence it, is a pretence of 'western European' notions of the authority of professionalism and objectivity (Kulick 1995:12).

3.5 Summing up

During 5 months of fieldwork in Kampala, I studied how popular young male artists become famous and sustain and deal with their fame. The data which forms the empirical basis for this thesis was generated through anthropological methods of participant observation, or 'hanging out', and semi structured interviews, field conversations and gossip. The artists, as well as other actors working with music and entertainment, I worked with constituted a 'community of experience' rather than a fixed social group in a fixed physical location.

Though I had not expected it, sexuality and sexualised relationships played a defining role to the kind of data I generated during my fieldwork in Uganda. My access to the field was in many cases conditioned by my ability, as a young single woman, and personal capacity to negotiate sexualised relationships with the people I worked with. My position as *girlfriend* gave med access to places and conversational subjects that were closed to outsiders. But

engaging in sexualised relationships whit informants and working in an environment where other actors have expectations of transactional sexual relationships, challenged my ideals of how an ethically sound fieldwork is carried out.

Ultimately, I learnt that fieldwork is a complex negotiation of roles and in itself a social becoming of the researcher in a new social environment. The tension field between relation and distance was in my case a balancing act between moments of emotional intimacy and an endeavour to situate my experiences and the people I worked with in a wider social context through analytical distance.

Chapter 4: Music and Economy

This chapter is about the music industry of Uganda and how it is connected with the social becoming of the young artists and their music. Here, I will give an overview of some of the factors that has led to the rapid growth in the music sector, and how this is part of youth's social becoming. I will start at the beginning, popular music before *the explosion,* to give a background to the new way of 'doing music' that emerged in the mid-1990s when the current superstars of Uganda stepped on stage. Then I will explore commercial radio and karaoke performance as two of the main driving forces in the rapid changes in the music economy of Uganda from the mid-1990s onwards, and how these have been instrumental in carving out new realms of expression for youth, and new trajectories to social autonomy. Lastly, this chapter looks at some central actors in the music economy today; radios, studios, producers, distributors and the Pearl of Africa Music awards. This chapter is central to the anthropology of the music industry of Uganda, because information and research on commercial music in Uganda and its relation to the wider economy is scarce.

As noted in chapter 2, youth go into music searching for the resources needed to gain social autonomy from their parents and kin. Becoming an artist is a way of overcoming marginalising forces that Kampalian youth struggle with in their daily lives. Though the market for music is expanding rapidly, competition is stiff and the market largely unregulated. Most artists, and others working with music, are extremely focused on *making money,* and like other Kampalians they apply their ingenuity to optimise the capital output of any situation. In the opening speech for the 4th Pearl of Africa Music Award show in Uganda, the chairman of the organising committee concluded by emphasising why artists, corporate companies, the media and the public should all join hands in the music industry: *'So that we can make more **money**!'* This chapter is about the commercialisation of music within the last 15 years in Uganda and how these economic processes are linked to the social autonomy of the young artists and the cultural autonomy of youth. But first, back to the chairman of the organising committee and the Ugandan Music industry:

Isaac Mulindwa Jr. grew up in public. His father is a famous business man, and so is he. He spent his youth in high profile schools and universities and established a real-estate business in Miami, USA, before he returned to Uganda in the mid-1990s. In a business conglomerate

with friends and family, he started the night club Club Silk, and later Silk Event management, radio Simba, which plays locally produced music, Hot 100, a hip hop and r'n'b station, and he was part of the team behind the local WBS TV. He runs the internet service company One2Net. And he does micro finance, farming and has just gone into Ugandan real-estate. His most prominent position is, however, as chairman of the organising committee of the local music award show Pearl of Africa Music Awards, nicknamed PAM awards. Since the first ceremony in 2003, PAM Awards has become *the* most powerful institution in Ugandan Music, hotly debated by artists, fans, media and corporate sponsors alike, and faithfully attended by VIPs and music fans every year.

Isaac speaks fast, with passion, his shirts are creaseless and his charm almost irresistible. His private life is very discrete and he rarely says the word no. Most Friday and Saturday nights, he personally welcomes high rollers and artists at the entrance to the VIP section of Club Silk. And from his air-conditioned office on the seventh floor of a beautiful, blue glass tower, he plans the future of the Ugandan music industry.

When the PAM awards started, he says, '*it was not an industry; it's not even an industry yet! And I strongly believe that the way forward for Uganda is not going to be in manufacturing as a country. Nope, it's going to be in the financial services sector, in the entertainment sector and in the tourism sector. So, because we're landlocked - we are far from anywhere - the costs are high. We don't have the raw materials. But the things I've mentioned, the raw materials are here: [in the] entertainment sector, we have the musicians, we have the artists, we have the performers; we have all that. We can actually mould them, improve on the quality of production, writing, packaging, and distribute the music at the end of the day. Which means you can make more money for this country than* anything *else. It's cheaper to export a musician - or to send a musician from here to go to Europe for a two week tour - and it makes more money than growing a plantation of bananas, cutting the bananas, putting them in a container shipping it to the coast, then from the coast they are on the ocean to Europe. A process that will take maybe 6 months. That container of bananas will earn you less money than one musician who goes to do a concert in Europe. So at the end of the day we need to do things that make sense to the economy of this country. One of them is the music – the entertainment sector, with a sub section of the music industry.*'

As Isaac hinted, calling what is happening with music in Kampala an industry might be an overstatement. There is a gaping absence of companies, institutions and structures usually found in music industries such as record companies, managers, agents, publishers, tour-managers, government support to the performing arts, music attorneys, enforced copyright legislature, functioning artist unions, music schools (see Passman 2006). This absence, to Nubian Li, means that to *make it* as an artist, requires the ability to perform all the different roles of a music industry and the resources to do so:

'It's really so hard to make it. You'll have to look for the money to go to studio. Then a musician has to do everything. He's the musician, he's the composer, and at the same time, he's the record label himself. He does the promotion of his songs. And...getting back that money takes a long time. 'Cause if it's a new person in the industry, he has to come from zero. Perform everywhere, everywhere*, for free. Remember, he needs money to go [back] to studio. But then he needs money to go to the show. But because he doesn't have a name, people don't know him, no one will be willing to pay him. Promoters will be like...you know, in those days you would even pay the MC*[26]. *You pay to enter the show, at the same time you pay the MC. To have chance to perform on the show.'*

Borrowing from Alex Perullo, I will employ the term 'music economy' which 'emphasizes the primacy of individuals and resources in shaping the form and structure of the popular music scene.'(Perullo 2003: 29). In the music economy of Uganda thousands of people find a way of making a living by using their ingenuity and creativity, by trying to *get somewhere,* and this, rather than transnational firms and institutionalised legislature, is the basis of the Ugandan Music Economy.

   With this analytical approach in place, I will proceed to explore the 'pre-modern'[27] and 'modern' musics of Uganda

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[26] Master of Ceremonies

[27] As way to look at changes in music over times, the terms 'premodern-modern-postmodern' (Manuel in Kierkegaard 2002: 10) can shed light on the different kinds of musics in Ugandan society. 'The premodern is interpreted as synonymous with the precolonial or even authentic music. The modern is represented by the fused musics of the 20th century, while the postmodern – although definitions are diffuse – signifies the highly hybridized musicals forms of the mediascape and global imaginations' (Kierkegaard 2002:11). While these categorizations can by no means be done in practice, since many tunes may belong to two or all three, and the indications of some kind of natural progression from one category to the other in the evolution of music is misleading, they serve an analytical purpose of making a distinction between musics and they way they are understood in Kampala today.

4.1 Traditional music

Usually visitors are impressed with the rich and still-vibrant 'premodern' or traditional cultural music scene in Uganda[28]. Drumming, singing and dancing is performed by cultural troupes and bands at weddings, funerals, at school competitions all over the country (Miklem, Cooke & Stone 1999: 32, Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005). Different tribes have different dances and most people regard music and dances as being vital parts of their tribal or traditional cultural heritage (Otiso 2006:126).

Because traditional music in Uganda is performed on acoustic instruments and sung without amplifiers, though urban troupes now often use microphones when they perform at their residential scenes, it is relatively easy for performers to travel and perform in rural as well as urban areas, since they do not need to invest in and transport generators, speakers, amplifiers and mixing tables. Few traditional groups have been able to record their music and sell their recordings to music distributors, and some of them have had success performing all over the world, notably 'Annet and the Planets' and 'Ndere Troupe'.

I will briefly focus on the musical history of the central region of Uganda, the Buganda area, as most artists in Kampala consider themselves to belong to the central region of the country. In pre-colonial and throughout colonial times, the Buganda kingdom had a band of musicians at the court, playing a variety of locally made and developed instruments such as harps, flutes, xylophones and drums (Cooke & Kasule 1999:10-11). These were the most skilled musicians in the kingdom and they won fame and fortune by being employed at the court. In 1962, Uganda became independent, and the King became president. When the prime minister Milton Obote overturned his reign in 1966 to become President, the king fled into exile and the royal musicians vanished from the scene. Some of them swore never to touch an instrument again, until the king was reinstated (ibid:11). By the time this happened in 1993 many of the skilled musicians had died without passing on their knowledge to a new generation of royal musicians.

In the meantime, traditional dancing and drumming had become popular as a part of school curriculum and schools compete on regional as well as national level to be the best in traditional disciplines as well as in disciplines using tonal musics introduced by the British

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[28] In Tanzania and Kenya traditional music is also a genre of popular music known as *ngoma* (Perullo 2003: 33-37)

colonial forces (ibid: 9). Musical competitions among school troupes are popular among the students as well as the surrounding communities all over the country. Choirs are also part of musical education in schools, one of the surviving disciplines of the missionary schools that preceded the state-run school system. Many artists in Kampala started their careers as drummers or dancers in school troupes, and traditional music has been a central element in their education to become musicians. Musical education in Schools has contributed to a vibrant scene for traditional cultural music in Uganda but it has also had a vital role in educating other performers.

   School choral music and traditional drumming, singing and dancing has spurred children to take interest in music, and symptomatically Chameleon, Uganda's most famed artist, started his career by writing the official anthem for his school in the early 1990s.

4.2 Modern-traditional music

The cluster of music in Uganda termed *modern-traditional* is 'modern' music fusing elements of traditional as well as foreign music. There is a wide range of modern-traditional genres in Uganda and a wide audience. What characterises them is that they are to some extent using Western tonality and electrical instruments to amplify music and vocals, but are perceived by audiences and artists to be *local* or indigenous to Uganda.

4.2.1 Jazz and band music

Band music, where a group of musicians play electrical guitars, basses, drum kits and keyboards or have a horn section but also uses traditional dance moves, chanting or instruments, have been popular for decades, especially among the upper class and expatriate audiences[29]. Band performance was during the 50's and 60's dominated by musicians from Congo and Kenya, but as Idi Amin came into power and started implementing the political strategy of Ugandanisation through 'economic war', most of them left the country (Cooke & Kasule 1999: 13). Empty dancehalls and stages were taken over by local acts, though nightlife was often restricted by curfews during times of battle in and around Kampala. The violent regimes caused a general feeling of insecurity, and many were afraid to leave their immediate neighbourhoods because of the risk of running into a roaming band of bored and aggressive

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[29] In other African countries the fusion of traditional instruments, voices and dances with western, Latin-American and central-African styles has also formed into distinct genres , in Tanzania starting in the early 50's (Perullo 2003: 68)

soldiers. Afrigo bands, formed in the 1960s, kept playing in spite of the insecurity and rapid shifts in political and military power, and Herman, who is one of the original members of the group, attributes the group's popularity with the mix of Congolese and Afro-Caribbean beats and *'local flavours'* like language and later percussion:

''Cause the type of music we are playing, the beat is from central Africa. But we only change the language, so that we use, our local language[30]. But the whole system's like from Congo. They come from Congo. So I was not happy with that, keeping telling people that: 'I'm from Uganda not Congo'.

Whenever we go to perform, I play the congas like Congolese; they think I'm form Congo. During those days we were performing in different places I met some professional artists like Thomas Mapfumo, Baaba Maal, Youssou N'Dour[31]. Thomas Mapfumo told me: 'Look, you are playing very good, but you should try to start from your roots, from the origin. And then you get to spice it, give it to people.'

And of course I did not leave it behind. I came with it here, I slept and dreamt of what to do. And I started [playing] the drums[32]. (…)Then we mix in our Western [music], the thing will be okay!'

In 1989 members of Afrigo and a few other bands started jamming on Monday nights at the National Theatre. Since, 'Musicians Club' has become a draw and a place where new artists practice their talent and established artists try out new material with a live band. Band music is becoming popular again as backing bands for *top-artists* as the music economy grows, but playing in a band remains a relatively expensive endeavour, because instruments are expensive, and aspiring musicians may spend a long time as 'back-up' players before they are granted full participation in bands. Further, playing an instrument takes time to learn and until 2001 there were no music schools in Kampala. Lastly, once in the band, the band's history and audience determines the style and genres of the band, leaving little room for individual creativity.

4.2.2 Kadongo kamu

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[30] Luganda
[31] Continent – and world - famous Zimbabwean, and Senegalese singers, respectively
[32] Herman is referring to the drums and drumming rhythms of 'premodern' Kiganda music

Kadongo kamu is a fusion of a local tradition of travelling musicians accompanying their storytelling songs with an 8 stringed harp called an endogo (Makubuya 1999), and electrical, Western instruments. This music developed in urban kiganda Uganda, and usually the beat is a traditional Bakaasimba rhythm, but it might also borrow from other tribal-based traditional musics. The Kadongo Kamu fusion became the music of the era of nationalism and independence from the late 1940's and onwards (Nannyonga-Tamuzusa 2002: 137) as it was heavily promoted by the national radio station Radio Uganda up until the late 1980's (Cooke & Kasule 1999: 14). Today old school kadongo kamu artists like Eddy Wamala are considered the fathers of music in Uganda, and contemporary kadongo kamu stars like *'lord'* Fred Sebatta and the late *'prince'* Paul Kafeero and their ensembles are drawing epic crowds at Nakivubo stadium (Fred Sebatta 2002, Paul Kafeero 2000). Kadongo kamu is probably the most popular genre in Uganda since it appeals to a predominantly rural audience but also to the urban poor.

Social conscious hip hopper Babaluku characterises kadongo kamu as a form of *'indigenous hip hop'*, because kadongo kamu lyrics are often about the *'realness'* and experiences of social suffering. Kandongo kamu, however, is for *'old people'*:

'Hip hop is similar to what they call kadongo kamu. But from a young man's perspective. (…) 'Cause every tribe has a form of rapping. Or let me say, they're telling riddles or whatever, that's in the format of hip hop, 'cause it's metaphorically spoken.'

For urban youth, kadongo kamu is associated with being an illiterate redneck, referred to as *'local'*, and not wise to the ways of the modern, urban world. Yet they consider kadongo kamu to be the *true* or authentic popular music of Uganda.

To sum up this section, there is no doubt that Kampala had a music economy prior to the blossoming of the karaoke generation including bands, studios and performance venues, but with only one radio station in Uganda, which favoured kadongo kamu over other genres, few distribution companies, and long periods of strict curfews in the city, artists had few outlets for their music. These 'premodern' and 'modern' types of music continue to flourish in Kampala, and have also benefitted from the growth of the music economy, and they continue to inspire and take inspiration from the 'postmodern' music that has characterised the

explosion in the Ugandan entertainment sector over the last five to six years, and which I will turn my attention to next.

4.3 The karaoke generation and mixed-up music

In the early 1990s most of the artists I worked with stepped into their youth, and in Uganda a new regime began its consolidation with Yoweri Musseveni as President[33]. The new regime found itself in charge of a country with a wrecked economy, both thanks to decades of civil war and disorder and failed structural adjustment schemes (Twaddle & Hansen 1998: 2) and Musseveni gradually accepted the demands on economic policies from donors and the Bretton Wood institutions (ibid: 7). The overall economy grew at an annual rate of 7%-8%[34] and underwent trade-liberalisation, an increased private inflow and gained renewed support from aid agencies (Collier & Pradhan 1998: 22), and though some entrepreneurs suffered with a post-war instability in the financial sector, establishments and companies shot up in Kampala, to feed the entertainment hungry population.

After more than a decade with fear, insecurity, instability and curfews, the citizens of Kampala again had the chance to go out, and bars and nightclubs were renovated and reopened all over the city. The influx of foreign goods like TV sets, video- and cassette-recorders, stereo sets, computers, CDs and cassette tapes became available through trade and Diaspora returnees. The new government did not have any legislation towards 'cultural protection' which meant that music and other cultural goods had a relatively free flow into the country (Cooke and Kasule 1999, 15). Two new things conditioned by the larger tendencies in the Ugandan economy have shaped the music economy of Uganda; commercial radio and karaoke performances.

4.3.1 Commercial radio: live transmission

The perhaps most important feature of the liberalization of the economy during the new regime for the emerging music economy, was the liberalization of the airwaves for radio (Ssewakiryanga 2004). Other media such as television and the printed press have also played a huge role in creating and sustaining a market for Ugandan urban youth music, but here, I

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[33] In 1995 a new constitution that had been several years in the making was in place (G.O.U. 1995), and the first election in the new one-party Movement system took place in 1996

[34] Measured in GDP against a population growth of circa 2.5-3 % (Twaddle & Hansen 1998:14)

will focus on the radio, because it is the most influential media in Uganda[35].Though radio broadcasting started late in Uganda, in 1958, compared to the neighbouring countries Kenya (1927) and Tanzania (1951) (Perullo 2003: 97), it is the most powerful media in Uganda because it is cheap to produce and consume and does not require literacy (cf. Hendy 2000). In 2002 48.6 % of all households in Uganda owned a radio, the ratio being higher for the urban population (68,2 %, U.B.O.S. 2006a: 22). Almost half the population (47.8 %) used the radio as main source of information (ibid: 31). The radio is an important part of every day life; as information and entertainment, a lifeline to other parts of the country and the rest of the world, and a signifier of status and modernity.

The monopoly on the FM band of the state-run radio, radio Uganda, ceased in December 1993 when the privately owned, commercial radio Sanyu started testing its equipment (Ssewakiryanga 2004: 143). Since January 1994 Sanyu has been playing the latest hits, global as well as local. Soon after Capital FM and Radio Buganda started broadcasting, and today about 40 radio stations are effectively broadcasting, most of them in the central region (Otiso 2006:44), although a total of 158 privately owned radio stations are registered according to the Ugandan Communications Commission (U.C.C. 2007). To local businessmen and organisations, commercial radio had a big commercial potential through advertising. To youth, searching for ways to make a living and gaining social and cultural autonomy, radio was an attractive employment opportunity. The new radio stations needed creative employees, from charismatic presenters, producers and programmers, to technicians as well as marketing-, sales and PR-officers. Radio employees not only had the chance to gain a steady income, they also had the chance to shape what was played on radio. Many of the new radio employees were aspiring artists and music enthusiasts (see also Ssewakiryanga 1999: 26, 2004).

Music for and by young people went from being something that was circulated and traded expensively between elite and Diaspora audiences, to becoming available in public and private spheres in Kampala and all over the country. Commercial FM radios became sites of creation of an emerging 'youth culture', where youth either pursued careers or tuned into their favourite programmes, playing their favourite tunes. Where Western urban music was earlier

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[35] Though 20% of urban households have a TV, only 4,5 % of the total population own a television set (UBOS 2006a), and New Vision, the largest news paper, circulates only 35.000 copies in a population of circa 30 million.

primarily available on expensive tapes that had been copied beyond recondition, it now boomed from radios whether small or large, original or '*fake*' all over the city[36]. And '*everything changed*' for Lyrical G*:*

''*Cause before we didn't have FM stations here. We had AMs and stuff. So the FMs came in, I think that was 1993... That was when we were introduced to R'n'B, and Hip Hop and all. (...) The era of rap came in, and then the music changed from the pop-thing, cause before it was pop, like dance music[37]. When hip hop came, it was hard to listen to the first time. But I was like: 'Oh, this is really good.' And then watching, you know, videos and stuff. It was cool to be into hip hop, and at school it took on. (...) When FMs came in, it kind of like pushed all these kinds of music that had been there before aside and in came r'n'b' and hip hop music, dancehall music - all that shit came at that time.'*

For local artists, having their music played on the radio is a crucial step towards becoming a star. It gives them exposure to potential audiences at musical shows, to promoters who organise music shows and to potential corporate sponsors. A hit song on the radio means instant fame and thereby an increase in the demand for the artist to perform at shows. One of Uganda's few female rappers, Twig, remembers the first time she heard her song on the radio:

GK[38] is the guy who called me: 'Switch to Sanyu FM, then you hear Alan [the presenter of a popular music show] playing your song.' Aaaaaahh! I shouted! I was so excited, I was like: 'Yeah! Now I'm going to be known for the whole U.G., for the whole Country, for the whole World!'

Because of the artists' dependency on radio airplay, demanding bribe for airplay has become a lucrative side business for radio deejays, presenters and programmers. According to a few artists, some radio stations have official guidelines and prices for airplay in the attempt to standardise the 'extra' services of various employees.

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[36] Today about 70% of radio-airtime is dedicated to music – local as well as foreign, depending on the musical profile of the station (Batte 2007).
[37] Lyrical G is referring to afro-pop and Congolese dance music performed by bands like Afrigo
[38] Twig's producer

The introduction of privately owned radio stations catalysed the commercialisation of music in Uganda and expanded the music economy remarkably. The new stations targeted audiences through music, and because many employees at radio stations were young, 'youth' also became a target audience of radio stations.

4.3.2 The karaoke revolution

Most youth oriented their imaginations towards American and Afro-Caribbean music, but it was a Japanese invention that would transform the local music economy and the way music was being performed in Kampala, namely Karaoke. Karaoke is a form of entertainment that became popular in South East Asia in the early 80' and subsequently spread to the rest of the world, where amateur singers sing along, reading the lyrics on a teleprompter, to recorded pop hits where the original vocals are cut out or reduced in volume. The Ugandan version is often a simple PA system with one or two microphones and a pile of CDs with the latest hits, or artists bringing their own music, whether originally recorded or a popular foreign beat or riddim.

Hope Mukasa, an artist recently returned from exile, introduced Karaoke at his bar Sabrina's and it changed the music economy of Uganda. Singing on stage was not about telling metaphorical riddles or changing Congolese to Luganda but about individuals becoming '*a star*' on stage, as New Vision wrote*:*

'... the karaoke at Sabrina's started on August 24th *1996 and has run every Saturday since then. Almost 100 people have had the chance to be out there on the stage, belting out songs made popular by more well known singers. It starts at 10.30 pm and runs till 2.00 am (...) some people become instant celebrities and get more drinks offered to them than they can handle (...) right now at Sabrina's every Saturday night hundreds of people can for a few minutes be in the lights and get a chance on how it feels to be a star' (New Vision September 27. 96 in Ssewakiryanga 1999: 27)*

In 1999 the club DV8 opened and became an instant success with the less discriminating 'open mic' nights. Karaoke was a new way of doing music that did not discriminate against the financial and social status of the artist. It only took the courage to walk on stage, and popularity depended on the *talent* and ability to perform energetically. The karaoke hits were

African-American pop hits, r'n'b, hip hop and Afro-Carribean ragga-dancehall tunes[39]; all hits known from the radio. As the quote above states, youth now had a chance to be in the spotlight and be like the stars they knew from the radio, from foreign music. Further, performing well meant a night of freebies and drinks at the club. Being seen on stage at karaoke nights at DV8 and competing with other karaoke groups was the reason for rapping to the rapper Da Mith when he started his career: '*We were not bothering about (...) recording and putting out proper music. We used to just go, DV8, perform, (...) that's all we would do.'* Doing karaoke was much more about being on stage just like a superstar and being seen by others as a skilled rapper and performer than forming a musical career. With time, however, many of the most popular artists one the karaoke scene '*graduated'* to writing and recording original compositions. Lyrical G, who had become a dedicated hip hop fan by the mid-1990s, collected records and took on the stage name Lyrical G –the G referring more to the 'Gangsta' than the 'Geoffrey', his Christian name. And then he stepped onto the stage:

I started doing karaoke and stuff on stage, miming and stuff - miming others people's stuff. I was especially fascinated by Snoop Dogg's thing, Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg, so I started doing their songs, at concerts. Eh, then I graduated after a couple of...after a while, I graduated to writing my own stuff, and then recording it, getting my own stage doing these concerts.(...) And I had already made a name, appearing on stage and rapping. I stopped doing other people's songs. Now I was writing my own small little-little raps.
(...)For me, getting into this hip hop ting, as I told you, [is] 'cause I'm a fan *first and foremost. From collecting all these [hip hop] records. It's so simple: I listened and I was like:' it's so simple'. So I started playing around with the words and writing.'*

From performing global pop hits some karaoke artists started to 'venacularise' the musical genres of karaoke hits into local genres (Ssewakiryanga 2004: 148). Groups like Da Hommies started singing, rapping and recording their songs in Luganda over reggae-dancehall and r'n'b beats in the mid-1990s (Da Hommies 1994, 1995). Likewise Lyrical G tells of his transition to writing his own lyrics and recording with the group Bataka Squad (Bataka Squad 1997).

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[39] For instance 'the hotsteppah' (Ini Kamoze 1994), 'Mr. Loverman' (Shabba Ranks 1992) and 'Boombastic' (Shaggy 1995)

Though hip hop was popular with youth, raggamuffin[40] became the favourite *style* of music for the performers. I will return to the role of foreign music and musical culture in the music economy in chapter 7.

Most of the karaoke performers attended secondary school and had access to radio, cassette tapes and –players. As Lyrical G mentioned above, the new urban youth music, hip hop, r'n'b, ragga, and dancehall *took on* in schools, where young boys formed groups or crews where they collectively rehearsed and perfected their performances. Being young, however, the performers usually did not control resources to be spent on leisure activities such as going clubbing – and they often snook out against their parents wishes. Being on stage and being seen was one of the main attractions of karaoke. By doing karaoke youth could achieve stardom by mimesis, by *becoming* the artists they copied. While they in their every day experience felt marginalised and silenced they could go into the world of music and *become somebody*, as an individual, outside parental control, and gain a level of social autonomy. Karaoke shows were a common space for expression and meeting other music fans *outside* the realms of adult's supervision – it was one of the first venues of cultural autonomy for actors seeking to escape the confinement of youth.

Performing karaoke quickly became a popular *art-form* in which youth expressed themselves and it harboured a new generation of performers in the Ugandan music economy. Today karaoke has split into three different styles of performance: miming karaoke, where an artist mimes or dances on a stage to a song made famous by another artist; karaoke, where an artist sings or raps on stage over a song or beats made famous by another artist and; karaoke style, where an artist sings or raps over his own originally composed recording.

As music software became available in East Africa, composing and recording original material became more accessible to the karaoke stars. These software inventions made it possible for people with access to a computer and a microphone to record their own music, without the costs of rehearsing with session musicians and the expensive studio time. The quality of the recordings was initially poor, and many artists sought the expertise of renowned studios in Nairobi[41]. Though they record their own sounds and sing their own songs, often in their own language, the artists that started their careers doing karaoke, categorised their own

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[40] Electronically produced reggae/dancehall rhythms with rapping or roughneck chanting vocals
[41] Such as Ogopa DJs, whose studios became an almost mandatory stop on the road to stardom for Ugandan artists in the early 2000's (Bebe Cool 2003, Chameleon 2001)

music along the lines of the music that first made them famous: *hip hop, R'n'B, dancehall and ragga.*

The original karaoke shows have structured the way most musical performances are organised today. The cost benefit ratio and commercial potential of karaoke for both artists and organisers is probably the main reason for karaoke becoming the most popular form of live entertainment at bars and clubs in Kampala. For bar and club owners, karaoke was originally an inexpensive way of ensuring entertainment and attracting a crowd. Artists were not paid to perform and the equipment needed to stage a karaoke show was very limited. Even now, when staging big shows with *top-artists*, the equipment needed for a karaoke show is far less expensive than equipment for a live show, and the profits of ticket sales are therefore higher. For artists, karaoke had benefits as well. With a recorded CD with original compositions, artists continued to use karaoke when performing, in *karaoke-style* performances. Armed with a CD and a track list for the deejay, the artist is equipped to perform anywhere and at anytime he or she can negotiate to get on stage. Karaoke-style performance is a inexpensive performance style, because the artist neither has to bother with paying a band of backup musicians nor have to arrange and pay their transport. There is no hindrance in having more than one performance a night. Further, having their own voice as backup on the CD provides a sense of security for artists who sometimes give physically demanding performances or perform under heavy influence of recreational substances.

Whether in small taverns or at stadium shows, artists perform in musical variety shows. Karaoke allows artists to get on and off stage quickly and without intermezzos of changing equipment and testing sound. Having many artists at the same show is, of course, also the promoter's strategy to attract a larger paying audience. Album launches, music shows – and now live shows and jam sessions – have taken the format of the initial karaoke shows, thus a typical performance is one or two songs for curtain raisers and 3- 10 songs for main acts at big shows. At big music shows, several *top-artists* can be booked to headline a show to draw bigger crowds, and unless they perform last, they usually perform just a few songs before they are off for their next performance.

Like radio, musical performances became a new space for economic opportunities for club- and bar owners, but youth also soon discovered the commercial potential in being '*someone*' on stage. The young artists use their ingenuity and resources to become popular music artists who attract larger crowds than just high school youth, even if it meant changing

their musical style. Chagga, who started doing hip hop in secondary school, had to find a steady income after graduation:

I realized that rap here, around Uganda…You can't earn a living when you're rapping, and me, music I was doing as a job. (...) So how can I get a style close to that person who is selling?

But it takes more than a style to *sell* music in Uganda.

4.4 Performance, studios, producers and distributors

Performing karaoke-style in front of a live audience is the main source of income for most professional artists in Kampala. Some aspiring artists perform for tips and transport money. For a *top-artist* and his crew, a lucrative weekend night can include two or three solo performances by the top artist in smaller venues like bars and hotels, a big show including the whole crew at a stadium show. They end their working day with a late night performance in a night club, where the crew usually parties the rest of the night away. A working day of this kind could earn the *top-artist* up to between 3 and 4 million Uganda shillings (ugx)[42] (not deducting the costs of feeding, drinks, transport and payment of the crew), or the equivalent to 20 times the average monthly wage for persons with secondary school education employed in the public sector (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2006b: 32)[43]. As Nubian Li said in the beginning of this chapter, the success of an artist depends on his ability to perform a wide range of roles and to use his ingenuity in different situations. The success of an artist starts on any stage available, for any payment available, according to PAM awards chairman Isaac Mulindwa. At a workshop for hip hop artists, he educates the 'class' on how to make money in the Ugandan music economy in a classic call-response fashion:

Isaac: *Performing. Simple word. There's nothing else. (rapping out the words:) It's not about talking, it's not about how you dress, it's not about what you eat, it's not about what you do, it's not where you came from, it's not about your language, it's not about how old you are, it's not about anything else, it's about:*

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[42] 1 US dollar equals 1,700 Uganda Shillings (02.07.2008)

[43] The median monthly wage of post secondary school employees in the public sector is 150,000 ugx, which is higher than the median monthly wage of employment in the urban private sector; 72,400 ugx. However, one should also consider that most formally employed people supplement their wages with other income generating activities.

The class answers*: Performance.*

(...)

Isaac: *So, you need to go into making performances. The more performances you do, the more you'll be known, the more you get known and you have an audience, the promoters will start demanding or asking for you to perform where?*

The class quietly: *at shows*

Isaac*: At the shows. Because what?*

Young man: *Because you are known*

Isaac, gesturing approvingly: *And the audience wants?*

The Class: *You*

Isaac lighting up and pointing at the class: *You! So when the promoters start calling you, don't think they've just discovered that you've been signing! No, what have they discovered?*

The Class*: the audience*

Isaac, exclaims with a single clap*: Ha! That the audience loves you! When you come on stage the kids get excited, the promoter wants a good show. He wants to give his, you know, the people who've come their money's worth, so he will call you and say: 'Jangu[44], come here, be part of it'. Of course he's going to first call you and say:' well, I have no money, I can't pay you.' But he'll start paying you eventually as your demand what? Grows. Because he knows the audience wants to see you. At this point, the radio stations will also play your music. For the same reasons! Because the audience out here, or the listener wants to hear your?*

The Class: *Music*

Isaac: *Song or your music. It doesn't matter how good your song is, if it is not known, or the person is not known, you're not going anywhere.*

Isaac confirms that getting on stage and becoming *somebody* in the music economy of Uganda has less to do with 'connections' and kin-based networks and more to do with resilience and diligence of the artist, as well as their individual ability to perform. By using every chance to perform, the artist builds a fan base and an audience. The demand for an artist is determined by how known he or she is. As *promoters* realise the demand from audiences, they will invest in the artist appearing on their shows.

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[44] Luganda for 'come here'

Isaac Mulindwa Jr. at the 2006 Hip Hop Canvas Expo. Photo by author.

4.4.1 'Back to the Lab' – recording a song

For a song to get known, it has to be recorded. Artists use recorded songs in performances and to promote themselves to radio stations. Most of the artists I met in Kampala were struggling to collect money to pay for studio time. Usually studios have a fixed price per song, with a discount if the artist wishes to record a full album of 6-8 songs. Depending on the reputation of the studio and the resident producer, prices range between 50,000 and 450,000 ugx. per song. In the absence of record companies and royalty systems, artists pay upfront, and hold the copyright of the recording. In other words, most artists pay studios to produce one track, and walk away with the master copy on a CD at the end of the sessions. It is then up to the artist to perform the song, gain radio airplay and thereby get distributors interested in buying an album from the artist. In the studio, the *producer*, who is usually the owner of the studio, or employed by the owner, plays a number of roles, depending on the abilities and talents of the artist. Professional artists usually write and compose their own material, and have a close relationship with their producer, but up-coming artists might need much more support from a producer and at the same time be rushed trough production to make room for the next costumer.

Twig, who is working on an album after having her first song played on radio, can tell the difference between a good and a bad producer, and rushing production means that the product will not sell:

' Some of the producers are like...Sometimes, when you get to their studios, they're so strict, eh? And they can't sell. When I say they can't sell, these producers I'm talking about, I mean they will never tell you that your song is good or poor. Because you have given them money, they'll just have to rush: 'Do your thing and finished!' See what I mean? Finish the thing, that's all. 'Here is your song, go.' But that song is not yet done, and it's no good be on the airplay [on the radio], you see what I mean? But GK is this kind of guy who is going to talk to you: 'Do this in this way and do that in other way. Come for rehearsals in my studio, have a room, do your thing. When you are ready, come back, I record for you'. And he's the same guy who is going to explain to you that: 'This is good and this is bad. Go back and think thrice, write it this way or write it the other way', but this one song...and he's good. He's good in producing music, 'cause he helps out guys to distribute the music to the radio.'

Studios usually do not require talent or a finished song from the artist, they just require an up-front payment, but some take on more responsibility and takes part on the promotion of artists, partly working as a record label.

Twig hanging out at GK's studio. Photo by author.

4.4.2 Copywrongs

These years copyright, protection of intellectual property and different royalty systems are hotly debated among actors in the music economy. In 2006 a new copyright law was passed[45], but it has yet to be enforced. This means that artists do not gain income from radio airplay, though radio remains an extremely important factor in building an audience and a fan base. To gain income from the music playing all over town, some artists take their master copy from the studio to distribution companies. The distribution companies press CDs and cassette tapes which are distributed to music vendors all over the country. In retail a cassette tape goes for 1,500 ugx and a CD for about 10,000 ugx. Music vendors selling original records compete against a very vibrant market of piracy, and many *music cutting shops* sell both 'original' and 'pirate' material. The hip hop group Klear Kut has never used local distributors, because they do not want to forfeit their ownership of their music:

Navio: *[when you have recorded your songs] you can also go to a distributor. Like with your CD, the same way you would approach a studio to actually make the song, after you got the song, you now go to the...*

Papito: *Distributor. And they also give you a once off payment and* they *now own the track and they can sell it as they want to.*

Navio: *But they still don't get off your performances*

Da Mith: *And some people sell the distribution right, but most artists have been selling their rights, as in: they don't own the tracks.*

Navio: *Without actually knowing what...*

Da Mith: *Without knowing what they were doing.*

Papito: *Yeah...lack of education on that side!*

Distributors usually pay between 1 and 20 million ugx for a full album (Music Forum 2004). In terms of global music industries the payment is peanuts, but for many Kampalian youth, 5 million shillings is a fortune. But distributors only invest in albums that are guaranteed to make a healthy profit by selling to a wide audience, and this often leaves young, up-coming artists out in the cold. Enticed by the prospect of being financially independent, and the status

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[45] The former copyright law was a leftover from the colonial era and had not been enforced since independence.

of having sold an album to a distributor, young artists will do almost anything to *make a deal,* ignoring the potential dangers of unclear intellectual property agreements.

4.4.3 Searching for that new sound

The artists performing the new genres of Ugandan music are criticised for not being authentic and leaving *real culture* and tradition behind. The hybrid genres springing from karaoke, like the 'betwixt and between' youth, are seen as *mixed-up,* detached and *'lost'*, but also connected to global youth culture. Herman from Afrigo band laments the electronically produced tracks that the generation which is now on stage have based their careers on:

'The problem is that the new generation that is now on [stage], they don't know all that [of playing instruments]. What they know is to go to studio get rhythms from the keyboard, they start to rap. (...) It's there, mixed up, ragga, hip hop - just there. They have no straight line of doing it, they mix up things. They are nowhere. (...) But that style is everywhere, for young people. They all do that, all over. Even in the US, even in Denmark, I understand, they rap, they sing ragga...you know?'

To Herman it is the way the music is made, that sets the new generations of artists apart from other musical performers in Uganda. The mixed up or 'post modern' music, that comes from using electronic instruments to produce music and incorporating global popular genres can be found all over the world. This is music for youth – a global group of people who have the 'mixing up' things in common. Youth is here, through musical taste, conceptualised as a group with cultural autonomy, or at least similar tastes that are opposed to the taste of their elders.

For the artists themselves, the *mixing up* of different kinds of musics is related to a search for a specific sound for Ugandan music in the 21st century, a sound for a generation of modern, urban youth that transcends realms of expression in 'premodern' and 'modern' musics. Bobi Wine's older brother Eddy Yawe won the PAM Award for best producer in 2006. After producing hit after hit for the Firebase Crew and a long list of other artists, he is still working to establish a '*tradition'* for local popular music:

'Pop here is far different from the traditional music. There is a very big difference. Actually those ones that used to do the traditional [music] ended up doing kadongo kamu. And as our generation grew up, someone doing kadongo kamu would look like a villager, or someone who didn't go to school. So we were so much into the Western pop. Yeah... Actually, Uganda doesn't have a particular kind of like pop music like you see; from Congo there's fazza fazza and Lingala, in South Africa there's kwaito and some other kinds. We don't have any, we don't have any. We do a lot of fusion from a couple of countries and we mix, we use together. The only type that is from here is kadongo kamu, do-do do (clapping the rhythm of Kandogo kamu on his thigh). It's from the drums then to one guitar. Now that's the kind of music I'll never try doing. Tradition hasn't, hasn't connected a lot to our music - not at all.(...) Because the hits we have got is what we have just named kidandali[46]. Because everybody just comes up with a uun-ka ung-ka uung (marking a souk-dancehall rhythm with one hand). But those are copied from Jamaica, from South Africa, there is some bit of reggae, there's some bit of souk, there's some bit of zoka, some bit of lingala in a song, just one given song. That's why I say that we don't have a particular tradition of pop around here.'

The way actors in the music economy understand musical genres and styles is related to ideas of authenticity and place, which I will return to in chapter 7. The point here is that a new way of 'doing music' has come up in Uganda since the mid-1990s and that though artists produce hits and music that is not '*connected*' to local musical tradition, they are still searching for their own autonomous, Ugandan *sound*. The premodern and modern music that characterised the music economy before the 1990s were limited by a small market for music and entertainment in Uganda. This was because of war and civil unrest, which made 'going out' impossible, because of economic decline and breakdowns, resulting in general poverty and because of a state monopoly on media, radio in particular. With relative peace and a new, and more stable, political regime combined with strong economic growth new forms of music and entertainment sprung up to meet a growing demand. Commercial radio stations employed youthful and fast-talking presenters, producers etc. and made Western pop, hip hop, dancehall and r'n'b hits available to Ugandan youth. Karaoke took the music on the radio to the stage where young fans could use their individual talents rather than their social connections to become *a star*, starting careers in popular music. For marginalised Uganda

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[46] A mocking name for a particular popular beat in local urban popular music

youth, who did not have good connections in political networks, *going into music* became an opportunity to become *somebody*.

Commercial popular music has become a venue for social becoming of youth in Kampala. For the artists the music economy is an opportunity to gain social autonomy by being a *star* on stage and gaining an income though performances. For the artists as well as the audience, the new way of doing music has opened up a realm of cultural expression, creating a space of cultural autonomy for youth. The music performed by the karaoke generation of artists is by others, as well as themselves, understood to be part of a global 'youth culture' where youth have their own music and taste and genres and styles are *mixed up*.

Chapter 5: The Soap Opera of Music

Newspaper and tabloid clippings from New Vision, Monitor and Red Pepper (2003-2006)

This chapter is about the people who are the most visible actors in the music economy; the *top-artists* and their crews. In the previous chapter it became clear that music and being an artist has become a viable economic endeavour over the last few years and that the music economy attracts youth, in search of social autonomy and cultural autonomy.

Since the early 2000s, a few young, male artists have gained tremendous fame and wealth because of their music, but also because of the way they behave, look and conduct their business of music. Their 'outrageous behaviours', sexual affairs and indulgent consumption of recreational substances, sense of fashion and style and not least their internal feuds to assert

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themselves as *'number one' top-top artist* have become quintessential to becoming a *top-artist*. Getting drunk and stoned before performing at a music show with tens of thousands of fans, then beating up a colleague and being dragged off to the police station is hardly economically viable behaviour, but the fact remains that some of the artists who do so are the most popular and the ones that headline all the large music shows in town – even other artists' album release parties.

Seeing music by the people I worked with in Kampala as a commercial enterprise within the music economy can be complimented by an alternative understanding of capital. Though artists often explain that all their doings and their overall goal for being in music is to *make money*, I find it useful to introduce Bourdieu's notion of capital as

'accumulated labour (in its materialized form or its "incorporated," embodied form) which, when appropriated in a private, i. e. exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified labour or living labour' (Bourdieu 1986: 241)

This understanding of capital opens other insights to how actors in the Ugandan music economy employ resources in their social becoming, towards a successful life; gain – and loose – status; become *big men* and *has-beens* in Kampalas music economy.

The artists refer to their career choice as *going into music* and *being in music*. This corresponds with other alternative paths that they might have taken, such as *going into business* or *going into church*. This way of seeing the worlds as separate spheres leads me to thinking of the music economy as a relatively autonomous social field of practice within wider Ugandan society. This chapter aims at an understanding the 'economy of practices' (ibid: 242) rather than the practice of economy.

Introduced by Isaac Mulindwa in the previous chapter, the symbolic capital in the music field, which defines what actors within the field strive for (Bourdieu 1990:66-68), might be conceived of as *'being known'*, or *'having a name'*. The artists themselves measure their position in the field of music – their relationships to other artists in *respect*. The *respect* and fame of an artist can be obtained outside the political and kinbased networks, the formal job market and the educational institutions, which the young men who *go into music* experience as marginalising forces in their lives.

I will look at different kinds of capital in the field and then analyse three highly publicised feuds between *top-artist*s with an aim of understanding social autonomy not only as economic independence but as social becoming within the local conceptualisation of *being a man.*

5.1 Crews and social capital

According to Bourdieu,

'Social capital is the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit, in various senses of the word' (Bourdieu 1986: 248-249)

While artists draw on a variety of networks in their daily lives, a specific kind of social institution is characteristic for the social organisation of music, namely crews. In the following I will look at crews and how social capital is created and traded, in the music field. In the previous chapter I wrote about the karaoke generation and their experience with getting on stage and performing. They formed groups or crews with friends and practiced their performances in the group. As professional artists, crews, or more loosely structured networks, remain important to many artists.

Getting into the music economy, and becoming a star, requires resources. Sometimes you will have to bribe MCs to get on stage, and you will certainly have to pay to record in a studio. You might have to bribe deejays to play your song on the radio or in nightclubs. A solo artist has to *do everything himself,* as Nubian Li said. But in a crew, artists pool their resources and together become stronger players in the music economy. They get inspiration, learn from each other, and give each other tips on how to make it in *the industry.* The most famous crews are connected to a *top-artist* who either owns or has unlimited access to a studio.

5.1.1 'Making it big collectively'

The Firebase crew has its meeting point in a small yard and a couple of run-down single room buildings behind Eddy Yawe's Dream Studio in Karmwoyka. Most of the members have known Bobi Wine, the Firebase Ghetto President, since their childhood, and they all refer to

their common experiences of *'growing up in the ghetto'*, the shantytown area Kawmoyka. The yard behind Dream Studios is called the *Firebase Ghetto*. As the sun sets over Kampala, Nubian describes what evenings in *the ghetto* are usually like:

'This is our Ghetto! Our base, Firebase, this is the base. Come here, you chill. We've written so many songs from here. You know in the in…most times, evening hours, you know, like at this time, we gather here most of us. Then, we start. (On the wall behind us two young men are rapping, one frequently breaking off into a melodic hook) *You hear what he's doing? He sings, and then some other guy joins in, and somehow a melody comes up and, like, you start putting words in it. At times you come here, and you're like: 'Is this a church, is the Holy Spirit here?' (…) It's one big family, one loving family, everyone looks out for the other. There is so much love in the ghetto. Yeah. Guys will advise you, and be like: 'Nubian, you need to have a song out this month', and like: 'Buchaman you're taking so long, you need a new song'. Here, guys will tell you the truth, and it works, that's the thing with Firebase.'*

Friendships, advice and singing together is creating synergy within crews to build individual careers, but *top-artists* and their crews have become famous by performing together and the name of the crews have *become known.* By pooling resources in a crew of 'peers', crewmembers experience a freedom from the control of elders. Chagga has been in two different crews and knows the value of a collective name:

'People join groups to have a family, to make it big collectively. Like, to have, like the name: you can join Firebase, 'cause the name Firebase is already big, so it can help you. Give you another level. Like you say, your name is not known. But they say: 'He is Robert from the Firebase' When they add on the Firebase, people will respect you, some…some join groups because of that.'

As Bourdieu writes social capital might be instituted by a common name in a group, and this social capital goes on to enforce the symbolic capital of each member. The collective name adds *respect* to individual members. One of the 'profits' of being in a crew with a *known name* is that the value of the name is assigned to individual members of the group. Though the experience of being in a crew is one of solidarity and friendship between members, 'the

profits which accrue from membership in a group are the basis of the solidarity which makes them possible'(Bourdieu 1986: 249). The social capital gives access to the music economy from an improved position. Though crews are collectives they are also a group of individual actors who each seek to make the most of their situation, using their talent and ingenuity, and this is what enables the solidarity and friendships in the crews.

There are also more practical benefits of being in a crew. For Phantom Lovins, the Firebase crew means the opportunity to record music at a discounted price because of the personal relationship with the studio owner, and the chance to perform as curtain raiser for his boss Bobi at shows that would otherwise be out of his reach:

'Many youths are there, talented, *down in the ghetto, but they don't have opportunity to record. It's not also so straight for us [in the crew], but at least…there's opportunity, easily, because it wouldn't take me point 3*[47] *like it would take any other person, to come down and record, no. It would only count for …the relationship between me and my producer. How would we work out things? Because I'm a crew member, 'cause the owner of the studio is a big brother to Bobi Wine, you understand? So that's the opportunity we get. (…)I have opportunity to be seen. So many youths are singing but they are not seen…*(sighing, shaking his head slowly) *they are not seen. Who would they sing for? No one. The best they can sing for is a crowd of 60 or a crowd of a hundred people (*inaudible*)… in a small bar, in a small karaoke place. But I can…if I can have opportunity to sing for 60.000 people in Nakivubo*[48]*, then…you don't have to - I mean - it's not surprising if next time, I'm the Bobi Wine, I'm a star of my own self.'*

By being in a crew, members find a promise of social becoming, of becoming a star and a man of one's own self in networks where being young is not necessarily a disadvantage.

5.1.2 Head of the family

As mentioned in chapter 2, the social organisation of political life and economic life in Uganda is structured in re-distributive patrimonial networks, where powerful men and elders control the resources of less powerful and younger people. This social organisation is

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[47] 0,3 million or 300,000 ugx, the price for recording a song at Dream Studios
[48] Stadium in downtown Kampala

reproduced in the music field. In these networks the social capital is concentrated 'in the hands of a single actor or a small group with the power to speak and act for the group' (Bourdieu 1986: 251). Though Firebase crew consists of young men who have grown up under roughly the same conditions and are roughly the same age, they do have a President in Bobi Wine, who is also known as Firebase Grandfather. The *top-artist* often possess this concentrated social capital, since he is often the one who handles promoters, press, radio stations and distributors and controls studio-time, and decides who gets to join him as curtain raisers at shows. A Firebase member breaks down the logic of using the name of the *top-artist* to benefit the whole crew:

'Bobi wine can tell the promoter: 'Me, I'm going to work for one and a half million. But I'm not going when you are not taking Buchaman and the firebase crew. You will pay them this much and me you will pay me this much. If you are not taking them, I'm not going, 'cause I move with them.' You see? Then the promoter will pay Bobi and pay [us].'

In return for using the name of the crew, the symbolic capital of being a member, and the opportunities that come with it, members fulfil a number of different roles supporting the *top-artist* of the crew. Most crew members get on stage and perform, but they often also act as bodyguards, dancers, drivers, sound technicians and personal managers.

For the *top-artists* being the head of a successful crew, and being the *number one crew,* is, in a slightly alternative way, the completion of social becoming and gaining social autonomy. The boss of the crew is now the head of an extended family, which he can speak and act for in the interest of the whole group. Just like the man who is always the head of the family and the family name in the song 'Adam ne Kaawa' in chapter 2, the other members *respect* their boss. At the same time the crew members, through the name of the crew gain social autonomy from parents and kin, by making money in the music economy. Crews are often referred to as *families* and if the boss of the crew manages and keeps his family well, he is a *real man.* But, Bourdieu writes 'one of the paradoxes of delegation is that the mandated agent can exert on (and, up to a point, against) the group the power which the group enables him to concentrate' (Bourdieu 1986: 251) and the head of a crew can misuse the 'concentrated social capital'. In that case the crew members – and fans - can lose their *respect* and commitment and look for greener pastures. Phantom Lovins explains the loss of popularity with the rival crew, Leone

Island, headed by *top-artist* Chameleon, with his 'mismanagement' of the crew, saying that the fans

 'have realized the badness in Chameleon and his crew. And the good thing is that he [Chameleon] failed to maintain and handle his own family. The so called Leone Island Crew. So even if you are a man, and you fail to handle your family affairs, then people will say: 'You are not a man!' So now, people know he's bad.'

A member of another crew reflects on the disadvantage of the head of a crew using the social capital of the crew to build his individual capitals on the expense of the crew:

'You don't know much he's being paid, you don't know much you're working for. You don't know when to be paid, 'cause you can go for a show and you just come back home [without being paid], yeah? And there is what he creates in everyone who is working with him, he creates fear so that you can't tell him that: 'Hey man!' So you have to wait for him to plan.'

Because the head of the crew handles business, he also controls the economic capital of the crew members. By giving them small cuts of the total payment, but at the same time offer them 'favours' like letting them stay at his house and feeding them, crew members effectively become dependants of the *top-artist*. Here the young artists reproduce exactly the conditions they were trying to escape by going into music, only with a younger (and maybe less restrictive) 'patriarch' on top. The *top-artist* then has the power to control the resources of the crew completely in a manipulative '*con-plan*' to build his individual *name:*

'Like, you can sing for your boss something, that you have in store. Then your boss, he chooses out something. He tells you that: 'Let me [record the song]. When you do that one, it won't help you, 'cause for you, you don't have name. But let me do it, 'cause me, I have the name, I have a big name. It [the song] will sound on the radio, then we shall get money. 'Cause for you, you are going just to spoil that song. It won't do you anything.'

This means that crews can both work as a way of making it big collectively and a way of staying 'stuck' in the undesired youth category. Chagga, as the story went in chapter 2, he left

Leone Island crew to become a solo artist. He realised that though he had spent 5 years building a career, he had been building somebody else's career:

'He [Chameleon] keeps you around his house, he buys you food. Music is not like something that stays there forever...today it's me tomorrow is someone else, yeah? But what if the next day Chameleon doesn't have a hit song? The little he has will be for his own *family, his wife and the children. So where will the rest go - the other Islanders? They will be starting life again. 'Cause me when I was there [in the crew]...When I left Leone Island, I had to start life again, and that's what I have been doing in this previous year. That's when I realized that I didn't have anything* (laughing) *when I was there.'*

Crew members might tolerate exploitation from their boss because even though the head of the crew might speak for the crew, crew members accumulate social capital as they follow him to shows, radio stations, distributors and other important institutions in the music economy.

When young male artists pool their recourses in a crew, they build a social capital in form of a durable network that exchanges contacts, ideas, advice, and not least *respect,* and sometimes economic capital. Young artists experience being in a crew as gaining social autonomy, as they rely on their peers rather than elders. The Crew is likened to a family, and often the 'head of the household' is also the one members *respect* as boss of the crew. The name of the crew and its boss builds the symbolic capital of individual members of the crew and they learn how to manage a musical career from him, but the boss can also manipulate and exploit the labour and talent of members that are less famous than himself to build his own individual name. What is remarkable about crews is that they (sometimes) reproduce the social structures and conditions that youth seek to escape, but they also provide youth with the chance to gain social autonomy from these structures. Further, they enable the *top-artists* to assume the role of 'head of the household' for the crew, earning them *respect* as *real men.*

Bodily capital on display: Bebe Cool on stage. Photo by author

5.2 Bodily capital and being *strong*

Apart from the collectively instituted social capital of crews, another form of capital contributes to the *name* or the *respect* of an artist. In chapter 2 I briefly outlined a local moral discourse on youth that teaches adolescents and youth to 'control' themselves. The bodies of youth are seen as resources by themselves and others, and showing social and cultural autonomy is also done through bodily practice (see for instance Stambach 2000).

'Many young people (...) are preoccupied by developing their bodily capital in different ways: they are keenly interested in how they can shape and decorate their bodies to become socially and sexually attractive' (Meinert 2004: 22)

Though originally not conceived as a capital by Bourdieu, work on the body also forms a kind of of 'accumulated labour', a bodily capital (Meinert 2004:22, Wacquant 1995).

For the artists working in the music field, bodily capital is related to *respect* and being a man. Having a masculine body and exercising it in masculine motions and postures on stage, or in other public arenas, certainly builds the *respect* of an artist. This is apparent in energetic

performances on stage. The crowd reacts by screaming and applauding when artists give a *good show* by dancing and moving on the stage, and some artists enhance the bodily aspects of performances by occasionally performing bare-chested. The assertive movement of masculine bodies are maybe even more valuable off stage. Being '*strong'* means moving assertively, often in abrupt and jagged movements. By applying the same masculine bodily capital that they use on stage in other public appearances, some artists are natural centres of attention in bars and nightclubs. In private, non public settings, they might be calm and quiet, but in public, they '*have to be big'*. The rather frequent physical clashes between *top-artists* and their crews could be interpreted as an ultimate expression of bodily capital, a one-on-one comparison the strength of bodies.

Another bodily aspect of building *respect* is through sexual conquest. *Top-artists* and their crews are, because of their economic, social and bodily capitals, attractive partners for many young women in Kampala, and by 'investing' sexually in many girlfriends, they build a capital in a body that can *handle* many (and beautiful) women. A strong body is also one that can *handle* what others may see as excessive use of recreational substances, like alcohol and marijuana. One of my informants lamented his tendency to get '*too high'* and compared himself to a colleague who, on the contrary is *strong: 'I can see him taking lots of weed and beer at the same time. Then performing very well on stage. He has stronger brains maybe. Or his body can handle ...-that's it.'*

Lastly, bodily capital can take the form of bodily decorations like tattoos, jewellery, hairstyle and clothing – things that are attached to the body of the artists – all things that most *top-artists* are almost obsessive about[49]. Top artists perfect their immaculate appearances through careful styling, grooming, well planned *looks* and *fashion designs* where every detail is a statement (cf. Biaya 1999), and this labour also builds the bodily capital of an artist.

Through investments in the body, be it movements, strength or fashions, artists build their bodily, capital and thereby show others that they are in 'shape' to go on stage and that they can capture the attention of the audience. Through investment in sexuality and masculinity in the body, artists build a *strong* body, a capital that others have to *respect.*

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[49] The impatient anthropologist often waited for hours in bars, lounges and frontrooms while informants fixed their hair, practiced facial gestures in front of the mirror and picked out the right outfit and accessories for the night.

5.3 'Stealing the show' and other contests of symbolic capital

On the stages in Kampala the competition is stiff and fans are eagerly awaiting new fads, hits and dances. Artists strive to create and recreate themselves, their styles and image to keep the attention of the audience, otherwise others are waiting behind the curtains to take their place.

In the field of music the competition for symbolic capital is played out in a 'musical soap opera'[50] in continuous dramas, *sagas* and feuds between artists, mediated by gossip, radio, songs and tabloid press (cf. the introduction to this chapter). Serious physical injures are rare, but the 'soap' of competing for fame is a 'highly charged social event that makes music personal and interesting' (Perullo 2003: 154) to people inside and outside the music economy[51]. The symbolic capital *respect* is, like in the wider society, connected to power and manhood. Like the crews, the music field is structured into hierarchs and the *top-artists* are the ones with most *respect*. But, referring back to Baganda notions of gender and power, there can only be one *number one top-artist*, one 'head of the household' of music, and this position is the centre of feuds between the young male *top-artists*.

The holder of symbolic capital is able to impose recognition onto others, and exerting symbolic power is the action of revealing or consecrating things that are already present in the social world (Bourdieu 1989: 23). Contests of symbolic capital is, then, actors' attempt at defining and re-defining social space.

In the following I will take a look at three different cases of contestation of symbolic capital. They are all part of the 'musical soap opera' and related to actions of *respect* and *disrespect*. The first is about the control of- and legitimate claims to the important space of performance; the stage. The second is about exploitation and betrayal, and public humiliation mediated by songs. The last example is the practical discrediting of capital investment of one artist by another with the aim of staying *on top*.

5.3.1 'Stealing the show'

The competition for getting on stage and performing is, as mentioned in the chapter 4, stiff, and promoters, club- and bar owners do their best to keep their audiences entertained. Getting on stage and performing is the most important aspect of being an artist. Access to audiences

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[50] I have stolen the term from Alex Perullo's description of competition among dansi groups in Dar Es Salaam (Perullo 2003: 153)

[51] Music in other East African communities are also played out as 'soap operas' cf. Lange 2000,

and potential fans is a scarce resource in the music economy, and the stage itself is a contested space. It is where the artists make money, where they build up their fame and respect with fans and where they display their capitals in the form of crew members, clothing, jewellery and *strong* bodies. The artist who is most in demand is the *number one top-artist* and he and his crew are in the position to monopolise stages and performances. Nubian Li from Firebase remembers:

'In those days when Leone Island was number one, Chameleon always made sure that we were out of work. If a promoter wanted Chameleon on the same stage as Bobi, then he had to choose between Bobi and Chameleon, Leone Island and Firebase. He would have to... Chameleon would make him to choose. And at that time they needed him so much. Yeah, he'd be like: 'I won't perform on the same stage with the Firebase guys, you either take me or you leave'...So the promoters would have nothing to do. They'd be like: 'Okay. (clapping once and putting on a resigning gesture*) Your name is bigger, your name brings more people to the shows, so let's cross out these guys.'*

But monopoly on stage and the status of a *top-artist* is not a fixed position; it is challenged and contested in the music economy. At big music variety shows, there are often arguments and scuffles over who gets to go on stage, and who gets to perform last as the main act of the evening. *Top-artists* are known to show up wanting to perform at shows they have not been booked for, simply to *outshine* competitors and show that they own the crowd. When Firebase crew was offered to take over a weekly *jam* from the competing crew Leone Island, they accepted. But when Leone Island showed up and tried to *steal the show* by playing their music, things went wrong:

Nubian Li: *'They [Leone Island] used to have a night in Walik Pub. (…) So you know, if you have the same person on Thursdays, the same day of the week over and over, the crowd is gonna reduce. So this guy [the owner of the pub] is like: 'let me make a little change, let me bring Firebase, this Thursday.'*
Yeah. So Firebase, we go for the show, and then the Leone Island guys came. They were there. They came as in: they were part of the audience. We didn't have a problem with that. But then they started yelling at us. (…) They had a corner they went to, one corner, and they

would shout, eh? 'Bomboclaat[52] Firebase, what, what.' So after the show they go to the deejay, and they play Leone Island songs. You know, it's so disrespective if it's a Firebase night and then you start playing Leone Island songs. So we go to the deejay, we're like: 'Turn off the music! Play something different',

and the Leone Island guys are like: 'No, you play Leone Island, what ever'.

So a fight came up. They were beaten up bad. One of the guys was seriously beaten up. Jeff. I don't know if he is the manager [of Leone Island]? I don't know. He might be the manager. And then he went to police, made a statement, be like:' Bobi hit me, did what.'

(...) I don't know what happened to that ...file. 'Cause in Uganda they [police] never close the files unless you go and you pay them. Yeah...but they've never come. And Jeff? I don't know, maybe he just gave up he's like: 'I can't do anything to this guy.''

Though the Leone Island crew did not try to get on stage at Walik pub, they 'stole' the control of the performance space and the audience in Walik pub. They *disrespected* their competitors by convincing the deejay to play their music, and thus claim ownership of a crowd that otherwise 'belonged' to the Firebase crew. This symbolic contest of monopoly of the performance space was so important for both crews that it ended in a fistfight, an employment of bodily capital, where Bobi Wine came out as a winner. A member of Leone Island reported the matter to the police, but he did not retaliate. And though Leone Island effective *stole the show* from the Firebase Crew, Nubian depicts Bobi Wine and his crew as 'winners' of the clash, because the manager Jeff was so badly beaten that he realised that he '*can't do anything to this guy'*.

5.3.2 Mr. Independent

In chapter 2, Chagga told the story of how he was almost thrown in jail after a fight with a deejay from his former crew. The story highlighted the daily insecurities and distrust many youth have for public authorities. But that is not the whole story. The reason Chagga left his crew in the first place was to become a *man of his own self*, as he said above, by starting a solo career after 5 years as a backup singer. This decision did not go down well with the head of the crew, Chameleon, who lost social capital and standing in the eyes of fans and other artist, because he was unable to sustain and keep his 'family'. A few months after the break-

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[52] Patwa exclamation, in Uganda mostly used as a negative exclamation

up Chameleon released a song about deceitful friends and betrayal. While he himself claims that the song is a general message to fellow human beings, others interpret the song differently (Buzz 2006: 28).

Chameleon in Luganda:

Betrayal, betrayal, ooh - People betray you

The one you heal a sick foot for, eventually kicks you with it. - People betray you

Even if you offer them so much, my friend, they betray you

The one you heal a sick foot for, is the one that eventually kicks you with it

I would like to warn you; all those you see laughing with you are not necessarily friends

You see the smiling on their faces but their hearts are filled with thorns

Watch out, those people that you hang out with, you regard them as your friends

But look, your so called buddy has no real friends.

They change like an axe within a piece of wood

You try your best to make a living, to make you friends and family proud of you

The one that you aid then turns into your enemy, working for your downfall to replace you.

You improvise plans to succeed

Sometimes you go to bed hungry to make sure that your friend succeeds, but people forget very quickly, they are never appreciative.

(…)

Do not overstretch yourself (in your help), even if they are smiling to you

Even if you spend nights hungry, you are helping a dog just to turn and bite your leg.

Do not overstretch yourself, even if they approach you with seemingly good intentions, it is helping a dog just to turn and bite your leg

(Chameleon, 2006, for full transcription and translation, see Appendix A)

People who knew the story of the break up between Chameleon and his friend and partner in business, Chagga, in this song heard a hurt and disillusioned Chameleon expressing his bitterness over the betrayal of Chagga, who was now competing against him to become a *top-artist* - working on his downfall to replace him.

Luganda native speakers use rich allegories and metaphors in daily speech, especially when touching on sensitive subjects of sexuality, politics or tribal belonging, and also when they do not wish to confront an interlocutor directly (Nannyonga Tamuzusa 2002: 138). This means that songs can have a 'hidden language'– and this is used in the rivalry and competition between artists. Artists produce and perform songs with the intention to publicly insult or embarrass competitors, artists with which one has a conflict or *beef,* in this kind of 'hidden language' and those who are in the know –the involved crews and artists, entertainment workers and fans who are knowledgeable about the soap opera of music - will understand the songs, and to whom they are addressed (although names are rarely mentioned), while others will enjoy the general message of the song.

For Chagga there is no doubt that Chameleon had him in mind, when he wrote this song. It portrays Chagga as an ungrateful, phony betrayer who has turned his back on someone who helped him to become a famous artist. Chameleon now laments having helped him, as he has realized that he was *'keeping a dog just to turn and bite his leg'*. Fans who had followed Chagga's and Chameleon's joint careers now took sides in the *beef* between the two, and Chagga, being the one with the smaller name was coming off as someone with a worth equal to a unpredictable and deceitful dog. To regain *respect* with fans and colleagues, Chagga released a song to explain his side of the story:

*'So after I left them, he [Chameleon] did a song called Beefula. Beefula, meaning, betrayal. Yeah, so whenever I used to go for performances, people used to tell me: 'Beefula'. Like: 'You're a betrayer!' So I had to do a song to let the crowd know, explain my side of the story. So mine goes, I did two, one called Sina Musango (*Chagga 2006a*). It means that 'I'm not to blame', 'I have no crime', yeah? Then I did another one with the meaning: 'you hate me for nothing'. For him, what did he do? He was abusive to me. But my songs, the song I did, was like, begging him to forgive me, 'cause 'Sina Musango'. I was narrating the story, why I left, yeah? But not abusing him. Me, I was telling him that I had to look for my boat to fish for my own. Now that the other catch we had wasn't enough for both of us, I had to go and fish for my own. That was what I was talking about in that song, and this new song saying that 'you hate me for nothing', was after they took me to prison (*Chagga 2006b*).*

The songs and the violent encounter between the deejay and Chagga as well as the legal aftermath had extensive media coverage (New Vision 2006, Mugisha 2006, Mabonga 2006). In the media, it was uncertain whether Chagga had *disrespected* Chameleon by leaving the crew, or if Chameleon had accused Chagga wrongfully, and tried to sabotage Chagga's career. Chagga himself insisted that he did not mean to *disrespect* Chameleon and accuse him of not being able to '*handle his family'*, even if others interpreted his independence as such, but carefully avoided Chameleon and his crew at shows and in nightclubs in the subsequent months.

5.3.3 The white suit

Chagga's career has taken him around in Uganda's music economy. As a crew member of Leone Island, he witnessed some very intense confrontations between his boss, Chameleon and the then up-coming Bobi Wine. According to Chagga, the way Chameleon *disrespected* Bobi Wine in the following story, is the foundation for the ongoing feud between the two artists:

'Let me tell you about this time we were in Ange Noir[53]. That's the most annoying part...(giggling:) Bobi Wine was coming from the UK ,and he was dressed in a white suit. (...) So then Chameleon called Bobi Wine over and told him (putting on a friendly but condescending voice):*' Err, Bobi Wine, you look smart, but you're dressed by Abdu Mulassi. Eh! But how do you dress like Abdu Mulassi?'*
You know Abdu Mulassi is despised that he is this local [artist][54]. Aha, so Bobi Wine kept quiet. Then Chameleon asks me: 'Chagga, by the way, when did I wear such a suit? Is it...is it, five years ago, I think?'
So me, I felt bad. I couldn't say anything. So Bobi Wine answered back and he told Chameleon: 'Don't call me names - I'm Bobi Wine. Don't call me Abdu Mulassi!'
Then they stopped that. Then we danced the rest of the night.
Then later, and this is the most annoying *part (...), Chameleon also went to London. Then, the day Chameleon came back, we were in Ange Noir. Bobi Wine had a girlfriend in London - Bobi wine had another girlfriend in the UK. Bobi Wine used to love that girl so much, and*

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[53] Fashionable night club in Kampala
[54] Abdu Mulassi is a famous kadongo kamu artist, who does wear a white suit in one of his music videos (Abdu Mulassi 2004)

Chameleon knew it. Then Chameleon came over and told [him]: 'Bobi Wine (clicking his tongue) *can you imagine, I fucked your girl!'*

This girl in the UK. He told him by name, like: 'I fucked Sarah'.

(looking up, with a surprised gesture, mimicking Bobi Wine's reaction:) *'What?!'*

That's the day that Bobi Wine got so mad. And he has never talked to him again. (...) Chameleon was taking it like easy, yeah. Yet he knows that, like, he wanted to hurt him. He knows that Bobi Wine loves that girl so much, so he says to him: 'She was kissing me, all over me!' That's the day! (...) [There were] many incidents of like, hurting Bobi Wine, because by then he had become a threat in music, so he [Chameleon] was telling him stories that make him feel inferior. That he is still...But his music was coming, like, competing now.'

Apart from the fact that the Uganda music economy is one of the few places in the world where one can legitimately do away with business competitors by telling them that their fashion sense is failing and that you're sleeping with their girlfriends, this story tells a great deal of how symbolic capital works in the music field and how it relates to the struggle for social autonomy of youth in Uganda. First there is a battle over the value of a white suit. Bobi Wine had been on a tour to the UK. Usually artists spend most of their earnings on such tours on the latest and hippest fashions to be able to bring a new, *smart* look back home[55]. As described above, fashion and style is part of what builds the symbolic capital of an artist. When Bobi comes to Ange Noir to show off his new flashy wardrobe, Chameleon *disrespects* him by comparing him to Abdu Mulassi, hidden behind the compliment *'you look smart'*. Abdu Mulassi is the exact opposite of the look that Bobi Wine was going for; the cosmopolitan artist, returning from a successful business trip. By linking it to Abdu Mulassi, Chameleon inverts Bobi Wines symbolic investment in the white suit, by imposing the recognition that whoever wears a white suit is *'local'*. He then relates to the white suit, but then remembers that it was 5 years ago, cementing the status of the white suit as a terribly outdated fashion mistake. Chameleon *disrespects* his competitor, who, in the situation, is unable to sanction this. This is an example of the power of the position as *number one top-artist,* a position held by Chameleon in the story. He holds the power to 'impose recognition' onto others. He forces his competitor Bobi Wine to recognise that he holds less symbolic capital, and therefore is less *top-artist,* because he is dressed like a *local villager*. Second,

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[55] More about Western fashion and goods in chapter 7

there is an issue of a girlfriend. In chapter 2 and 5 I mentioned that sexual conquest and having many girlfriends adds to a young man's social potency and masculinity. Chameleon steals Bobi Wines sexual potency by publicly announcing that he had sexual relations with a woman who belongs to Bobi Wine. He implies that Bobi Wine was not *man enough*[56] to fulfil the woman's needs and that she was actively pursuing a relationship with the *real man,* Chameleon. In a field where proving one's manhood is essential to social becoming, Chameleon effectively puts a stop to Bobi Wine's aspirations to become *the number one top-artist*, by proving that he is not even a *real man.* Chameleon changes Bobi Wine's investment in symbolic capital into a misrecognition of capital, by *imposing* recognition.

Artists employ their symbolic capital to impose status onto others and define what legitimate symbolic capital is. This *respect* between artists is an economic practice – of exchange, theft and earning – that structures the positions within the filed of the musical soap opera in Kampala. But how is this field related to other fields? Can an artist cash in his credit as *top-artist* with actors who are not *in music?*

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[56] As seen in chapter 2

Chapter 6: Capital conversions – muyaye and serious

Some of the young artists in Kampala, especially the *top-artists,* have gained social autonomy and become icons of an emerging youth culture Uganda, by earning massive economic capital in the music economy and performing for hundreds of thousands of people. But can the *respect* of a *top-artist* be converted into recognition and capital in other fields? Or are the artists still just *small boys* to elders as well as to political and corporate elites?

In the public representations of the young artists doing urban music, the moral discourse on young men as *bayay[57]e*, introduced in chapter 2, comes into play. *Bayaye* is a negative categorisation of marginalised social deviants, who are not kept in place by social networks; the unemployed, the orphans and the drug addicts – and the artists. In Kampala, young men hanging in bars and on street corners without adult supervision are associated with excessive use of recreational substances[58], violence, uncontrolled sexuality and general rowdy behaviour. *Bayaye* are the undisciplined, 'loose molecules' of Ugandan society– countered by *serious* or *clean* youth – young people who abide to parent's and kin's directions, who are attending school, who take part in religious practices (like being religiously *saved* cf.Wimberley 1996, Mulamila Olsen 2006).

In the previous chapter I showed how *top-artists* use recreational substances, their sexuality and public displays of violence in bars to build capital and gain *respect,* all things associated with being a *muyaye.* Musicians or *artists* are both because of the places they work (as in Chapter 3) and the way they gain fame and popularity also often categorised as *bayaye[59]*. Like earlier generations of musicians[60], the karaoke generation of artists are often viewed as *bad* or *dirty* by *respectable* people who control public discourse, like clergy, politicians and press. Artists are not only *bayaye,* they are also setting bad examples for their peers. But at the same time the artists with the most outrageous public personas, are the ones

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[57] Pl. for *muyaye* as introduced in chapter 2.

[58] Not all recreational substances are associated with being rowdy, but local brews and beer, commercially brewed beer and hard liquor, marijuana, lighter fluids, gasoline and glue are. Wine, red, white or sparkling, and some cocktail drinks is interestingly also used as a status symbol among some 'saved', Christian youth.

[59] Similar perceptions of artists and musicians exists in Tanzania, (cf. Perullo 2003: 122, 131, Perullo 2005)

[60] Herman from Afrigo band explains why his parents were against his musical career when he started playing in the 1960s: '*Because we had a bad reputation of erm, Congolese people. (...) [B]ecause they didn't mind where to stay. They were playing music and [they would] get ladies to sleep with in the night, so that he doesn't have to rent a house. He plays at night, he goes with a lady to her home, sleeps for the night. In the morning he takes breakfast, and moves off for practice. Where he practises he gets lunch. In the evening he will find another lady to sleep with, all the time drinking, of course.*'

getting most publicity and popularity among music fans. The *top-artists* through their feuds for the spot as number one, embrace the traits associated with being a *muyaye*. Both in the way they talk, think, act and look –in their *lifestyle* as Nubian Li explains:

'You know, in Uganda, music is associated with being spoiled. They will associate you with...taking drugs, doing all sorts of things. Erm, it's like if you're into music, it means that you don't listen to your parents. (...) But you know, when you get to hang out with musicians, I think they are *crazy. I think they are crazy-people...What they talk about, their dreams...What they want, and their lifestyle.'*

Being *into music* is interpreted as not listening to or respecting parents. The social becoming of the artists is impinging on the power of parents or elders because it takes on a trajectory not controlled by them, which in turn leads to a categorisation of the artists as deviant and dangerous *bayaye*.

But the *respect* of the artists outside the music field is growing, it seems, as the music economy expands. The economic capital of *top-artists* and their celebratory public consumption of status symbols like houses, cars, mobile phones and *designer fashion* earns them *respect* even if their livelihood is considered to be immoral. The editor of the entertainment magazine City Beat, Kalungi, has covered the entertainment scene for about 15 years and comments that the status of artists have changed since the 1990s:

'Because a musician, you know, is a guy who dropped out of school, doesn't have a job, doesn't have a steady family, has got kids all over the place. So they were looked down upon in society. But now that's like, changing again; these are rich people and they make a lot of money. (...) so you gotta respect that, if nothing else, you gotta respect a guy who's got aaall that money.'

Though artists are still seen as *bayaye*, people who are unemployed, without a family, they are now beginning to earn *respect* in wider society because of their ability to convert their fame in the music field to economic capital, which allows them to invest in elite status symbols.

But the recognition of artists as *somebody serious* or *somebody big* is also expressed in an institutionalised form at the Pearl of Africa Music Awards (PAM awards).

6.1 Formalised systems for artists

In the view of Isaac Mulindwa, the chairman of the organising committee of the PAM awards, the way artists are looked upon has changed after the music economy has been introduced to *formalised systems* like the award ceremony. At the awards, the commercial potentials of *top-artists* in different categories are displayed in competition before influential corporate sponsors. To Isaac, the PAM awards mediates between the creative, uncontrolled, world of artists and the formalised, systematic and *serious* world of corporate business:

'Before the PAM awards a musician was a nobody, in this society. (…) [And] it is the first thing that has come up and has actually given artists direction. Instead of running around like, you know, everybody's going on their own, and there's no unity and whatever. There's something they can look at and say: 'It does things in a systematic way'. You know, it becomes formal. A formalised system, that formalise things. Because don't forget that I can tell you that 90 percent of our musicians, if not 99 percent didn't go to school. (…)Some of them have never even had a formal family life. You know, there are two ways we learn to be formal here: they learn it from the family life, you know, when you are growing up at home, your mum your dad -you know, people around you- the relatives. And you have a formal, standardized life. Or a formal education. Those are the two ways we do it. So if you don't have [that] - if you never had either, and you're growing up…you become a musician at the end of the day, where there's nothing formal, and it's very creative - but there is nothing formal. You can see, you can quickly get lost. So the PAM awards has formalised, has given them a formal system.'

The award show re-introduces artists in the *formal systems* in line of *formal family life* and *education* – the same institutions of marginalising forces that the artists seek to overcome by going into music - with an economic profit in mind. With the award mechanism, some of the artists who are the most popular, and have most *respect* in the music field, have the opportunity to 'learn' to do things in a *systematic* way, to convert their capital generated in the music field to recognition in other fields in society. The high profile sponsors, and not least the protector of the awards the Queen of Buganda, who attend as VIPs, and present awards at the award ceremony, reflects this conversion of capitals at the PAM awards. At the PAM

awards, the *dirty* field of music is *clean* enough for ministers, royalty and corporate hot shots to openly endorse. The artists do not ignore this opportunity for being rewarded and *respected* by the wider society. Lyrical G has won the award as best hip hop artists for two consecutive years:

'[For a person] who doesn't have a [formal] job, PAM awards is good. You get recognized. At the end of the day you're rewarded, it gets you your money, your million, something like that, and you get your awards. And it's good. You'll improve on your CV. And there's a degree of respect that comes with it.'

The PAM awards thus both bring winning artists an economic reward for their status as *top-artist* within the music field and a reward in form of *respect* from *formal* society.

As the music economy grows and the economic profits of music grows, and as Uganda merges more and more into global capitalism, the *respect* of the music field becomes 'cleaner' and more easily converted to *respect* in other fields of Ugandan society.

6.2 Being bad – and autonomous

Even though more artists are getting recognised, they still encounter the labelling as *muyaye* in their daily lives, and many identify themselves along a 'muyaye':'serious' binary scheme. The struggle of *bayaye,* to the artists, captures the struggle for social becoming, from the perspective of the marginalised *ghetto youth* who have a different language, sense of style and dignity than wider society. To Nubian Li, being *ghetto* and being *bad* means being marginalised, and struggling to survive – but it also brings a sense of community; it is what the Firebase Crew have in common:

Nubian Li: *A guy from the ghetto, when he goes to these guys who live uptown, in uptown, or whatever...He will start speaking, and they're like:'Now, what is he saying?'(...)*
They are like: 'Ah, these are bayaye, these are Firebase guys, they smoke [weed]...
Nanna: *But listen, now that's another thing, like the whole image of being...being bad.*
Nubian: *Bad!*
Nanna: *Aha, er, where does that come from?*

Nubian, smiling: *Firebase being bad. Ehehe!*

Farouk joining in from across the yard: *You know, for us, they know us, that they can't manipulate [us] -*

Nubian laughing, cutting Farouk of: *They're baaad boys from the ghetto! (*Quietly:) *A kid stats making his…looking after himself, paying for a house he lives in, at around the age of ten. Then every morning he wakes up, he goes, finds a way of making money to buy him breakfast, lunch, supper, and at the same time to pay the rent. And now, that kind of person; you don't take nonsense. And like, he wants to make money,* (lowers his voice, leaning forward:) *he will go and get it. And if ..if you get onto his way, he can do anything…to hurt you. Now, Firebase, these are ghetto guys who are trying to make a living. To get a way of living. So if you mess up with them, they will do something bad to you.*

A guy from the *ghetto*, according to Nubian Li, is in an oppositional position to *guys who live uptown*, who look down on people who do not speak properly and smokes weed. But the logic and way of living in *the ghetto*, even if desperate and deprived (and ultimately self-destructive), also provides marginalised youth with a tangible trajectory for becoming *a man*. In the *ghetto* a child can become a man – providing for himself and establishing a household by paying rent – and the violent *badness* that comes with surviving in the ghetto is what gives him social autonomy. As Farouk comments, a part of being *bad* means that one can not be manipulated by the more powerful *guys uptown.* What elders see as *bayaye* and uncontrolled behaviour is at the same time asserting masculinity and social autonomy for the young artists. Embracing the negative categorisation as *bayaye* is to the young men not so much being uncontrolled as being out of control of elders. Although growing up in an urban setting, with unstable patrimonial networks and a dependency on individual ingenuity, male youth have the chance of proving their manhood in the urban *ghettos* of Kampala.

6.3 Strategically bad

The moral discourse on male youth in Kampala and artists in particular as representatives of *bayaye* or *ghetto guys,* in many instances reproduces negative stereotyping and reinforces the marginalising forces that youth encounter in their struggle for social becoming. Both the City Beat editor Kalungi, Isaac Mulindwa and Nubian Li portray artists as people who have the characteristics of a *muyaye;* no formal employment, no formal family life, no formal

education – and consequently poor command of *formal* language – laziness and an innate tendency towards violent behaviour and an excessive consumption of recreational substances. Interestingly, most of the artists I worked with in Kampala do not fit this description at all. Most of them seem to have a reasonable relationship with their families, or are actively trying to mend broken relationships, and have at least completed secondary school. As mentioned earlier, Bobi Wine and Nubian Li both hold bachelor degrees from Makerere University, and many other artists invest their earnings from music in higher learning. They are resilient professionals who spend most of their time searching for opportunities to perform and *make deals*, managing information and their public image, rehearsing and performing, with working hours sometimes extending into the wee hours of the morning. Although subject to marginalising forces in society and growing up in areas like the Kamwoyka *ghetto*, the Firebase crew members are hardly representative of *ghetto guys*. So it seems, that Nubian, the Firebase crew, and as well as other artists to some extent have chosen to promote themselves as *ghetto guys*, as *bayaye*.

Another crew member, Phantom Lovins, has a different outlook on being *bad*. According to him, Firebase crew originally had a fan base in the *ghetto* only, because others saw Bobi Wine as a *muyaye*. When he fought his way to the top by consistently producing popular hits and representing himself as 'the only Makerere Graduate who sings' (Exit 2006), others recognised him – respected him – as somebody *serious.*

Phantom Lovins: *That is why those days [when] firebase crew was hated, it was loved by the ghetto youths. The so called bayayes. But today it's loved by everyone. Because Bobi had to fight his way and let the world know that he is not that kind of person, they thought he was. You understand?*
Nanna: *What kind of person did they think he was?*
Phantom Lovins: *They thought he was this kind of person who is not serious, this kind of person who is a hooligan, you know what hooligans are?*
Nanna: *Mmm, a muyaye.*
Phantom Lovins: *A muyaye, just! And he would be performing and they would tell him go away. But today they accept him.*

To Phantom Lovins the acceptance from '*everyone'* is what made his boss Bobi Wine and his Crew *number one* in the country, and the path from *the ghetto* to the top was a fight to prove Bobi Wine as *somebody serious.* The *respect* and acceptance which *top-artists* is a recognition of a new kind of entrepreneur in the Ugandan economy, somebody who by bypassing and defying inter-generational order can *fight his way* and in the end *make it to the top* and control wealth and capital that surpasses that of parts of the established elite.

The way some artists strategically use the negative stereotype *muyaye* and how they also *fight their way* to be accepted as *serious* is deeply bounded in the social fabric of Ugandan society. Being seen by others as a *muyaye* or a *thug* is both a limitation in the social becoming of artists and a resource that can be used strategically to assert social and cultural autonomy. To understand this complex occurrence it is necessary to take a closer look at the intersection of social mobility, global popular culture and the social becoming of artists in Kampala.

Chapter 7: Mobility, Modernity and Social Becoming

That global popular music and imageries inspire and influence the social organisation of music, is evident everywhere in the music field. As descried in chapter 4 global cultural commodities are to an increasing extent available to Ugandan youth. In the mid-1990s the introduction of commercial radio made global hits available and during the last 5 years the internet has again revolutionised youth's access to global popular culture and music. Young people in Uganda to an increasing extent aspire to participate in- and be a part of a global youth culture, but experience that the marginalising forces in their lives and their marginal positions within 'global cultural flows' (Hannertz 1987) prevent them from doing so.

Ruth Prince, in analysing lyrics from songs and youth in Western Kenya, writes that youth experience being 'stuck' not only in their individual process of social becoming but also in societal, developmental terms. They are caught in a 'space of marginality' (Prince 2006: 119) where 'modernity' and 'prosperity' is terminally *elsewhere,* outside the village, outside the country and outside Africa (ibid: 121).

'Europe and America promise a future that cannot be found in Uhero [the village where Prince does her fieldwork] and that remains inaccessible – and the growing availability of images of this other world in advertisement, print, on Hollywood videos played in market centres, only exacerbates this experiences of disconnection, of being left on the margin whilst the modern world moves on' (ibid: 121)

As in Kenya, also Ugandan youth dream of 'spaces of modernity', that often remain elusive and out of reach for youth (see Meinert 2004). From this point of view, social becoming and being respected as a man can be understood as a question of (social) mobility, of being able to be where 'modernity' and 'status' is.

The connections between mobility, global popular culture and social becoming are evident in a myriad of practices among Kampalian youth. Here I will focus on two aspects of the lives of artists; re-presentation and appropriating music and images and going international.

7.1 Appropriation and re-presentation

One way of bringing the 'modernity' of America and Europe closer is, as already hinted in chapter 4, in popular music. Inspiration and elements from predominantly African-American

and Afro-Caribbean music generated a new way of doing music in Kampala and a new way of being an artist. In the karaoke shows, youth could *become* the stars, they idolised and being seen as a *star* on stage became a venue for social becoming. This sparked off new local, or 'venacularised' genres of *afro-beat, hip hop, r'n'b, ragga dancehall* and *reggae*.

Ethnomusicologists have been concerned that globalization and fusing of different kinds of music may be 'graying out' local musical styles in the non-Western world (Berger 2003; xviii), but in more formal musicology of 'Western music', the incorporations of 'musical others' is seen as 'the attempt aesthetically and discursively to subsume and control the other' (Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000: 16).

'They [western artists drawing upon 'musical others'] are transforming that music through incorporation of their own aesthetics: appropriating and re-presenting it. Crucially, in doing so, they intend not only to evoke that other music, but to create a distance from it and transcend it.' (Born & Hesmondhalgh 2000: 15)

These views of *mixed-up* or 'post-modern' music from non-Western societies as disempowering local, musical traditions and damaging cultural authenticity are echoed by Herman, the percussionist of Afrigo Band (see chapter 4):

Look, the thing is: you get these things from [a] keyboard, which are already played in the keyboard, by somebody from outside, from Europe. He fits the keyboard, you buy it you bring here, you get the tunes from there and you put on your words. I don't think that is your music. I don't think you call it your music. When you have got something from another place, bring it here, you polish it well, you clean it. It's yours? It's like buying a car in Japan, bring it here, dismantle it and then put it together. Then the next day you say it is made from Uganda. I don't think so.

In other words, and bluntly put in terms of popular music, when a Western artist uses elements of foreign music like a citar, mbaqanga beats or atonal vocals (George Harrison 1970, Paul Simon 1986, Damon Albarn 2002) he is 'controlling' a musical Other and enriching his music, and when an African artist plays a keyboard or produces electronic music, he is 'loosing' his culture and being 'grayed out' into global capitalism.

This view reproduces colonial discourse, implying that agency and action lies with Western actors, culture or music and Others are completely controlled by the forces of the

West. The deprived Others can do nothing but try to copy (and fail) the better developed, central and original West. Again, non-Western actors are robbed of their history, consciousness and agency, and Western modernity remains remote. But what if Ugandan artists were *themselves* the musical Self and the West the musical Other which they 'appropriate' and 're-present', in order to enrich their own compositional frame? In my view appropriation and re-presentation of musical elements, as well as other elements of global cultural flows, is central to musical practice among Ugandan artists performing urban youth music in their search for cultural and social autonomy.

Producer Eddy Yawe explained in chapter 4, that what he calls Ugandan pop music has *'connected'* more to Western Pop and other foreign music than local music traditions, and in the *mix* of different kinds of music, a specific Ugandan *sound* is yet to be found. The experiments with appropriating and re-presenting sounds and images that appear in global pop culture by young Ugandan artists, enables them to search for their own specific *sound* and address and represent what they experience to be 'youth culture'.

According to Lyrical G many artists go into music not so much because they want to be musicians but because they are inspired by hip hop culture, and want to be a part of it:

'A lot of the people who are rapping now are inspired by what they see on TV what they see and hear. A lot of the hip hoppers we have here are not serious artists, that's why they don't come up with albums, they didn't set out as musicians. No, it's like, if you like the way erm Ronaldo plays or Ronaldinho, then tomorrow you're gonna be playing football as well. There's nothing wrong with that. (...)You see, he's rapping because he's into Nas, Jay-Z[61],those guys. They're not rapping because they're musicians.'

Being on stage and doing music is in other words a way of bringing oneself into the world of global popular music, and participating actively in global popular culture. It removes some of the perceived barriers between 'here' and 'spaces of modernity' (cf. Ssewakiryanga 2004). Youth pick out terminologies and elements from global cultural flows and interpret them in local contexts and give them meaning through their individual experiences. Having a *'crew'*, living in *the ghetto,* having *'beef'* and making *'diss-tracks'* takes on meaning in local

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[61] African-American hip hop icons (Jay-Z 1996,2007, Nas 1994)

experiences and discourses. Even the 'soap opera of music', through the frequent clashes between *top-artists,* is framed within American hip hop culture, as Chagga explains:

'For them, they have another lifestyle. They just want to be like Tupac, Biggie[62], I think that's what they want (...) they have a badmanship in them.'

One feature of especially hip hop culture and afro-caribbean music is the representations and sometimes romantic valorisation of the social suffering and self-destructive violence of marginalised (black) people in Urban settings. Some of the most idolised African American and Afro-Caribbean artists in Uganda, like Tupac Shakur, The Notorious B.I.G, 50 Cent (2000, 2003) and Beanieman (1997) are by Ugandan youth looked up to both because of their fame and fortune as global superstars in 'spaces of modernity', but also because they embrace an aggressive, violent hyper-masculinity by promoting themselves (or being promoted by record companies and marketers) as 'thugs'(cf Tupac Shakur 1994), 'bad boys' (P.Diddy 2001), 'gangsta' (Jay-Z 2007) or 'badman'. Hence, the categorisation of local artists in Uganda, doing music associated with American Hip Hop and Afro-Caribbean Raggamuffin, as *bayaye* is both a part of local conceptualisation of marginal youth and the appropriation and re-resentation of imageries of '(post-)modern' global popular music.

This might explain how being *bad* can both be experienced as negative and positive. It is a negative stereotype that needs to be overcome to be taken seriously, and a resource of proximity to 'modernity', through the lives of global pop icons, that can be used strategically by young artists working in the music economy of Uganda. Being marginalised and from a poor neighbourhood, can be converted to a kind of symbolic capital and *respect* by framing it within the realm of African-American hip hop and Afro-Caribbean ragamuffin culture and presenting oneself as a *badman* or a *thug* from *the ghetto.*

Rather than graying out music, the appropriation and re-presentations of Western music on local stages is empowering the Ugandan youth to change the status of youth from one of marginalisation to one connected with the modernity of global popular culture. And by picking and choosing elements in global pop cultural flows, and employing them in their own social context, the young artists are creating musical expressions that better represent their

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[62] Chagga is referring to the highly publicised American East-coast – West-coast hip hop rivalry where the most prominent *beef* was between Tupac Shakur (1991, 1993, 1994) and The Notorious B.I.G. (1994, 1997).

experiences of growing up as marginalized youth in a changing city, in a global world, than *local* 'premodern' and 'modern' kinds of music can offer.

A more tangible relationship between mobility, modernity and social becoming is when artists in Kampala travel to spaces of modernity to perform their music. *Going international* is the ambition of many artists who dream of the enjoying the same luxurious lifestyle that they see their American idols enjoy in music videos and feature films. But *going international* is in practice often a local accomplishment of mobility and 'the good life'.

7.2 Going International – a local accomplishment of mobility

The ultimate dream for many artists is *to go international*. Going international builds an image of global hip hop- and pop stars with international careers, and travelling to the UK or America brings promises of international recording deals and Hollywood features (cf. New Vision 2007). Reality, however, most often is that Diaspora Ugandans contract Ugandan artists to perform for Diaspora audiences. This kind of international career does not impress producer, Eddy Yawe:

'When they go, they perform for the same Ugandans who are there [in the Diaspora]. So for them, there's no development apart from that they have seen a different part of the world. But they've not performed for another kind of audience.
(…) [they go] elsewhere, to Boston, what, and the states. Where there are no Ugandans, they don't go there. Because they don't have fans there. But although they could join the associations in the US, and they could even start producing international music. That could lead them out of Uganda. But when they go there, they perform for the same Ugandans, and that's all.'

Though Eddy Yawe gives little credit to the artists who have *gone international,* they return back home as heroes who have conquered the world, often bragging about what big business deals they have made and showing off the wealth accumulated while on tour, as described in chapter 5. *Going international* is not the same as attaining international success, like global pop icons. What builds the fame and success of the artist here is not the international audiences but the mobility itself – the movement from Uganda to spaces of modernity.

An important aspect of *going international* for artists is to bring back luxurious goods and *designer fashions* such as clothes, sneakers and Timberlands and perfumes from Europe and America. Their purchases are followed by their fans, as local tabloids and newspapers often publicise the new fashions and styles worn by returned artists (cf Buzz 2006: 27, Red Pepper 2006). The luxury items are greatly coveted by crew members who stayed back home and as Chagga remembers about his former boss, the best thing about him, was that he would shop the for whole crew when he had toured the US:

'When he goes to abroad, sometimes he can bring new jeans for you, whatever you can imagine, so that you look flashy on stage.'

Friedman, in his article on 'les sapeurs' (1990), examines the cult of beauty that young men in Congo are involved with in relation to consumption from a global perspective. He argues that the demand for goods is not entirely depending on economic concerns but also on the socio-cultural context of the consumers, in 'general social processes' (ibid:102; 103). Rather than being driven by economic concerns, he argues that people through consumption pursue 'the good life':

'consumption is a material realization, or attempted realization, of the image of the good life.' (ibid: 105)

In the instance of youth celebrating Parisian fashion, he presents a concentric hierarchy of consumption related to ideas of 'the good life' (ibid: 114). He argues that modernity and the good life are much the same and thus, the centre of consumption is also the centre of modernity – the opposite, and most distant concentric circle being 'nature'. His informants are oriented towards the fashion centre Paris. The youth of Kampala are oriented towards Anglophone centres of consumption and culture, the route being London/America>Kampala>Village>Nature (cf ibid: 117). Their image of the 'the good life' is represented to them through global popular cultural flows in music, videos and on the internet. The concentric circles are not necessarily actual physical spaces. They can also be cultural and social spaces, that people can commute between. The further from the centre of modernity one is, the more *local*. Artists traverse these concentric circles and gain symbolic capital from their journeys by appropriating and representing 'the good life' of the modern places they have been to in their local contexts in Kampala.

Looking at consumption from this perspective deepens the understanding of Chameleon's symbolic *disrespect* of rival Bobi Wine in chapter 5. When Bobi wine returns from the UK with a new suit, he is not only showing off his purchasing power but also his 'good life' in terms of modernity and participating in the 'cultural centre'. When Chameleon discredits his suit as belonging to the kadongo kamu singer Abdu Mulassi, he not only questions Bobi's taste, but also the authenticity of his claim to modernity – and his status as a *top-artist-* by placing him in a *local* social space. For the actors in the music field – as in wider Ugandan society – dressing up is not a strategy used to 'fool the audience, to use appearance as a means to status that is not rightfully attained'(Friedman 1990: 121) it is *becoming* the dress. Another example of this perceived difference between 'local-backwards' and 'mobile-modern' happened at a music show in a small provincial town where the Firebase Crew was performing.

Lady Mariam is performing her smash hit Tinda Tine[63] and as she sings over the music CD, fans walk onto the stage to give her tips. Some of them dance with her a bit before they leave. A young man in a slightly worn shell suit, sneakers and a big piece of shiny bling around his neck dances with Lady Mariam. The jewellery looks familiar, and I hear Nubian Li laugh behind me. As I turn around everybody is laughing at one of the younger crewmember. He is wearing a silver-coloured crown in a chain around his neck, identical to the one worn by the fan on stage. With an embarrassed smile, he removes the chain and hides it in his pocket. (Field note November 2006)

The Firebase Crew member was ridiculed for wearing the same jewellery as '*a guy from the village*' and quickly removed the incriminating item. Before he had proudly worn it as a signifier of being a part of global urban youth culture, but when a young man, dressed less *smartly,* from a rural town wore it too, it took on a negative value as *local.*

By accumulating the symbols of power in form of modern objects from 'modern places'*,* the artists 'attempt to capture power' (ibid: 125). In Friedman's view of Congolese society the symbols are not 'expressions but definitions of power' (ibid) much as the symbolic capital of the music field. The consumption of symbols of Western modernity adds to the *respect,* the

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[63] Lady Mariam 2006

symbolic capital of the artist, and asserts their position as *somebody big* who is upwardly mobile both geographically and socially.
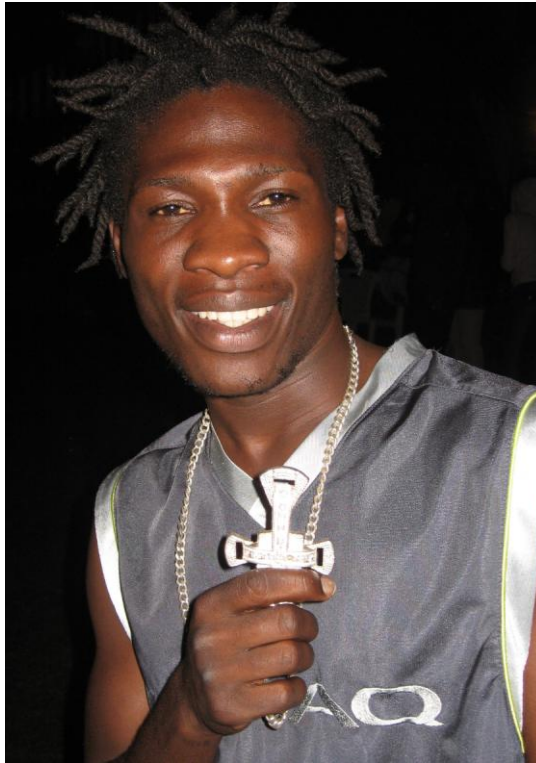
Banjoman shows off his *bling.* Photo by Benjamin

7.3 Homeboy Cosmopolitanism

Diawara (1998) writes about American images of black men and how they have sparked the imaginations of African youth. He calls the representations of the well dressed, urban, black male, who effortlessly moves across the city, from slum areas to fancy avenues, usually as a participant in underground economies, 'homeboy cosmopolitanism'[64].

If anyone, *top-artists* in Uganda are inspired by and representatives of 'homeboy cosmopolitanism'. *Top-artists,* who have grown up in places they see as deprived of modernity, gain access to the world through their musical careers. They are some of the most mobile people in Kampala, who can walk through the *ghettos* without feeling threatened by the *bayaye,* drive up-town for *serious* business meetings in air conditioned offices with

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[64] One of the most recent and illuminating examples of homeboy cosmopolitanism in global popular culture is the 2007 Hollywood movie American Gangster, directed by Ridley Scott (American Gangster 2007). Here the well dressed, cosmopolitan Frank, played by Denzel Washington, effortlessly moves 'uptown' from the New York slum area Harlem, and further into the world (i.e. Vietnam) to pursue the American dream in the inner-city illegal drug economy.

corporate sponsors and promoters, and obtain visas that give access to the modern world of *outside countries* with no questions asked.

Other scholars have linked the popularity of especially African-American hip hop among youth in Africa with the angry voices and social conscious lyrics of hip hop and rap (Samper 2004: 41). African youth connects with the frustration and rebellion in rap lyrics and images. Another aspect African American hip hop and its images is the (social) mobility of hip hop icons like Tupac (1991, 1993,1994), Jay-Z (1996, 2007) and P.Diddy (Puff Daddy and the Family 1997). The images of African-American hip hop artists shows Ugandan youth that 'coming from poor areas and being black would not limit a person's potential' (Perullo 2003:51, cf. Haas & Gesthuizen 2000). To the karaoke generation these American superstars represent the cosmopolitan homeboy, and they appropriate and re-present hip hop styles and images from music, music videos and films in their own social worlds, in speech, dress, beats and body language[65].

The effortless movement through the city, and the world, of the cosmopolitan homeboy accurately captures the accomplishment of social and cultural autonomy for the young artists. The artists in Uganda, like the cosmopolitan homeboys in Diawaras scenarios 'want to assume individual identities which they have shaped themselves, out of bondage, and be acknowledged for their contribution to global civilization' (Diawara 1998: 255).

7.4 Global perspectives of a local music field

Global commodity chains and economic change made hip hop, r'n'b music, videos and films available to Ugandan youth at a particular time, and this catalysed the becoming of a local music scene for youth. The choice to get on stage, and to 'experience what it feels like to be a star' was not one they made because they had seen their friends in school doing it, or because 'big men' were doing it, but because they had seen American youth attain superstardom in music, video and films. Though the experiences, desires and choices of the young artists in Kampala are shaped and circumscribed by their localised experiences, they can not be fully understood without regarding the enormous significance of global popular culture in their lives as well as questions of mobility and modernity.

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[65] The same trends have appeared in other East African countries, see Haas & Gesthuizen 2000, Lukalo 2006, Perullo 2005, Samper 2004

Some artists build their symbolic capital by being *ghetto* – through being '*connected*' to an imagery of American and Caribbean inner-city street culture, represented through global popular culture. Further, artists appropriate and re-present the images of 'a good life' in global popular cultural flows to build their symbolic capital within the music field. Their fame as artists opens up opportunities of global mobility that most other Ugandans can only dream about, and *going international* earns the artists recognition as *serious* business men when they return with dollars and high status consumer goods. This accumulation of labour bypasses the patrimonial networks of social advancement, and asserts the artists as a new breed of cosmopolitan homeboys, who do 'business' and feel at home in deprived as well as affluent settings, in local as well as modern spaces.

The *top-artists* and their colleagues in the music economy might be opening new 'spaces of modernity' inside Africa to Ugandan youth. Audiences, whether urban or rural, see in the *top-artists* people who have attained the same kind of status and prosperity that they see in advertisements, movies and print from the Western world. And their status as 'modern' is cemented by their frequent tours to places like USA, England and Scandinavia. Both their lives and their music genres are symbols of a modern life that hitherto had been a part of a remote modernity, belonging to America and Europe. The successful top artists are bringing modernity closer to home and providing youth with images of prosperous, modern and young *Ugandans.* The *top-artists* show that 'modernity' and 'prosperity' for youth does not only belong elsewhere. It is not my place here to discuss if Africa is indeed a 'marginal' space or not, or if the dream of modernity is attainable or not for African youth. But what is my concern is to underline that the *top-artists* in this study in part owe their popularity to their ability to 'bring the American home', by becoming icons of modern, urban lifestyles (Ssewakiryanga 2004:141), and by effectively overcoming marginalising forces – local as global – in their lives as youth.

Chapter 8: Sunset coming on

At the end of this thesis I will sum up a few central arguments, point to topics of further research and take a look beyond the ethnographic presence of this text.

I have explored how *going into music* relates to the social becoming of youth in Kampala by fusing two analytical approaches focusing on youth as a process and youth as a position, respectively. This approach to youth reflects an empirical reality and experience of urban youth in Kampala. Social becoming is for the people in this study both a search for individual, social autonomy and collective, cultural autonomy.

This study raises the argument that to understand the experience of youth and to find out what young people in Africa are 'up to', it is necessary to explore their lives both a process and a position within society. By employing the concepts of 'social autonomy' and 'cultural autonomy' I have stressed the fact that the young artists in Kampala are active agents who constantly seek to better their lives and to overcome the structural marginalisation, rather than being acted upon and accepting that they are 'stuck' in youthhood. The lives of the Ugandan Superstars are extraordinary, and they are in many ways not representative of 'ordinary' youthhood. They are social entrepreneurs who have found a new trajectory to social becoming in the Ugandan society.

I have explored a segment of popular music in Uganda, which today dominates the public urban sphere. This feeds into an emerging anthropology of music industries, and African music industries in particular, that looks at popular music from the site of its creation rather than the site of its consumption (though there are no clear boundaries between the two, as this study also shows).

To become a successful artist in the Ugandan music economy youth do not have to rely on kinbased or political networks. Artists, as well as media moguls, emphasise the individual's talent, resilience, and ability to perform in a number of different roles in the music economy as imperative in becoming a successful artist or a *top-artist*.

In the process of commercialisation and professionalisation of the music economy in Uganda, commercial radio and karaoke style performances play a crucial role. Both as venues where young people can experience what it is like to be the centre of attention, to be a *star*, and where they earn money to gain social autonomy, and as sites of creation of music and imageries that are perceived to represent a Ugandan youth culture or the cultural autonomy of

youth. But social becoming is not only about making money as an independent individual, it is also about being *respected* by others.

Understanding *respect* as a symbolic capital that structures a music field, gives insights into how artists gain status as *big men* or *real men* through practices that are not explicitly related to economic capital. In the music field other capitals than economic can be accumulated and converted into *respect*. Artists who command a lot of *respect* are the *top-artists*, but ultimately, there can only be one *number one top-artist,* and the contests of symbolic capital are played out in highly publicised feuds between different *top-artists* and their crews in a 'soap opera of music'.

The *respect* that artists build in the music field can in some cases be converted to recognition in other fields of society. Especially the often extravagant investments in consumer goods like sports cars and SUVs, clothes and jewellery earn artists *respect* as people who are wealthy. But their profession is still associated with being *bad* or *muyaye,* implying that artists have innate tendencies towards violence, excessive use of recreational substances and other antisocial behaviours. The Pearl of Africa Music Awards institutionalises the conversion of capital in a ceremony where corporate, royal and political elites recognise and award *top-artists* in different musical categories. But artists also use the negative stereotype strategically to assert their social autonomy and to connect to elements of global cultural flows.

By appropriating and re-presenting musical elements and imageries of African American hip hop and Afro-Caribbean ragga and reggae, young Ugandan artists signify an attractive but elusive 'modernity' in a local context, and frame their individual experiences of marginality and their aspirations to become *somebody* within the realm of global youth culture. The search for social and cultural autonomy is also a search for mobility, and to other youth and Ugandans, *top-artists* who *go international* are the embodiment of ideals of social and physical mobility. Their musical careers give them access not only to *the ghetto* and *uptown* but also to 'spaces of modernity' like America and Europe. In these places they invest in consumer goods that symbolise 'the good life'. Consumption is then also a part of the social becoming of the artists, one that signifies mobility, modernity and wealth – things that have hitherto usually been the privileges of older political, religious and royal elites.

The intersection of the anthropology of youth and social becoming, and the emerging anthropology of music industries gives some insight into the role that music play in the lives of Ugandan youth.

The relationship between global cultural flows of popular culture and the ways youth make use of these in their everyday lives, the different moral discourses of youth and the roles popular music plays in these, and a more holistic analysis of the music economy in Uganda, are important topics yet to be explored in anthropological research. Further, an important endeavour for future research on music and popular culture in Uganda will be to describe how an increasing number of female artists experience working in the music economy.

The ethnographic present of this thesis has sought to capture a moment of change, creativity and entrepreneurship in Ugandan music, a present which is already 'so last year'. Since I left the field in January 2007, more and more karaoke superstars practice and perform with a live band. The *top-artists* are working towards playing with a live band at all performances. This tendency cements that the music economy is growing, and that it is therefore viable to stage the much more expensive live performances, but also that the karaoke genre has revitalized other forms of music such as live band music. Further, the live-tendency is an expression of the young artists' aspirations to broaden their audiences to older generations and international audiences which normally consider karaoke performance styles not to be 'real' music. The Ugandan Superstars featured in these pages have been individual driving forces behind the commercialisation of the music economy, and their *fight to become a man* has instituted new practices in Ugandan popular culture. The artists themselves have become *big men* on their own terms, and live in a material luxury that most Ugandans only dream of. To Phantom Lovins, sipping a soda as the sun sets over the Karmwoyka *ghetto,* the future looks bright, as long as he keeps fighting for recognition as an artist:

'And that is why I was saying as a man you have to fight your way. Of course, all of us we're singing, but people don't take us serious. But one day they will *take us serious, because for me I keep writing, every other day I keep writing. But if I was sitting down, nothing would happen. Life and time matters: if you have life, then of course time comes about with change. But I don't look forward to have negative change. I look forward to have positive change. That's my dream.'*

We be the superstar

Everybody know we be the superstars

Everybody wanna be a superstar

Everybody know, that's what we are,

hand me the keys to my car

...

I dress like a superstar

Cruising Ferraris just like superstar

Meeting nice girls just like a superstar

Hook me up and be a superstar

Klear Kut feat. Bebe Cool on the 2004 album K^2,

(For full transcription and translation see Appendix A)

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Appendix A: full transcriptions and translations of songs quoted, ordered alphabetically by artist

Bebe Cool

Aweete (Ssente 2006)
Transcription and translation by Peter Ntende

Ani yani ?! – hey! X3
Bebe Cool Bad man

Ani yani ?! - Hey! X3
Gagamel Entertainment Crew

Verse
 Nti bangi bantukilidde nga bagamba nti
Abayaye bakaye
Ekissera kibadde kiwanvu
Nebeteera nebefuula ekirala
E Uganda Ebibimba bika.
Nebilungi bibaako ekkomo,
Kati, mukwano omuntu bwoba omukooye
Mukonkone Sabawa aweete.

Chorus
 Bwoba omukooye - Aweete!
Atamalakkoo - Aweete!
Ate Bwaba Akunnyiza - Aweete!
Oli wa bulamu bwo si musango X2

Verse
Nsonga ki ezo ezikuyombessa
Nga abantu bangi bewogembessa
Si ka money tomuddira
Bwaba Akukyunga mugambe ndekka
Kati, Mukwano oyo gwolina
Bwaba nga akwagala akuwa ebilungi bwomusaba.
Bwaba akujooga muleke ofune abamalako
Mu Kampala abasajja bangi abamalako
Charli Lubega ne Sekyanzi
Abo bwobasekera bagaba kummi
Bebe Cool Nze bwonsanyusa nti nkutwaala bulaya gyozalilra
Kinno Kikambwe emame etabye,
Era laba bamaama bwebagimenyekka
Tim Kizito katabula mibimba
Bebe Cool kawanda mibimba

 Chorus
 Bwoba omukooye - Aweete!
Atamalakkoo – Aweete!
Ate Bwaba Akunnyiza – Aweete!
Oli wa bulamu bwo si musango. X 2

Let him turn and go (Kick him out) (Ssente 2006)

Who is who?! X3
Bebe Cool Bad man

Who is who?! X3
Gagamel Entertainment Crew

 Verse
Several people have approached me they say that
hooligans are on rampage
It has been a long time
They are all over the place and have become a power
In Uganda, even what overflows eventually settles
down.
Even Good things have an ending
So my friend, if you are fed up with your partner
Knock him on the target and kick him out

Chorus
 If you are fed up   - Let him turn and go (kick him
out)!
 If he is not man enough - Let him turn and go!
If he is annoying - Let him turn and go!
It is your life, so it is not a crime x2

Verse
For what reason are you quarreling with him?
There are lots of people admiring you
don't even go back to him for the money
If he is mistreating you, tell him it's over.
So my friend, check what kind of partner you've got
If he really loves you, he will give you the nice things
you ask him for.
If case he despises you, drop him and get a real man
In Kampala there are lots of real men
Charlie Lubega and Sekyanzi
When you smile to these ones, they give you ten
 As for me Bebe Cool, when you please me, I will take
you abroad when its time to give birth
It is hot, the game is on
The ladies are breaking down on the rythm
Tim Kizito the master music mixer
Bebe Cool the great rapper

Chorus
 If you are fed up   - Let him turn and go (kick him
out)!
 If he is not man enough - Let him turn and go!
If he is annoying - Let him turn and go!
It is your life, so it is not a crime. X2

Kale, laba abo bantu bange
Bye banjogerako bigambo byabwe
Bansaba ettaka newesilii
Senga balina akabundu bandinkubye
Naye nga omubbi, nemeddeko
Nga ne mibimba nkyabongeera
Abamannyi bantegeera, abatanamannyai bajja kuntegeeera
Owamnnyi ge tayomba
Kyovva olaba Aba Arsenal tetuwakana
Oba nga effumbiro omukka omungi tosobola
Lifulume olekemu abamalako
Owamnnyi ge tayombo
Kyovva olaba Bebe Cool siwawakana
Oba nga effumbiro omukka omungi tosobola
Lifulume olilekemu abamalako

Chorus
 Bwoba omukooye Aweete
Atamalakkoo Aweete
Ate Bwaba Akunnyiza Aweete
Oli wa bulamu bwo si musango X2

Okay, imagine my very own people
They're are talking bad about me
They beg me for land, even when I don't have anything
I am certain if they had a gun, they would have shot.
But as a badman, I stand my ground
 I am to produce even more Hits
Those that know me, acknowledge, those that have not yet known me will acknowledge.
A strong man never shouts
That is why Arsenal fans never argue
If the Kitchen is full of smoke and you are suffocating
Get out and leave it to those that can take it!
 A strong man never shouts
That is why Bebe cool never argues
If the Kitchen is full of smoke and you are suffocating
Get out and leave it to those that can take it!

Chorus
 If you are fed up   - Let him turn and go (kick him out)!
 If he is not man enough - Let him turn and go!
If he is annoying - Let him turn and go!
It is your life, so it is not a crime x2

Bobi Wine

Adam ne Kaawa (Omwana W'abandi 2006) feat Nubian Li

No transcription available. The song is originally in Luganda – except for the patwah - , translation by Ssawa Karim

Bobi Wine in Patwah:
So it was written, so it must be done
Woman, if you don't believe in men's superiority, then you don't believe in God, man, you know.
Rember! Man is the king and woman is the queen.
Bobi Wine again, don't get too scared, hahaha.
Tony Houlz and Washington run things[1]
Come in Nubian!

Nubian Li in Luganda:
Many things in this world are like this because everything is made to be like that.
God knows much because he is the one who created everything.

---

[1] this is a shoutout for the producers Tony Houlz and

Washington, both resident producers at Dream Studios

The man is the husband and the woman is the wife and He gave them different jobs
The man is the leader and the woman is the follower, so the family can stand
The respect of a lady is to have a husband that she loves and satisfy
Like that, the family can stand happily and that makes God happy
This started with our grandparents Adam and Eve, because in Eve is Adams rib and this is how it is, because that is how it was and it will always be like that.

Bobi Wine:
Patwah: So me, I tell them:
Luganda: It is naturally known that the man is the family. He is always the foundation.
If a woman obeys her husband, that is a good combination
Even if you have so much education, in family issues you don't front education
Education helps outside but in the home it brings confusion.
Even if you have enough money to top a container, and yet your husband does not have, remember your husband is the attraction [of the family]
Even if you become a lawyer or a doctor, woman you know you need a little submission

Nubian Li in Luganda:
A lady, even if you have much respect and you have no husband, [then] your respect is worthless.
You must know that you can only get respect because of the man you are married to
Even if you are the one that married the man and also pay the house rent when he has no money
Because he is the husband and you're the wife, his [name] is always the family name.
Even if a lady has so much money and is so rich, you need support and defence. The husband is the support and also the defence, that is how God made it
This started with our grandparents Adam and Eve, because in Eve is Adams rib and this is how it is, because that is how it was, and it will always be like that.

Bobi Wine in patwah:
Ay, ay, ay Woman! You better know that God had a plan to put a difference between man and woman
That is why he made the man head of the house and the woman to bear children.
Check in the Bible: man is made in the image of God and the woman in a man's image
That is why I want to let world know, say, if a woman meets a man, she is [supposed] to give respect, remember:

Woman beautiful, man is a warrior, woman powerful,
man is superior, woman expert, man is a senior,
woman talented and man is a genius.
Woman precious, but man is courageous, woman fight,
still man victorious. Woman there, but man was there.
That is why woman is queen and man is a King

Nubian Li in Luganda:
Many things in this world are like this because
everything is made to be like that.
God knows much because he is the one who created
everything.
The man is the husband and the woman is the wife and
He gave them different jobs
The man is the leader and the woman is the follower,
so the family can stand
The respect of a lady is to have a husband that she
loves and satisfy
Like that, the family can stand happily and that makes
God happy
This started with our grandparents Adam and Eve,
because in Eve is Adams rib and this is how it is,
because that is how it was and it will always be like
that.

Bobi Wine:
Patwah: So me, I tell them:
Luganda:It is naturally known that the man is the
family. He is always the foundation.
If a woman obeys her husband, that is a good
combination
Even if you have so much education, in family issues
you don't front education
Education helps outside but in the home it brings
confusion.
Even if you have enough money to top a container, and
yet your husband does not have, remember your
husband is the attraction [of the family]
Even if you become a lawyer or a doctor, woman you
know you need a little submission

Nubian Li in Luganda:
This started with our grandparents Adam and Eve,
because in Eve is Adams rib and this is how it is,
because that is how it was and it will always be like
that.

Appendix A: full transcriptions and translations of songs quoted, ordered alphabetically by artist

Kiwani (Omwana Wabandi 2006)
Transcription and translation by Peter Ntende

Bad man I
Number one I
Tony Houz Ah
Kabaka wani?---

7/11 all we do is - Sing!
Make the people know the truth – Sing!
The way we survive in the ghetto, man

Verse
Lwali lumu nentese nomukyala nsibe e Kiwanyi
Nalina pulani nze nfe yakuube emilanga
Kubanga nsonga ya yala, Akajja sente ya kuyiiya.
Amabugo olwaweera ne njasimula asibe ekiwanyi
Kiwannyi Kyanyweera nebaweeeta netubala ekisimbi
Kubanga Kampala kuyiya
Bwoloba Boss oba oba obusudde
Mu Ghetto neyo mu baloodi
Buli wodda wonna Kuyiiya.

Chorus
Nze wanno mu Kampala byansobera dda - Buli omu asiba Kiwanyi
Nze mu City byantabula dda- Buli omu asiba Kiwanyi
Ne mu Ghetto byansobela dda-Buli omu asiba Kiwanyi
Mu Kyalo ne City byantabula dda -Buli omu asiiba Kiwaani.
Kiwanyi, Kiwanyi - Buli omu asiba Kiwanyi
Kiwanyi, Kiwanyi - Buli omu asiba Kiwanyi.

Verse
Ennaku wayita mbale ekisimbi nga kiweddewo.
Namugamba Leero Kisibbe offe, ogwange gwa kukuba Miranga.
Teyagana yasiba ekiwanyi ku last kyaleta Joni.
kussawa eyokwasimula mama wabana nga taddamu.
Zzukuka Zzukuka - maama wabana nga taddamu
Yasimula Kisumulule –maama wabana nga tanyega.
Nabagamba omukyala tanaffako—Tubadde tusiba Kiwanyi
Bantimba nga bampitta zolo –maama wa baana bamuziika
Ndabula mwe abasiba ekiwanyi nti Kya ttabu.

Fraud (Omwana Wabandi 2006)

Bad man I
Number one I
Tony Hauls Ah
Who is the King ?

In patwah: 7/11 all we do is – Sing!
Make the people know the truth – Sing!
The way we survive in the ghetto, man

Verse
Once upon a time, I colluded with my wife to make a fraud (kiwani).
My plan was to pretend that I am dead then she would moan and scream.
This was due to abject poverty, to get some income I had to be ingenious.
When she had gathered enough moaning offerings, I sneezed to scare away the gathered moaners.
The fraud worked and they were terrified of the sneezing dead body, they all run away and we reaped the money.
With Kampala's poverty you need to be ingenious.
If you don't play the game, you cannot survive.
This goes for both the ghetto people and the well to do.
Every place you turn it is the way of life.

Chorus
I have observed the way of life in Kampala for a long time - Fraud is the order of the day!
I have observed the City dwellers -Fraud is the way of life!
I have observed the Ghetto dwellers - Fraud is the way of life!
Fraud, Fraud - Everybody is corrupt!
Fraud, Fraud - Everybody is corrupt!

Verse
We used up the money in short time
I again asked my wife to make the fraud again.
This time we switched roles, she played dead, while I moaned.
She went along and we cashed in big time.
When it came to the time to sneeze, so as to scare away the moaners, my wife did not react.
Wake up, Wake up, I begged her - My wife did not react.
Sneeze, Lets stop the faking, I shouted to her - My wife was not reacting.
I confessed to the moaners that we had been frauding to get money.
They assumed I had lost my mind; they tied me up to stop me from distracting them.
They ended up burying my wife alive!
I am therefore sending a stern warning to all that do these dubious fake deals. It has dire consequences.

Appendix A: full transcriptions and translations of songs quoted, ordered alphabetically by artist

Owa Police agenda na Kulya – Kiwani!
Muba muweta ensonda nakuuta – Kiwani!
Bwoba nga omutemeddeyo akasso oba akasa busso. – Kiwani!
Nagenda emulago ndabe abavva ekasawo be balaba omusawo - Kiwani!
Omukazi obulwa ezo kulya nafuna ezigula rip stick
Ku Wilson asonga bannyumye naye nga basiba – Kiwanyi!
Bamuzungu yasudde Gold babeera basiba – Kiwanyi!
Bwomubazza ekigambo Bada - Kiwani!
Akuddamu nti kyali – Kiwanyi!
Natuuka nokusiba akadda nekabalema kubanga – Kiwanyi!
Abakazi obala 100 nga 99 enviiri si zabwe.

Chorus
Nze wanno mu Kampala byansobera dda -Buli omu asiba Kiwanyi
Nze mu City byantabula dda- Buli omu asiba Kiwanyi
Ne mu Ghetto byansobela- dda- Buli omu asiba Kiwanyi
Mu Kyalo ne City byantabula dda- Buli omu asiiba Kiwaani.
Kiwanyi, Kiwanyi - Buli omu asiba Kiwanyi
Kiwanyi, Kiwanyi -Buli omu asiba Kiwanyi.

When a Policeman arrests you – Fraud!
As you turn a corner he sets you free if you just bribe him -Fraud!
In Mulago hospital only those that are willing to give a bribe gets treatment - Fraud!
For ladies even if they can't afford a meal – Fraud!
they will afford makeup "lip stick"
The smart youth along Wilson road, look to be well off - Fraud!
Those dealing in fake Gold, claiming to have picked it from white people - Fraud!
If you ask them the meaning of Bada, they say – Fraud!
I even set them a bet, and they failed because - it was Fraud!
99 out of 100 women in Kampala have fake hair.

Chorus
I have observed the way of life in Kampala for a long time - Fraud is the order of the day!
I have observed the City dwellers ---Fraud is the way of life!
I have observed the Ghetto dwellers - Fraud is the way of life!
Fraud, Fraud - Everybody is corrupt!
Fraud, Fraud - Everybody is corrupt!

Chameleon
Befula (2006)
 transcription and translation by Peter Ntende

Chorus
Befula befula ohh abantu befula
Gwowonnya eggere yalikusambya, abantu befula
Nebwowaba ebingi tebakusiima, munange, befuula
Gwowoonya eggere yalikusambya nnananananna

Verse
Njagala nkulabule bonna abo bolaba abesseka sibalungi
Obalaba mu maaso nga bamweenya emitima gyabwe giggudde amagimbi
Wegenderezze boyiita nabo bossutassuta obayita mikwano gyo
kati laba, mwana damu talina rafiki
Yefuliira mumutti nga mbazzi,
otetekanya bulamu bwo obeewo, wesiimisse batayi ne family yo
gwoyamba ate afuuka mulabe wo, nakuliimirira oveewo abeewo
Opanga panga plan obeewo,

Betrayal (2006)

Chorus
Betrayal, betrayal, ooh, People betray you
The one you heal a sick foot for, eventually kicks you with it, people betray you
Even if you offer them so much, my friend, they betray you
The one you heal a sick foot for, is the one that eventually kicks you with it

Verse
I would like to warn you, all those you see laughing with you are not necessarily friends
You see smiles on their faces but their hearts are filled with thorns
Watch out, those people that you hang out with, you regard them as your friends
But look, your so called buddy has no real friends,
They change like an axe within a piece of wood
You try your best to make a living, to make you friends and family proud of you
The one that you aid then turns into your enemy, working for your downfall in order to replace you.
You improvise plans to succeed

Nosula nenjala munno abeewo, kyokka abantu tebajjukira tebasiima
Kale maama!

Sometimes you go to bed hungry to make sure that your friend succeeds, but people forget very quickly, they are never appreciative.
Alright, Mama!

Chorus
Befula befula ohh abantu befula
Gwowonnya eggere yalikusambya, abantu befula
Nebwowaba ebingi tebakusiima munange befuula
Gwowoonya eggere yalikusambya nnananananna

Chorus
Betrayal, betrayal, ooh, people betray you
The one you heal a sick foot for, eventually kicks you with it, people betray you
Even if you offer them so much, my friend, they betray you
The one you heal a sick foot for, is the one that eventually kicks you with it

Verse
Nabaggaga betuulaba obutayamba,
bayambye banji tebasiima,
bayambye bangi nga babomba nebakoowa emitima gyekirimba,
siyimba kulunno nanga, bwekirikutuukako olingamba wotukira ku lyengedde nga olabye bingi aohhhh,
tuli mu kafubbo fenna tubeewo, twesimisse bataayi ne family zibbewo
gwoyamba affuka mulabe wo, nakulimilira oveewo abeewo
tuli mu kafubo fenna tube wo,
nosuula ne njala munno abeewo
Kale maama.

Verse
When the rich refuse to help,
It is because they have helped a lot of ungrateful people,
They have helped so many that have just disappeared into the blue, and they have gotten fed up with such treacherous hearts
I am not singing but prophesying. When the time comes and it happens to you, you will remind me of my words
By the time you succeed you have really seen a lot, oh!
We are in a struggle, so that all of us can succeed, to make our buddies and families proud of us and to have them well off.
The one you aid then turn into your enemy, working for your downfall in order to replace you.
We are in a struggle for survival
Some times we go without food to make sure that our friends succeed too,
Allright, Mamma!

Chorus
Befula befula ohh abantu befula
Gwowonnya eggere yalikusambya, abantu befula
Nebwowaba ebingi tebakusiima munange befuula
Gwowoonya eggere yalikusambya nnananananna

Chorus
Betrayal, betrayal, ooh, People betray you
The one you heal a sick foot for, eventually kicks you with it, People betray you
Even if you offer them so much, my friend, they betray you
The one you heal a sick foot for, is the one that eventually kicks you with it.

Tewemalangamu,nebwebessesasessa
Gwe nobulwa otuulo, nga gwoyamba oyoolaa mbwa kuluma nteega[2]
Tewemalangamu wadde nga bajja bekkoza, nga gwoyamba oyoola mbwa kuluma nteega
Tewemalangamu (…) bagambe!
Bobi wine mugambe ebekengeere!
Shiru bagambe!

Do not overstretch your self in your help, even if they are smiling to you
Even if you spend nights hungry, you are helping a dog just to turn and bite your leg
Do not overstretch yourself, even if they approach you with seemingly good intentions, it is helping a dog just to turn and bite your leg
Never overdo your self (…)
spread the message
Tell Bobi wine to look out for them!
Shiru, tell them!

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[2] Luganda proverb

Tewemalangamu yadde nga bajja bekkoza oluusi nosuula enjala
Nga gwoymba oyoola mbwa kulluma nteega
Tewemalangamu nebwebessessa, yadde bajja bekkozza
Olussi nosula enjala, nga gwoyamba oyoola mbwa kuluma nteega.
Bebe Cool mugambe!
Weasal-Manisal bagambe!
Tewemalangamu yadde nga bajja bekkoza oluusi nosuula enjala
Nga gwoymba oyoola mbwa kulluma ntee

You're only keeping a dog who then turns around and bites your leg
Never over stretch yourself, however much they smile
Spending a night on an empty stomach, but you are just helping a dog to turn and then bite your leg.
Bebe Cool, tell them!
Weasal-Manisal tell them!
Never overstretch your self, however much they smile
Spending a night on an empty stomach, but you are keeping a dog to then turn and bite your leg.

Klear Kut
Superstar (K^2 2004)
Transcprition by Nanna Schneiderman,
translations by Papito and Peter Ntende

Superstar (K^2 2004)

Yeah boy!
Would you like to meet some superstars?!
 Talking to nice girls, says in Uganda,
 Klear Kut and Bebe Bool upon you now,
Lord have mercy! Red-Eye,
Well this is mad…

Verse
(…no transcript availabe)
Muzungu mugambe, I'm the baddest you know this
Lyrical genius the lambourgini to your lesson
Sample this you can't get better than this
So stop trying - go ahead and steal my beats
I got lukumi plus
And am dubious
And every nigga wan' step out with us
We be the superstar
Everybody know we be the superstars
Everybody wanna be a superstar
Everybody know That's what we are, hand me the keys to my car

Hook by Bebe Cool
Bwotuuka e Uganda
Tunamitafika
Na moto mingi
Ohh wacha na wasiwasi
Na' m Africa Inatizi tunarule Klear Kut
Buuze Bebe Cool

Hook by Bebe Cool
When you're rich in Uganda
We will be ready for you
With lots of fire
Ohh stop playing smart
(…)Ask for Bebe Cool

Chorus
I dress like a superstar
Cruising Ferraris just like superstar

Meeting nice girls just like a superstar
Hook me up and be a superstar
I dress like a superstar
Cruising Ferraris just like superstar
Meeting nice girls
And you'll be a superstar

<u>Verse</u>
The stardom of a superstar
I see it - I got it
Got a biatch on my back and don't want it,
drop it
See a car in a magazine want it cop it
On a project I don't wanna be on, stop it
 If I See a gun that I want , cock it
Critics come around, and see it but can't
knock it
Change the bling, a wit, and I'll rock it
Every hit that you put on the radio I'll top it

Can't tell what I do behind closed doors when
I lock it
Do two things to a crowd entertain and shock
it
I'm a superstar got mad cash in my pocket
Won't stop till I'm a star in my own cockpit

<u>Chorus</u>
I dress like a superstar
Cruising Ferraris just like superstar
Meeting nice girls just like a superstar
Hook me up and be a superstar
I dress like a superstar
Cruising Ferraris just like superstar
Meeting nice girls
And you'll be a superstar

<u>Verse</u>
In French: Without a doubt
I am defeating all dumb rappers
24/7 while still partying
I am the multi lingual rapper
 the ace of all aces
 Who dares to impose the only rules.

In Kiswahili: I am that super star
 who wants to give you a taste

of this tight beat that
 Lights up a fire on the dance floor
And heats up your blood until you feel like I
have healed your bodies with this ill rap.
And as you swing swing
 you will feel as real as million shillings.
And when I'm killing the mic , you be feeling
really sicked
 then I will fill this sight with smiles for miles
away.

Chorus
I dress like a superstar
Cruising Ferraris just like superstar
Meeting nice girls just like a superstar
Hook me up and be a superstar
I dress like a superstar
Cruising Ferraris just like superstar
Meeting nice girls
And you'll be a superstar

Verse
Yo, I'm walking back to the number one -
Believe that
To the top of the charts - Believe that
As a superstar I'm living pure bliss
Sipping on cris,
Freaky jah round my neck and wrist
Guns-and tee? Yes your hight ness
We be armest
We getting the finest
Hot (damn)
They roll up on the cockpit
They get busy like a stock market
Shooting like a rocket
And let the fire suck it
Pulling benjies right out of the wallet -
superstar!
Basheezy my kneesy Jb gets busy
Follow up my niggas

Ey, yo the M- to da izzah
The illest superstar
Ug – izzah
the big guy living in boxing
the leaving charts to the redye
spitting what's toxic

you really wanna fuck with that?
No, I didn't think so
the greatest rappers of this game
we thiths and twist up on my frame
spitting left hooks that will mess up your brain
insane
my man causes to leave you lame
done
like whole hold up he knows I'm the one
too chubby never had a reason to run
never have never will
I'll leave my mic stopped
Girl: " my good he's so Ill"!!

Hook by Bebe Cool
Bwotuuka e Uganda
Tunamitafika
Na moto mingi
Ohh wacha na wasiwasi
Na' m Africa Inatizi tunarule Klear Kut
Buuze Bebe Cool

Hook by Bebe Cool
When you rich in Uganda
We will be ready for you
With lots of fire
Ohh stop playing smart
(…)Ask for Bebe Cool

Chorus
I dress like a superstar
Cruising Ferraris just like superstar
Meeting nice girls just like a superstar
Hook me up and be a superstar
I dress like a superstar
Cruising Ferraris just like superstar
Meeting nice girls
And you'll be a superstar

Ad lib till fade

Ziggy Dee
Eno Mic (2003)

I live my life like a Superstar
Blessed are those who believe
But they need to see!
Eno mic, eno mic, eno mic!

Chorus
Eno mic ya ziggy D tessaga, Nebwogisooka ko mama
osima X 3

Verse
Zisanga oyo atabisobola
Zisanga oyo atabisobola – Hey!
Tebagamba obyesibeko
Tebagamba obyesibeko!
Ziggy ndaba, Ziggy ndaba,
Omwana asunda
Sunda ebbuto, sunda ebbuto
Boss alya bito
Ziggy D mic yebasigula
Ziggy D mic yebakyakaza
Tuli wakati, kwata wakati, Kampala tofitina
Dance nina, mic nina, Kampala tofitina
Tuli wakati, teka wakati, Kampala tofitina

Chorus
Eno mic ya ziggy D tessaga, Nebwogisooka ko mama
osima X 3

Hook by cute fet
Eno mic ya ziggy D tessaga, Nebwogisooka ko mama
osima X 4

Verse
Ba Mama mwe muliluddawa
Ba Mama mwe muliluddawa
 Abalaasi muli kuki
Teka wakati, kwata wakati
eUganda tuzina tuti
Airtime nja kumugula
Airtime nja kumugula
Tuli wakati, kwata wakati, eUganda tuzina tuti
Tuli wakati, kwata wakati, eUganda tuzina tuti

Money olina, Bimma olina, mu Kampala tolya ssumu!

Chorus
Eno mic ya ziggy D tessaga, Nebwogisooka ko mama
osima X 3

This Mic (2003)

I live my life like a superstar,
Blessed are those who believe,
but they need to see!

This mic, this mic, this mic!

Chorus
Ziggy D's mic doesn't fool around, and it burns when
you touch it X 3

Verse
We found those that can't handle
We found those that can't handle
Don't tell people to stick with them
Don't tell people to stick with them
Ziggy is very alert
Ziggy is very alert
The chick can shake it
Shake that belly
Shake that belly
The boss loves young chicks
It's Ziggy D wowing you on the Mic
It's Ziggy D on the Mic making you dance
We are in the middle, touching the middle, Kampala,
don't be jealous
I have the Dance, I have the Mic, Kampala don't be
jealous of me
We're in the middle, put it inside the middle, Kampala
don't be jealous

Chorus
Ziggy D's mic doesn't fool around, and it burns when
you touch it X 3

Hook by cute fet
Ziggy D's mic doesn't fool around, and it burns when
you touch it X 4

Verse
You sexy mamas, where you at?
You sexy mamas, where you at?
Rastafarians, what you up to?!
Put it in the middle, touch it in the middle
In Uganda this is how we dance
Don't worry, I will buy you airtime
Don't worry, I will buy you airtime
We're now in the middle, touch the middle, this is how
we dance
You have cash, you have a Beema, in Kampala we
don't eat "air"!

Chorus
Ziggy D's mic doesn't fool around, and it burns when
you touch it X 3

We are dancing in the middle, touching in the middle, Kampala do not tell!
We are dancing in the middle, touching in the middle, Kampala do not tell!
Ziggy on the Mic, feeling the mic, Kampala tofitina
Ziggy on the Mic, feeling the mic, Kampala tofitina

Chorus
Eno mic ya ziggy D tessaga, Nebwogisooka ko mama osima X 3

Hook by cute fet
Eno mic ya ziggy D tessaga, Nebwogisooka ko mama osima X 4

Chorus
Eno mic ya ziggy D tessaga, Nebwogisooka ko mama osima X 3

We are dancing in the middle, touching in the middle, Kampala do not tell!
We are dancing in the middle, touching in the middle, Kampala do not tell!
Ziggy on the Mic, feeling the mic, Kampala don't be jealous
Ziggy on the Mic, feeling the mic, Kampala don't be jealous

Chorus
Ziggy D's mic doesn't fool around, and it burns when you touch it X 3

Hook by cute fet
Ziggy D's mic doesn't fool around, and it burns when you touch it X 3

Chorus
Ziggy D's mic doesn't fool around, and it burns when you touch it X 3