

## THE GLOBALISATION OF AFRICAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS: A CASE OF THE ADEUDEU OF TESO COMMUNITY IN KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

*There are various insights into the discourse of musical culture from a global context. Some of these insights include the impact of globalisation on the music industry and African music-making at large. African musical instruments continue to be cultural artefacts and productions of immaterial culture and music. African instruments have not remained static but have responded to intercultural reciprocity. This study stems from an ambit that has discussed African traditional musical instruments such as the Mbira, Kora, Djembe, and Endara of West and South Africa but needs to pay more attention to those from East Africa and Kenya in particular. This paper is a case study of the Adeudeu (a chordophone), a principal instrument of the Teso community in Western Kenya and a symbol of their cultural identity. The purpose is to highlight the extent to which traditional musical performances have been appropriated and retained in the contemporary setting creating their popular music. The study engaged eight musical groups drawn from each of Teso district's divisions, selected through purposive and snowball sampling. Qualitative data analysis was used. The paper analyses music performed on the traditional Adeudeu vis a vis that performed on the contemporary Adeudeu to elucidate similarities and differences in music making. The argument is that a change in one element of the musical ensemble has ramifications on the music producing a different 'musical colour'. The paper culminates in highlighting changes that have taken place on the instrument and the overall musical rendition of the Teso.*

**Keywords:** Globalization, African musical instruments, Adeudeu, Teso music and dance, Contemporary African music

### INTRODUCTION

Globalisation results from human interactions and borrowing ideas, beliefs, and ways of life, which is culture. The more humans interact with each other through migration, travelling, and mass media, the more they are what they find, hear and see in the 'new' environments. Thus, it is a "complex, accelerating, integrating process of global connectivity" (Tomlinson, 2016, p. 352). The connectivity involves everything that encompasses modern life, including music. Music traditions are never static. They have changed over the years and keep changing. The process of improvisation, common in African music, allows for creativity during the performance. Whatever has been created is someone else's style that acts as a basis for further improvisation by other musicians or even the same musician. In such a process, a "core" remains community-specific and will identify a community's music. Auh and Walker (2002, p.17) resound this when they state that "most obviously associated with creativity is the concept

of innovation, but innovation can only be recognised within the context of what is known. In this sense, creativity can only function and be recognised within a particular knowledge system”.

Through globalisation, African traditional musical instruments have continued to transform. They are also performed beyond their conventional borders to a broader international audience. Several traditional African musical instruments have been discussed by several authors for instance Jones (2008) has discussed how women from Zimbabwe have performed the *mbira* outside Zimbabwe to an international audience. The *kora* of the Malinka of West Africa “has undergone many modifications and adaptations since the early 1970s, when it first began to be well known outside West Africa” (Duran, 2008, p.35).

Duran continues to argue that the Kora scale has changed over the years. In addition, Price (2013) discusses African cultural influences in the world with specific reference to Djembe because of interactions between Africans and Americans. Price argues that the rich Djembe rhythms continually inform contemporary genres. African instruments have not remained static but have responded to intercultural reciprocity. Among these resounding studies on African musical instruments needs, more discourse on the Adeudeu, a Harp of the Teso community in Kenya.

The general observation is that the Kenyan popular music scene comprises a wide range of Afro-fusion musical genres. This genre of music encompasses such genres as *Benga*, *Mugithi*, and *Ohangla*, which are popularised through the famous cultural nights across the country. They are each based on one of Kenya’s ethnic communities. During such functions, a community exposes their cultural heritage through dressing, food and music. These afro fusions have continued to change due to contact with a cosmopolitan society, among other factors that have given rise to globalisation. Some communities have given special names to the music, which are a preserve of the community’s traditional cultural music performance. It is noticeable in Kenya that some of the larger ethnic communities have popularised their music more than other smaller communities. The smaller ones hardly even have cultural nights, as in the Teso community. Central to the Teso musical experience is the Adeudeu, a harp. The Teso music and dance practices have been discussed by Darkwa (1984), who gives a general overview of the Teso music without providing details of the changing roles of the adeudeu due to globalisation.

The wave of commercialisation of music on the African continent has influenced Teso music immensely. Exposure to musics from other parts of the world via radio and television has widened the musical scope of Teso musicians enticing their ears with guitar music. Consequently, the Teso musicians have appropriated the traditional Teso music resulting in popular Teso music, which appeals to both the young and old. In the process, bands have been formed. This study aims to highlight the extent to which traditional musical performances have been appropriated and retained in the contemporary setting creating their popular music.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a case study research design that allowed an in-depth study of the Teso music. The target population was formed by musicians who play Teso music within Teso district's four administrative divisions: Angurai, Amagoro, Chakol and Amukura. Through purposive and snowball sampling, eight performing groups were identified. Data was collected using an interview schedule from which the responses were audio recorded and notes taken for transcription. Photography was also employed. Qualitative data was then analysed by organising the information according to emerging themes. Musical elements were analysed to interpret what is "authentic" and "new". Both participant and non-participant observation and focus groups were used to obtain primary data. The bands formed the eight (8) focus groups while their band leaders were picked as the primary respondents during the face-to-face interviews.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The discussion begins with a brief insight into the Teso, followed by an exposition of the various performing groups in the community and then an analysis of their music and the contexts within which it occurs. This music performed among the Teso is centred on the Adeudeu. The study discusses the original shape, size, role and other musical instruments that form part of the Adeudeu musical experience, including the music and dance. In addition, there is an examination of the Adeudeu's role, shape and size and its instrumental ensemble in the present Teso society.

### **Who are the Teso?**

The Teso, also known as Iteso, are a branch of the Eastern Nilotic group of speakers currently found at the western border of Kenya and Uganda. In Kenya, the Teso community is, in essence located in the Teso district of west Kenya. They are comparatively a small community that

sometimes features little in the literature concerning the traditional music of Kenya. Most of them are found in Uganda, forming the second-largest community in that country. Traditionally the Teso grow crops (mainly sorghum, millet and maize). Women who sometimes own the land do much of the agricultural work. To the Teso, millet or sorghum is used as a raw material for brewing their traditional beer called *Epaliye*. This brew is availed in almost all social events. It is taken by a group seated around a pot with traditional straws passed from one person to the other, as they believe it portrays a spirit of togetherness. Their settlement comprises scattered homesteads around granaries that store their agricultural produce, whose core provides space for social and ritual activities. The surrounding comprises houses owned by related men, living with their wives and children. Their clan identity enables them to collectively elect leaders among themselves and provide a clan representative who elects their chief leader called the *Emorimor*. Like any other African community, their music, *Ajosi*, is part and parcel of everyday life, accompanying social and ritual activities. The term *Ajosi* also refers to a dance and a sport.

There are various groupings among the Teso, constituted by men, women and youth. The groups included in this study are Twende Kazi Traditional Dancers, Iteso Lukelegaka Lukasonya, Adanya Kings Band, Adeudeu Atesot, Amagoro Jazz Band, Asonya Success Band and Akogo Band. The first group, *Twende Kazi* Traditional Dancers, is a group of youth that started in 1999. The members here started with poultry farming for sustenance before venturing into music when they discovered that they had the necessary talents for musical performance. The growth of this group was born out of friendship and peer influence. Both boys and girls are incorporated. Their leader James Ochwe stated that “women must be in the performance for it to be good” (J. Ochwe, Personal communication, June 17, 2005).

The second group, *Iteso Lukelegaka Lukasonya* group began in 1940. Its principal role was to welcome people to a chief’s *Barasa*. After ten years, the group would perform in other cultural events. The group comprises men and women but restricts group leadership to men. By the time of the study, the group had about fifty members. It is made up of elderly members of the community who perform the traditional *akisuku* dance. According to one of their leaders (B. J. Otwane, personal communication June 18, 2005), the youth are not interested in the kind of music that the group performs.

The third group is called *Adeudeu Atesot* under John Barasa Yuwowo, who started playing the Adeudeu in 1978. The group comprises elderly men and women; the youth rarely join in their performances. The group leader contends that children are not serious performers, which is why they are left out. The fourth group is Adanya Kings Band. It began in 1991 under the leadership of Crispin Ewagata. In his group, he has managed to accommodate the youth. He trains all the members of the group.

The fifth group is *Amagoro* Jazz Band which began in 1969 and was led by Joseph Omuse. His group is made up of seven men. He argues that women are too busy in the fields to participate but has incorporated two young girls since 2006 who are involved in singing and dancing.

The sixth group is *Asonya* Success Band, led by Palinyang Kiton Obasie. This group began in the 1940s and is made up of elderly men. This decision was made to keep off violent fights over the women (P.K. Obasie, personal communication June 17, 2005). Finally, *Akogo* Band that Andrea Akure began. It consists of older men and women.

A good number of the groups discussed above have names ending with the word “band”. What is in a name? According to Crispin Ewagata (personal communication, June 4, 2005), “the name of a group helps to sell the ideals for the performing group. They are also used to attract the audience”. He further explained that the younger generation prefers and likes popular music, which he called “*miziki ya Siku hizi*”. Musical history in Kenya after the Second World War unveils the use of guitar style of performance in Kenya, resulting into the formation of the famous Benga music of Kenya. With this music came the naming of musical group performances by the term “Bands” (Low, 1982, pp. 17-36). Thus, naming performing groups as bands is a new concept among the Teso.

Each of the above groups has its reasons for making whatever decision they make concerning its membership. The regulation of membership in African communities is common where involvement in a musical performance is based on sex and age. Whereas the participation of one in a musical activity was either voluntary or obligatory in the traditional setting, nowadays, among the Teso, one’s involvement in a musical activity is purely voluntary. It is based on one’s interest in performance and time. The traditional social systems have crumbled down. To some extent, a group's membership determines the kind of songs and dances performed.

While the older members of society seem to enjoy traditional performances, the youth enjoy acculturated music that evolves like popular music.

### **The instrumental repertoire of Teso music**

At the core of African musical performances is an array of musical instruments. The Teso have a variety of cultural musical instruments that include *Ekiriakiria* (jingles), *Akogo* (Lamelaphone), *Adeudeu* (harp), *Adigidigi* (xylophone), *Akembe* and *Adungu* (Harp), *Esos* (flute), *Alut* (horn), *Atenusu* (drum), and *Arigirigi* (fiddle). Together with these are cultural artefacts that enhanced the performance. The artefacts depict the rank of those performing, the contexts within which music is presented and provide visual appeal. The artefacts include *Etida* (giant drum used for treating stress), masks, helmets, *Ekikong* (club used for killing a bull), *Papakodwe* (an instrument used for sending messages), *Kikep* (a stone used for dehorning and sharpening other stones), *Emacher Kaplon* (spear used for fishing), *Ekus* (spear for killing python, shells for various rituals and a three-legged stool. As mentioned earlier, the use of these artefacts is occasion-related, as they are symbolic and functional in multiple contexts. As such, they were rarely used in the performances upon which this study is based. Each traditional instrument had its role in a version. While some (*Adeudeu*, *Akogo*, *Arigirigi*) perform leading functions, others perform subordinate functions. It is worth noting that whereas one instrument may play a significant role in one performance, it can also play a subordinate role in another. Together with the above-named instruments is the use of an accordion and three guitars. The accordion's presence on the African continent, jointly with the “guitars, violins and pedal organs, was introduced into Africa by European traders” (Impey, 1998, p. 416). The groups had different combinations of instruments:

1. 3 Adeudeus (Solo, Rhythm, Bass), Drum set, Improvised percussion, Metal ring.
2. 4 Atenusu drums, leg jingles and Arigirigi (Fiddle).
3. Atenusu drum, bottles and Khukas (Cymbals).
4. Adeudeu, drums, Shakers, Leg jingles.
5. Accordion, Guitars (Solo, rhythm and bass), bottles, shakers, Atenusu drums.
6. Arigirigi, Metal ring, Drums, Adeudeu and Accordion.
7. Four Thumb pianos (*Akogo*), Metal ring, Wooden Sticks.

It was evident that each group would vary the instruments in the ensemble according to the song being performed. It was observed that groups with the youth incorporated different

combinations of musical instruments. Therefore, there are seven different combinations of devices.

Adeudeu is a principal instrument of the Teso community that gives the neighbourhood its cultural identity. It is a harp (see figure 1).



Figure 1: *Authentic 5-stringed Adeudeu of the Teso*

The resonator, crossbar and tuning pegs are made up of wood. This resonator is covered with cow skin. The strings are nylon, a change from what was used earlier, animal tendons. Traditionally, the Teso used different scales in their music based on their authentic *Adeudeu*, made up of five strings. Its tuning is a pentatonic scale made up of the sol-fas “s m r d l,” and “l, d r f t” (J. B. Yuwowo, personal communication, June 7, 2005). The tuning of this instrument varies from one performer to the next since there is no standard pitch (key) (Senoga-Zake 1986). This instrument is hand-held with the resonator resting on the player’s abdomen. The 5- stringed Adeudeu played the role of an equal partner to the voice in some cases. Here there was a call-and-response relationship between the voice and Adeudeu. In other cases, the Adeudeu gave an ostinato above which the voice sang melodies.

Due to globalisation, the formation of bands among the Teso has given rise to the transformation of the Adeudeu. The shape has been maintained, but the size of the instrument has changed. The Teso community is currently endowed with *Adeudeus* of various sizes and tunings. Whereas the traditional ensemble had a five-stringed *Adeudeu* or a combination of two five-stringed instruments, the present ensembles range from one to a combination of three *Adeudeus*, each with a different number of strings. When asked why they have three Adeudeus,

one of the performers explained that the imitation of guitar roles in a band had created the use of three Adeudeus, each one taking a different part, that is, the lead/solo, rhythm and bass. It was noted that the larger the size, the lower the overall pitch of the instrument; thus the largest *Adeudeu* plays the role of the bass. Each Adeudeu performer was asked to pluck each string one after the other to identify the strings' relative pitch. This was the result:

Solo Adeudeu - s, d r m f s l t d' (see figure 2)

Rhythm Adeudeu - d r m fi s l t d' r'

Bass Adeudeu - s, d m s d' m'

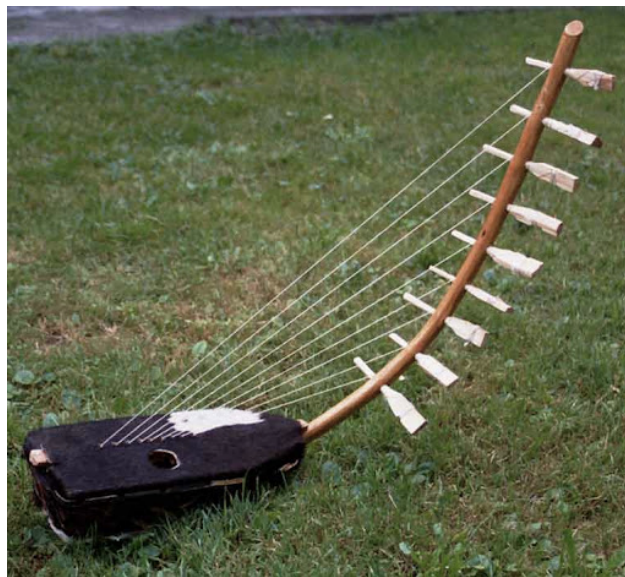


Figure 2: *A 9-stringed Adeudeu*





Figure 3: *Playing the position of a Bass Adeudeu and rhythm Adeudeu*

As the sizes differ, so is the playing position (see figure 3). These tunings inform the pitches expected in the melody that is played on the *Arigirigi* or the voice. While the traditional tuning was subjective in terms of tonality, where the traditional instruments are played alongside Eurocentric ones, the tuning of traditional instruments conforms to the tonality of the pitched Eurocentric instruments. For example, the *Arigirigi* was tuned according to the performer's comfortable pitch or tonality. When this instrument plays alongside the Accordion or guitar, it must be tuned according to the Accordion. In essence, the Adeudeu has been changed. These changes have given the Adeudeu a "new life". Its role in an ensemble has significantly changed. The new form of Teso music can be referred to as Teso popular music or contemporary Teso music that appeals to a broader audience within and without the Teso community.

### **Musical Practices**

To appreciate the state of Teso's popular music, it is best to address its new sound. Here, we will briefly discuss some presentational forms, rhythms used, and interplay of instruments with the Adeudeu with the understanding that the neo-traditional idioms mentioned above have given Teso music a new flavour. It is worth noting that performing groups, such as *Iteso Lukelegaka Lukasonya*, composed of the elderly, incorporated traditional dance movements. At the same time, those made up of the younger generation were instrumental even though they stimulated dancing from the audience. Such dances were both traditional and borrowed dance movements.

African musical structure or presentational form is a defining element of musical cultures on the African continent. This musical element has been discussed by various scholars (Masasabi 2011, p. 90; Agu 1999, p. 15; Senoga-Zake 1986, p. 9; Akpabot 1986, p. 109) and can be summarised as Solo performances, Call and Response, Call and Refrain, Solo and Chorused Refrain, Mixed Structural Forms, Through composed and Quasi-Rondoic form. Call and response have the soloist singing a call section followed by a short response section. Call and Refrain has the soloist performing a short solo part followed by a more extended section performed by the choral group. Solo and Chorused Refrain have the choral response performing a similar area to that of the soloist. This is also called antiphonal singing. Composition is a structure with different verses with no repetition of sections. A mixed structure involves a combination of two or more of the structures mentioned earlier. Quasi-

rondo form involves alternating a given musical performance section with other new materials. These musical structures are evident in Teso's musical expressions. I will use five songs to exemplify musical presentational forms in Teso music.

The first example is a song entitled Ukimwi by Amagoro Jazz Band performed in the Kiswahili language. Here Joseph Omuse is the solo singer accompanied by three guitars and a drum. The music begins with an instrumental section followed by a solo voice with instrumental accompaniment. After that is a section of “verbal text” (narration) in which the soloist enacts a dialogue between two people. An instrumental interlude follows it then solo singing with instrumental accompaniment. Following is another section of narration ending with solo singing. The overall outcome is a quasi-rondo form where the narrations act as episodes while the sung section is variations of a refrain.

The second example is the song Apinat by Twende Kazi Obekai Band. “Apinat” talks about Aids using the Teso language. The music begins with an instrumental introduction, made up of adeudeu, a metal ring and improvised percussions (drum set) in that order. The song uses call and response, and the choral response has a shorter section than the soloist. An instrumental interlude leads to a repetition of the call and response part, with the soloist having different words while the response has the same melody and text. Thus, an AB A<sup>1</sup>B structure is formed, where the “B” section acts as a chorused refrain. The given analysis is vocal while the instruments play an ostinato. In the solo, Adeudeu plays a melody of two phrases as the others provide a harmonic accompaniment. The voice comes in with a call-response in which the call varies text as the response sings a repetitive response part. Following is an instrumental section with a solo “Verbal Text” unfolding into other vocal interjections as the music fades away.

The third example is a song by Asonya Success Band. Here a solo performer sings and accompanies himself with the Arigirigi. There is an instrumental introductory section. Following is a section of solo singing accompanied by the Arigirigi. The structure here is call and refrain, which changes to call and response. This continues to the end, creating an overall mixed design.

The fourth example is a song by the Akogo Band. Here Akogo plays alongside the metal ring and wooden sticks. These instruments are introduced one after the other, with the Akogo

beginning, followed by the Metal ring and then the wooden sticks. Following is a section of calls and responses by the voice. This structure is maintained to the end.

The fifth example is a performance by Iteso Lukelegaka Lukasonya. This performance begins with an instrumental introduction of three Atenusu drums and leg jingles. It is followed by a section of call and response by the voice accompanied by the instruments. After that is another section of the solo and chorused refrain. Following is a section of enactment with instrumental accompaniment. The group presents a drama entitled *Amaria Apesa*, which means struggle over a woman. It is a dialogue between a woman and a man. After that is a sung section in call and response and solo and chorused refrain form, another enactment of a naming ceremony of twins follows this. Here special songs are sung for the mothers who have given birth to twins. The parents of the children are advised on how to conduct themselves as they nurture their children. When children cry, their mother is summoned by a unique drumbeat from the fields or her workplace; she is not called by name. The local brew is brought from the mother's place, and the children must taste it during the child-naming ceremony.

A postlude of call and response, solo, and the chorused refrain is presented. The performance is mixed structure and a quasi-rondo form. This group has maintained the Akisuku dance tradition, where men and women dance together. Women sing while men jump. Men jump on the main beat of a compound meter while the women sway in duplets against the triple time articulated by the instrumental accompaniment. The overall performance rendition of this group is the integration of song, dance and drama.

## **ROLES OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN AN ENSEMBLE**

### ***The authentic 5-stringed Adeudeu, when performed in pairs, has one A***

Adeudeu performs melodies, while another provides harmonic accompaniment in the form of ostinatos. When one Adeudeu is used, the harp can play in dialogue with the voice as call and response or call and refrain. In other cases, the Adeudeu can perform the ostinatos as a basis upon which there is singing. Akogo can also perform both ostinato passages and melodies depending on the combination of instruments within a given ensemble.

The use of three Adeudeus in an ensemble has given the harp different roles from the authentic one. The Adeudeus have taken on roles like guitars in a band. One is solo/lead, another is rhythm, and another is Bass. The bass Adeudeu is played by two persons: one plucks the strings

while the other strikes the resonator to produce a percussive rhythmic sound. Rhythms performed on the Adeudeu have been changed as the Bass Adeudeu also plays the role of a drum. Interplay of two notes against three notes is a common rhythmic characteristic of the Teso musical experience. As exemplified in the Iteso Lukelegaka Lukasonya performance, two drums play a triplet; a third drum keeps the tempo on a strong beat. In contrast, the fourth plays a syncopated decoration of the main rhythm. The jingles have a recurring duplet figure.

There are authentic rhythmic motifs, but newer rhythmic renditions have been added. The change in size gives the instrument a different timbre. The introduction of more strings has changed the scales that are used for various songs. Whereas the authentic harp has a pentatonic scale, the transformed harp has a diatonic scale of eight notes. Therefore, the melodies have more pitches with varying intervals.

### **Contexts of musical performance**

African traditional music “is thought rather be functional. Functional music drawn from ritual, work, or play is externally motivated. Thus, funeral dirges sung by mourners, boat-rowing songs sung by fishermen, lullabies performed by mothers, and songs of insult traded by feuding clans: these utilitarian musics are said to be incompletely understood whenever analysis ignores the social or ‘extra musical’ context” (Agawu, 2001, p. 8). In this respect, analysis of Teso music would be incomplete without attending to the contexts within which the music is performed. The Teso community performs music on various socio-cultural occasions, including entertainment, wedding and epunyasi (resurrection). Neo-traditional contexts include, among others: national holidays, self-enjoyment and relaxation, beer parties, studio recording for consumption through mass media and escorting people to various churches in Amukura (P.K. Obasie, personal communication June 5, 2005).

When escorting people to churches, the song tempo determined the pace of movement. Modern society, with the introduction of Christianity on the African continent, has allowed the performance of certain music within the community to escort those going to various churches. Studio recording of music for commercialisation is also another new context. The context of the performance would determine who takes part in the performance. As mentioned earlier, a musical performance at the centre of homesteads would attract a larger audience that would perform as well. When recording a song, on the other hand, there is no audience as such. This means that a song performed in the two situations would have varying lengths and texts. One

can entertain themselves by inviting a group to perform in their homesteads. Likewise, beer parties could be organised to entertain a group of friends invited to someone's house. Consequently, the contexts are ritual, ceremonial and recreational. "Changes in societal life and the introduction of patronage affect the musical output" (Darkwa, 1984, p.75).

The performance context determines the song text and themes. The cyclic nature of African music lends itself to the text variation above a repetitive Melo-rhythmic figure. The texts carry messages that are functional in that particular context. Across the performing groups that were interviewed, one theme was expected, which was AIDS. Each group had some advice to give concerning the pandemic. This was so since the community was facing the effects of Aids as a pandemic. "Social and political commentaries are common in other African cultures" (Berliner 1976, p. 468). Themes continue to reflect issues of societal concern among the Teso. The languages used to communicate messages are Iteso, Kiswahili (Kenya's national language) and Luganda.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is worth noting that globalisation occurs due to contact between cultures, and it happens in phases. There is no wholesale erosion of one culture; instead, there is continuity of a community's culture, in this case, the Teso community. Hence, there is a core that resists change for a while, giving the original culture its identity, in this case, the Adeudeu. The "new" does not spring out of a void but is propelled by one's orientation and induction into music-based experiences from within and without a community's music. The Adeudeu has changed in its size but retains its shape. Alongside it performed Eurocentric musical instruments that have changed the resultant musical experience. The authentic Adeudeu of five strings and its transformed versions exist among the Teso. Bands within the Teso community have moved away from exclusively using the Iteso language to combining Iteso, Luganda and Kiswahili. Kiswahili is the national language of Kenya.

The findings reveal the presence of neo-traditional music among the Teso. In their music, the community has attempted to preserve some traditional elements: the shape of Adeudeu, tuning of five-stringed Adeudeus, language use, drum rhythms, call and response vocal forms and the use of ostinatos with a variation on a basic theme. Such elements easily identify a piece of music with the community since there is a resemblance to the traditional genre. At the same

time, there is a reinterpretation of musical instruments to perform new functions, as seen in the changing sizes of the Adeudeu, having more than five strings. These adeudeus' roles have changed and aped those of solo, rhythm and bass guitar. Some contexts have also been reinterpreted; for example, the resurrection songs sung on the third day after burial are now sung on the burial day. At the same time, new contexts have evolved where people are escorted to church. Musical forms and instrumental ensembles have changed.

Consequently, globalisation has taken place. This observation is like trends among other African communities, as discussed by Kubik (1991, p. 226) and (wa Mukuna, 1997, p. 244). This study is an overview of Teso music, allowing for further research and discussion about this community's music practice.

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