



University of Nairobi
School of the Arts and Design

KENYA NATIONAL ATTIRE: FACTORS INFLUENCING ADOPTION



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Kenya National Attire: Factors Influencing Adoption

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of
Masters of Arts Degree in design in the School of the Arts and Design,
University of Nairobi.



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Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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Dedications

To God. (you have been my Ebeneza) this far you have brought me.

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I will forever be great full.

Abstract

In the recent past, the search for nationhood and strategies of advancing the same have been brought into question in Kenya. Despite having a national language, which is Swahili such stated conflicts have prevailed, thus bringing the question of material culture into the limelight? The Kenya national attire is such a significant form of material culture that would bring the spirit of nationhood to Kenyan people. However, such a symbol is lacking in Kenya. National symbols have been used to unite people by creating visual, verbal, or iconic representations of their values, goals, or history. Thus there has been a subliminal desire for national attire, which Kenyans believed, could enhance national identity. Nonetheless, the search for Kenya's national attire has been an extremely difficult task for Kenyan designers. (Adongo and Odhuno 2004; Shamalla 2004; Magioga 2004; Safari mate 2006). More so, despite various efforts to the national attire it has not been adopted by a recognizable number.

This study therefore sought to establish factors affecting adoption of the 2004 national attire developed in the Sunlight National Dress Quest. The research design used in this study is descriptive survey. Primary data was obtained using questionnaires and interview schedules while secondary data were found from books, reports, magazines, newspapers and the Internet. The study was carried out in Nairobi and the sample population was purposefully sampled. The total sample size for this study was fifty questionnaires out of which thirty questionnaires were answered. The sample comprised of eleven male and nineteen female. Designers, judges and members of the national attire project team. In this research different groups of people were interviewed and each gave their own opinion on what they thought contributed to the non-adoption of the Kenyan attire.

From the analysis of results, the data reveals that the key reasons for poor adoption of the national attire include poor advertisement as about 37% of the respondents agreed to this. 57% did not like the design of the national attire while 43% did not like the color. The other reasons for poor adoption of the national attire included high cost of the national attire as about 30% of the respondents agreed to this. The low cost of secondhand clothes or (mitumbaa) also contributed to the poor adoption of the attire. This study

therefore came to the main recommendation that the national attire should evolve from Kenyans. On the same line of practice designers should be allowed to come up with their creative ideas of national attires based on their respective Interpretation of contemporary Kenyan culture. Such would be a viable base for coming up with national attire that would promote nationhood in the country.

Abbrevlation and Acronyms

GWG	Great Western Garment
KCB	Kenya Commercial Bank
KEPSA	Kenya Private Sector Alliance
KWS	Kenya Wildlife Service
IPC	Investment Promotion Centre
MP	Member of Parliament
MSK	Marketing Society of Kenya
UKL	Unillver Kenya Limited
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PNU	Party of National Unlty

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Preamble

This chapter concerns the focus, if not the problem, of the study. It contains my own story and other people's stories and efforts towards the Kenya national attire. In addition, the chapter is a discussion of the importance of national attire and the factors that influence that adoption. Finally, the chapter houses objectives, assumptions, scope and significance of my study.

1.1 Background Information

My initial interest in the Kenya national attire was ignited way back in the eighties while I was a student in Poland studying Textile Design: a part of the program involved presentations during open national days. It was during these celebrations that students from countries all over the world showcased their national attires among other things. However, we Kenyan students felt that we had no universally recognizable national attire. In its stead, we cobbled our khangas and other fabrics to serve for the occasion ("Plate 1.1 on page 2 shows the Researcher in a Two Piece Khanga"). Of course, the results were not as outstanding as those of national attires but we had no choice. The feeling of inadequacy and embarrassment in the face of an international audience, planted the first seed of my concern for national identity through universally acceptable attire. Back home in the year 1997, I started a tailoring business in Nairobi. The idea for the business was to use the skills acquired in Poland so as to develop a prototype dress that would pass for national attire. However, this did not materialize since the business experienced capital inadequacy. There was a new lease of life in the year 2005 when a chance to pursue a master's degree at The School of the Arts and Design was granted to me. This provided a new impetus to advance the search for national attire. Part of the course involved writing a term paper on Contemporary Design Issues; my paper was titled "Kenya National Attire as a Design Issue".

It occurred to me that the quest for national attire was not my personal ambition but a national one. From safari net 2006, one can see that versions of Kenya attire existed during the 1980's, when Mary Kadenge and other designers recognized difficulties

In developing national attire'. Mary Kadenge, a Nairobi designer who was involved in trying to evolve national attire in the 1960's said that it was difficult to get one since cultural differences always cropped up whenever the idea was mooted. Another designer, Margaret Akumu Gould embarked on the crusade for national attire in the late 1980's when she organized the first ever national attire competition at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre in Nairobi. Adongo and Odhuno² in 2004 said that since colonial times some parts of Africa have been looking for an identity, Kenya included. It is for this reason that Akumu embarked on another search for the Kenya national attire in 1990. It was clear that the national attire was not a fashion design issue such as time required to absorb and accept a fashion statement. John Kaveke, who helped come up with the 2004 attire, said that, "any fashion trend takes time to be accepted and to pick up"³. Yet the challenge in developing national attire seemed more than time to accept a fashion design: one of the key questions was whether or not to adopt mainstream fashion or work from a myriad of ethnic material cultures. It seems to adopt ethnic material culture won the day. To that effect, several dress concepts were developed. However, it seems the concepts did not meet with national acclaim and adoption.



Plate 1.1 The Researcher in a Two Piece Khanga during the International Women's Day

¹ Internet June (2006); <http://www.safarilweb.com/>

² Odhuno, O., Adongo, M. (2004) Kenya's national dress: The pride of a nation; Research paper, Ministry of Culture and Social Services

³ The daily nation of September 2005



Plate 1.2, 1.3 The Proposed National Attire Designs, right John Kaveke's design which won a prize in the Mid 90's⁴

The search for Kenya national attire was a difficult task for Kenyans⁵. According to safari net, Kenyan women, attending the Beijing United Nations Conference held in 1990s, did not stand out in the crowd as a group despite the fact that they were the second largest delegation. The reason was that unlike their counterparts from West Africa, Asia and the Pacific, they did not have national attire that set them apart from everyone else⁶. This implies that just as companies brand their products, national attire brands people who wear it because it sets them apart. People may wear national attires on special occasions or when carrying out certain roles or occupations for example, most Japanese women have adopted Western-style attire for daily wear, but will still wear their silk kimonos on special occasions ("Plate 2.37 – 3.39 on page 51"). Although the Beijing Conference was not about patriotism, Kenyans expressed a strong desire to have national attire to wear while abroad⁷.

⁴ Ministry of Culture and Social Services: Government of Kenya (December 2006)

⁵ Internet (June 2006); <http://www.safariweb.com/safarimate/natdress.htm>; A Correspondent Report for Safari mate (a)

⁶ Internet (June 2006); <http://www.safariweb.com/safarimate/natdress.htm>; A Correspondent Report for Safari mate(b)

⁷ Internet (June 2006); <http://www.safariweb.com/safarimate/natdress.htm>; A Correspondent Report for Safari mate (c)

The Green Belt Movement led by Nobel laureate: Wangari Mathai¹ at one time considered featuring the design that had won national attire competition in the previous year ("Plate 1.2 and 1.3 on page 3 shows proposed national attire of the 1990s"). This was in a bid to promote the idea of national attire for Kenyans. There is however no doubt that in recent time there has been a general feeling among designers that such attire must be found soon: this is because designers feel they possess the skills required to develop Kenya attire. In recognition of problems facing the development of national attire, Joy Mboya among others said that Kenyan designers were uncertain whether to focus on the identity of one community or to deal with the identity of many communities. From this researcher's own experience, it was apparent that there were ideological differences among designers on which way to go in the designing of the Kenyan attire. By 3rd June, 2004, the Project committee had received a total of 100 national attire design proposals submissions in form of sketches, stitched garments, and ideas from whose author's nine designers who would steer the development and tailoring of the final version of the national attire were selected.

On 5th June, 2004, the Project committee constituted a panel of 5 selected judges consisting of Dr. Kimani Njogu (Academician/Consultant), Ms. Molly Mungai (Evelyne School of Design), Ms. Sheila Madoka (Designer), Dr. Suki Mwendwa (Chairman of the then Department of Design but now School of the Arts and Design, University of Nairobi), and Mr. Robinson M Kanyenze from the Department of Culture. These judges selected a nine-member design team to undertake the national attire tailoring².

The panel rigorously assessed design submissions from designers, and thereafter selected a total of 16 designers, the first 9 with highest score being recommended to the project management committee to form the core of the design team for the national attire. The committee was advised where necessary to draw technical input from any of the remaining selected designers. The selected first nine designers were:- Martha Gakii, Patricia Mbela, John Kaveke, Jane Wangui Njenga, Mumbi Munguti, Maryann Nguyo, Seventinah Ooko, Dickson Owiti, and Samira Jeizan (see "Plate 1.4" on page 5). The

¹ Internet (June 2006). <http://www.safarinet.com/safarimate/natdress.htm>: A correspondent Report for safarimate

² Kanyenze, R.M (2004): Head, Visual Arts Division, 10th August, 2004 CSS/DC/1/16/VOL.1/(49)

proposed national attire was launched in September 2004¹⁰ it had taken both fashion experts and the public many days to come up with.



Plate 1.4 The National Attire Design Team 2004¹¹

In December 2004¹² Kaparo once again protested against Prof Kibwana for wearing national attire in parliament. To protest that Prof Kibwana was in the national attire, Kaparo demanded to know who had declared the shirt national attire, where and when. Not even arguments by Prof Kibwana that the Ministry for Gender, Sports and Social Services had gone "through a very elaborate process to determine what our national attire will be" could save him from the wrath of the Speaker. Kaparo intoned: "It is the opinion of the Chair that if that be our national attire, then the ministry needs to go back and think very hard!"¹³

Although the incident looked embarrassing for the government as it showed the left hand did not know what the right one did, it showed lack of seriousness with which the government treats culture ("Plate 1.5 on page 6 Shows Three Members of Parliament who received a Dressing Down from Speaker Francis Ole Kaparo"). This action drove even more people into rejecting the Sh50 million Kenyan cloaks that Najib Balala

¹⁰ Mboya J. Juma (2004): Invitation to Select the Design Team: Sunlight National Dress. Official correspondence (The Go Down Art Centre)

¹¹ Eve the Essence of African Woman Septemer (2004); Issue No. 30 pg 51

¹² Internet 18 March (2008): <http://www.artmatters.info/fashion/articles/rejed.php> (a)

¹³ Internet 18 March (2008): <http://www.artmatters.info/fashion/articles/rejed.php> (b)

had conceived and advanced as the national attire. The concepts¹⁴ were proposed as a springboard for local designers and the public to evolve further to accommodate their own personal preferences. It was expected that the attire would fly, but surprisingly this has not really happened.



Plate 1.5 Three Members of Parliament who received a Dressing Down from Speaker Francis Ole Kaparo¹⁵

Despite the launch fanfare, the national attire has not gained much popularity from both public and designers as expected. Since the launch very few people still remember how these attires looked like, let alone ever wearing one. And yet, despite this slow start, Kenyans are still waiting for the attire that they can comfortably identify with. The design doesn't seem to be popular. Apparently it also doesn't seem to have the universal appeal that was expected. Either the attire is very costly, unavailable or out of taste for the Kenyans it was made for. But just why are Kenyans not so taken in with this attire? What don't they like about it? Why is the public's perception of the attire so passive? Why haven't Kenyans accepted their national attire wholeheartedly, despite participating in the design concept and even selecting what they believed was an attire that adequately represented the country. However, there seems to be a problem of adoption of the national attire. This researcher therefore, sought to understand the reason for such an eventuality.

¹⁴ Daily Nation October 2005

¹⁵ Internet February (2008) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/1/africa/307031.131.stm>

1.2 Statement of the Problem

From available literature⁴, it is clear that there is a desire for national attire. My own experience and casual observation indicate that Kenyans want national attire, to enhance national identity and national pride. Many designers attempted to develop national attire but their efforts did not succeed. More recently, in 2004, a more concerted and nation-wide effort was made to attain national attire; but the outcome did not meet with national acceptance. In this study I attempted to establish why none of the proposals for national attire was adopted by many and wholeheartedly. In addition to establishing reasons why the proposals were not adopted, I viewed national or traditional attires of nationalities around the world to realize their cultural and design qualities.

Whereas factors influencing adoption of proposed national attire is the concern of this study, I assume that there is need for the same. The principal assumption of this study is that there are reasons why Kenyans did not adopt the proposals and that the adoption of the national attire is significant in tracing a focus and attitude towards the adoption of Kenya's contemporary cultural identity.

1.3 Objectives and significance of the study

This study looked at why the Kenya national attire had not gained much popularity, since the national attire plays an important role in portraying a national character. It is worthy noting that adequate care must be taken in the choice of such a design as previously noted. I was inspired to give an insight into factors influencing the choice of the best design. In this way, a design, which is focused on the identity of all the communities, can be developed. Consequently this research provides guidelines on the design process before final application. Having said the above, more specific objectives of the study were:- To enquire into the factors affecting adoption of the Kenya national attire; To establish why the proposed national attires are not adopted; To assess design approaches of other national attires (globally).

In addressing these objectives, the following research questions have been dealt with in this study: -

- What factors affect adoption of national attire?
- What are the historical characteristics of national attire?

⁴ Adongo and Odhuno 2004; Shamalla 2004; Magoiga 2004; Safari mate 2006

National attires and flags symbolize the nation and its people¹⁷. The events in Kenya after the 2007 general elections left Kenyans divided on tribal lines more than ever before. Kenya is bleeding and the people of Kenya are yearning for an identity, something that can bring unity among the 42 diverse groupings. Already various designs have been made, lots of money spent in the search for national attire, but Kenyans have not adopted it. Kenya's design industry is an industry that plays a pivotal role in the cultural definition by providing an identity. The researcher believes that the inauguration of the national attire will provide an opportunity to promote Kenya's fashion design industry.

The significance of the study is important, as it will: -

- Inform government institutions on the way forward for cultural attire.
- Add value on existing national attires.
- Expose stakeholders on the challenges of adopting national attire.
- Become a source of information for more specific studies by other scholars on the subject.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study confined itself within the Kenyan context of the search for national attire. Nairobi was chosen because of diverse cultures and taste, exposure to both national and global fashion. Within the context of this study, the researcher chose to use the definitive term attire to connote the material cultural product dealt with in this study. It will also add value to the terms dress or costume. In this case, a costume is occasion specific while the term dress connotes a form which is usually worn to cover the upper part of the body as well as below the waist and these terms do not actually connote a form of material culture of a country.

Sources of information on national attires in Kenya are limited and there are modes of unwillingness. There was unwillingness by Unilever Kenya Limited to provide original information and sketches. Unwillingness by respondents and members of the national attire design team to be interviewed also limited this study.

¹⁷ Shamalla J (2004): Submission to the Quest for Kenya National Dress; Ministry of Culture and Social Services

1.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter one has dealt with the background information on the Kenya national attire. It discussed the importance of national attire and the factors that influence that adoption. The chapter has discussed the research problem, given the objectives of the study vis-a-vis the assumptions. It has stated the significance of the research, discussed the extent of the research under scope of the study, stated the assumption, and mentioned some problems encountered in the course of the research under limitation of the study.

Definition of Terms

Textile - A term used for all items of clothes.

Costume – Occasion specific for play or national attire. The term costume can refer to wardrobe and dress in general, or to the distinctive style of dress of a particular people, class, or period. It can also refer to a particular style of clothing worn to portray the wearer as a distinct character.

Dress – A common article of modern attire or clothing that is also referred to as garment, usually worn to cover the upper part of the body as well as below the waist.

National Attire – Also known as regional costume or traditional dress expresses local (or exiled) identity and emphasizes a culture's unique attributes. It is often a source of national pride. Examples of such are a Scotsman in a kilt or a Japanese person in a kimono.

Fashion – A term commonly used to describe a style of clothing worn by most people of a country or a term used in a positive sense to describe glamour, beauty, and style.

Haute Couture/ made-to-measure – A type of garment made to order for an individual customer, and is usually made from high-quality, expensive fabric, sewn with extreme attention to detail and finish, often using time-consuming, hand-executed techniques. This type of fashion design predominated until the 1950s.

Fashion designer - A person who thinks up combinations of line, proportion, color, and texture for intended garments. They may have no sewing or patternmaking skills whatsoever, and may only sketch or conceptualize garments.

Patternmaker - One who flat drafts the shapes and sizes of the numerous pieces of a garment by hand, using paper and measuring tools or by computer using AutoCAD based software, or by draping muslin on a dress form. The resulting pattern pieces must comprise the intended design of the garment and they must fit the intended wearer.

Textile designer - a person, who designs fabric, weaves and prints for clothes and furnishings. **Seamstress** - Someone who sews seams, or in other words, a machine operator in a factory who may not have the skills to make garments from scratch or to fit them on a real body. This term is not a synonym for dressmaker.

Dressmaker - Specializes in women's custom apparel, including day dresses, career

Chapter Two Literature Review

2.0 Preamble

This chapter examines the development of dress. It discusses the historical development of the influence of adoption of the national attire within an environment of mainstream fashion industry. Although it sounds far fetched, specific interest was made so as to analyze concerns that have riddled the adoption of the Kenya national attire. It also discusses national attires of other countries with specific emphasis on their evolution and adoption. Finally, the concept of branding is also discussed with specific interest in the issue of 'Brand Kenya' as compared to the national attire.

2.1 Historical Challenges In the Search for Kenyan National Attire

Kenya, the search for national attire has been an on and off activity since the 1960s¹⁸. Mary Kadenge, a Nairobi designer (who was involved in trying to evolve national attire the 1960's) says that it has been difficult to get national attire since cultural differences always crop up whenever the idea is mooted. But this never stopped the search for the national attire. Another designer, Margaret Akumu Gould embarked on a similar crusade in the late 1980's when she organized the first ever-national attire competition at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre in Nairobi.

In Africa today, the search for nationalistic form of material culture has been historically defined. To this end Adongo and Odhuno¹⁹ in 2004 have said that since colonial times some parts of Africa have been looking for an identity, Kenya included and so she embarked on another search for the Kenya national attire in 1990 by Adongo. The search sparked-off in 1994 when three members of parliament received a severe dressing down from Speaker Francis Ole Kaparo because of entering the chambers in African attires. A more spirited search for the national attire was initiated in 2004 when the then Minister Najib Balala called on designers to design national attire.

¹⁸ Internet April (2006); Wikipedia, the internet encyclopedia.

¹⁹ Odhuno, O., Adongo, M. (2004) Kenya's national dress: The pride of a nation: Research paper

In addition to forty-two ethnic communities, Kenya has other cultures of Asian and European origin. Therefore, focus of ethnicities would have most likely hindered the conception of national attire. With such a foregoing, there are several concerns to consider in looking at the adoption of the Kenyan attire. For instance, although Uniliver Kenya Limited is commended for sponsoring the quest, the state and the corporate were not directly involved in the dynamics of development of the national attire. The private sector was seen as being competent for the tender because the companies involved all had very narrow sectarian interests. They are more interested in marketing their brands rather than branding the country and its people. In fact when it was launched in 2002, Brand Kenya's main aim was to be used as a platform best suited to effectively market the country.

However, like our national attire Brand Kenya has remained stillborn while other countries like South Africa are realizing tangible economic benefits from similar initiatives²⁰. A national branding campaign is best driven from the centre (government) as they are able to mobilize all resources for success. The search for national attire was reignited in 1994 when three members of parliament received a severe dressing down from Speaker Francis Ole Kaparo because of entering the chambers in African attires. In 2004 the then Minister for Gender, Hon. Najib Balala, in a press conference held in his office challenged designers to come up with national attire²¹. The speaker of the national assembly Francis Ole Kaparo in December 2004²² again protested against Prof Kibwana for wearing the proposed national attire in parliament. Shamalla²³ in 2004 opined that it was sad noting an ongoing debate where contributors suggested that the flag could form a basis of the national attire. She asked 'how can national attire be narrowed down to specific colours in the national flag'? In the given design effort, it is important to note the symbolic significance of the colours in a flag cannot be reduced to suit the colours of national attire. Attires have a whole colour significance based upon the mood of the

²⁰ Internet 18/3/2008; [http://www.artmatters.info/fashion/articles/reject.php\(a\)](http://www.artmatters.info/fashion/articles/reject.php(a))

²¹ Kenya Times 16th April, 2004 Publication ID, 33766 pg 11

²² Internet 18/3/2008; [http://www.artmatters.info/fashion/articles/reject.php\(b\)](http://www.artmatters.info/fashion/articles/reject.php(b))

²³ Shamalla F. N (2004), Research Paper on Kenya National Dress; Ministry of Culture and Social Services

wearer, occasion, and place among others. National attire on the other hand has a much higher colour significance that will be further dealt with in this study.

2.2 History of Clothing

The history of clothing is as old as the history of mankind. The biblical context in Genesis 3:7 phrases this as having originated as an act of necessity due to the nakedness of man. "Man stitched aprons out of fig leaves". According to Genesis 3:21, by way of divine intervention, God provided animal skin "To Adam and his wife did the Lord Make coats of skins, and clothed them"²⁴. From a life of nakedness man has since adopted to wearing other types of clothing on his body. From the above information, we see a situation of adoption through acceptance of other sources of clothing provided for through changes in time. Given a chance, Kenyans could also adopt their national attire. National attire should not be designed and forced on the people for adoption but rather allowed to evolve naturally from the people. A walk through any urban area in this country makes one to encounter the ever changing dynamics and evolving mode of dressing. Gone are the days when formal dressing would be used to accentuate one's personality. Fashion and style now take center-stage in decision of attire. It sounds far fetched but I need this area because it provides some historical facts into the history of clothing.

According to archaeologists and anthropologists, the earliest clothing probably consisted of fur, leather, leaves or grass, draped, wrapped or tied around the body for protection from the elements of nature. Knowledge of such clothing remains inferential, since clothing materials deteriorate quickly compared to stone, bone, shell and metal artifacts. Archeologists have also identified very early sewing needles of bone and ivory from about 30,000 BC, found near Kostenk, Russia in 1988²⁵. Artifacts found in Sumerian tombs suggest that the early inhabitants of Mesopotamia (c. 3500-2500 BCE) wore a wrapped sheepskin skirt. After woven cloth was available, the garment was fringed at the hem to simulate the effect of fleece. Cloaks covered the upper body²⁶. The earliest

²⁴ King James Easy-Reading Study Bible, Goodyear, Arizona 85338. www.swordbible.net. 1-877-KJ-BIBLE

²⁵ Internet (June 2007) <http://en.Wikipedia>, the free encyclopedia

²⁶ Encyclopedia of Modern Asia Clothing (2006), Traditional—Iraq: Macmillan, USA

evidence of civilization in Mesopotamia is identified as Sumerian. Early Sumerian men typically wore waist strings or small loincloths that provided barely any coverage. However, later the wraparound skirt was introduced for men, which hung to the knee or lower and was held up by a thick, rounded belt that was tied in the back. Early Sumerian women seem to have worn only a shawl wrapped around their bodies. Later Sumerian women typically wore sewn outfits covered with tiers of fringe. These included skirts much like those worn by men and shawls or tops that were also fringed. By the end of Sumerian rule around 2000 B.C.E. both men and women wore skirts and shawls²⁷.

There is less evidence about what men and women wore during Babylonian rule from 1894 to 1595 B.C.E.²⁸. The scant evidence available suggests that Babylonians wore skirts and shawls very similar to the Sumerians, although some men during Babylonian rule did wear loin skirts with a hemline that slanted from the upper knee in the front to the calf in the back. According to Nemet-Nejat and Karen Rhea evidence does suggest that the fringe on garments became more elaborate during this time. One painting discovered shows a king wearing a skirt with tiered fringe. No evidence of female attire exists except for what was depicted in renditions of goddesses who were shown wearing sleeved attires with fitted bodices, V-necks, and straight skirts. The Assyrians, who ruled from 1380 to 612 B.C.E., continued to wear fringed garments²⁹. Both men and women wrapped fringed shawls over their shoulders and around their waists to cover themselves from their shoulders to nearly their ankles. These were held in place by belts. Around 1000 B.C.E. Assyrian men began wearing belted knee-length tunics with short sleeves. Men of high status, such as kings and military officers, also wore woolen cloaks. After the Assyrians were conquered in 612 B.C.E., the Persian Empire began to prosper and people in Mesopotamia adopted Persian trousers into their wardrobes³⁰.

²⁷ Internet 17 April 2008: <http://www.fraxian.com/notes/oldking.htm>

²⁸ Nemet-Nejat, Karen Rhea (1998): *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press

²⁹ Payne, Blanche (1965) *History of Costume: From the Ancient Egyptians to the Twentieth Century*. New York: Harper and Row(a)

³⁰ Payne, Blanche (1965) *History of Costume: From the Ancient Egyptians to the Twentieth Century*. New York: Harper and Row(b)

Ralf Kittler, Manfred Kayser and Mark Stone King¹¹, has conducted a genetic analysis of human body louse that indicates that they originated about 107,000 years ago. Body lice require clothing to survive, so this suggests a surprisingly recent date for the invention of clothing. Its invention may have coincided with the spread of modern Homo sapiens from the warm climate of Africa, thought to have begun between 50,000 and 100,000 years ago. However, a second group of researchers used similar genetic methods to estimate that body lice originated about 540,000 years ago¹². As for now, the date of the origin of clothing remains unresolved. Some human cultures such as the various peoples of the Arctic Circle until recently made clothing entirely of furs and skins, cutting clothing to fit and decorating lavishly ("Plate 2.1")¹³.



Plate 2.1 Shows a Neanderthal Clothed in Fur¹⁴

From the ongoing debate it is evident that adoption to different types of clothing is not new to man. Kenyans too, have in the past adopted other forms of clothing and can adopt their national attire over time. Other cultures have supplemented or replaced leather and skins with cloth woven, knitted, or twined from various animal and vegetable fibers. As these technologies change so does clothing. According to the futurologists, current trends predictions, man-made fibre such as nylon, polyester, Terylene, terycot,

¹¹ Kittler M, Kayser M and Stone King M (2007). *Molecular Evolution of Pediculus Humans and the Origin of Clothing*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc

¹² Internet (June 2007); [http://en.Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia\(a\)](http://en.Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia(a))

¹³ Reed et al. (2004) PLoS Biology: <http://www.bookrags.com/research/clothing-traditionaliraq-ema-02/> (August 2007)

¹⁴ Internet June (2007); [http://en.Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia \(b\)](http://en.Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (b))

Lycra, and gore-tex account for much of the clothing market²⁵. Many more will certainly develop.

2.3 History of Fashion

Although fashion is not a national dress there is need to look at it because of the historical factors which can give a foundation of the history of dress. The history of fashion design is divided into two periods namely: Early twentieth century and late twentieth century. Choice and creativity of fashion is influenced by: aesthetic factors, seasons, economy and political factors, cultural-psychological factors, managerial factors, personalities (super stars) and technology, physical factors, media and the fashion industry (fashion designers, merchandisers, models). Fashion design is generally considered to have started in the 19th century by Charles Frederick Worth. Worth widely considered the Father of Haute Couture, was an English -born fashion designer of the 19th century. While all articles of clothing from any time period are studied by academics as costume design, only clothing created after 1858 could be considered as fashion design²⁶.

Born in Bourne, Lincolnshire, England, Worth made his mark in the French fashion industry. He worked at several prosperous London drapery shops before moving to Paris in 1846²⁷. Gagelin and Opigez, well-known Parisian drapers, hired him. While working in their shop, he married one of the firm's models, Marie Vernet. Marie would model shawls and bonnets for prospective customers. Worth made a few simple dresses for his wife and customers started to ask for copies of the dresses as well. Worth, by now a junior partner in the firm, urged his partners to expand into dressmaking, but they hesitated to risk their reputation in a business as low-class as dressmaking. Worth found a wealthy Swede, Otto Bobergh, who was willing to invest in the venture and opened the dressmaking establishment of Worth and Bobergh in 1858²⁸. Many of his customers would travel a long way to Paris from other countries, even as far as New York and Boston across the Atlantic Ocean²⁹. Worth gave his customers luxurious materials and meticulous fit. Rather than let the customer dictate the design as had previously been dressmaking practice four times a year he displayed model dresses at fashion shows. His patronesses would pick a

²⁵ Internet August (2007): Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia/clothing

²⁶ Internet August (2007): Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia/clothing

²⁷ Internet 20 March (2008): [http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Charles+Frederick+Worth\(a\)](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Charles+Frederick+Worth(a))

²⁸ Internet 20 March (2008): [http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Charles+Frederick+Worth\(b\)](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Charles+Frederick+Worth(b))

²⁹ Internet 20 March (2008): [http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Charles+Frederick+Worth\(c\)](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Charles+Frederick+Worth(c))

model, which would then be sewn in fabrics of their choice and tailored to their figure. He completely revolutionized the business of dressmaking. He was the first of the couturiers, dressmakers considered artists rather than mere artisans.

2.4 Who Dictates Fashion

Fashion in clothes has allowed wearers to express emotion or solidarity with other people for millennia⁴⁰. What a person chooses to wear can reflect that person's personality or likes. When people who have cultural status start to wear new or different clothes a fashion trend may start. People who like or respect them may start to wear clothes of a similar style. Fashion varies significantly within a society according to age, social class, generation, occupation and geography as well as over time. The system of sporting various fashions can be regarded as a fashion language⁴¹.

Musicians and other cultural icons have always influenced what we wear, but so have political figures and royalty. According to Snobille Ndamase⁴², a renowned fashion designer in Africa, Nelson Mandela the former president of the Republic of South Africa has given people the courage to dress differently through his famous madimba shirt. "African traditional and modern outfits are turning up in boardrooms and becoming an acceptable substitute for the black tie." Mandela is therefore not just a living saint but also a fashion statement. In Kenya the Maasai attire is largely accepted as Kenyan. It has previously influenced designers of the national attire. They have capitalized on it to influence their work. During the 2007 campaigns in Kenya, many people were greatly influenced by politician in the way they dressed. It was not surprising to see a majority of people dressed in their preferred political party colors during rallies. These colors were orange for the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and blue for the Party of National Unity (PNU). A few months down and nobody wanted to be seen donning these colors. They are hardly worn by people, see examples as shown in ("Plate 2.2 on page 18").

⁴⁰ The encyclopedia of fashion. (1970) (a)

⁴¹ The encyclopedia of fashion. (1970) (b)

⁴² Saturday Nation; November. (2007) pg 3



Plate 2.2 Shows Orange for Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and Blue for Party of National Unity (PNU)

2.5 The Media and Fashion

An encounter with the ever changing dynamic and evolving mode of dressing in Kenya can not go unnoticed. Gone are the days when formal dressing would be used to accentuate one's personality; fashion and style now take center-stage in decision of attire by the people of Kenya. Inasmuch as this is a contentious issue that elicits unending dialogue and varied opinions, the question that begs asking is: What determines what Kenyans wear today, and why? The media comes out as a major influence on the decisions people make, especially when it comes to dressing. Under the umbrella term 'media', is publications, television, radio, cinema, theatre, the Internet and various modes of advertising that relay information to people. With such universal rights as freedom of expression seemingly in full effect, Kenyans and especially the youth need no prompting to enjoy these rights and exercise the freedoms that go with it. Besides style and fashion, human beings primarily get dressed for protection from the elements and also to safeguard their dignity. The question that arises then is: Why would one endure the discomfort of a winter jacket worn in the afternoon heat or teenage girls bear the morning chill in short sleeveless tops. Are we more interested in dressing comfortably or in fashion from the West?

The warped view that the youth get especially after watching movies and music videos from the developed countries is that the attire worn during performances is everyday wear. Many young people eventually wear these clothing while aping what they

have watched. In 2004 there was a launch of Kenya's national attire. Since the launch, very few Kenyans still remember how those attires looked like, let alone ever wearing them. Either the attires are very costly, unavailable or out of taste for the Kenyans they were being made for. This craving for what is foreign runs deep within all of us but, it is more evident in the youth who are more prone to peer influences and impulsive actions by virtue of their age and the circumstances they find themselves in.

An important part of fashion is fashion journalism. Editorial critique and commentary can be found in magazines, newspapers, on television, fashion websites and in fashion blogs. At the beginning of the twentieth century, fashion magazines began to include photographs and became even more influential than in the past. In cities throughout the world these magazines were greatly sought-after and had a profound effect on public taste. Talented illustrators drew exquisite fashion plates for the publications which covered the most recent developments in fashion and beauty. Perhaps the most famous of these magazines was 'La Gazette du bon ton' which was founded in 1912 by Lucien Vogel and regularly published until 1925 (with the exception of the war years)⁴³.

Vogue, founded in the US in 1902, has been the longest-lasting and most successful of the hundreds of fashion magazines that have come and gone. Increasing affluence after World War II and, most importantly, the advent of cheap color printing in the 1960s led to a huge boost in its sales⁴⁴. Haute Couture (made to wear) designers followed the trend by starting the ready-to-wear, heavily advertised in the magazines. Television coverage began in the 1950s with small fashion features. In the 1960s and 1970s, fashion segments on various entertainment shows became more frequent, and by the 1980s, dedicated fashion shows like Fashion Television started to appear. Despite television and increasing Internet coverage, including fashion blogs, press coverage remains the most important form of publicity in the eyes of the industry⁴⁵. Western fashion has, to a certain extent

⁴³ Internet August (2007): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion>

⁴⁴ Fernand Braudel (1981). *Civilization and Capitalism. The Structures of Everyday Life*. William Collins & Sons, London

⁴⁵ Hal R. Varian, (April 2007). *The New York Times*. Why that Hoodlacker's your Son Wears isn't Trademarked: (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion>)

become international attire, as Western media and styles penetrate all parts of the world. Very few parts of the world remain where people do not wear items of cheap, mass-produced Western clothing. Even people in poor countries can afford used clothing from richer Western countries. In Kenya, the cheap clothing (*mitumba*) has been cited as one of the reasons for non adoption of the national dress.

2.6 Changes in Fashion Styles of the Western World

Fashion, changes constantly and these changes may proceed more rapidly than in most other fields of human activity (language, thought, and so on). For some, modern fast-paced changes in fashion embody many of the negative aspects. This is because it results in waste and encourages people and consumers to buy things unnecessarily. Young people especially, enjoy the diversity that changing fashion can apparently provide. They use it as a way to satisfy their desire to experience "new" and "interesting" things. Fashion can change to enforce uniformity, example in the case where Mao suits became the national uniform of mainland China⁴⁶. Its adoption among revolutionaries in Tanzania⁴⁷ is one case of the latter form of imitation of admiration, association and hence imitation. African radicals perceived the Chinese style of dress as a symbol of anti-colonial, anti-western solidarity worthy of replicating. At the same time there remains an equal or larger range designated as 'out of fashion'. These or similar fashions may cyclically come back 'into fashion' in due course, and remain 'in fashion' again for a while.

Throughout the early 20th century⁴⁸ "practically all high fashion originated in Paris, and to a lesser extent London. This however, was not the beginning of national attires. Fashion magazines from other countries sent editors to the Paris fashion shows. Department stores also sent buyers to the shows, where they purchased garments to copy and openly stole the style lines in addition to trim details of others. During this time in fashion history, the division between haute couture (made to wear) and ready-to-wear was not sharply defined. The two separate modes of production often co-existed in houses where the seamstresses moved freely between made-to-measure and ready-made.

⁴⁶ Internet August (2007): <http://gainsjunction.tamu.edu/issues/vol4num1/garis/>

⁴⁷ Michael F. Loiche (1965), *Zanzibar: Background to Revolution*, Princeton University Press

⁴⁸ Albert Tenzou (1970), *Histoire de la Presse*, Paris, PUF

2.7 Styles of the 1900s



Plate 2.3, 2.4 Shows Clothes Worn In the 1900s⁴⁹ and a Portraill of Fashionable Lady of the 1900s⁵⁰ on the right

The costumes worn by the fashionable women of the 'Belle Époque', as the French called this era, were strikingly similar to those worn in the heyday of Charles Worth who was a fashion pioneer. By the end of the nineteenth-century, the horizons of the fashion industry had generally broadened. This was partly due to the more mobile and independent lifestyle many well-off women were beginning to adopt and the practical clothes they demanded. However the fashions of La Belle Époque still retained the elaborate, upholstered, hourglass-shaped style of the 1800s⁵¹. The constant need for radical change, which is now essential for the survival of fashion within the present system, was still literally unthinkable. The use of different trimmings was all that distinguished one season from the other.

2.8 Styles of the 1910s

During the early years of the 1910s the fashionable silhouette became much more supple, fluid and soft than in the 1900s. The girls wore flowing pantaloons, turbans, and vivid colors and gels has in exotic kimono. The Art Deco movement began to emerge at this time and its influence was evident in the designs of many couturiers of the time⁵². Simple felt hats, turbans, and clouds of tulle replaced the styles of headgear popular in the 1900s.

⁴⁹ Internet August (2007): The Encyclopedia of Fashion, 1970(a)

⁵⁰ Internet August (2007): The Encyclopedia of Fashion, 1970(b)

⁵¹ Internet August (2007): The encyclopedia of fashion, 1970 (c)

⁵² Albert-Terrou (1970): Histoire de la Presse. Paris, PUF



Plate 2.5 Shows a Dress Design by Paul Poiret of the 1900s¹¹ Plate 2.6 Shows a Delphos Gown of the 1900s¹²

Changes in dress during World War I were dictated more by essential needs than by dictates of fashion. As more and more women were forced to work, they demanded clothes that were better suited to their new activities. Social events had to be postponed in favor of more pressing engagements and the need to mourn the increasing numbers of dead, visits to the wounded, and the general gravity of the time meant that darker colors became the norm. A new monochrome look emerged that was unfamiliar to young women in comfortable circumstances. By 1915 fashionable skirts had risen above the ankle and then later to mid-calf¹³. The world war saw the end of traditional attire and birth of fashion.

2.9 Styles of the 1920s

This was the era of shifting waistlines, between the natural waist and hips. Waistlines were at the waist, but were loose and not fitted. Women wore suits with long hemlines and somewhat full skirts, often with belts at the waist of the jackets. Dress and suit bodices alike were worn loose, even baggy. By 1923, waistlines began to drop to a point between the natural waist and hips, while styles continued to be loose and baggy. In 1924 the waistline dropped to the hip. In 1925, "shift" type dresses with no waistline

¹¹ Internet August (2007): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion\(a\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion(a))

¹² Internet August (2007): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion\(b\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion(b))

¹³ Albert Tarrow, (1970) Histoire de la Presse, Paris, PUF

emerged. At the end of the decade, dresses were being worn with straight bodices and collars. Tucks at the bottom of the bodices were popular, as well as knife-pleated skirts⁵⁶.

In 1928, styles changed again, hemlines rose to the knee and dresses became more fitted. These changes laid the foundation for the elegantly styled fashions of the 1930s.



Plate 2.7 Shows Style of 1928⁵⁷



Plate 2.8 Shows Fashions of 1928⁵⁸

Many garments of the 1920s were fastened with buttons. The zipper, first patented in 1893, was not utilized in garments until the latter part of the decade. It was originally known as a "locker" It did not receive its current name until 1926⁵⁹. In men's wear there was a growing mood of informality, this was especially mirrored in fashions that emphasized youthfulness and relaxation. Young men in the Twenties, no longer afraid to show their youthfulness, began to wear the same soft wool suit all day long. Short suit jackets replaced the old long jackets of the past which were now only worn for formal occasions. Men had a variety of sport clothes including sweaters and short pants, commonly known as knickerbockers. For evening wear, a short tuxedo was more fashionable than the tail-coat⁶⁰.

⁵⁶ Allen, C. and Unwin F. (1988) *A century of style*. London (a)

⁵⁷ Internet August (2007) Source: *The encyclopedia of fashion*, 1970

⁵⁸ Internet 25 August (2007); <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion>

⁵⁹ Allen, C. and Unwin F. (1988); *A century of style*. London (b)

⁶⁰ Lobenthal, Joel *Radical Rags: (1990)*, *Fashions of the Sixties*. New York. Abbeville Press, 1990



Plate 2.9 Shows 1920s Jazz Suits for Men⁴¹

2.10 Styles of the 1930s

In the 1930s, as the public began to feel the effects of the Great Depression, fashion became more compromising, aspiring to preserve feminism's victories while rediscovering a subtle and reassuring elegance and sophistication. Women's fashions moved away from the brash, daring style of the Twenties towards a more romantic, feminine silhouette⁴². The waist was restored to its proper position, hemlines dropped, there was renewed appreciation of the bust, and backless evening gowns and soft, slim-fitting day dresses became popular. The fashion for outdoor activities stimulated couturiers to manufacture what would nowadays be called sportswear. The term 'ready-to-wear' was not yet widely used⁴³.

⁴¹ Internet August (2007): *The encyclopedia of fashion, 1970*

⁴² Internet 25 August (2007): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion> (a)

⁴³ Internet 25th August (2007): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion> (b)



Plate 2.10 Shows Fashions from 1936⁶⁴

2.11 Styles of the 1940s

Many fashion houses closed during occupation of Paris during World War II. Several designers permanently relocated to New York⁶⁵. In the enormous moral and intellectual re-education program undertaken by the French state couture was not spared. In contrast to the stylish, liberated Paris, the model of the wife and mother, the robust, athletic young woman, a figure which was much more in line with the political dispensation was promoted. Germany, meanwhile, was taking possession of over half of what France produced, including high fashion. It was also considering relocating French haute couture to the cities of Berlin and Vienna, neither of which had any significant tradition of fashion. The point of all this was to break up a monopoly that supposedly threatened the dominance of the Third Reich⁶⁶.

2.12 Styles of the 1950s

Flying in the face of continuity, logic, and erudite sociological predictions, fashion in the 1950s bore strong reflective echoes of the past. A whole society was now more circumspect. Women chose to wear dresses made of opulent materials, with corseted

⁶⁴ Internet August (2007); Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion>

⁶⁵ Barwick, Sandra (1984) *A Century of Style*, London, Allen & Unwin(a)

⁶⁶ Barwick, Sandra (1984) *A Century of Style*, London, Allen & Unwin (b)

waists and swirling skirts to mid-calf. As fashion looked to the past, haute couture experienced something of a revival and spawned a myriad of star designers who profited hugely from the rapid growth of the media⁴⁷.



Plate 2.11 An Evening Gown by Designer Charles James⁴⁸ Plate 2.12 The popular Full-Skirted Style of the Fifties⁴⁹

After the war, the style which consisted of broad shoulders, floral ties, straight-legged pants, and shirts with long pointed collars, became very popular among men in Europe⁵⁰. In London certain manufacturers revived the Edwardian elegance in men's fashion, adopting a tight-fitting retro style that was intended to appeal to traditionalists. The Italian look style⁵¹ was taken up by an entire generation on both sides of the Atlantic. By the end of the decade mass-manufactured clothing had become more popular than in the past. This granted unprecedented access to fashionable styles to all.

2.13 Styles of the 1960s

During the 1960 and 1969 a radical shake-up occurred in the fundamental structure of fashion. There would not be just one single, prevailing trend or fashion indivisibly linked to all the various influences in other areas of people's lives⁵². For the first time in history there was an independent youth fashion that was not based on the conventions of an older age group. In the past, failure to follow fashion merely meant

⁴⁷ Albert Teroou, (1970) *Histoire de la Presse*, Paris, PUF(a)

⁴⁸ Internet August (2007): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion\(a\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion(a))

⁴⁹ Internet August (2007): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion\(b\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion(b))

⁵⁰ De Osmo, Cuillermo (1994) *Marlano Fortuny: His life and work*, New York, Aurum Press Ltd

⁵¹ Albert Teroou (1970), *Histoire de la Presse*, Paris, PUF(b)

⁵² Lobenthal, Joel *Radical Rags* (1990): *Fashions of the Sixties*, New York, Abbeville Press

that you were poor but in the Sixties it became just as much a statement of personal freedom.



Plate 2.13 Shows the Sixties miniskirts²³

In stark contrast to their mature, ultra-feminine mothers, the woman of the 1960s adopted a girlish, childlike style, with short skirts and straightened curves, reminiscent to the look of the 1920s. At the start of the decade skirts were knee-high but steadily became shorter and shorter until the mini-skirt emerged in 1965. By the end of the decade they had shot well above the stocking top, making the transition to tights inevitable.²⁴

2.14 Styles of the 1970s

Nick-named as 'me' decade, please yourself 'these style of the 1970s was seen as the end of good taste. The decade began with a continuation of the hippie look of the late 1960s, with Alghans, Indian scarves, and flower-print tunics. Jeans remained frayed, tie dye was still popular, and the fashion for unisex mushroomed. An immense movement claiming civil rights for blacks combined with the influence of soul music from the USA created nostalgia for Africa and African culture. A radical chic emerged, influenced by the likes of James Brown, Diana Ross, Angela Davis, and the Black Panthers. In everything from afro hairstyles to platform soles. Hems began dropping in 1974 to below the knee, until finally reaching the lower mid calf in 1977 and shoulder lines were dropped.²⁵

²³ Internet April 2007; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Bibaminiiskirt.jpg>

²⁴ Ireland John Patrick Encyclopedia of Fashion Details, Batsford
Barwick, Sandra(1984); A Century of Style, London, Allen & Unwin



Plate 2.14 Shows Fashionable skirt styles of 1972⁶⁶

2.15 Styles of the 1980s

The self-conscious image of the decade was very good for the fashion industry. Fashion shows were transfigured into media-saturated spectacles and frequently televised, taking high priority in the social calendar. Appearance was related to performance, which was of supreme importance to a whole generation of young urban professionals. The way in which men and women associated with the latest styles was no more a matter of passive submission but one of active choice. As fashion once again looked to the past, baroque evening dress and long gowns made reappearance⁷⁷.

⁶⁶ Internet August (2007); Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion>

⁷⁷ Barwick, Sandra (1984): *A Century of Style*. London, Allen & Unwin



Plate 2.15 The extravagant outfits by designer Nolan Miller for the 80s TV series Dynasty⁷⁸



Plate 2.16 The Short, flounced rah-rah skirt created by Norma Kamali⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Internet August (2007) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion> (a)

⁷⁹ Internet August (2007): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion> (b)

2.16 Styles of the 1990s

Fashion at the end of the 20th century tackled themes like rape, disability, religious violence, death, and body modification. There was a dramatic move away from the sexy styles aimed at the glamorous femme fatale of the Eighties and many designers, taken with a vision of romantic poverty, adopted the style of the poverty-stricken soul, dressed in a stark, perversely sober palette, with a face devoid of make-up⁸⁰. Clothes by ready-to-wear retailers such as The Gap, Banana Republic and Eddie Bauer came to the forefront of fashion⁸¹.

2.17 Styles of the 2000s

In the 2000s, as the future began to seem increasingly bleak, fashion, and indeed the Arts in general, looked to the past for inspiration, arguably more so than in previous decades. Vintage clothing, especially from the Sixties, Seventies, and Eighties became extremely popular and fashion designers often sought to emulate bygone styles in their collections. The early '00s saw a continuation of the minimalist look of the Nineties in high fashion. Later on, designers began to adopt a more colorful, feminine, excessive, and "anti-modern" look⁸².



Plate 2.17 The Popular Boho Chic Style of the Mid'00s⁸³

⁸⁰ Allen, C. and Unwin F. (1988): *A Century of Style*. London(a)

⁸¹ Allen, C. & Unwin F. (1988): *A Century of Style*. London(b)

⁸² Warwick, Sandra (1984): *A Century of Style*, Allen & Unwin, London.

⁸³ Internet 25 August (2007): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion\(a\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion(a))

⁸⁴ Internet 25 August (2007): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion\(b\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion(b))

2.18 Styles of the Late Twentieth Century

During the late twentieth century, fashions began to crisscross international boundaries with rapidity. Popular Western styles were adopted all over the world, and many designers from outside of the West had a profound impact on fashion. Synthetic materials such as Lycra, Spandex, and viscose became widely used. Fashion, after two decades of looking to the future, once again turned to the past for inspiration⁵⁴.

2.19 The Non-Western World

Outside the Western European sphere of influence, costume tends to be traditional, and variations from the original forms are traceable to influences of conquest and migration. Where non-Western cultures have come into conflict with Western ideas, traditional attire has often been displaced or even obliterated. In Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East many aspects of traditional attire have survived. The influence, particularly of the Moslem conquests, can be traced in the attire of the various areas⁵⁵. Attire in Africa is generally in the draped rather than the fitted tradition. As might be expected from the climatic condition, it varies from the loincloth to the elaborately patterned and draped robe. A Middle Eastern influence can be detected across North Africa and in some places south of the Sahara and in East Africa, where the rather grander appearing sewn robe, sometimes with a draped outer garment and sometimes with a caftan like over robe, may be found⁵⁶.

The Middle East shows a mixture of costume influences from ancient times.⁵⁷ Although distinct traces and forms are found in particular regions, the general effect is of a rich conglomeration of traditions adapted and adjusted to the local climates and activities. Until oil became important to the industrial West, little change had occurred in the ancient traditional attire, beyond the introduction of silk from the Far East during the early Byzantine Empire. In recent decades, Western manufactured attire has rapidly displaced much of the more expensive traditional handmade attire. Some resurgence of

⁵⁴ Internet September (2007); [http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acre/7631/costume9.html?200715\(a\)](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acre/7631/costume9.html?200715(a))

⁵⁵ Internet September (2007); [http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acre/7631/costume9.html?200715\(b\)](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acre/7631/costume9.html?200715(b))

⁵⁶ Internet September (2007); [http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acre/7631/costume9.html?200715\(c\)](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acre/7631/costume9.html?200715(c))

the more basic forms of traditional attire has occurred with the upsurge of traditional Muslim values. Before the Muslim conquests of the 16th century⁸⁸, the people of India seem to have worn only variations of the draped attire of the hot-climatic ancient world, including the loincloth and the sari. Middle Eastern influences came with the Mug Hal Empire and seem substantially greater on Indian traditional attire than the Western influence was under the British Empire.

Clothing in Southeast Asia seems to be a variation of the draped costume. Trousers resembling those of the ancient Persians are combined with an open-sleeved coat or sleeveless waistcoat. The aristocracy and royal families have developed a ceremonial attire of elaboration and decoration similar to their tradition in architecture⁸⁹.



Plate 2.18 The traditional square-cut, open attire of China, Japan and Korea⁹⁰

As shown in this picture, the traditional attire in China, Japan, and Korea consisting of silk and light cloth made of finely woven fibers have been used in square-cut, open-robe costumes that can be layered almost endlessly against cold weather. Trousers common in China, are infrequent in Japanese traditional attire, but in general the rest of the styles are similar. The industrial Westernization of Japan after World War II has also westernized the national attire⁹¹. In the Far East many aspects of traditional attire have survived, and the influence, particularly of the Muslim conquests, can be traced in the attire of the various areas⁹².

⁸⁸ Internet September (2007); [http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acres/7631/costume9.html?200715\(a\)](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acres/7631/costume9.html?200715(a))

⁸⁹ Internet September (2007); [http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acres/7631/costume9.html?200715\(b\)](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acres/7631/costume9.html?200715(b))

⁹⁰ Internet September (2007); [http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acres/7631/costume9.html?200715\(c\)](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acres/7631/costume9.html?200715(c))

⁹¹ Internet September (2007); [http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acres/7631/costume9.html?200715\(d\)](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acres/7631/costume9.html?200715(d))

⁹² Example: Japan, China, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and even Saudi Arabia

2.20 Types of Fashion

There are three main categories of fashion, but these may be split up into additional and more specific categories. They include: - **Haute Couture**, also known as "*made-to-measure*"⁹¹. This type of fashion design predominated until the 1950s. A couture garment is made to order for an individual customer, and is usually made from high-quality, expensive fabric, sewn with extreme attention to detail and finish, often using time-consuming, hand-executed techniques. Look and fit take priority over the cost of materials and the time it takes to make.

Ready to-Wear. Ready-to-wear clothes are a *cross between haute couture and mass market*. They are not made for individual customers, but great care is taken in the choice and cut of the fabric. These clothes are made in small quantities to guarantee exclusivity, so they are rather expensive. Fashion houses usually present these collections each season during a period known as Fashion Week⁹². The Fashion Week takes place on a citywide basis and occurs twice per year in Europe, Asia and the Americas. However in Kenya, the Fashion week takes place once a year although not always.

2.21 Mass Market Fashion

The mass market caters for a wide range of customers, producing *ready-to-wear clothes in large quantities and standard sizes*. Cheap materials, creatively used, produce affordable fashion. Mass-market designers generally adapt the trends set by the famous names in fashion. They often wait around a season to make sure a style is going to catch on before producing their own versions of the original look. In order to save money and time, they use cheaper fabrics and simpler production techniques, which can easily be done by machine. The end product can therefore be sold much more cheaply⁹³. Today, fashion industry relies more on mass-market sales. It is however important to note that national attire and fashion can not be complete without the use of fabric. This will therefore form the next part this study.

⁹¹ Internet August (2007); <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion>

⁹² Sara Tomerlin (1975). *American Fashion*. New York

⁹³ Cumming, Valerie (2004). *Understanding Fashion History*. Costume & Fashion Press. ISBN 0 8967-6253-X

2.22 Clothing Materials

The common clothing materials include cloth, typically made of viscose cotton, flax, wool, hemp, ramie, silk or synthetic fibers such as Polyester and Nylon among many others. (Fur, Leather, Denim). While in the early 19th century, only natural textiles were manufactured, synthetic textiles became popular in the middle of the 19th century²⁰. Synthetic textiles are known to possess properties like heat resistance, durability, water proof, which make them quite useful in manufacturing a number of products. The range and variety of fibers has increased in the last 100 years.

Textiles can be obtained from a variety of sources including:

- Vegetable Fibers: Example - Cotton, Linen
- Animal Fibers: Example - Wool, Silk
- Mineral Fibers: Example – Asbestos²¹

Man made textiles can be both cellulose and non-cellulose polymer based. Some of the major synthetic textiles are rayon, nylon, acrylic, and mord-acrylic and so on. Some of the popular classes of man made and natural textiles that are available for uses include:

- Woven textiles
- Knitted textiles
- Tufted textiles²²

Many industries including home furnishings, automobile, garments and so on are major consumers of these types of textiles. Interior decorators, homemakers, fashion and dress designers, and retail store customers also use these textiles for various purposes²³. Kenya's textile industry for example relied heavily on cotton until the 1960s. Thereafter the industry began shifting away from cotton to synthetic materials following a general world-wide trend. The textile and clothing industry expanded steadily between the 1960s and 1980s due to increased private sector and government investment. However it has stagnated in the last decade as a result of inadequate supplies of raw materials, increased imports of second hand clothing (mitumba), inadequate modernization of equipment and

²⁰ Internet 20 August (2007): <http://www.textilefurnishings.com/what-is-textile.html>

²¹ Halsey and Young mark (1986): *Foundation of Weaving*, David and Charles Inc(a)

²² Halsey and Young mark (1986): *Foundation of Weaving*, David and Charles Inc(b)

²³ Halsey and Young mark (1986): *Foundation of Weaving*, David and Charles Inc(c)

machinery, and failure to increase exports especially following the collapse of the East African common market¹⁰⁰.

2.23 Fashion Design

To many people, the latest style in clothes and cosmetics is usually admirable. The production of new styles and accessories involves a process, which Hawes¹⁰¹ calls fashion design. These designs and accessories are usually created within the cultural and social influences of a specific time. The product of fashion design fall into disuse after some period of time called a "season". Chenoune¹⁰² notes that fashion design has a built in obsolescence usually of one or two seasons and it is possible to produce attire, which can be in use for more than two seasons. The use of national attire's should carry more than this character because they are more enduring.



Plate 2.19 Fashion shows display looks created by professional designers¹⁰³

According to Steele¹⁰⁴, the fashion designer who was not simply a dressmaker was Charles Frederick Worth 1826–1895. Before the former draper set up his maison couture (*fashion house*) in Paris, clothing design and creation was handled by largely anonymous seamstresses, and high fashion descended from that worn at royal courts. Worth's success

¹⁰⁰ J. Madeley (1992): *Trade and the Poor: The Impact of International Trade on Developing Countries*. Intermediate Technology Publication, Nairobi

¹⁰¹ Hawes Elizabeth (1938) *Fashion is spinach*. Random house

¹⁰² Chenoune Farid (1993) *A history of Men's Fashion*. Paris, Flammarion

¹⁰³ Internet April (2008): : <http://www.uzuri.com/>

¹⁰⁴ Steele Valerie (1988) *Paris Fashion: A cultural history*. Oxford University press

was such that he was able to dictate to his customers what they should wear, instead of following their lead as earlier dressmakers had done. It was during this period that many design houses began to hire artists to sketch or paint designs for garments. The images alone could be presented to clients much more cheaply than by producing an actual sample garment in the workroom. If the client liked the design, they ordered it and the resulting garment made money for the house. Thus, the tradition of designers sketching out garment designs instead of presenting completed garments on models to customers began as an economy¹⁰⁵. Sketching of national attires is therefore, a process that can enhance functionality and provide variations in designs so as to encourage adoption.

According to the web page noubikko¹⁰⁶, dress is said to make a "fashion statements." By overlooking, we could convey uncertainty and confusion. By emphasizing we can enhance our look, strength and success. National attire therefore, continues to make its statements and will be judged by more people than they will ever see our homes. Today, dress has become a means for one human to evaluate another¹⁰⁷. National attire can create positive aspects of us. It sparks self assurance and confidence. It can make people to respond and be excited to be in our presence. At times, dress is the only visible clue to our personalities. According to Snowbile Ndamase¹⁰⁸ one of the biggest names in African Fashion design, "the decision to make a fashion statement was one that Nelson Mandela made on his own," Having been in prison for more than 20 years, he wanted something that the world would identify him with. The result was a shirt that has made its mark on the world scene¹⁰⁹.

2.24 National Attires/Traditional Attire

National attire also known as traditional dress brands a nation and its people but for the purpose of this study I choose to use the word attire. Dress has long been regarded as an important social indicator but never more than it was by the Victorians.

¹⁰⁵ John Patrick 1970, Encyclopedia of Fashion Details, Batsford, Ireland

¹⁰⁶ Internet July 2007; February <http://www.noubikko.com/noubikko-body/tips/advise/clothingaffect.htm> (a)

¹⁰⁷ Internet 30 July 2007; <http://www.noubikko.com/noubikko-body/tips/advise/clothingaffect.htm> (b)

¹⁰⁸ Saturday Nation, 10th November, 2007; Pg 3 (a)

¹⁰⁹ Saturday Nation, 10th November 2007; Pg 3 (b)

Merrifield¹⁰. In her book "dress as fine Art" listed its function of marking the wearer's station in society third after the needs of decency and warmth. Part of the reason for the nineteenth century preoccupation with this function was the fact that the customary social distinction in dress was increasingly being ignored or flouted. National attire therefore becomes important in this sense as it denotes the position of the country in the world and shows the national character of the people. Some African countries also have their national attires, Nigerians for instance have their Agbada and Ghanalans have their kente while Ugandans have their Gomesi also known as the Busuti.

Africans all over the continent have taken the idea of a flat piece of cloth, turned its use into an art form, right from the dynastic periods of ancient Egypt. Much of what is worn around the continent tends to vary quite significantly from one region to another. There are however some types of clothes common in all the five regions of the African continent. In West Africa, the wrapper a rectangular piece of cloth is used by both men and women, overlapped and knotted in a myriad of creative wraps. Common names used to identify these are the Iro, Iborun, Gele, Ase Oke in Nigeria, the kente and Adinkra cloth in Ghana¹¹. The Eastern side of the continent has other interpretations of the flat cloth. They have the creatively printed and colored kitengo, the versatile kanga and the hand woven kikoi. The kanga has become a worn statement like the Western T – shirts with all sorts of sayings – political, social and philosophical, to be collected. The kanga is commonly used in Kenya, Tanzania, Malagasy and Swaziland¹². In Zaire this flat piece of cloth is worn as a bottom piece while the top is fitted and tailored.

Many people throughout the world have either maintained or readopted traditional attire in everyday use or for selected occasions. Very often traditional attire has gone through a conversion process from everyday attire, to a fixed formal attire of weddings, government functions, traditional dance, or religious celebrations. Many styles of traditional attire throughout the world were also assimilated into western fashions. Traditional attire is enjoying a 'comeback' in some areas in the world for example in Moslem countries even while losing ground in others.¹³ However, numerous examples of

¹⁰ Merrifield, M. (1854) *Dress as fine Art* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

¹¹ Odongo, O., Adongo, M. (2004) Kenya's national dress: The pride of a nation. Research paper

¹² National Museums of Kenya. (2005). "Umeuacha Mbachao, Kanga Exhibition": For of Jesus, Mombasa

¹³ Ireland, John Patrick (1970). *Encyclopedia of Fashion Details*, Batsford

traditional attire have survived into the 21st century either in their original form, or in modified versions.

National attire symbolizes the nation and its people. It usually identifies people from a particular nation but can also indicate social, marital or religious status¹⁴. It can reveal a nation's way of thinking. Various countries have their national attire for example Ao dai for Vietnam, Bunad-Norway, ceinture fleche-Quebec, dirndl-Bavaria Austria, Hanbok for Korea, Kimono-Japan, Barong Tagalog-Philippines and several others. The national attire of a country portrays the national character of the people¹⁵. The flowing agbada of the Nigerians says the following: "we are affluent, grandiose, loud, and love ourselves" which demonstrates the national character of the people¹⁶. The Mao suit is a clear indicator of the character of the Chinese people of that time that they are hard-working¹⁷.

National attire also known as national costume, regional costume or folk attire reflects culture, beauty, identity and status for both men and women all over the globe. Such costumes often come in two forms for everyday occasions, the other for festival and formal wear¹⁸. Not all countries have national attire though, and the ones that have developed their own styles and dress adapted for their climate for example linen and cotton. Silk were used more in India and China while wool and leather were commonly used in colder countries.

As in many cultures, dress was a way of distinguishing a person's position in Chinese society. While this was more apparent prior to and including the 19th century there is still evidence of it today. The cheungsam is regarded by many as the classic national attire for women in China. While its origins may be seen in the court garments of the Qing dynasty the Mao suit was also for a time the national attire ("Plate 2.21")¹⁹. In China origins of the Mao suit as military attire, reflected major political change. According to Powerhouse museum, contemporary designers both within China

¹⁴ Internet (February 2006). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_dress

¹⁵ Merrifield, M. (1854) *Dress as fine Art* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

¹⁶ Internet (May 2006); <http://www.bakareweste.com>

¹⁷ Frantz Fanon (1967). *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, Inc

¹⁸ Odongo O., Adango M. (2004) Kenya's national dress: The pride of a nation Research paper; Ministry of Culture and Social Services

¹⁹ Internet (December 2007); <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/hsc/evrev/>

and abroad are influenced by China's rich textile history. As they embrace new ideas, the Chinese designers today reflect aspects of the past in their work.



Plate 2.20 The Semi-Formal Dragon Silk Embroidered Robe (Jifu) made in China in the 1800s¹²⁰



Plate 2.21 The Styles of the Mao Suits¹²¹

People may wear national attire on special occasions or if carrying out certain roles or occupations. Most Japanese women have adopted Western-style attire for daily wear, but will still wear silk kimonos on special occasions¹²². Items of Western attire may also appear worn or accessorized in distinctive, non-Western ways. For example a Tongan man may combine a western T-shirt with a Tongan wrapped skirt, or tupenu¹²³.

¹²⁰ *Journal* (December 2007); <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/hw/evrev/>

¹²¹ *Internet* December (2007); http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Mao-style_suits_fading_away_in_China september, 2005

¹²² *Journal* November 2007; *Costume of History in Japan*

¹²³ *Journal* (July 2007); <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing>.



Plate 2.22 The Kimono¹²⁴



Plate 2.23 The Saree/Sari¹²⁵



Plate 2.24 The Scottish Kilt¹²⁶



Plate 2.25 The Agbada¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Internet (August 2007); <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimono>;

¹²⁵ Internet (August 2007); <http://images.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl>, August 2007

¹²⁶ Internet (July 2007); <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottishkilt>;

¹²⁷ Internet (February 2006); Source: <http://www.safarinet.com/>



Plate 2.26 The Asante omanhene Kente¹²⁸

2.25 Costumes of Peoples of South Africa

In the South of Africa women's clothing can incorporate beaded and woven skirts, blankets and cloaks with elaborate motifs. The colorful jewelry made from metal including copper, grasses and beads¹²⁹. The Ndebele of the southern part of the Gauteng Province in South Africa are renowned for their colorful traditional attire and artistic beadwork. After passing through an initiation school the unmarried Ndebele girl dons the ceremonial attire of the newly -admitted adult see ("Plate 2.27 on page 42"). The outfit consist of a skirt, with beaded apron, a beaded bodice that covers the breasts, a necklace or two, earrings, neck band with multiple arm and leg bands. The image to the right is a typical example of the bright colored clothing and beads that make up traditional outfits¹³⁰.

¹²⁸ Internet (May 2006): <http://www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teacher/curriculum/m12/activity3.php>

¹²⁹ Internet September (2007): http://www.rebirth.co.za/traditional_african_clothing.htm

¹³⁰ Internet September (2007): http://www.rebirth.co.za/traditional_african_clothing.htm



Plate 2.27 Shows Tribal Costumes of South Africa¹¹

A girl just entering her teens dressed in traditional attire (see "Plate 2.27 above center"). This attire consists of a beaded bodice and characteristic double-layered cloth skirt. The neck and head have multiple leg and armbands. This type of clothing is normally worn on special occasions like weddings or celebrations. A young married woman with a colorful beaded cloak is dressed for a dancing ceremony (see image above). The design of the beaded staff is typical of the Ndebele people¹². In many parts of Africa only the married woman may wear a cloak. The Zulu people the most prominent tribe in South Africa, a chief wears a leopard skin and bright colored feathers of the bishop bird adorn his headdress. The shield and spear is for protection and is part of the traditional gear worn by the chief see ("Plate 2.28 on page 43").

¹¹ Source: Beckwith C, Fisher A (2000): *African Ceremonies*. The Conche Edition., Harry N. Abrams Inc, New York

¹² Internet September (2007): http://www.rebirth.co.za/traditional_african_clothing.htm (b)



Plate 2.28 Shows Tribal Costumes of South Africa

The heard boy's traditional everyday work clothing consists of a loin cloth and skin to cover his rear, brightened by bearded hoops and necklaces. The dancing costume of a young Zulu maiden is made of beads in its entirety. This costume is worn during festivals or dancing ceremonies. Zulu diviner wears special clothing designed to please the snake (see "Plate 2.28 above right"). The Zulu takes its name after their chief Shaka Zulu who founded the royal line in the 16th century. The complicated Zulu etiquette was refined during his reign³³.

2.26 Clothing of the Xhosa of South and Western Cape

Among the Xhosa a young maiden is draped with a blanket of a favorite ochre color, and an elaborately beaded gorget. Her armbands are of copper and, weaved grasses and beads (see "Plate 2.29"). A tribal elder warmly wrapped in his blanket daubed his face with white clay. The Xhosa use clay for many purposes. Married women wear a typical wrap skirt and cloak. The beaded bag is for her smoking accessories. Only married women are permitted to smoke. South Africa's top statesman, Nelson Mandela just like Nyerere, has chosen to drop the international official attire 'the suit' and has since been seen wearing the Batik shirts as his trademark attire and identity even on formal occasions.

³³ My Africa <http://www.nationalaudio.com/News/EastAfrica/15072002/Opinion/Opinion21.html> (September 2007)



Plate 2.29 Shows Xhosa Tribal South and Western Cape

Shirts in this style are fondly known as "Madiba shirts" in South Africa, but elsewhere in Africa they are simply known as "Mandela shirts" ("Plate 2.30"). In both the late seventies and early eighties, local people in Tanzania used to spot another style of dressing, 'Kaunda suit', named after the former Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda, who founded the attire. This type of dressing consisted of matching pair of trousers with an upper coat spotting a rounded neck'²⁴.



Plate 2.30 The Nelson Mandela 'Madimba' Shirt'²⁵

²⁴Internet September (2007): My Africa
[http://www.nationaudio.com/News/EastAfrican/15072002/Opinion/Opinion21.html\(a\)](http://www.nationaudio.com/News/EastAfrican/15072002/Opinion/Opinion21.html(a))

²⁵Internet September (2007): My Africa
[http://www.nationaudio.com/News/EastAfrican/15072002/Opinion/Opinion21.html\(b\)](http://www.nationaudio.com/News/EastAfrican/15072002/Opinion/Opinion21.html(b))

2.27 The Sari/Saree

The Sari also known as Saree is one of the most successful surviving national attire. It is the traditional female garment of India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka¹³⁶. A sari is a very long strip of unstitched cloth, ranging from four to nine meters in length, which can be draped in various styles. History of Indian clothing traces the sari back to the Indus valley civilization, which flourished in 2800-1800 BCE¹³⁷. The earliest known depiction of the saree in the India in subcontinent is the statue of an Indus valley priest wearing a drape. Some costume historians believe that the men's dhoti, which is the oldest Indian draped garment is the forerunner of the sari. Ghurye in his book *Indian costume* says that "until the 14th century, the dhoti was worn by both men and women"¹³⁸. Sculptures from the Gandhara, Mathura and Gupta schools (1st-6th century) show goddesses and dancers wearing what appears to be a dhoti wrap, in the "fishtail" version which covers the legs loosely and then flows into a long, decorative drape in front of the legs¹³⁹. No bodices are shown.

The Indian everyday attire consisted of a dhoti or lungi (sarong), combined with a breast band and a veil or wrap that could be used to cover the upper body or head¹⁴⁰. The two-piece Kerala mundum neryathum, a dhoti or sarong, is a survival of ancient Indian clothing styles. The one-piece sari is a modern innovation, created by combining the two pieces of the mundum neryathum. Wrapped sari-like garments¹⁴¹, shawls, and veils have been worn by Indian women for a long time, and that they have been worn in their current form for hundreds of years. According to Shakti Press International, the history of the choli or sari blouse, and petticoat were unknown before the British arrived in India, and that they were introduced to satisfy Victorian ideas of modesty¹⁴². Previously, women only wore one draped cloth and casually exposed the upper body

¹³⁶ Alkazi, Roshan (1983) *Ancient Indian costume*. Popular Book Depot (Bombay)(a)

¹³⁷ Alkazi, Roshan (1983) *Ancient Indian costume*. Popular Book Depot (Bombay)(b)

¹³⁸ Ghurye (1951) *Indian costume*, Popular book depot (Bombay)

¹³⁹ Alkazi, Roshan (1983) *Ancient Indian costume*, Popular book depot (Bombay)(c)

¹⁴⁰ Miller, Daniel & Banerjee, Mukulika: (2004) *The Sari*, Roli books: Boulanger (a)

¹⁴¹ Miller, Daniel & Banerjee, Mukulika: (2004) *The Sari*, Roli books: Boulanger (b)
¹⁴² (nd): *An Illustrated Guide to the Indian Art of Draping*, Shakti Press International, New York

and breasts. In South India, women from many communities wore only the sari and exposed the upper part of the body till the 20th century⁴¹. In ancient South India, a single piece of clothing served as both lower garment and head covering, leaving the bosom and midriff completely uncovered⁴². The sari is usually worn over a petticoat (pavada/pavudai in the south, and shaya in eastern India), with a blouse known as a choli forming the upper garment. Although there are many styles of draping the sari, the most common style is for the sari to be wrapped around the waist, with one end draped over the shoulder baring the midriff⁴³. Sari drapes are categorized into a few families and this will be covered in the next chapter.

North India Style also described as the "Modern Style", is the most common way of wearing a sari. The North Indian Style refers to the drape common to Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Bihar and Uttrakhand States. It is however important to note that there are variations in sari draping of the North Indian Style. As an example, in the north the sari may also be draped over the right shoulder or over the head and over the right shoulder. The drape over the head is thought to be a Muslim Influence brought about by intermingling cultures which was more pervasive due to invasions in the North⁴⁴.

In Pakistan, the wearing of saris has almost atire for formal functions, especially weddings amongst the Pakistani elite⁴⁵. However, the sari is currently gaining interest. It is sometimes worn as dally-wear, mostly in Karachi, by those elderly women who were used to wearing it in pre-partition India⁴⁶ and by the some of the new generation who have re-introduced the interest of saris. The most famous sari types in Pakistan are Punjabi and Sindhli style saris. Sri Lankan women wear saris in many styles. Two ways of draping the sari are popular and tend to dominate these are the Indian style and the Kandyan⁴⁷.

⁴¹ Ghurye (1951) "Indian costume", Popular book depot (Bombay)(a)

⁴² Ghurye (1951) "Indian costume", Popular book depot (Bombay)(b)

⁴³ Parthasarathy, R. (1993) *The Cilappatikaram of Ilanko Atikal*, Translations from the Asian Classics, Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1993.

⁴⁴ *Bollywood saris and a bombed train*, Asia Times; (August 2007)

⁴⁵ *The spread of the sarwar*, The Hindu; (August 2007)

⁴⁶ Craddock, Norma (1994); Anthills, *Split Mothers, and Sacrifice. Conceptions of Female Power in the Maryamman Tradition*, Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.

In the past, saris were woven of silk or cotton¹⁵⁰ but today there is a wide selection of both synthetic and silk fabrics. Various saris are named according to the community and type of saris as well¹⁵¹. Designers of national attires in Kenya should use different types of fabrics to design different styles of national attires, as this will help in reflecting our diversity of culture. The people can make costumes depending on their personal taste and preference as a way of making adoption easier.



Plate 2.31 The Indian Airlines Sari¹⁵²



Plate 2.32 The Soft Fine Benares Sari¹⁵³



Plate 2.33, 2.34 The Hand Embroidered Kantha Sari and Snow White Sari¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Miller, Daniel & Banerjee, Mukulika; (2004) "The Sari". Lustre press / Roll books. (Bombay)

¹⁵¹ Churya (1951) "Indian costume". Popular book depot (Bombay)

¹⁵² Internet September 2007; Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sari> (a)

¹⁵³ Internet September 2007; Source: <http://www.angelfire.com/al/saree/thumb.html> (b)

¹⁵⁴ Internet September 2007; Source: <http://www.angelfire.com/al/saree/thumb.html> (c)



Plate 2.35 and 2.36 Shows Purple Haze and the Tranquil shamoos satin sari with subtly blended shades of blue with a delicate floral print¹⁵⁵

Today the sari has been internationalized by flight attendants' who wear it as uniform¹⁵⁶. (See "Plate 2.31 on page 47"). Women in the armed forces, when wearing a sari uniform, don a half-sleeve shirt tucked in at the waist¹⁵⁷. While an international image of the 'modern style' sari may have been achieved, each region in the Indian subcontinent has over the centuries developed its own unique sari style. As shown in the above images the sari comes in different fabrics and these are: Mysore silk sari, kanji Aram sari, pure silk sari and the banarasi silk sari to name but a few.

2.28 Kimono, the Traditional Japanese Attire

Kimono is the national attire of Japan. The word "Kimono" literally means "something worn", that is, "clothes"¹⁵⁸. Originally kimono indicated all types of clothing, but it has come to mean specifically the full-length traditional garment worn by women, men, and children. Kimonos are T-shaped: straight-lined robes that fall to the ankle, with collar and full-length sleeves.

¹⁵⁵ Internet September 2007; Source: <http://www.angellire.com/al/saree/thumb.html> (e)

¹⁵⁶ Mohapatra, R. P. (1992) *Fashion styles of ancient India*, B. R. Publishing corporation

¹⁵⁷ Boulanger, Chantal; (1997) *Saris: An illustrated Guide to the Indian Art of Draping*, Shakti Press International, New York.

¹⁵⁸ Internet June 2007; Traditional Crafts of Japan (<http://www.kougei.or.jp/english/>)(b)

The sleeves are commonly very wide at the wrist, as much as a half meter. Traditionally, on special occasions unmarried women wear kimonos (furisode) with extremely long sleeves that extend almost to the floor. The robe is wrapped around the body, always with the left side over the right (it is only wrapped with the right side over the left when dressing the deceased for burial and secured by a wide belt (obi) tied in the back. Kimonos are generally worn with traditional footwear known as (geta), thonged wood-platform footwear, and (zori), a type of thong-like footwear and split-toe socks (tabi)¹³⁹. The traditional Japanese attire is fashioned entirely from one long piece of cloth and, the design is simple. However, kimonos have seen much modification throughout Japan's history, and many Chinese aspects were transformed into ones that met indigenous tastes and conditions more closely.

Today's kimonos trace their origins to garments that were originally heavily influenced by a traditional attire of China called hanfu through extensive cultural exchanges between China and Yamato period in Japan beginning in the fifth century¹⁴⁰. Synthetic fibers have replaced silk for kimonos in an attempt to overcome laundry problems. Designers have also introduced new fabric and designs which can be worn regardless of the age of the wearer. Formerly, tradition dictated certain patterns and color to be worn according to the season and one's age. For example, a young woman would wear red and pink with floral designs in spring, while in summer, her kimono would suggest water. In autumn, she would wear floral designs or chrysanthemums. In winter, especially at holiday time designs based on pine trees, plum blossoms and bamboo, Japanese good luck symbols will be worn¹⁴¹.

Kimonos are not a one size attire; they come in various lengths and widths and are often made to fit one wearer. A good kimono is the one with a sleeve width that comes to each wrist when one's arms are at their sides. Secondly, it should be as long as one is tall to allow for the Ohashori (the tuck that can be seen under the obi)¹⁴². The Ohashori is created to pull down the back of the kimono so that the collar does not slip

¹³⁹ Internet April 2007; Costume History of Japan.

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/syuzou/meihin/senshoku/index.html>

¹⁴¹ Internet August 2007; Kimono Encyclopedia: (<http://www.japaneselifestyle.com.au/fashion/kimono.html>)

¹⁴² Internet September 2007; <http://moltra.ref.or.jp/ENC/Hiroshima/Things/79.html>

¹⁴³ Internet August 2007; Tokyo National Museum textiles

<http://www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/syuzou/meihin/senshoku/index.html>

against the neck. Kimonos are made from a single bolt of fabric. The bolts come in standard dimensions, and all the fabric is used in the making of the kimono. All traditional kimonos are sewn by hand, and the fabrics from which they are created are also frequently hand made and hand decorated. Various techniques such as yūzen dye resist are used for applying decoration and patterns to the base cloth. Repeat patterns that cover a large area of a kimono are traditionally done with the yūzen resist technique and a stencil¹⁶¹.

There are many varieties of kimono: the long-sleeved worn by geisha (young girls), the formal kimono stamped with the wearer's family crest and worn on ceremonial occasions and kimono for men and children. There are also a wide variety of patterns in Kimono, but one of the most popular types, is the stripe (shima)¹⁶⁴. In the past, a kimono would often be entirely taken apart for washing, and then re-sewn for wearing. Modern fabrics and cleaning methods have been developed that eliminate this need. However, the washing of kimonos in the traditional way can still be found. Basting stitches—long, loose stitches—are sometimes placed around the outside edges of the kimono for storage. Over time there have been many variations in colour, fabric and style, as well as accessories such as the obi¹⁶⁵.

Although Western-style attire has been popular in Japan since the late 19th century among men, and since the 1920's among women, the traditional kimono has by no means disappeared¹⁶⁶. Its form and use have been refined to play an appropriate role in Japan's modern life. The kimono assumed its present form during the Edo period (1603-1867)¹⁶⁷. According to the webpage mothra, designers have tried to modernize its style over the last decade or two. This is because the Japanese have found that in everyday life, whether in office or factory, shopping or teaching, the kimono is not as practical and is more cumbersome than Western-style attire, which is less restrictive in movement and easier to take care of.

¹⁶¹ Internet (April 2007): Costume of History in Japan.

¹⁶² <http://www.kyohaku.go.jp/eng/syuzou/meshin/ienhoku/index.html>

¹⁶³ Internet (September 2007). <http://mothra.ref.or.jp/ENG/Hiroshima/Things/79.html> (a)

¹⁶⁴ Internet (February 2006): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimono>

¹⁶⁵ Internet (September 2007). <http://mothra.ref.or.jp/ENG/Hiroshima/Things/79.html> (b)

¹⁶⁶ Internet (September 2007). <http://mothra.ref.or.jp/ENG/Hiroshima/Things/79.html> (c)

A young woman wears a kimono with long sleeves and an Obi, a wide silk or brocade sash about 12 feet long and 12 inches wide. The Obi is wrapped around the waist in such a way as to cover the ribs. It is tied at the back in a special fastening kept in place by as many as 15 girdles of brocade, silk or other materials worn around the middle of the obi. As she gets older, her kimono designs become smaller and the colors deeper and richer while the obi is worn lower and made narrower. A man's kimono is usually dark-blue, brown, gray or black. The material is silk or hand woven wool for winter and cotton for summer. Today this is generally used only by artists, actors and family patriarchs. The common formal attire of present-day Japanese men is a morning coat and striped trousers.

The informal, unlined kimono made of cotton and worn with a narrow sash is usually worn to the bath or on summer evenings. It has been the favorite attire for relaxation, but is gradually disappearing from the urban scene. Children's kimonos have tucks along the shoulders and around the waist, and these tucks are let out from time to time to widen and lengthen the kimono to fit the growing body¹⁶⁸.



Plate 2.37, 2.38, 2.39 The young kimono wearer¹⁶⁹. Women in furisode kimonos¹⁷⁰ and the white Wedding Kimono¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Internet (September 2007); <http://mothra.ref.or.jp/ENG/Hiroshima/Things/79.html>

¹⁶⁹ Internet (February 2007); <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimono> (a)

¹⁷⁰ Internet (February 2006); <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kimono> (b)

From the primitive Jomon period through the Yamato, Asuka, Nara, Heian, Muromachi, and Edo periods, factors including climate, life and customs of the Imperial court, laws, the development of skills in weaving and dyeing, and the availability of materials have influenced the style of Japanese clothing¹⁷². Today, 1200 years later¹⁷³, the Imperial household still uses the costumes of the Heian period for the formal occasions of coronations and weddings. Secondary data points to a change over time in the Kimono designs (see “Plate 2.40-2.46”). In Japan and other countries national dresses have evolved naturally. Designers of the Kenyan national attire should also avoid its hasty implementation so as to allow it evolve naturally from the people because they are the ones to adopt it.



2.40

2.41

2.42

2.43

- Plate: 2.40 Men Clothing of Yamato Period¹⁷⁴
- Plate: 2.41 Women's Clothing of Yamato Period¹⁷⁵
- Plate: 2.42 Men and Women's Clothing of Asuka Period (550-710 A.D)¹⁷⁶
- Plate: 2.43 Clothes of Nara Period (710-792 A.D)¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² Internet June 2007; *Traditional Crafts of Japan* (<http://www.kougel.or.jp/english/>)

¹⁷³ Internet (August 2007); <http://web.mit.edu/jpnet/kimono/history-edo.html> (a)

¹⁷⁴ Internet (August 2007); <http://web.mit.edu/jpnet/kimono/history-edo.html> (b)

¹⁷⁵ Internet October 2007; <http://web.mit.edu/jpnet/kimono/history-edo.html> (a)

¹⁷⁶ Internet October 2007; <http://web.mit.edu/jpnet/kimono/history-edo.html> (b)

¹⁷⁷ Internet October 2007; <http://web.mit.edu/jpnet/kimono/history-edo.html> (c)

¹⁷⁸ Internet October 2007; <http://web.mit.edu/jpnet/kimono/history-edo.html> (d)



2.44

2.45

2.46

- Plate 2.44 Clothing of Heian Period (792-1192 A.D.)¹⁷⁹
- Plate 2.45 Clothing of Muromachi Period (1192-1573 A.D.)¹⁷⁹
- Plate 2.46 A woman's Kimono of Edo Period (1601-1867 A.D.)¹⁸⁰

2.29 The Kilt

Kilt is a traditional attire of modern Scottish culture. It exists in various modern forms, and in forms inspired by the historical garment. This includes:

- The modern form of the traditional Scottish garment.
- The historical form of this same Scottish garment
- Various other national forms of the kilt, such as the Northumbrian kilt, Irish kilt and the Welsh kilt.
- The contemporary kilt, such as the AmeriKilt, Neo-Kilt or Utilikilt.
- Certain types of school uniform skirts for girls.

¹⁷⁹ Internet October 2007; <http://web.mit.edu/jpnet/kimono/history-edo.html> (a)

¹⁷⁹ Internet October 2007; <http://web.mit.edu/jpnet/kimono/history-edo.html> (b)

¹⁸⁰ Internet October 2007; <http://web.mit.edu/jpnet/kimono/history-edo.html> (c)

According to the web page Wikipedia¹⁶, the skirt-like kilt evolved around the middle of the 18th century from the more commonly worn and functional belted plaid (in Gaelic, *feileadh breacan* or *feileadh mor*, 'the big kilt'). The *feileadh mor* was a longer untailored garment, around five meters in length. It was gathered and then belted at the waist to provide cover for both the upper and lower body. From the waist down, the *feileadh mor* resembled a modern kilt while the remaining material above the waist was draped over the shoulder and pinned there. This upper portion could be arranged in a variety of ways around the shoulders according to the demands of weather, temperature or freedom of movement required. At the end of day, the belt could be unbuckled to transform the *feileadh mor* into a warm covering for the night¹⁷. The Gaelic plaid actually means 'blanket'.

As the kilt evolved the *feileadh mor* was simplified by disposing of its top half, leaving the belt and the skirt below. The resulting creation became known as the *feileadh beg*, or 'little kilt'. This was reputedly at the behest of an Englishman running an ironworks at Inver Garry who felt his kilted employees needed a greater freedom of movement to do their work. The kilt now became a tailored garment with sewn-in pleats, making it neater and easy to put on and wear. The upper half of the big kilt evolved into the separate plaid (or sash), which is now worn at more formal events¹⁸.

Following the Jacobite defeat at Culloden in 1746¹⁹, the kilt and other aspects of Highland attire were outlawed. Its continued survival during these years was largely due to its adoption by Highland regiments serving with the British army. Highland regiments still wear the kilt on regular basis although no longer into battle. But it is not an everyday article of attire in Scotland. Today kilt-wearers are more likely to be seen at formal celebrations such as weddings and at Highland Games. Although, kilt is typically regarded as being Highland attire, more kilts are now worn in the Lowland cities than in the Highlands²⁰.

¹⁶ Internet June (2007): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/scottishkilt> (a)

¹⁷ Internet June (2007) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/scottishkilt> (b)

¹⁸ Tewksbury B and Stuehmeyer E (2001). *The Art of Kitmaking* (Celtic Dragon Press, Rome, NY. ISBN 0 8708751 0 7)

¹⁹ Andrew Bolton (2003). *Bravehearts: Men as Slaves* (Victoria & Albert Museum, London. ISBN 0-8109-6658-3)

²⁰ Internet July (2007): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clothing>

Modern kilts have up to eight meters of material which is thickly pleated at the back and sides, with the pleats stitched together only at the waistband¹⁴⁸. Fashion designers have tried to update or modernise the kilt so as to make it appeal to a wider audience by using non-tartan designs and material such as leather. Today most Scotsmen see the kilt as formal attire or ceremonial attire. The kilt is usually worn with a Prince Charles or Argyll jacket, see plate 40. Irishmen on the other hand commonly wear the Brian Boru or the Kilkenny jacket with the kilt. They are often worn at weddings or on other formal occasions, while a few people still wear them daily.

The kilt is used for parades by groups such as the Scouts, and in many places it is seen in force at Highland games and pipe band championships as well as being worn at the Scottish country dances and ceilidhs¹⁴⁹.



2.47



2.48



2.49

Plate: 2.47 Style of kilt wear worn with the less formal Argyll jacket, and belt¹⁵⁰

Plate: 2.48, 2.49 The Highland Dancers In a Scottish Kilt¹⁵¹

Certain regiments of the British Army and armies of other Commonwealth nations (including Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa) still continue to wear the kilt as part of attire or duty uniform. However, they have not been used in combat since 1944¹⁵². Uniforms in which the kilt is worn include Ceremonial Dress, Service Attire, and Barracks Attire. The kilt is considered appropriate for ceremonial parades, office duties, less formal parades, walking out, mess dinners, and classroom instruction and band

¹⁴⁸ Internet August (2007): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilt> (a)

¹⁴⁹ Tewksbury B. & Stuehneyer E. (2001). *The Art of Kiltmaking* (Celtic Dragon Press, Rome, NY, 2001 ISBN 0-9703751-0-7)

¹⁵⁰ Internet August (2007): [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kilt\(b\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kilt(b))

¹⁵¹ Internet July (2007): <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/scottishdlt>

¹⁵² Internet (8 August 2007) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilt\(c\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilt(c))

practice. The kilt has become normal wear for formal occasions, for example being hired for weddings in much the same way as top hat and tails are in England or dinner jackets in America. The kilt is being worn by anyone regardless of nationality or descent.¹⁹¹ Although a white tie style exists, the more common style of formal Highland regalia is seen in Black tie or Red Sea rig.

The kilt has increasingly become common around the world for casual wear, for example with the Jacobite shirt. It's not uncommon at all to see kilts making an appearance at Irish pubs. It is however becoming somewhat less rare to see them in the workplace¹⁹². Casual use of the kilt dressed down with lace-up boots or moccasins, and with T-shirts or golf shirts, is becoming increasingly more familiar at Highland Games. The kilt is associated with a sense of Scottish national pride and will often be seen being worn, along with a football top, when members of the Tartan Army are watching a football match¹⁹³.

2.30 Design and Construction of National Attires

One of the most distinctive features of the authentic Scottish kilt is the tartan pattern, or sett, they exhibit. Many of these patterns have come to be associated with Scottish clans or families, but there are also tartans for districts, counties, countries, corporations, States and Provinces, schools and universities, individuals, commemorative, and simple generic patterns that anybody can wear¹⁹⁴. According to wikipedia¹⁹⁵, setts are registered with the Scottish Tartans Authority which maintains a collection of fabric samples characterized by name and thread count. In all, there are approximately 5000 registered tartans¹⁹⁶. Although, many tartans are being added every year, most of the registered patterns available today were created in the 19th century by commercial weavers who had a large variety of colors to work with. There are different types of kilts. The Scottish kilt for example displays peculiarities of design, construction, and convention

¹⁹¹ Internet (8 August 2007) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilt\(a\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilt(a))
¹⁹² Bolton A. (2003), *Bravehearts, Men in Skirts* (Victoria & Albert Museum, London, (ISBN 0 8109 6558 5))(a)
¹⁹³ Bolton A. (2003), *Bravehearts: Men in Skirts* (Victoria & Albert Museum, London, (ISBN 0 8109 6558 5))(b)
¹⁹⁴ Tewksbury B. and Stuchmeyer E. (2001), *The Art of Kiltmaking* (Celtic Dragon Press, Rome, NY, ISBN 0-9703751-0-7)
¹⁹⁵ Internet 28 August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilt> (b)
¹⁹⁶ Internet 28 August 2007 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilt> (c)

which differentiate it from other garments¹⁹⁷. It is a tailored garment that is wrapped around the wearer's body at the waist starting from one side, around the front and back, and across the front again to the opposite side. The fastenings consist of straps and buckles on both ends, the strap on the inside end passing through a slit in the waistband to be buckled on the outside. Depending on the occasion, a kilt is normally worn with accessories such as a belt, jacket, sporran (a type of pouch), special footwear, and optionally underwear (usually black cotton briefs).

The Northumbrian kilt is almost identical to the Scottish Kilt, but usually of plainer weave and less colorful¹⁹⁸. In contrast to the Scottish kilt, the Irish Lein-croich traditionally was made from solid color cloth, with saffron and green being the most widely used colors. In present day Ireland the kilt is still seen very much as being primarily Scottish. The current crop of county and district tartans is largely unknown in Ireland and indeed difficult to obtain. On a day-to-day basis kilt wearing is rarely if ever encountered. Within the world of Irish dancing the boy's kilt has been largely abandoned¹⁹⁹. The appearance of the kilt at Irish weddings is becoming increasingly common either for the groom or more usually for the male guests²⁰⁰. It is an alternative to the more usual suit and is once again being seen as an outward sign of Celtic origins.

Although not considered a traditional component of Welsh national attire, the kilt has recently become popular in the Celtic nations as a sign of Celtic identity²⁰¹. Kilts and tartans can therefore also be seen in Cornwall, Devon, the Isle of Man, Brittany, the Trás-os-Montes region in the North of Portugal, and Galicia in Spain, as well as England, particularly the North East and South West²⁰². Today with Welsh nationalism on the rise and a resurgence of Welsh national pride, kilts are being worn more and more by Welshmen²⁰³.

¹⁹⁷ Internet (31 July 2007), <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/scottishkilt>

¹⁹⁸ Thompson C. J. (1979) *So You're Going to Wear the Kilt* (Heraldic Art Press, Arlington, VA(a))

¹⁹⁹ Thompson C. J. (1979) *So You're Going to Wear the Kilt* (Heraldic Art Press, Arlington, VA(b))

²⁰⁰ Teall G. & Smith P. D. Jr (1992), *District Tartans* (Shepherd-Walwyn London, UK (a))

²⁰¹ Teall G. & Smith P. D. Jr (1992), *District Tartans* (Shepherd-Walwyn London, UK (b))

²⁰² Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilt> (a)

²⁰³ Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilt> (b)

2.31 Jeans

The web page Encarta²⁰⁴ defines Jeans as a loose-fitting trouser of heavy denim for manual work or casual wear. However some are tight fitting. Jeans are trousers traditionally made from denim, but may also be made from a variety of fabrics including corduroy. Originally intended for work, they became popular among teenagers starting in the 1950s²⁰⁵. Historic brands include Levi's, Jordache, and Wrangler. Today jeans are a very popular form of casual dress around the world and come in many styles and colors (see "Plate 50"). The earliest known pre-cursor for jeans is the Indian export of a thick cotton cloth, in the 16th century, known as dungaree²⁰⁶. Dyed in Indigo, it was sold near the Dongaril Fort near Bombay. Sailors cut it to suit them. Jeans were first created in Genoa, Italy, when the city was an independent republic and a naval power²⁰⁷. They were first made for the Genoese Navy because it required all-purpose pants for its sailors that could be worn wet or dry, and whose legs could easily be rolled up to wear while swabbing the deck.²⁰⁸



Plate 2.50 The Blue Jeans²⁰⁹

Denim jeans first came from Nîmes in France, and hence de Nîmes, the name of the fabric. The French bleu de Gènes, from the Italian blu di Genova, literally means 'blue

²⁰⁴ Internet June 2007: <http://www.encyclopedia.com>

²⁰⁵ Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeans> (a)

²⁰⁶ Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeans> (b)

²⁰⁷ Internet August 2007: <http://www.fecolumnists.expressindia.com>

²⁰⁸ Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeans> (c)

²⁰⁹ Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeans> (d)

of jeans." today²¹⁰. Genoa" dye of their fabric, is the root of the names for these pants, "jeans" and "blue



Plate: 2.51 The Dungaree²¹¹

Initially, blue jeans were simply sturdy trousers worn by workers, especially in the factories during World War II. In the United States during the 1950s²¹², wearing of blue jeans by teenagers and young adults became symbolic of mild protest against conformity. This was considered by some older adults as disruptive; for example, some movie theaters and restaurants refused to admit patrons who wore blue jeans²¹³.

During the 1960s the wearing of blue jeans became more acceptable. By the 1970s Jeans had become a general fashion in the United States, at least for informal wear²¹⁴. Notably, in the mid-1950s the denim and textiles industry was revolutionized by the introduction of the stone-washing technique by Great Western Garment (GWC). Denim suddenly became an attractive product for all age groups. Acceptance of jeans continued through the 1980s and 1990s to the point where jeans are now a wardrobe staple, with the average North American owning seven pairs²¹⁵.

In many regions of the world, people wear traditional attire at festivals or holidays, and sometimes more regularly. Americans, however, do not have distinctive folk attire with a long tradition. Except for the varied and characteristic clothing of Native American peoples, dress in the United States has rarely been specific to a certain region or based on the careful preservation of decorative patterns and crafts. American clothing is

²¹⁰ Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeans> (a)

²¹¹ Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeans> (b)

²¹² Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeans> (c)

²¹³ Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeans> (d)

²¹⁴ Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeans> (e)

²¹⁵ Internet August 2007: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeans> (f)

derived from the fabrics and fashions of the Europeans who began colonizing the country in the 17th century²¹⁶.

Early settlers incorporated some of the forms worn by indigenous peoples, such as moccasins and garments made from animal skins (Benjamin Franklin is famous for flaunting a raccoon cap when he travelled to Europe), but in general, fashion in the United States adapted and modified European styles²¹⁷. However, blue jeans are probably the single most representative article of American clothing.

Despite the number and variety of immigrants in the United States, American clothing has tended to be homogeneous, and clothing from an immigrant's homeland was often rapidly exchanged for American apparel. American attire is distinctive because of its casualness. The 20th century style²¹⁸ is recognizably more informal than in Europe, and for its fashion sources. It is more dependent on what people on the streets are wearing. Paris designers, both today and in the past, have also dressed wealthy and fashionable Americans, who copied French styles.

Although European designs remain a significant influence on American tastes, American fashions more often come from popular sources, such as the school and the street, as well as television and movies. In the last quarter of the 20th century, American designers often found inspiration in the imaginative attire worn by young people in cities and ballparks, and that worn by workers in factories and fields²¹⁹.

As designers began to create more sophisticated styles of blue jeans and to adjust their fit, jeans and T-shirt began to express the American emphasis on informality and the importance of subtlety of detail²²⁰. By highlighting the right label and achieving the right look, blue jeans, despite their worker origins, ironically embodied the status consciousness of American fashion and the eagerness to approximate the latest trend.

American informality in dress is such a strong part of American culture that many workplaces have adopted the idea of "casual Friday," a day when workers are encouraged to dress down from their usual professional attire. As shown by the preceding

²¹⁶ Internet June 2007: <http://www.encyarta.msu.com>

²¹⁷ Beale Valane (1988). *Paris Fashion: A cultural history*. Oxford University press

²¹⁸ O'Hara, Georgina. (1970): *The Encyclopedia of Fashion*. Abrams (a)

²¹⁹ O'Hara, Georgina. (1970): *The Encyclopedia of Fashion*. Abrams (b)

²²⁰ Internet June 2007: <http://www.americanjeans.com/>

paragraphs. Jeans and T-shirt are not the accepted national attire of America, but probably the single most representative article of American clothing²²¹.

2.32 Ghana In National Attire/Traditional Attires

The origins of kente cloth date back to 12th century²²². The cloth was worn by Kings, Queens and important figures of state in Ghanaian society, during ceremonial events and special occasions. The kente cloth received its name from the term "kenten", which means "basket", because of the cloth's resemblance to the woven design of a basket²²³. Ghana's weavers use looms to weave strips measuring about 4 inches wide, which are sewn together to form larger pieces of cloth. Behind each design was deep symbolic meaning.

According to the webpage [africawithin.com](http://www.africawithin.com), each kente pattern was unique and had its own name. Weavers used vibrant colours and complex designs to portray the cloth's profound philosophical meaning. Kente cloth came to represent the history, philosophy, ethics, and moral values in African culture. Today as African Americans gain a renewed sense of pride for their motherland Africa, they wear kente cloth for more than just fashion. They wear it for inspiration, and as a reflection of the artistic nature of their African ancestors from Ghana²²⁴.

Kente is an Asante's ceremonial cloth, hand-woven on a horizontal treadle loom. Cloths come in various colours, sizes and designs and are worn during very important social and religious occasions. In a total cultural context, kente is more important than just a cloth. It is a visual representation of history, philosophy, ethics, oral literature, moral values, and social code of conduct, religious beliefs, political thought and aesthetic principles. The term kente has its roots in the word "kenten" which means a basket. The first kente weavers used raffia fibers to weave cloth that looked like kenten (a basket); and thus were referred to as "kenten ntoma", meaning basket cloth²²⁵. The original Asante name of the cloth was "nsaduasoo or nwontoma", meaning "a cloth hand-woven

²²¹ Internet June 2007: <http://www.americanjeans.com/>

²²² Halsey and Youngmark (1986). *Foundations of Weaving*. David and Charles Inc

²²³ Internet May 2007: <http://www.exploitingafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teacher/curriculum/ml2/activity3.php>

²²⁴ Internet May 2006: [http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm\(a\)](http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm(a))

²²⁵ Internet May 2006: [http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm\(b\)](http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm(b))

on a loom' and is still used today by Asante's weavers and elders. However, the term kente is the most popularly used today, in and outside Ghana²²⁶.

The kente cloth made by the Asante of Ghana is one of the key features of Asante's visual art and its complex symbolic connection to verbal arts. That is, the graphic decorations, symbols and figural compositions are always directly related to proverbs, traditional sayings, or historical events²²⁷. Thus, a person well versed in Asante's history and proverbs, can read the specific meanings represented in these art objects. Because the most significant patrons are the royal courts, most of the symbolic meanings of Akan art are elaborations on good government ship and philosophical commentaries on the necessity of wisdom in political and social situations.

As shown by the webpage [exploringafrica.matrix](http://www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu)²²⁸, the Asante artworks celebrate the power and prestige of the Asante confederacy and ensure that Kumasi (the capital of the Asante kingdom) continues to be a thriving center of artistic creativity. The Asante strip woven cloth called kente is unquestionably the most popular and best known of all African textiles²²⁹. It is produced in greater quantity, exported to more places, and incorporated into a greater variety of forms than any other African art form. Like most of Africa's visual art forms, kente is a visual representation of history, philosophy, ethics, oral literature, religious belief, social values and political thought. Originally, since at least the eighteenth century, its use was reserved for their royalty and limited to special social and sacred functions.

The names and meanings of kente designs can allude to proverbs, historical events, social status, and the gender of the wearer. Each Asante's king would create a new kente design after close consultation with master weavers during his reign. This new kente design had to be chosen with great care because its pattern and symbolic meaning would always be associated with this particular king. It is however important to note that while the 'khangas' cloth also found in parts of Africa has a communicative message or a proverb, the kente cloth utilizes motifs and their colours to communicate²³⁰. Its success forms a basis for Kenya's designers who could adopt the khangas as the fabric of choice for

²²⁶ Internet May 2006: http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm

²²⁷ Internet May 2007: <http://www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php> (a)

²²⁸ Internet May 2006: <http://www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php> (b)

²²⁹ Internet May 2006: <http://www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php> (c)

²³⁰ Halsey and Youngmark (1986). *Foundations of Weaving*. David and Charles Inc.

the national attire. The kanga has been widely accepted by Kenyans, and it is believed that they can be found in all Kenyan households.

In the kente cloth, names and meanings are derived from historical events, individual achievements, proverbs, philosophical concepts, oral literature, moral values, social code of conduct, human behavior and certain attributes of plant and animal life. Patterns and motifs are rendered in geometric abstractions of objects associated with the intended meaning. Sometimes, some of such patterns and motifs are arbitrarily determined, and their forms have no direct structural similarities with the concepts or objects symbolized, their relationship is primarily conceptual rather than representational.

Patterns and motifs are generally created by weavers who also assign names and meanings to them. Forms, names and means of such patterns and motifs are sometimes given by weavers who may obtain them through dreams and during contemplative moments when they are said to be in communion with the spiritual world. Sometimes, kings and elders may ascribe names to cloths that they specially commission. Generally, names are based on the warp arrangements of the cloth, however, in some instances, both warp and weft arrangements determine a name of a cloth²²¹.

There are over 300 different types of kente cloth designs, each with its name. Each cloth design comes with numerous variations in colour and distribution of motifs²²². Symbolism is given interpretations on the basis of the general Akan culture. Colour symbolism within the Akan culture affects the aesthetics of kente. Colours are chosen for both their visual effect and their symbolic meanings. A weaver's choice of colours for both weft and warp designs, may be dictated either by tradition or by individual aesthetic taste. There are gender differences in color preferences, dictated by tradition, individual aesthetic taste and by spirit of the occasion. As a convention rather than a strict code of dress, women tend to prefer cloths with background or dominant colors that are lighter or tinted, such as white, light yellow, pink, purple, light blue, light green and turquoise.

Generally, men tend to prefer cloths with background or dominant colors that are on the shaded side, such as black, dark blue, dark green, maroon, dark yellow, orange

²²¹ Internet May 2007: www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php (a)

²²² Internet May 2007: www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php (b)

and red. Social changes and modern living have, however led some people to ignore these traditional norms, resulting in color choice based on individual taste.

2.33 Symbolic Meanings of Kente Colours as National Attire

Symbolic meaning of colors as seen in the kente cloth, are chosen for both their visual effect and their symbolic meanings. The following chapter explains the various meanings of color to the kente as defined by the webpage²³³.

Yellow in all its variations is associated with the yoke of the egg, ripe and edible fruits and vegetables and also with the mineral gold. In some spiritual purification rituals mashed yam is rendered yellow with oil palm and served with eggs. It symbolizes sanctity, preciousness, royalty, wealth, spirituality, vitality and fertility²³⁴.

Pink is associated with the female essence of life. It is viewed as red rendered mild and gentle, and therefore associated with tenderness, calmness, pleasantness, and sweetness. According to Akans social thought, these attributes are generally considered as essential aspects of the female essence²³⁵.

Red is associated with blood, sacrificial rites and the shedding of blood. Red eyed mood means a sense of seriousness, readiness for a serious spiritual or political encounter. Red is therefore used as a symbol of heightened spiritual and political mood, sacrifice and struggle²³⁶.

Blue is associated with the blue sky, the abode of the Supreme Creator. It is therefore used in a variety of ways to symbolize spiritual sanctity, good fortune, peacefulness, harmony and love related ideas²³⁷.

Green is associated with vegetation, planting, harvesting and herbal medicine. Tender green leaves are usually used to sprinkle water during purification rituals. It symbolizes

²³³ Internet May 2007. [www.exploringafriamatrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php\(a\)](http://www.exploringafriamatrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php(a))

²³⁴ Internet May 2007. [www.exploringafriamatrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php\(b\)](http://www.exploringafriamatrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php(b))

²³⁵ Internet May 2007. [www.exploringafriamatrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php\(c\)](http://www.exploringafriamatrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php(c))

²³⁶ Internet May 2007. [www.exploringafriamatrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php\(d\)](http://www.exploringafriamatrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php(d))

²³⁷ Internet May 2007. [www.exploringafriamatrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php\(e\)](http://www.exploringafriamatrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php(e))

growth, vitality, fertility, prosperity, fruitfulness, abundant health and spiritual rejuvenation²³⁸

Purple is viewed in the same way as maroon. It is considered as earth associated with colour used in rituals and healing purposes. It is also associated colour used in rituals and healing purposes. It is also associated with feminine aspects of life. Purple cloths are mostly worn by females²³⁹.

Maroon has a close resemblance to red-brown which is associated with the colour of Mother Earth. Red-brown is usually obtained from clay and is therefore associated with healing and the power to repel malevolent spirits²⁴⁰.

White derives its symbolism from the white part of the egg and from white clay used in spiritual purification, healing, sanctification rites and festive occasions. In some situations it symbolizes contact with ancestral spirits, deities and other unknown spiritual entities such as ghosts. It is used in combination with black, green or yellow to express notion, spirituality, vitality and balance²⁴¹.

Grey derives its symbolism from ash. Ash is used for healing and spiritual cleansing rituals to re create spiritual balance when spiritual blemish has occurred. It is also used in rituals for protection against malevolent spirits. Grey is therefore associated with spiritual blemish but also with spiritual cleansing²⁴².

Silver is associated with the moon which represents the female essence of life. Silver ornaments are usually worn by women and are used in the context of spiritual purification, naming ceremonies, marriage ceremonies and other community festivals. It symbolizes serenity, purity and joy²⁴³.

Gold derives its significance from the commercial value and social prestige associated with the precious mineral. Gold dust and gold nuggets were used as medium of exchange and

²³⁸ Internet May 2007; [www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php\(a\)](http://www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php(a))
²³⁹ Internet May 2007; [www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php\(b\)](http://www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php(b))
²⁴⁰ Internet May 2007; [www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php\(c\)](http://www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php(c))
²⁴¹ Internet May 2007; [www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php\(d\)](http://www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php(d))
²⁴² Internet May 2007; [www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php\(e\)](http://www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php(e))
²⁴³ Internet May 2007; [www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php\(f\)](http://www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php(f))

for making valuable royal ornaments. It symbolizes royalty, wealth, elegance, high status, supreme quality, glory and spiritual purity²⁴⁴.

Black derives its significance from the notion that new things get darker as they mature: and physical aging comes with spiritual maturity. The Akans blacken most of their ritual objects to increase their spiritual potency. Black symbolizes an intensified spiritual energy, communion with the ancestral spirits, antiquity, spiritual maturity and spiritual potency²⁴⁵.

2.34 Types of Kente Cloth

Nyankonton Kente

Literally means "God's eye brow (the rainbow)"²⁴⁶. It was created in exaltation of the beauty and mystery of the rainbow phenomenon. The arrangement of warp threads mimics the visual characteristics of the rainbow. This cloth symbolizes divine beauty, gracefulness, divine creativity, uniqueness, and good omen.

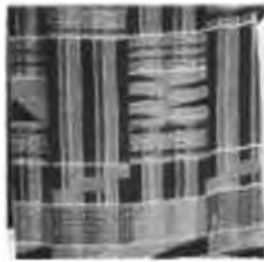


Plate 2.52 Nyankonton kente²⁴⁷

Akyempem Kente

It literally means "thousands shields." This is a reference to shields used by highly well organized militia consisting of thousands of men and women who defended the Asante Kingdom against external aggression. According to the military strategy of the Asante Kingdom, the chief of the shield bearers, the Akyempemhene, and the rear guards of the King are his own sons. Shields once used as military weapons are now used in royal

²⁴⁴ Internet May 2007; www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php

²⁴⁵ Internet (May 2006); www.exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m12/activity3.php

²⁴⁶ Internet May 2006; [http://www.africanwithn.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm\(a\)](http://www.africanwithn.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm(a))

²⁴⁷ Internet May 2007; [http://www.africanwithn.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm\(b\)](http://www.africanwithn.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm(b))

ceremonies to symbolize and commemorate the military prowess of the Asante Kingdom. The cloth symbolizes military prowess, unity through military strength, bravery, and political vigilance & spiritual defensiveness²⁴⁸.

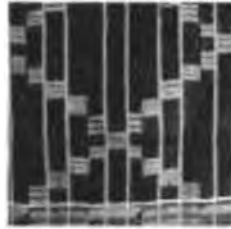


Plate 2.53 Akyempem kente²⁴⁹

Kyeretwie Kente

Literally means "the lion catcher." The cloth was designed to commemorate an incident during the reign of King Kwaku Dua (1838 -1867) who tested the courage of his warriors by ordering them to catch a leopard alive²⁵⁰. The appellation, "Kyeretwie" was since appended to the names of some of the Asante Kings whose bravery and leadership qualities were comparable to the courage needed to catch a leopard alive. The black vertical warp stripes represent the black spots in a leopard's fur. In the past, the cloth was worn only by the Asantehene or by other chiefs with his permission. The cloth symbolizes courage, valour, exceptional achievement and inspiring leadership.

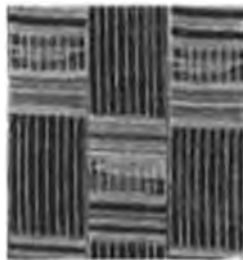


Plate 2.54 Kyeretwie kente²⁵¹

²⁴⁸ Internet May 2006: <http://www.afriprov.org/resources/links.html> (a)

²⁴⁹ Internet May 2007: http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm (a)

²⁵⁰ Internet May 2006: <http://www.afriprov.org/resources/links.html> (b)

²⁵¹ Internet May 2007: http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm (b)

Wofro Dua Pa A Na Yepia Wo

Literally means "one who climbs a tree worth climbing gets the help deserved." The cloth was designed to express the Akan social thought which maintains that any good individual effort deserves to be supported by the community. When one climbs a good tree that has fruits on it, people around will give him a push, since they know they will enjoy the fruits of his labour. It is a notion that reinforces the importance of aspiring towards a worthy course. It symbolizes aspiration, hope, mutual benefits, sharing and noble deeds²⁵².



Plate 2.55 Wofro Dua Pa A Na Yepia Wo kente²⁵¹

Toku Kra Toma

It literally means Toku's soul cloth. The cloth is designed and named to commemorate the soul of a warrior Queenmother of that name, who, though was defeated and executed in a battle with Nana Opoku Ware I, the King of the Asante kingdom (1731-1742), was viewed as a courageous woman. It commemorates that historic event and honours the soul of that Queen mother for her bravery. In the past, such a cloth would only be worn by the royalty and people of high rank, during very sacred ceremonies in which the spirits of the ancestors are venerated. The cloth symbolizes courageous leadership, heroic deeds, self-sacrifice, and spiritual vitality and rebirth (see "Plate 2.56 on page 68").

²⁵² Internet May 2006: <http://www.afriprov.org/resources/links.html> (a)

²⁵¹ Internet May 2007: <http://www.afriprov.org/resources/links.html> (b)

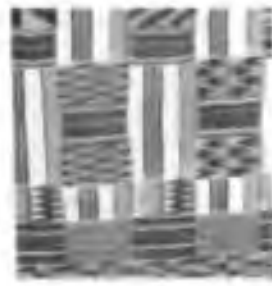
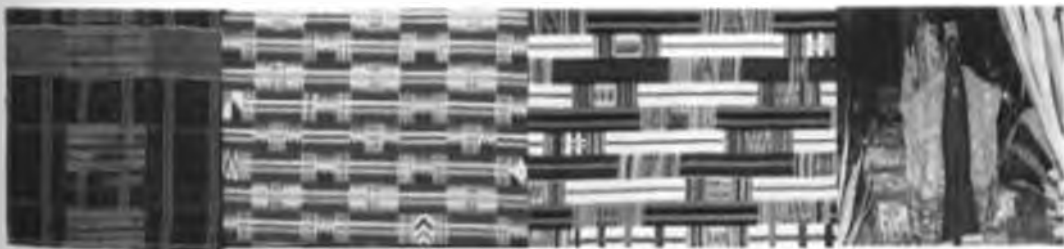


Plate 2.56 Toku Kra Toma kente²⁵⁴

Emaa Da Kente

It literally means, "It has not happened before" or "It has no precedence." According to Nana Kwasi Afranie of Bonwire, the Asantehene's chief weaver, the cloth was designed and so named by one of the Asante Kings who was so awed by the uniqueness of the pattern that he remarked "Eyl de emmaa da" meaning, "this one has no precedence." The cloth was therefore reserved for the exclusive use of the King, but its use was later extended to people of high ranks. It is a symbol of creative Ingenuity, Innovation, uniqueness, perfection and exceptional achievement²⁵⁵.



2.57

2.58

2.59

2.60

Plate 2.57 Emaa Da kente²⁵⁶

Plate 2.58 Shows Details of a Man's kente cloth²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ Internet May 2007: http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm (a)

²⁵⁵ Internet May 2007: http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm (b)

²⁵⁶ Internet May 2007: http://www.africawithin.com/tour/ghana/kente_cloth.htm (c)

Plate 2.59 Shows Details of a Woman's kente cloth²⁴⁸

Plate 2.60 Shows a Ghanalan Costume modelled by African heritage²⁴⁹

This design features the very popular Oyokoman pattern. It takes its name from the Oyoko clan, which has produced every Asantehene (Asante king) and queen mother doth.

2.35 Nigeria In National Attire/Traditional Attires

The Agbada is a distinctive wide shouldered flowing gown worn by Nigerian men in high office or on special occasions²⁵⁰. In the past twenty years, it has become a potent symbol of power and status in Nigeria. Agbada is a Yoruba name for a type of flowing wide sleeved robe, decorated with embroidery, which is worn throughout much of Nigeria by important men, such as Kings and chiefs on ceremonial occasions, weddings and funerals. Agbada itself is however a Yoruba term. In the North amongst the Hausa, Nupe and Fulbe, the Agbada is known variously as the Riga and Babariga (see "Plate 261").

Although they are often still made from hand woven cloth, beautiful hand embroidery that was used in the past is rarely seen. Old robes have become family heir looms passed on from father to son. In the past these prestige robes were traded over vast distances. Similar or related garments are still found throughout much of West Africa²⁵¹. The Agbada has a long and complex genealogy spanning from many cultures and histories, which I will touch on in this paper.



Plate 2.61 Different types of Agbada²⁵²

²⁴⁷ Internet May 2007: <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teacher/curriculum/m12/activity3.php> (a)

²⁴⁸ Internet May 2007: <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teacher/curriculum/m12/activity3.php> (b)

²⁴⁹ Internet May 2007: <http://www.artmatter.info/fashion/articles/natdress.php>

²⁵⁰ Internet May 2006: <http://www.encarta.msu.com> (a)

²⁵¹ Internet May 2006: <http://www.encarta.msu.com> (b)

²⁵² Internet January 2008: <http://www.bakareweate.com>



Plate 2.62 A Man And Woman Wearing The Agbada²⁶³

Due to the wideness of the costume at the shoulders, the wearer is required to fold the fabric over, creating a layered effect that further accentuates the shoulders. The vertical folds of fabric on either side of the neck form two draping loops, the bottom of each loop being around knee height. Most Agbadas also feature an embroidered chest pocket with a V-neck skewed to one side, and a large pocket below. In the socio-cultural landscape of contemporary Nigeria, the Agbada signifies power, authority and wealth and is most commonly worn by those who either have these attributes or would like to acquire them²⁶⁴.

The Agbada's replaced the khaki symbolic of one regime, military dictatorship and the colonial power it aped. The folds of the Agbada imply that which is hidden. Beneath the Agbada lies concealed pleasures, violence, appropriations, stories that will never be told. Functioning as a social mask, the agbada both conceals and expresses status²⁶⁵. Amongst the Yoruba, traditional male dress can comprise up to six separate garments: four robes: *dansiki* a sleeveless vest, *gbariye* a flared tunic with short sleeves, *dandogo* similar to

²⁶³ Internet January 2008: <http://www.bakarewale.com>

²⁶⁴ Internet May 2006: http://www.mondaviarts.org/educationpdfs/cue.Children_ofUganda.pdf (a)

²⁶⁵ Internet May 2006: http://www.mondaviarts.org/educationpdfs/cue.Children_ofUganda.pdf (b)

²⁶⁶ Internet May 2006: <http://www.encyarta.msu.com>

an agbada but with more distinct sleeves and a flared body section, traditionally worn by dancers on festive occasions and finally the agbada itself²⁶⁴. For the legs, the outfit requires a pair of wide-waisted trousers, known as sokoto an ehumula or sokoto for short and a hat, ikon also known as fila. While the gbariye and dandogo are specifically Yoruba forms of dress worn in the South-West. The embroidery designs on the Ajufun originate from the Islamic North²⁶⁵.

During the late eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century, the balance of power in much of what is now known as Nigeria was disrupted by the impact of an Islamic Jihad. This was inspired by the legendary Muslim Fulani leader Usman dan Fodio²⁶⁶. The main Yoruba power of Oyo was defeated and the capital city was abandoned in the 1830s. Owing their military power to supreme prowess on horseback, the new Fulani rulers brought with them a style of male dress consisting of flowing robes and huge baggy trousers adapted for horseback riding²⁶⁹. They also bought an Islamic tradition of 'robes of honour', embroidered gowns and the flowing turbans worn with them which became badges of office for both rulers and court officials. Emirs and other rulers purchased the finest robes for themselves and distributed numerous others to their courtiers. An elaborate trade network developed, with both Nupe and Yoruba weavers and embroiderers, along with specialist tailors, cloth beaters, and dyers, serving the main emirates. Centers of excellence in embroidery grew up in Bida, Kano, Katsina, Dikwa, Daura and Ilorin. These centers continue to this day. Royal courts beyond the Fulani power such as the Yoruba kings adopted the same style of dress. In the twentieth century the gowns became the de rigueur dress of important men across a large area of Nigeria and into neighbouring countries. The oldest surviving riga is a Nupe gown in the 1841 Egga collection in the British Museum²⁷⁰.

According to the history of Nigeria²⁷¹ there is good evidence to support the speculation that the Fulani emirs' dress sensibilities were influenced by the powerful Ottoman Empire to the North in Turkey. Ottoman Empire was then a global force in the world at the time of Dan Fodio's reign. A visit to the palace of the Sultans, the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, reveals

²⁶⁴ Internet May 2006: <http://www.encyarta.msu.com> (a)

²⁶⁵ Internet May 2006: <http://www.encyarta.msu.com> (b)

²⁶⁶ Internet May 2006: http://www.mondaviarts.org/educationpdfs/cue.Children_ofUganda.pdf (a)

²⁶⁷ Internet May 2006: http://www.mondaviarts.org/educationpdfs/cue.Children_ofUganda.pdf (b)

²⁶⁸ Internet May 2006: <http://www.encyarta.msu.com> (c)

glass cases of robes with exactly the same elongated shoulders as with the Agbada²⁷². In recent history the Agbada has become significantly more widespread in use. Up until two decades ago, at least in the South-West of Nigeria, the Agbada was worn only by the big men of the town and city. The rise in prominence of the Agbada is that of the disproportionate wealth obtained from the discovery of oil. The turning point for the rise to symbolic prominence of the Agbada was the Second Republic of President Shehu Shagari in the 1980s²⁷³. At the height of the first oil-boom, Shagari was often seen wearing elaborately flowing Agbada, adorned with copious embroidery on the Ajilfun. As one dictatorship followed another, the Agbada returned and returned, becoming ever more widespread amongst the court and hangers-on as it was amongst the rulers themselves. The tradition set by Shagari continues to the present day.

2.36 Uganda in National Attire/Traditional Attires



As shown in the above plate, Gomesi also known as Busuti is the national attire for the women of Buganda and several other tribes in Uganda. The true origins of this costume are still under discussion; however the most acknowledged story is that the busuti was introduced by a British teacher for pupils of Gayaza high – school back in 1930's²⁷⁴. The busuti was then renamed gomesi after the tailor who's name was Gomez. He transformed it from the Indian sari-suka and sash inspired from the Japanese kimono's known as 'obi'. Gomesi is a floor length, brightly coloured attire with a square neckline and short, puffed sleeves. The garment is fastened with a sash placed just below the waist over the hips, and by two buttons on the left side of the neckline²⁷⁵. The style varies from one tribe to another. For men the kanzu, an ankle-length robe was introduced to Uganda

²⁷² Internet May 2006; http://www.mondeviarts.org/educationpdfs/cue.Children_of_Uganda.pdf (a)

²⁷³ Internet May 2006; http://www.mondeviarts.org/educationpdfs/cue.Children_of_Uganda.pdf (b)

²⁷⁴ African Woman, *The Voice of the Woman in Africa*, East African Edition: Issue 17/2007

²⁷⁵ Internet October 2007; <http://www.uggulis.com/articles/daily/homepage.asp?ID=544>

by the Arabs from Oman that came to Buganda during the reign of king Suuna²⁷⁶(see "Plate 2.66 on page 75"). Since then embroidery patterns have been added. The kanzu is often complimented with a Western- style jacket for formal events however it has since been replaced by the safari suit and also by western - style shirts and pants²⁷⁷.

The kitambi is a traditional dress in parts of Uganda. It has several different names including suuka, mwenda or munagiro depending on the origin²⁷⁸. In Uganda it was popular for women to wrap selves in a piece of cloth called the suuka²⁷⁹. The Buganda women went on to transform this suuka into gomesi by adding sleeves²⁸⁰. Women in western Uganda used it as a shawl to cover their traditional dress that included a kikoy wrapped as a skirt underneath (see "Plate 2.63 on page 75").

Mushanana finds its origin in Rwanda. In Uganda, it is mainly worn by the Bafumbira people from the Kisoro district as many of them are related to the Rwandese²⁸¹. Today, the mushanana has become a very popular outfit for traditional ceremonies because of its comfort, simplicity and ability to fit any size and figure.

Decency in African context was portrayed in many forms including dressing, which in many tribes reflected mannerism. In Buganda it was and still is important how one appears before the Bako (inlaws) or Sabasajja (king)²⁸². As part of the continued quest for decency, the early tribesmen in Buganda came up with the idea of the gomesi.²⁸³ Women in Buganda have worn the gomesi for close to 100 years²⁸⁴. The gomesi made of six metres of cloth, has sleeves made in a particular way and worn with a belt known as the kisi biro.

²⁷⁶ African Woman, *The Voice of the Woman in Africa*; East African Edition; Issue 17/2007(a)

²⁷⁷ Internet September; <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Sr-Z/Ugandan-Americans.html>

²⁷⁸ African Woman, *The Voice of the Woman in Africa*; East African Edition; Issue 17/2007 (b)

²⁷⁹ African Woman, *The Voice of the Woman in Africa*; East African Edition; Issue 17/2007 (c)

²⁸⁰ African Woman, *The Voice of the Woman in Africa*; East African Edition; Issue 17/2007(d)

²⁸¹ African Woman, *The Voice of the Woman in Africa*; East African Edition; Issue 17/2007 (e)

²⁸² Enoch Mulabaazi, 16th November, 2006. Ultimate Media Consult

²⁸³ Internet September 2007; <http://www.ugpulse.com/articles/daily/homepage.asp?ID=544>

²⁸⁴ Internet June 2006; <http://www.artmatters.info/sayit.htm>



Plate 2.63, 2.64, 2.65 and 2.66 Basuuti, Mushanana, Kitambi and Kanzu

The gomesi is widely worn all over the country and not only by the Baganda, all tribes in Uganda wear it, be they from the north, east, west or the central parts of the country. The Banyankole for example have their traditional attire but sometimes wear the gomesi. Similarly the Batoro and the Banyoro also have their own distinct attire for women, but will still wear the gomesi on special occasions²⁸⁵. As in many tribes of Uganda, gomesi is the official attire for women. A woman not dressed in a gomesi at a social function or event was not considered decently dressed until the recent arrival of kitenge and agbada from West Africa.

2.37 History of Uganda's National Attire

While there are no doubts that the gomesi is a noble costume, there are many historical contradictions about the origin of the Gomesi. Enoch Mutabaazi of Ultimate Media Consult has recorded that contemporary history indicates that the Basuuti was originally made for Gayaza schoolgirls in around 1940s and 50s²⁸⁶. It states that their first

²⁸⁵ Internet September 2007: <http://www.ugpulse.com/articles/daily/homepage.asp?ID=544>

²⁸⁶ Enoch Mutabaazi, 16th November, 2006: Ultimate Media Consult

uniform was a cotton sheet, which they wrapped around their breast and tied to the waist with a strip of cotton. But the uniform always slipped off whenever the girls bend down to dig. Their missionary tutors thought it was indecent for a woman to expose her breast so they had an Indian tailor sew out the gomesi²⁸⁷. Two decade later, the gomesi became a popular outfit at all traditional functions beginning with the Baganda and later the Basoga, Iteso, Alur and Japadhola. However, there are also those who say that missionaries did not develop the gomesi but rather stumbled on it.

According to Dr J.O. Pido of The University of Nairobi, "bark cloth preceded the suuka but people had worn 'chwana mara' a type of clothing before the gomesi". "Use of skin as a form of clothing determined the tying of the suuka and this is what developed into gomesi and later succeeded to become national attire". The popular use of the gomesi turned it into a national dress beginning with Basoga and then adopted by the Baganda." People in Buganda picked it up from there and used it. The gomesi has evolved from skin, bark cloth, suuka, and then gomesi jinja Basoga a (victorian fashion with high shoulders)²⁸⁸.

Odoch however agreed with Rose Nakiwala that "gomesi existed before the coming of the missionaries and they only improved on an already existing design"²⁸⁹. According to Nakiwala, traditionally, the earlier gomesi among the Baganda and other tribes was strapless. It existed in form of bark cloth, "Fashion and style of bark cloth gomesi in Buganda was not sophisticated, probably due to lack of sewing skills. It was one sheet of bark cloth garment wrapped around a woman's body". This was worn to cover the breast and legs leaving the back open, something similar to the Gayaza girls' uniform mentioned earlier in this study²⁹⁰. The open back gomesi started disappearing in early 1950s towards independence, however many rural Baganda women still wear open back gomesi.

According to Harriet Nakazi a Gomesi tailor, the earlier gomesi was designed with a romantic bias aimed at showing the tenderness of a woman's body. "Most importantly, the floor length was meant to give a woman respect by covering her body". Mary Onen

²⁸⁷ Enoch Mutabaazi, 16th November, 2006: Ultimate Media Consult (a)

²⁸⁸ Odoch J. P October 2007 (nd) National Dress of Uganda

²⁸⁹ Enoch Mutabaazi, 16th November, 2006: Ultimate Media Consult (b)

²⁹⁰ Enoch Mutabaazi, 16th November, 2006: Ultimate Media Consult (c)

a Ugandan student in Kenya shared this sentiment, but was quick to say that gomesi in Buganda is also about purity. Men are said to see beauty in women symbolized through this attire. Today, the gomesi is worn on all festive and ceremonial occasions for example Kwanjula (introduction or formal engagement), wedding and funeral ceremonies.

According to Hajat Zuliyati Bbosa, the modern gomesi has gone through four stages which are: The bark-cloth gomesi worn by our mothers, khaki or cotton gomesi worn in the 1960s, Toplain gomesi worn in the 1970s and finally the kikoy gomesi²⁹¹. The kikoy gomesi is in reference to the underneath garment wrapped from above the woman's breast. Today, more designs have been added to make the fading design plausible to the young generation. There was only one style of wearing the attire, but when modernity set in designs have become sophisticated. Details have also increased making wearing gomesi an elaborate exercise.

As women opted for linen fabric contrary to bark cloth and cotton, they noticed that the new fabric easily sticks to the body hence, making movement difficult. To avoid this, a kikoi came in handy as underwear. However, some dynamic designers with business acumen have found a window for making money. Designers have improvised the necessary changes to attract young people who say that gomesi is good but not friendly for the fast moving life of today. Chrisams Design, a tailoring house on Bombo Road, has modernized the gomesi to include a zip so as to make sure that the dress does not slip open at the sides²⁹². The fold over the waist is fastened with straps. This intervention has received a positive response from both young and old. According to Enoch Mutabaazi, the busuuti will continue to be a source of clashes between culture and modernity. Whether wearing a gomesi is uncomfortable or not, today in many tribes, people will scoff at a woman who goes to a cultural function in anything but the gomesi²⁹³. It is however a day to day attire for most rural women who consider western clothing as a girls only.

The Inauguration of national attire in Kenya was an opportunity window for the employment market. This would have seen the revival of textile industries and therefore

²⁹¹ Enoch Mutabaazi, 16th November, 2006: Ultimate Media Consult (a)
²⁹² Internet September 2007: <http://www.uggulite.com/articles/daily/homepage.asp?ID=544>
²⁹³ Enoch Mutabaazi, 16th November, 2006: Ultimate Media Consult(b)

creating jobs for people. Kenyan designers should combine traditional and Western designs as a way of making adoption easy. This will also aid in achieving a dress that cuts across different cultures represented in the country.

2.38 Politics and National Attires

Nation attires tell a lot about us, they tell who we are in the society. Clothes tell others what we want, what our talents are, our needs, our personalities, our dispositions and our destinations. The Nigerian agbada for example says the following we are unique, powerful and wealthy²⁴⁴. It is commonly worn by those who either have these attributes or would like to acquire them. This implies that dress is the most prominent façade of our well being in the society. It can camouflage, it can cover-up and it can build as much as it can destroy our image. It can say for us, we're as good as you are, or we have the same interest or we're important or even the opposite, we're worthless. National Attire is a silent yet a very powerful communicator.

The traditional attire of Iraq whose members are so deeply immersed in Islamic fundamentalism reflects these ideals and values²⁴⁵ (see "Plate 2.67 on page 79"). Most people in Europe, North America and other westernised countries as well as the colonized African people, still dress in similar way in clothes that have been mass-produced in factories. Individual regions and countries however developed their own styles and attire adapted to their climate for example linen, cotton, silk were more used in India, and China while wool and leather were commonly used in colder countries.

The Kenyan national attire has also been a political issue. At the national level during the 2007 election campaigns the two main political parties, Party of National Unity (PNU) and the Orange Democratic Movement demonstrated a politicization contemporary use of colour in their attire. The former speaker Mr Francis Ole Kapro is in record to have issued a severe dress down to members of parliament, Raila Odinga and Koigi Wamwere for entering the chambers in flowing Nigerian agbadas²⁴⁶. After the launch of Kenyan national attire in 2004 the former minister professor Kibudha Kibwana also received a severe dress down for entering the chambers with the national attire. This

²⁴⁴ Internet May 2006: http://www.mondaviarts.org/educationpdfs/cue.Children_ofUganda.pdf

²⁴⁵ Harth, George L. (1958) *Iraq: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture*. New Haven, CT: Haf Press

²⁴⁶ Internet May 2006: <http://www.safarweb.com/safarimate/naldress.htm>; A Correspondent Reports for safarimate

action seemed to water down issue of Kenya's national attire. As at now Kenya has national attire that has not been embraced by the public, but the search for national attire has been a conviction among Kenyans²⁹⁷.



Plate: 2.67 Moslem Women in Religious Attire²⁹⁸

The search for the Kenya national attire has been on for more than a decade. The most recent effort in this direction was in 2004, when the government sponsored a competition to create national attire. This resulted in a design, which has failed to win over the public. Vasagar²⁹⁹ says the design looks unmistakably African, but has so far not been adopted by Kenyans. Known as the Kenyan cloak (see image below), the design features an ankle-length robe and long cloak for women, while men wear a shirt with a slashed collar. The cloak is structured to wrap around and over one shoulder. It can be

²⁹⁷ Alan Donovan 2004, *My Journey through African Heritage*, Kenway Publishers
²⁹⁸ *ibid* August 2007; Encyclopedia of Modern Asia: Macmillan Reference, USA
²⁹⁹ Vasagar, J. (October 25th 2004); *Kenyans say no thanks to national dress*, The guardian

part of the shirt or an accessory piece put over a foundation shirt or coat. Both attires come in the colors of the flag: red, green and black³⁰⁰.



Plate 2.68 The Proposed 2004 Kenya National Attire for Men and Women³⁰¹

When introducing the Kenyan flag and coat of arms in 1963, the then Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs the late Tom Mboya said, "This flag is a flag of unity and we expect it to be respected and symbolise something deeper for all"³⁰². In the same way national attire should symbolise something deeper, in the sense that it is expected to bring about a common identity for a nation and its people.

In view of this, secondary data points to the fact that Kenyans designers to date have continued in their quest for national attire which accommodates every Kenyan. According to Ojay Hakim an authority in fashion, as shown above designers are making changes and modifications to the proposed national attire³⁰³, see ("plate 2.69 on page 81").

³⁰⁰ Government of Kenya, 2004

³⁰¹ The Go-down Art Centre, 2006

³⁰² Daily Nation, July 31, 2003: The News of 1963 as it was Reported

³⁰³ Daily Nation July 5th 2007; Sunday Nation, 16th September 2007;



Plate 2.69 Shows Changes And Modifications To The Proposed National Attire³⁰⁶.

2.39 Cultures of Kenya and their National Attire/Traditional Attires

There are more than 40 different ethnic groups in Kenya. The main groups of tribes are the Bantu who migrated from western Africa. They are concentrated in three main geographical regions: Western Kenya and Lake Victoria region (Luhya, Kisii), east of Rift Valley, (Kikuyu, Embu, Kamba) and Coastal belt (Mijikenda). The Nilotic people who originated from Sudan are represented by the Luo, Kalenjin, Maasai and related groups. The Kalenjin linguistic groups is concentrated in the area north to south and west of the central highlands, while the Luos are concentrated in the Lake Victoria Basin. Cushitic (Hamitic group) who were mainly pastoral tribes from Ethiopia and Somalia represent the Somali speaking group. They occupy the eastern portions of the arid and semi-arid north eastern Kenya. Rendille and Orma speaking groups occupy the north western part. The main tribes are Kikuyu (21%), Meru (5%), Kalenjin, Luhya, Luo (14%), Kisii, Kamba, Swahili, Maasai, and Turkana. There are also some groups of people who form a very small population. They include the tribe of El Molo³⁰⁷.

Many different cultures are thus represented in Kenya but however, the country does not have a unique culture that identifies it. According to

³⁰⁶ Daily Nation, July 2007

³⁰⁷ Saturday Standard, October 2005

³⁰⁸ Daily Nation July 5th 2007; Sunday Nation, 16th September 2007;

³⁰⁹ Internet June 2006: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/culture_of_kenya

Magloga¹⁰⁸, this lack of a unique culture is the direct outcome of diversity of the ethnic groups. With such diverse regional peoples such as the Swahili along the coast, several pastoralist communities mainly in the North and the different communities in Central and Western regions, having a mutually acceptable cultural identification is difficult.

The Maasai



Klumpp D. R in a paper on preliminary analysis of Maasai body ornaments says, "the basic Maasai style of attire for men, women and children has remained intact since at least the mid 1880s," it consists of a loosely tied robe and a cape for both sexes with the addition of an ankle length wrap-around skirt for women and a shorter wrap-around for warriors. These clothes were originally of oil-tanned leather, but as cloth became more readily available, men began wearing fabric robes and small

skin capes during their warrior years, adding blankets and large fur capes when they reached elder hood. Women retained their skin skirts in some areas while adopting plain cloth robes with patterned or checked cloth capes in various combinations of red, white and black.¹⁰⁹



The Maasai dressed in skins stitched together known as N-dorosi garments (see image above). This was worn like the Spanish poncho, slit being made in the middle for the head to pass through¹¹⁰. They dressed simply with a piece of cloth for the men, and a

¹⁰⁸ Magloga M.S (2004): National dress; (ES) Chairman, African Cultural Network

¹⁰⁹ Klumpp, D. R: April 1992 (n.d.), *A Preliminary Analysis of Maasai Body Ornament*, Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi, Paper No. 157 (a)

¹¹⁰ Klumpp, D. R: April 1992 (n.d.), *A Preliminary Analysis of Maasai Body Ornament*, Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi, Paper No. 157 (b)

skin or cloth tied at the shoulder for the women. Before manufactured cloth became readily and inexpensively available, a Moran wore a goatskin or calfskin cape as his everyday attire¹¹. Today the common covering is a brightly colored cloth of red or reddish orange see ("Plate 2.70"). The cloth may be draped to go over one shoulder or wrapped around the body from chest to knees, suspended from criss-crossing beaded braces or rolled down around the waist loincloth style. Unlike other tribes in Kenya, the Maasai culture is well known due to its heavy exposure from tourism. They are also known for preserving their culture.



Plate 2.70 Maasai Men In Traditional Attire¹²



Plate 2.71 A Maasai Girl¹³

The Maasai are one of the best adorned tribes in Kenya. The men painted themselves with ochre as a form of adornment and had elaborate hair styles, which were sewn together using cow oil. All Maasai women learnt the art of bead making quite early in life and each woman made her own jewellery. Apart from beads Maasai women painted their bodies using a herb called 'ongeriantus'. This left permanent marks on the body and on the face. They also had body scarifications though it was not so common.

¹¹ Klumpp, D. R.; April 1992 (n.d), *A Preliminary Analysis of Maasai Body Ornaments*. Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi, Paper No. 157

¹² Internet August 2007: Source: [http://kenya.robowen.com/people\(a\)](http://kenya.robowen.com/people(a))

¹³ Internet August 2007: Source: [http://kenya.robowen.com/people\(b\)](http://kenya.robowen.com/people(b))



Plate 2.72, 2.73 some of Kenya's Traditional Dressing

Turkana Attire



Turkana attire is uniquely different from any other tribes in Kenya. Over the years,

men's nakedness has given way to thin striped blankets knotted over one shoulder or lengths of plain or printed cotton material wrapped around the waist. In the old days, full leopard skins were worn down the back as brilliant cloaks on all ceremonial occasions. Today, this style of attire has all but disappeared as a result of strict game laws intended to halt the decline of the leopard population. Tight fitting leggings made of soft, white calf skin were always worn below a man's calves as a reliable protection from the wicked thorns afflicting herdsmen and travelers¹⁴.

¹⁴ W. Eteki - Mbouroum (1974). *Africa Arts: African Studies Centre - University of California*

Men have taken to wearing the top half of socks round their ankles.¹¹³ The most distinctive feature of a Turkana man's attire is his decorated day hairdo. Hardly a week goes by that they do not make a new article of clothing from tanned sheep or goatskins which are expertly colour-matched and sewn. Unmarried girls wear two V-shaped aprons made of tanned goatskins with hair removed, a small one in front and a larger one behind see ("Plate 2.76 below"). The front apron is decorated round the edge of the V with a broad band of Ostrich eggshell beads. These are pierced and strung together before being sewn onto the garment. In places the apron is generally rectangular, and colored glass beads are used instead¹¹⁴.



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Plate 2.74, 2.75, 2.76 The Turkana in Traditional Attire

Girls complete their wardrobe of practical, home-made clothes with full-length cloaks of soft skin, which are richly decorated. They hang loosely down the front of the body but may be round the waist if the girl is journeying far. Married women also wear leather cloaks but theirs are plain. The aprons of married women are never decorated with ostrich eggshell beads. The front apron is made of calf, goat, or gazelle skin without the hair removed. Several lines of iron, copper or brass beads may also be sewn in the centre of the apron in preference to glass beads¹¹⁵.

A long time ago when metal was scarce, small soft stone beads were used instead. Styles differ from territorial section to section. Some women stitch dark and light skins in

¹¹³ Nigel Pavitt (1997). *Turkana*: The Havill Press, London

¹¹⁴ W. Eteki - Mboumoua (1974). *Africa Arts*: African Studies Centre - University of California

¹¹⁵ Nigel Pavitt (1997). *Turkana*: The Havill Press, London (a)

¹¹⁶ Nigel Pavitt (1997). *Turkana*: The Havill Press, London (b)

¹¹⁷ Nigel Pavitt (1997). *Turkana*: The Havill Press, London (c)

successive broad vertical bands. Others sew alternate black and brown squares. Cattle brand divisions require their women to edge the lower sides of their skirts with the front leg skins of their marriage oxen. Belt styles also vary. A few decorated with metal beads, others with cowry shells, and still others are made with the metacarpus and the tarsal bones of dikdiks²⁴¹

The Luo of Kenya

The Luo's conception of being properly dressed around 1906, centred around the minimal forms of clothing (of fibre or skin, but not textiles), paint and jewellery made of beads, wire and carved bone²⁴¹. This was appropriate for specific situations. The really flashy dressers in this society were the warriors, distinguished by their stunning headdresses of ostrich feathers or carved tusks, the red and white paint on their faces, the lengths of iron wire wrapped around their arms and legs, and their spears and shields they carried. Women and girls usually wore a short simple apron of fibre, or a more elaborate beaded one for special occasions²⁴².



Plate: 2.77 Luo men and women style of dressing²⁴³

Married women wore chleno tied around their loins and hanging in a back, soft fibre tail that hung low enough to protect their modesty from the back. Married men usually wore a small piece of goatskin tied just around their loins, and sometimes an additional, larger piece of skin on a thong tied over one shoulder. Wealthy or influential

²⁴¹ Charles W. Bird & Ivan Karp. (1996): *African Material Culture*. Indiana University Press (a)

²⁴² Charles W. Bird & Ivan Karp (1996): *African Material Culture*. Indiana University Press (b)

²⁴³ Charles W. Bird & Ivan Karp (1996): *African Material Culture*. Indiana University Press(c)

men wore cloaks of goatskin or sometimes leopard skin, numerous earring, and coils of wire around their arms and legs. Most of these forms of clothes were sturdy and quite long lasting. The best skins were kept supple through periodic rubbing with oil, and were brought out only for formal occasions¹²³.

Chiemo were expected to last through out a woman's married life. They were made by craftswomen in areas with the best local sources of fibre, while skins were prepared by local craftsmen. The early British travellers and officials were stunned by the sight of Kavirondo natives "in their fullest undress"¹²⁴. Drumkey's year book for East Africa describes the Kavirondo as "thrifful, Industrious people whose most remarkable peculiarity is that both sexes went stark naked, although they had the reputation of being a highly moral and respectable race"¹²⁵.

The Nandi

In the past men and women were scantily dressed. The former showed no signs of shame at being seen naked but women must not appear without their lower garments. Babies and small children would run about naked. Young boys would wear a goat's skin



garment (Ingoret) and a Necklace of black beads (Sonalek).

Young girls wear an apron called Osiek. It is made of strips of leather fastened onto a belt ornamented with cowries. They also at times wear a dressed skin or cloth called Ingoret-

¹²³ Charles W. Bar & Ivan Karp, (1996): *African Material Culture*. Indiana University Press

¹²⁴ Churchill Winston (n.d.), *My African Journey*. London: Hodder and Stoughton

¹²⁵ Drumkey, Y. S. A., (1909): *Drumkey's year book for East Africa*. Bombay: The Times Press

ap-ko¹²⁴. The attire of the warriors consist of two or three black goat's or calves hides sewn together and loosely fixed by a strip of leather over one shoulder.

The Mijikenda

Among the Mijikenda community, boys used to wear a cloth which was tied round the waist and passed between the legs. Girls put on a type of cloth skirt known as "hando" and had the rest of the body uncovered. Married women used to wear a large string of beads over the hando. These beads were called "Magalia"¹²⁷. Girlama girls wore a skirt made of many strips of material, gathered together at the waist. When they were older, they covered this with a second skirt made of clothe. On their arms women wore beads of different colours tied together with strings¹²⁸. They also wore aluminum or copper bracelets. The material was coiled around in a long spiral, reaching from the waist to the elbow.



They made for themselves aluminium earrings and necklaces. Older women wore bracelets made of Ivory. Girls were decorated with incised marks on their cheeks and sometimes on their stomachs. Elders, called kambi wore closed cloth round their waists, tied in position with a red belt.

The traditional Swahili clothing is elaborate for ceremonies and festivals but simple for everyday wear. Most men wore a kikoi round the waist. The kikoi is a long piece of material about one metre wide, either plain or patterned. Elaborate ones may be used for special occasions such as Friday prayers, festivals and weddings. The kikoi is drawn round

¹²⁴ A. C. Hollis (1909). *The Nandi their Language and Folk lore*: Oxford Press

¹²⁷ Johnson A. Mwangudza. (1983) *Kenya's people - Mijikenda*: BAS Printers, Over Wallop, Hampshire (a)

¹²⁸ Johnson A. Mwangudza (1983). *Kenya's people - Mijikenda*: BAS Printers, Over Wallop, Hampshire (b)

the waist and fastened by folding both ends together, rolling them into a ball at the top and then tucking the ball inwards against the body. However a belt to hold it up is hardly necessary¹⁰⁹. Today a cotton vest and a shirt is sometimes added. During old days the kikoi was covered by a kanzu – a long straight narrow garment with long sleeves that reaches well below the knees. Although really seen, the kizibao a kind of sleeveless waistcoat made of bright coloured cloth was also worn. On great occasions the joho may be worn over all other clothing. This is a long loose cloth made of fine coloured cloth, blue, purple, scarlet or brown, often richly braided over the shoulders with gold lace. It is open in front and falls over the back in one seamless piece, reaching down as far as the heels¹¹⁰.

On the head a Swahili man wears a white needle-work cap called a kofia. Around his bound a turban which may be plain white or coloured. Swahili women traditionally wore trousers and loose dresses on top. They wore silk shawls on their heads and the young ones wore caps decorated with gold and other bright materials. Some women wore embroidered tunics. When they ventured out of their doors the women covered themselves in a bulbuli with a piece attached which was used to cover the face. At home a Swahili woman dresses lightly. Large, rectangular coloured cotton cloths (kanga or lessa) are much evident. Kangas are sold as a pair. In this case one is worn to cover the head just like a shawl with a cotton dress. Secondly, a pair of cloths may be worn, one on the head and the other drawn round the body under the arms, and secured by gathering the ends together and rolling them into a ball at the chest or on one side¹¹¹.



Plate 2.78 Some Tradition Attire of Kenya

¹⁰⁹ Salim I. Ahmed (1985). *People of the Coast – Swahili*. Evans Brothers Kenya Ltd (a)

¹¹⁰ Salim I. Ahmed (1985). *People of the Coast – Swahili*. Evans Brothers Kenya Ltd (b)

¹¹¹ Salim I. Ahmed (1985). *People of the Coast – Swahili*. Evans Brothers Kenya Ltd (c)



Plate 2.79 Some Kenyan Traditional Attire



Plate 2.80 Some Kenyan Traditional Attire

2.40 The Kenya National Attire

At the national level, the search was reignited in 1994 when three Kenyan members of parliament received a severe dressing down from Speaker Francis Ole Kaparo because of entering the chamber in African attire. A more spirited search for the national attire was initiated in 2004 when on 15th April, 2004, the then Minister for Gender, Hon. Najib Balala, in a press conference held in his office challenged designers to come up with national attire¹²². Seeing this as an opportunity to promote the new sunlight brand,

¹²² Kenya Times 16th April, 2004 Publication ID, 33766 pg 11

Unilever offered to fund such an initiative. This researcher's idea acquired official vindication.

Apart from the national flag, Kenya is yet to have national attire that cuts across its diverse ethnic divide. With each of the more than 42 ethnic groupings in Kenya having its own traditional practices and symbols that make it unique, this is a task that has proved elusive in the past. However, several attempts have been made to design an outfit that can be worn to identify Kenyans, much like the kente cloth of Ghana. The most recent effort was the Unilever-sponsored "Sunlight quest for Kenya's National Attire"³²³. A design was chosen and though it was unveiled with much pomp at a ceremony in which public figures modeled the attire, the design never took hold with the ordinary people. The government of Kenya through the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services called on local designers and members of the public³²⁴ to give ideas for and create the national attire in March 2004 (see "plate 2.81").



Plate 2.81 Coupon used to invite designers³²⁵

Six concepts of the national attire were proposed by the design team, these fall in four categories namely the apron concept, the cape concept, the cloak concept and the sash concept (see "Plate 2.68 on page 80")³²⁶.

³²³ East African Standard, 16 April, 2004; Publication ID 279967 Back Pg (a)

³²⁴ East African Standard, 16 March 2004; Publication ID270040 Back Pg (b)

³²⁵ The Go-Down Art Centre 92006)



Plate 2.82 The Launch of the Proposed Concepts¹¹⁷

Kenyan citizens were then called to vote on the four concepts through internet, short messaging service (SMS) and ballot voting. The most popular design would become public property to be used by any Kenyan citizen ("Plate 2.83 below"), at any time and anywhere. There would also be no royalty or copyright claim due to any member of the design team, the public or the consulting experts. The national attire would be worn when representing Kenya and would not replace individual cultural attire.



Plate 2.83 Above left the National Attire concept displayed, while below the Honourable Minister for Culture votes for his preferred Attire.

¹¹⁷ Government of Kenya (n.d.). (2004)

¹¹⁸ Internet, 16 September, 2004). <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3660698.stm>.

2.41 The 2004 Quest for national attire

On 24th March 2004¹³⁴ Unilever Kenya Ltd, submitted to the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services a comprehensive proposal for the development of Kenyan national dress through one of its key brands "Sunlight Washing Powder". Kenyense¹³⁵ observed in 2004 that after thorough consideration of the proposal and its enrichment by

Opinion of the Department of Culture, the Ministry endorsed the project proposal and committed itself to partnering with Unilever Kenya Ltd in implementing the project.



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Consequently on 15th April, 2004, the partnership between the Ministry of Culture and Unilever Kenya Ltd in the project was officially announced by the then Minister for Gender Hon. Najib Balala, in a press conference held in his office. This was in the presence of officials from Unilever Kenya Ltd, led by its marketing director Ms Patricia Ithau, and attended by representatives from several Kenyan media houses¹³⁶. On 26th April 2004, the Ministry's then Permanent Secretary, Ambassador Nancy Kirui, appointed a Ministry controlled Joint Steering Committee on the development of the National Attire. It was composed of the Director of Culture, the Managing Director Kenya Tourism

¹³⁴ Daily Nation (16th April, 2004), Publication ID 13724

¹³⁵ Kenyense, R M (2004) Head, visual arts division, Ministry of Culture and Social Services: ESE/DC/1/16/VOL.1/ (49)

¹³⁶ Unilever Kenya Limited (2006)

¹³⁷ The People Daily, 20 April 2004, ID 1948, pg 17

Board, the Commissioner for Social Services and Ms. Joy Mboya who was the Director of the Go down Arts Centre. The Steering Committee was mandated to guarantee the necessary moderations and expeditious implementation of the project⁴².

Unilever Kenya Ltd setup the National Attire project committee composed of experts from the fashion and Design industry to manage the technical implementation of the project. The project Committee set its operational base at the Go down Arts Centre. This made significant progress towards putting into place the National Attire. After researching and consulting widely with all relevant stakeholders and experts/ academicians and designers, the Project Committee went ahead to embark on the first crucial phase of the project. This phase included soliciting for design proposals, ideas, and color combinations of the National attire. At the same time, the Project Committee had also been soliciting and receiving public choices of the preferred colors of the National attire. This was done through voting for the same through coupons found in the Sunlight Washing Powder products, which were widely sold in the Kenyan local marketing outlets (see image below).



Plate 2.84 A Copy of Coupons found in Sunlight Washing Powder⁴³

By 3rd June, 2004, the Project committee had received a total of 100 National Attire design proposal submissions in form of sketches, stitched garments, and ideas from whose authors 9 designers who would steer the development and tailoring of the final version of the National Attire were selected. On 5th June, 2004, the Project committee constituted a panel of 5 selected judges consisting of Dr. Kimani Njogu (Academician/Consultant), Ms. Molly Mungai (Evelyn School of Design), Ms Sheila

⁴² The people Daily, 16 April 2004 ID 1948 pg. 5
⁴³ Source: Joy Mboya: The Go down Art Centre

Madoka (Designer), Dr. Sukl Mwendwa (University of Nairobi Design Department), and Mr. Robinson M Kanyenze from the Department of Culture (see image below).



These selected the 9 members of the members of the design team were to undertake the national dress tailoring process to its completion. The panel rigorously assessed design submissions from 100 designers, and thereafter selected a total of 16 designers, with the first 9 with highest score being recommended to the project management committee to form the core of the design team for the National Attire. The committee was advised where necessary to draw technical input from any of the remaining 7 selected designers. The selected first nine designers were:- Martha Gakli, Patricia Mbela, John Kavuka, Jane Wangui Njenga, Mumbi Munguti, Maryann Nguyo, Seventinah Ooko, Dickson Owiti, and Samira Jelzan (see "Plate 1.4 on page 5")⁴⁴. The search for Kenya's national attire is one noble venture whose true goal can only be achieved with unending support of all those concerned. In South Africa for example, designers in the fashion industry are successful because of the overwhelming support given to them by their government⁴⁵.

2.42 Constraints to the Design of the National Attires

At the national level the search was reignited in 1994 when three members of parliament received a severe dressing down from Speaker Francis Ole Kaparo because of entering the chambers in African attire (refer to Chapter One) Kaparo, who is

⁴⁴ Kanyenze, R.M (2004). Head, visual arts division, Ministry of Culture and Social Services: CBI/DC/1/16/VOL.1/ (49)

⁴⁵ The Daily Nation 4th November 2007 pg 3

remembered for throwing out of Parliament MPs Koigi wa Wamwere and Paul Goro Sunguh for what was described as indecent dressing but two days later praising Public Works minister Ralla Amolo Odinga for being 'smart' in an attire similar to the ones Wamwere and Sunguh had donned. He was reported to have wondered "what herosism do MPs find in dressing improperly"⁴⁶. In December 2004 Kaparo once again protested against Prof Kibwana for wearing national attire in parliament. To protest that Prof Kibwana was in the national attire, Kaparo demanded to know who had declared the shirt national attire, where and when. Not even arguments by Prof Kibwana that the Ministry for Gender, Sports and Social Services had gone "through a very elaborate process to determine what our national dress will be" could save him from the wrath of the Speaker. Kaparo intoned: "It is the opinion of the Chair that if that be our national attire, then the ministry needs to go back and think very hard!"⁴⁷

Ochillo Ayacko, the Gender, Sports and Social Services minister under whose docket the national attire issue falls, said, "Mr Speaker Sir, I know there will be occasion to debate this, but what Prof Kibwana is wearing is the national attire although it is not the complete fashion." But the Speaker could not buy his argument. Saying the House was "repulsed" by Prof Kibwana's "casual look", Ole Kaparo added, "You cannot even go and teach a Standard Seven class in that attire." The Speaker advised the Ministry of Culture that whatever national attire it designs, it should "make sure that it makes sense."

Ayacko pleaded with the Speaker to reserve his comments on the national attire, contending that the Speaker's "point that has been made so firmly" could prejudice debate on the national attire when it was brought to Parliament. Mr Kaparo retorted: "Who allowed you to decree that it is our national attire? Who told you it is a national dress? There has not been any declaration of national attire. I think whatever you people do, including the Hon Professor, you should at least come to the House with something that shows seriousness." Although the incident looked embarrassing for the government as it showed the left hand did not know what the right one did, it showed lack of seriousness with which the government treats culture. And drove even more people into rejecting the Sh50 million cloak that Najib Balala had conceived and mid-wifed as the national attire. Many more Kenyans interviewed consider the red, green and black ankle-length robe and

⁴⁶ Internet (18 March 2008): <http://www.artmatters.info/fashion/articles/reject.php> (a)

⁴⁷ Internet (18 March 2008): <http://www.artmatters.info/fashion/articles/reject.php> (b)

cloak for women and shirt with slashed collar and cape across the shoulder for men as both cumbersome and clumsy. Rather than forcing garbs on Kenyans, pundits continue to argue that an important matter like the national attire should come from the people at the grassroots and crawl to the national stage instead of the powers-that-be forcing it on people as a few people in the NARC government tried to do but ended up with an attire that Kaparo describes as lacking in seriousness. But the Director of Culture, Silverse Anami, says the national attire is evolving and that there should be no reason for alarm or for concluding that it has miscarried. Citizens of nations with national attire will tell you their garb has evolved without any one forcing it on the people. The sari is embraced by India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka just as the Koreans and Japanese are proud of their Hanbok and Kimono, respectively. The Kilt and the Lungi of Scotland and Myanmar are other national symbols that have evolved through history for their practicality³⁴⁸.

For its variety of pre-Columbian ethnic attire, Oaxaca province of Mexico is often described as a huge fashion show that attracts tourists to the Central American nation. Given a chance, Kenya, too, is rich in pre-colonial ethnic wear that make the Kikuyu, the Kamba, the Maasai, the Samburu, the Luo and the Luyla unique. This type of wear should be given a chance to evolve. National attire should not be designed and forced on the people apparently for 'patriotic' and political reasons and little to do with the aspirations of the people who matter. This is because they are the ones who will wear it and if they do not like it, they will not adopt it as is the case with the current one.

There are several constraints to the design of the national attire. Kaveke³⁴⁹ says that the number of tribes in Kenya poses a design problem and adds that the Kenyan cultures have been polluted by western cultures. The cost of production which translates into the total cost of the dress, makes it non economical. Could this be the reason why the national dress was rejected? Essentially, a national dress is an attire characteristic of a country or a time or a social class³⁵⁰.

According to Wikipedia dictionary national attire expresses an identity through costume which usually relates to a geographical area, but can also

³⁴⁸ Internet (18 March 2008): <http://www.artmatters.info/fashion/articles/relect.php>

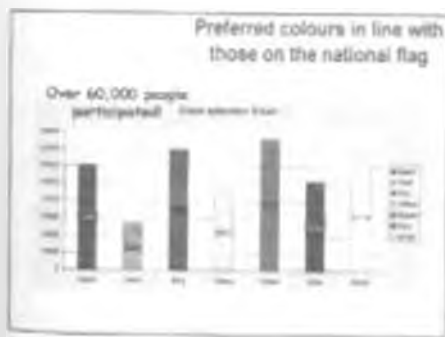
³⁴⁹ Internet (November 2006): <http://www.artmatters.com>

³⁵⁰ word-web dictionary (May, 2006)

Indicate social, marital and or religious status and that such costume often come in two forms: one for everyday occasions, the other for festivals and formal wear. As a symbol, national attire of a country or its people sends distinct signals to others on numerous things, but most importantly the national character of the people. The flowing oversized agbada of the Nigerians says the following "we are affluent, grandiose, loud, and love ourselves" which demonstrates so clearly the national character of the people³⁵¹. The drab Mao suit of China suits the psyche milieu of hard working communist China³⁵².

From the contributions on the outset of designing the 2004 Kenyan attire, Shamalla³⁵³ cites that it was sad noting an ongoing debate where contributors suggested that the flag could form a basis of the national attire. She asked how can national attire be narrowed down to specific colours in the national flag? In the given design effort, it is important to note the symbolic significance of the colors in a flag cannot be reduced to suit the colors of national attire. Attire has a whole colour significance based upon the mood of the wearer, occasion, and place among others. National attire on the other hand has a much higher colour significance that will be further dealt with in this study.

National attires and flags symbolize the nation and its people³⁵⁴. As shown in the picture below, Kenya has national attire with colors that are in line with those on the national flag (see image below). This attire has not been adopted by the majority.



³⁵¹ Internet (29th May 2006); <http://www.encyarta.miu.com>

³⁵² Maturil A. A (1970). "The Robes of Rebellion: Sex, Dress, and Politics in Africa." Encounter

³⁵³ Shamalla J. (2004): Research Paper on Kenya National Dress; Ministry of Culture and Social Services

³⁵⁴ Shamalla J. (2004): Submission to the Quest for Kenya National Dress; Ministry of Culture and Social Services

However, the search for national attire has been a conviction among many Kenyans. This research is an inquiry as to why the Kenya national attire has not been adopted. It presents the history of the search for the Kenya national dress in light of the activities which have been undertaken towards the attire. It also sought to establish reasons for non adoption of the attire by Kenyans.

Arguments against having national attire include those that see it as a backward idea. One of the reasons for such arguments is that Kenya is cosmopolitan and does not need an attire for identification. While others think it is critical, Donovan in his book "My Journey through African Heritage" notes that many people think that the idea of national attire was too late 40 years since the country's independence¹³³. Another argument is that if the design for the attire chosen is predominantly from one culture, or draws its inspiration from one ethnic group, that group may develop a superiority complex over others thereby creating an explosive situation. Others also argue that the attire should have been introduced as a fashion. Kaveke¹³⁴ says that "any fashion takes time to be accepted and to pick up" and that Kenyans are a peculiar people, most of them tend to adopt a "wait and see attitude." From the ongoing debate it is evident that designer need to go back to the drawing table so as come up with an attire that accommodates all Kenyans. As this way adoption can be made easy for Kenyans.

2.43 Branding

Branding is often confused with marketing and public relations. An effective brand strategy gives a major edge in increasingly competitive markets. It tells the customers what they can expect from products and services, and it differentiates what a company offers from their competitors. Your brand is derived from who you are, who you want to be and who people perceive you to be. An effective brand strategy gives you a major edge in increasingly competitive markets, which means the added value brought to your company's products or services that allows you to charge more for your brand than what identical, unbranded products command. The most obvious example of this is Coke as compared to a generic soda. Because Coca-Cola has built powerful brand

¹³³ Allan Donovan (2004); *My Journey Through African Heritage*; Kenway Publications, Nairobi, 128-309

¹³⁴ Saturday Standard, October (2005)

equity, it can charge more for its product and customers will pay that higher price. The kente of Ghana and the agbada of Nigeria are obvious effective examples of national attire brands which have given a major edge in increasingly competitive markets. Customers are ready to pay any price as long as they know its source. Branded products attract higher price more for their brands than what identical, unbranded products would command.

The failure by Kenyans to adopt their national attire was a failure to brand the country because national attire are used to brand a nation and its people. In an effort to brand Kenya there was the launch of Brand Kenya. This was to be used as a platform to effectively market the country. It has remained stillborn while other countries like South Africa are realizing tangible economic benefits from similar initiatives. The Brand Kenya vision was to 'Harness the hard work, warmth and spirit of our people to become a just and prosperous nation that leads Africa's socio economic and cultural emergence.' It was to be achieved through showcasing the country's strengths: an alluring tourist destination, skilled workforce, investment potential, peace and stability, diversity, respected heritage, athletes, climate and location. The campaign arose out of the realization that today, every country, region and city has to compete with every other country, region and city on the planet: for customers, tourists, business, talented people, and investment.

According to Julius Kipngetich¹⁵⁷, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Director, "the issue of Brand Kenya is a sad story. What it lacked was a champion inside the Government." Kipngetich who was involved in developing the Brand Kenya campaign when he was managing director of the Investment Promotion Centre (IPC), says that an independent office within government was to have been created to spearhead the initiative. However, Tom Sitati, chairman of the Marketing Society of Kenya (MSK), also believes that lack of support from Government was Brand Kenya's undoing. "If it is not driven by government it doesn't work. The South African initiative is driven by government with private sector involvement," he says¹⁵⁸. The national dress of Kenya has since suffered the same blow for

¹⁵⁷ Business Daily (18 November 2007), Nairobi: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711180097.html> 25 March 2008 (a)

¹⁵⁸ Business Daily (18 November 2007), Nairobi: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711180097.html> 25 March 2008 (b)

¹⁵⁹ The Financial Standard, March 25, 2008

¹⁶⁰ Business Daily (18 November 2007), Nairobi: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711180097.html> 25 March 2008 (c)

lack of political goodwill as is the tradition in other countries. While Unilever did a commendable job in sponsoring the quest, the government of Kenya has not bothered to take it to the next level.

Lack of good will from the Government is cited by some private sector players and stakeholders as the reason as to why Brand Kenya has remained an apparent failure. The Government in turn says a decision to incorporate Brand Kenya into Vision 2030 has delayed its implementation. Simon Anholt, a British branding expert who first coined the term "nation branding" in 1998¹⁰⁰ says, "In order to compete effectively, every place needs to be known for something: its values, people, ambitions, products, landscapes or perhaps a combination of these," says having a brand strategy means knowing exactly what those assets are, how to use them, showing the world that you have them, and knowing how they add up to a whole that is unique, truthful, distinctive and attractive. Done well, even small and poor countries can find ways to be heard in world affairs says Mr Anholt.

Marketing Society of Kenya (MSK) spearheaded the research and development of Brand Kenya supported by Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) a private sector lobby. But Tom Sitati¹⁰¹ an Executive Director with Interbrand Sampson East Africa and Chairman of the Marketing Society of Kenya, Brand Kenya had some success in its primary objective which was to awaken Kenyans to feel proud to be Kenyans. Martin Lel of Kenya displays a sense of national pride as he poses with the winner's trophy after a marathon race in New York City. According to Sitati, they have had other Brand Kenya campaigns for example the "Proudly Kenyan" campaign which was followed by others not necessarily part of the Brand Kenya initiative. The fact that more corporates have in the last five or so years aligned themselves with the national brand is testament to the fact that the national branding drive was the right thing to do. Safaricom, Tusker, Equity Bank, Nakumatt, Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB), Access Kenya is just but a few of the large money minting brands that have benefited from aligning themselves to the national

brand 'we are proud to be Kenyans'²⁶¹. Can branding be a reason as to why the national attire did not catch on?

National attire is a tool used to brand a nation and its people. The quest for national attire sponsored by Unilever was another controversial project associated with Brand Kenya. The search took seven months at a cost of Sh50 million and the national attire was launched in September, 2004. Kenyans have obstinately clung to their Western wear and have not adopted their proposed national attire. However, according to Kipngetich²⁶², the problem with the national attire was one of seven pillars of Brand Kenya and should have been implemented in tandem with the other pillars such as national pride, heroes and symbols. "National attire branding campaign is best driven from the centre (government) because this maximizes the benefit for all sectors of the economy"²⁶³. As much as Unilever is commended for having sponsored the quest for Kenya's national attire, the private sector cannot do it well because all the companies involved have very narrow sectarian interests."

In another show of lack of seriousness with which the government treats culture, was when Dr Alfred Mutua came in as the Government spokesman. He launched the "Najivunia kuwa Mukenya" program. Like most of his projects, this was ridiculed in some quarters. Leading the campaign was the then ODM-Kenya presidential candidate, now Vice President, Mr. Kalonzo Musyoko. He pulled crowds into watering down the call to take pride in being a Kenyan. He would often quip "Navumilia kuwa Mkenya. When Mutua tried to teach the words of the National Anthem, again people laughed at him. As Kenyan we are supposed to share common goals and aspirations for this country. Mutua and others went to great lengths to educate Kenyans on patriotism. Some companies too went on to urge Kenyan to buy Kenya build Kenya. The same call can be used to brand our national attire so as to make adoption easy. If the national attire of Kenya is to be adopted, the campaigners must show seriousness. As it is now evident soon after the

²⁶¹ The Financial Standard, Tuesday March 25, 2008 Pg 12

²⁶² Business Daily (18 November 2007), Nairobi: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711180097.html> 25 March 2008 (a)

²⁶³ Business Daily (18 November 2007), Nairobi: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200711180097.html> 25 March 2008 (b)

national attire's campaign, they went on to dress in Nigerian agbadas and other West African wear.

Chapter Summary

The reviewed literature has analyzed the different orientations and attitudes towards adoption of diverse national attire. The given analysis has ably distinguished the following forms of orientation towards adoption of the national attire which include:-

- 1. Ceremonial awareness orientation.*
- 2. An everyday inclusive awareness orientation.*
- 3. A ritualistic adoption orientation.*
- 4. A symbolist orientation.*

From these four major forms of adoption orientation of the national attire, it has been noted that they also connote people's inherent nationalistic philosophies in everyday life. That is, they reflect a people's way of understanding nationalism and their attitudes towards it within a problem posed by the effects of globalization. This thereby implies the significance of dress in understanding social psychology, an aspect that will be investigated throughout preceding chapters.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.0 Preamble

This chapter deals with the methodology used in the research. It discusses the research design and research site. It provides information on the processes carried out in collecting data, analysis and presentation. It discusses the research design and instruments used to collect data. The sampling techniques and field instruments are discussed. The data collection and analysis have also been discussed. The reliability and validity of sampling techniques and instruments have been discussed. The research sought to find out the reason why the national attire has not been adopted by a majority of Kenyans. It specifically studied national attires of other countries so as to analyse how they were designed and so verify their adoption as a way of coming up with guidelines that could be followed by designers of national attires.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is the "glue" that holds all the elements in a research project together³⁴⁴. The research design used in this study is descriptive survey. Descriptive research is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering questionnaires to a sample of individuals³⁴⁵. It can be used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinion, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues³⁴⁶. This study aimed at collecting information from respondents on their opinion in relation to factors influencing adoption of Kenyan national attire. The tool that was employed in the initial identification process was questionnaires and interview schedules. To achieve the purpose of this research, the researcher used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained using questionnaires and interview schedules while secondary data were found from books, reports, magazines, newspapers and electronic media.

³⁴⁴ Kombo D. K and Tromp D. L. A (2006): *Proposal and Thesis Writing, An Introduction*, Don Bosco Printing Press, Kenya

³⁴⁵ Orodho. A. J. (2003). *Essentials of Educational and Social Sciences Research Methods*, Masola Publishers, Nairobi (a)

³⁴⁶ Orodho and Kombo D. K. (2002): *Research Methods: Kenyatta University*, Institute of Open Learning, Nairobi (b)

3.2 Research Location

The study was carried out in Nairobi, Kenya because of diverse cultures, taste and exposure to both national and global fashion. Nairobi district was selected by Purposive sampling as a study site.

3.3 Study Population

The total sample size for this study was fifty questionnaires out of which thirty questionnaires were answered and returned. The objective of the questionnaires was to get people's opinion on the 2004 attire. Subjects of the study included five designers of the national attire design team, three of the Judges and three members of the national attire project management team. The respondents included Government employees, private organizations and members of the public. Among these respondents, the sample comprised of eleven male and nineteen female. In this research different groups of people were interviewed and each gave their own opinion on what they thought contributed to the non-adoption of the Kenyan attire.

3.4 Sampling design

Purposive sampling technique was used in sampling people for the study. The main objective was to identify key informants who participated and influenced the attire. The research targeted the experimentally accessible population which included: Government officials in the ministry of gender, sports, culture and social services, Unilever Kenya limited officials who were involved in the campaign, three judges, five national attire design team and two members of the national attire project management committee.

3.5 Research Instruments

The Research instruments used in this study were mainly questionnaires and interview schedules which were designed to collect information on factors influencing adoption; questions were administered to the cases involved in the quest for the national attire. Interview schedule was developed and used to gather data from the respondents.

3.6 Pre-testing

The survey instruments were pre-tested. At least 15 questionnaires were pre-tested among the different clusters within the sample. From these fifteen, ten respondents answered and returned the questionnaires while five did not answer (refer to appendix).

Pre-testing was done in order to provide information on the following:

- Length of interview
- Clarity and flow of questions
- Respondents comprehension of the questions

The process enabled the researcher to review the instruments and incorporated the changes as revealed during the pre-testing.

3.7 Data collection procedure

A data collection permit from the University of Nairobi was obtained and then the research instruments to the selected respondents were administered. For the purpose of qualitative data analysis, data of interest was recorded in a journal and later transferred on computer using Microsoft Excel. The use of a journal as a tool for recording data was useful because the account keeping on the progression of events was maintained

3.8 Data Analysis

An SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) was used for the purpose of quantitative data analysis, to draw relevant descriptive statistics and testing for some relationships among variables. The processing exercise consisted of editing, coding of open-ended questionnaires. Data cleaning and analysis was then undertaken.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Analysis

4.0 Preamble

This chapter discusses the organization, analysis and presentation of data. The presentation of data refers to ways of arranging data to make it clearly understood. Data analysis involves scrutinizing the acquired information and making deductions and inferences⁵⁶. The quest for national attire sponsored by Unilever took seven months at a cost of Sh50 million and the national attire was launched in September, 2004. Kenyans have obstinately clung to their Western wear. Reasons given for the failure include hasty implementation of the project and Kenyans opposing to national attire being imposed on them by designers whereas in other countries it has evolved naturally. Fashion comes and goes while costumes are occasion-specific for example costume worn for a play. National attire on the other hand, though it has a certain essence, they can be adjusted to suite the need of the wearer. Kenya is a conglomeration of tribes and several cultures, some of which are similar and therefore designing attires, which accommodate all of them, has been very difficult. The question that begs is why Kenya has not adopted its national attire. The data analysis presents reasons for non-adoption of the Kenyan national attire. Data in this chapter is presented in frequency distribution and histograms, their length indicating the frequency of a particular class.

4.1 Interviewee background

Gender of respondent

Data collected from different groups of people included: two Government officials in the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services, two Unilever Kenya Limited officials who were involved in the dress campaign, three of the five judges, five of the nine national attire design team. Others were two members of the national attire project management committee and sixteen members of the public. In the interviews, most of the respondents were about 63% while about 37% of the respondents were male. (See table 1 and figure 1 on page 108).

⁵⁶ Mugenda and Mugenda (2003); *Research Methods, Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*; Acts Press, Nairobi

Table 1: Gender of respondent

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	11	36.7
Female	19	63.3
Total	30	100.0

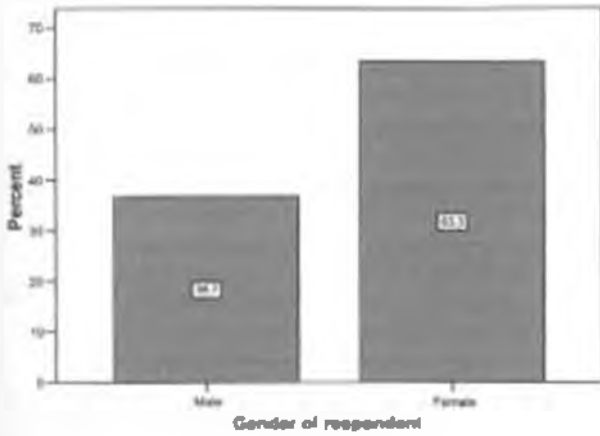


Figure 1: Gender of respondent

Marital status of respondent

Of the respondents interviewed, about 66% were married, 31% single and about 3% widowed. They reflected the total sample of the population interviewed for this study (see figure below).

Table 2: Marital status of respondent

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Married	19	65.5
Single	9	31.0
Widowed	1	3.4
Total	29	100.0

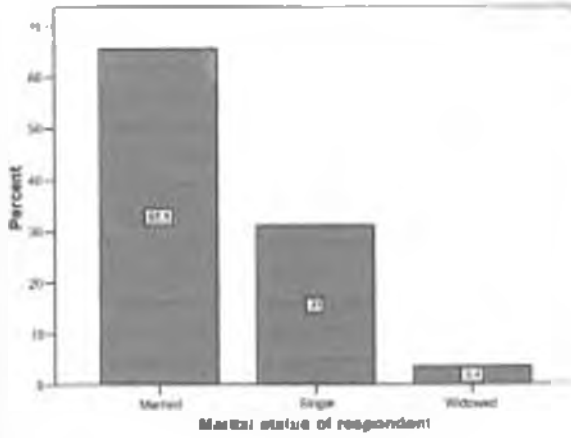


Figure 2: Marital status of respondent

Education level of respondent

Of those who were interviewed, 60% of the respondents had training after secondary school and therefore could be considered to be able to provide well informed answers to questions. Only few respondents had attained some secondary level of education.

Table 3: Education level of respondent

	Frequency	Percent
Some secondary	2	6.7
Secondary	10	33.3
Training after secondary	18	60.0
Total	30	100.0

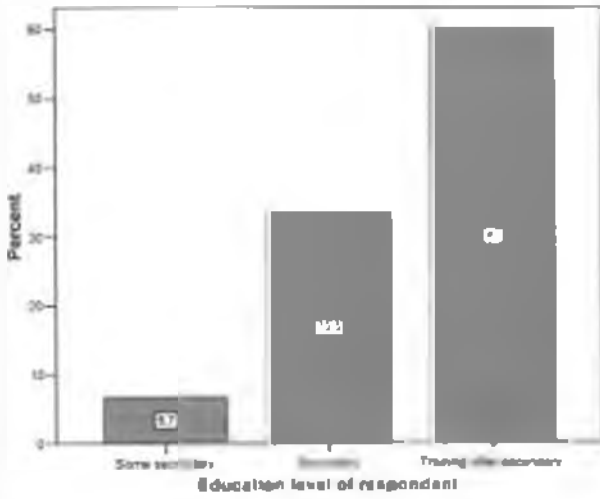


Figure 3: Education level of respondent

Age of respondent

Most of the respondents (about 40%) were between 30 and 34 years of age. 13% were aged between 25-29 years and 30% aged between 35 and 39 years.

Table 4: Age of the respondents

Age group	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
25-29	4	13.3	13.3
30-34	12	40.0	53.3
35-39	9	30.0	83.3
40-44	5	16.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	

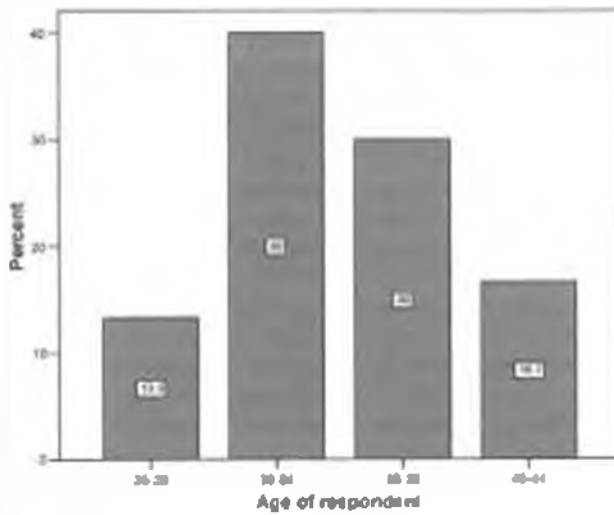


Figure 4: Age of respondent

Religion of respondent

Most of the respondents were Christians (86.7%) while the remaining 13.3% were Moslems. This is true of the proportion of Christians in Kenya. A few Hindus were keen to answer the questionnaires but did not return them as required.

Table 5: Religion of respondent

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Christian	26	86.7	86.7
Moslem	4	13.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	

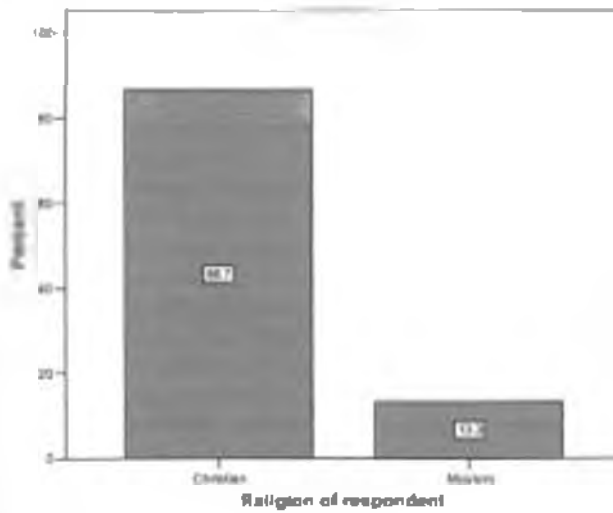


Figure 5: Religion of respondent

Occupation

Most of the respondents were designers (63%), 20% were Unilever Kenya Limited (UKL) officials and about 37% were members of the public (refer to Appendix).

Table 6: Occupation

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Government official	3	10.0	10.0
UKL official	3	10.0	20.0
Designer	13	43.3	63.3
Member of public	11	36.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	

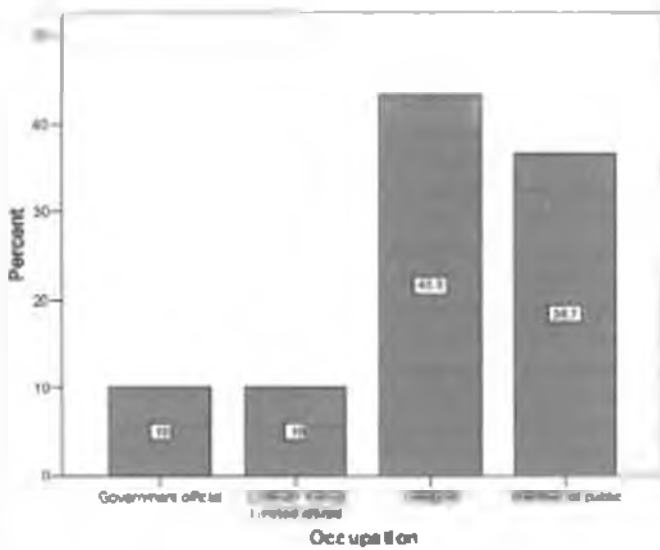


Figure 6: Occupation of the respondent

Organization

22% of the respondents work in private firms as 8% was in government owned organizations.

Table 7: Organisation of respondent

	Frequency	Percent
Government	8	26.7
Private firm	22	73.3
Total	30	100.0

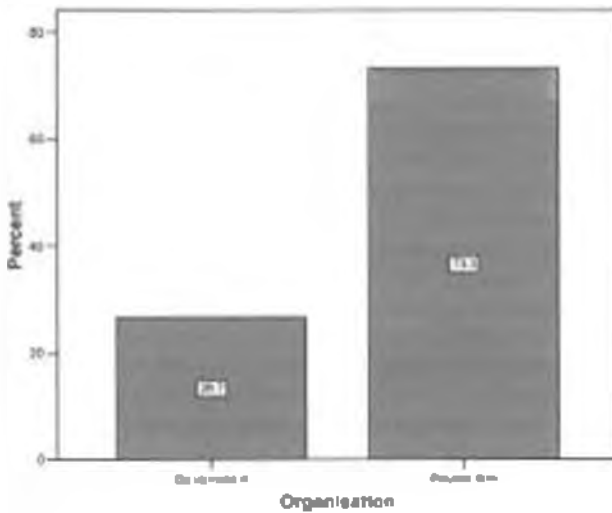


Figure 7: Organisation of the respondent

Whether respondent were aware of quest

Most of the respondents (80%) were aware of the quest for the national attire. 20% were not aware of the quest for the national attire (see figure 8 below). This data suggests that a great number of Kenyans were aware of the quest for the national attire, yet they have not adopted it in reasonable numbers. From the research findings, most of those who were aware of the quest for the national attire participated through: voting on the four concepts through print and electronic media, short messaging service (SMS) and ballot voting.

Table 8: Whether respondent aware of the quest for national attire

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	24	80.0
No	6	20.0
Total	30	100.0

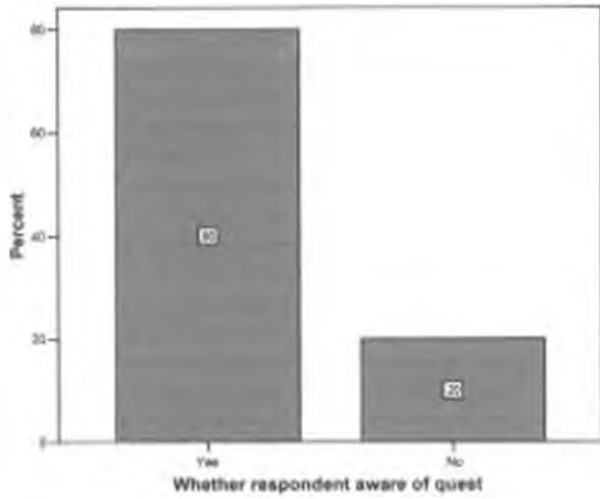


Figure 8: Whether respondent aware of the quest for national attire

Whether respondent participated in the quest

63.3% of the respondents participated in the quest by either providing ideas or selection of the various designs. About 37% did not participate in the quest. From the analysis of the findings more than 50% Kenyans who participated in the quest were either not serious or made their contributions for the sake of it. It is in my view that lack of seriousness from those who participated in quest, may have contributed to non adoption of the attire. This may have also contributed to lack of important traditional design aspects in the selected designs. These and others may have made adoption easy. During the launch it had been agreed that the most popular design would become public property to be used by any Kenyan, at any time and anywhere. There would be no royalty or copyright claim due to any member of the design team, the public or the consulting experts. But when contacted the Ministry of Gender, Sports and Culture together with the Unilever Kenya they were unable to trace the original template for the national attire and sketches. Even after making several calls to members of the national attire design team no sketches were found.

Table 9: Whether respondent participated in the quest

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	63.3
No	11	36.7
Total	30	100.0

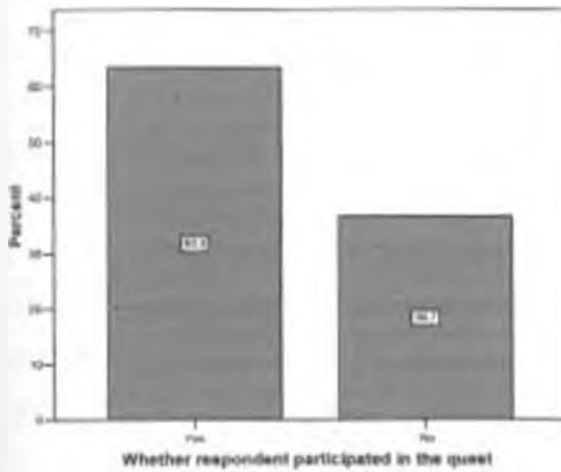


Figure 9: Whether respondent participated in the quest

Role respondent played in the design

About 40% of the respondents played the role of designer in the quest for the national attire. About 17% played the role of judge. 27% were members of the national attire project management team. My experience with designers who participated in the quest was not a cordial one as some of them felt they should be paid for their information on the attire. It took some time convincing the respondents to agree on granting an interview and feeling of questionnaires. This is in line with Steele¹⁰⁰, who says that Charles Fredrick Worth's success as fashion designer was such that he was able to dictate to his customers what they should wear. However, the study of the Japan's kimono, the agbada of Nigeria, the kente of Ghana and the gomesi of Uganda contradicts

¹⁰⁰ Steele Valerie (1988) Paris Fashion: A Cultural History: Oxford University press

this as they were allowed to evolve into what we see today. My opinion is that use of designers to come up with national attire may have been the best option at that point in time. However there are things to learn from the non-adoption of national attire because a lot of money was put in it yet Kenyans have a dress which they can not rightly identify as Kenyan. National attires in other countries of the world have evolved and Kenya is not exceptional.

The use of fashion designers to give Kenyans attire is debatable because fashion is seasonal while national costumes are more enduring. Kaveke³⁶⁹ one of the designers who helped come up with the present design agrees that fashion takes time to be accepted and therefore the attire should be given time to catch on. However from the analysis of results from the findings of this study, the future of Kenyan attire is very promising as designers today continue to design the attire with slight variations in the design. African Heritage director Ojay Hakim who also sat on the attire's panel echoed Kaveke's confidence. Despite disappointment at the fact that the dress has not caught on as expected, Ojay is nonetheless confident that it will. Ojay says that he was pleasantly surprised when he walked into his bank branch one day only to find some of its staff members wearing the national attire. "It was their African day which they have once every year and their staff come to work in African attire."

The significance of the role of the national attire was such that about 10% of the respondents felt that the quest for the national dress is not significant. The data tallies with those who felt that after forty four years of independence³⁷⁰ Kenya does not need national attire. There are however those who felt that Kenya needs a dress that they can identify with especially when traveling abroad to represent the country in for example sports³⁷¹. Apart from showcasing their talents they also display their national attires. Those who were undecided were about 33% while 33% felt that the quest for the national attire was highly significant.

³⁶⁹ *Saturday Standard*, (October (2005)

³⁷⁰ Donovan A (2006), *My Journey Through African Heritage*: Kenway Publications, Pg 309

³⁷¹ *Daily Nation*, Thursday 5, 2007, Pg 63

Table 10: Role respondent played in the design

	Frequency	Percent
Did not play a role	5	16.7
Designer	12	40.0
Judge	5	16.7
Member national dress project management team	8	26.7
Total	30	100.0

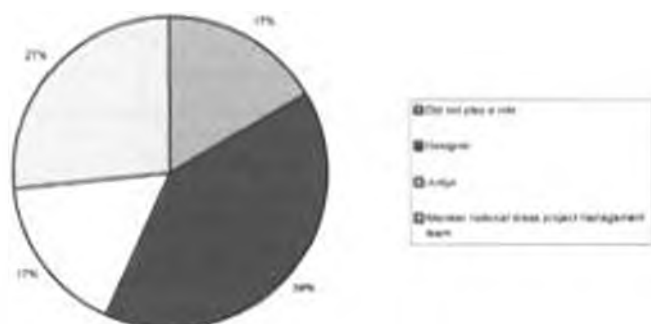


Figure 10: Role respondent played in the design

Significance of the role of the national attire

The significance of the role of the national attire was such that about 10% of the respondents felt that the quest for the national attire was not significant. About 33% were undecided while 33% felt that the quest for the national attire was highly significant. The pilot taste run gave some information on reasons of how national attire can be enhanced by national attire. This data tallies with those who said that the national attire had come too late, forty-two years after independence¹⁷². They said that Kenyans does not need national attire to identify them. There are however those who said that Kenya needs a attire that they can identify with especially when traveling abroad to

Donovan A. (2006), *My Journey Through African Heritage* Kenway Publications, Pg 309

represent the country in sporting events²². Apart from showcasing their talents they also display their national attires.

Table 11: Significance of the role of the national attire

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very low	1	3.3	3.3
Low	2	6.7	10.0
Moderate	10	33.3	43.3
High	10	33.3	76.7
Very high	7	23.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	

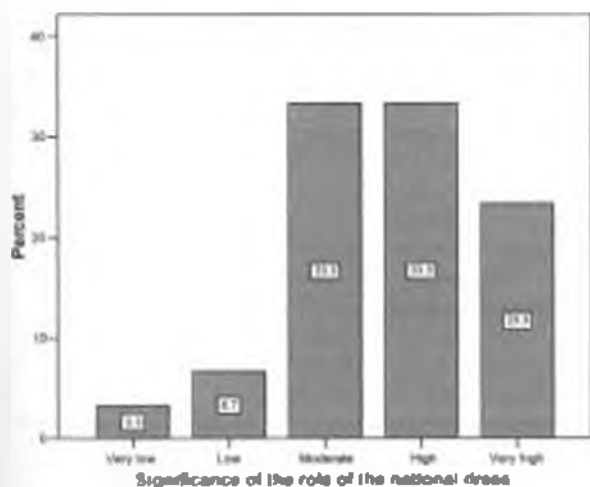


Figure 11: Significance of the role of the national attire

Key roles of the national attire of the country

Most of the respondents (63%) had the opinion that the key role of the national attire is that the attire should act as the symbol of identity. 33% said that the national attire brings unity and 3% said the role of the national attire is to promote the local clothe industry. This is in accordance with the feelings of the Kenyan women who attended the Beijing Conference in the 1990s, who had expressed a strong desire to have national attire that people all over the world can identify as Kenyan. There are those who felt that in Kenya today tribes have taken centre stage as a form of identity. However, tribe should be a positive basis for nationhood. Even if tribe is a source of identity, it should be a source of pride and diversity. Designers and Kenyans should agree and find common ground on where it becomes irrelevant and nationality through adoption of their national attire becomes a priority.

Table 12: Key roles of the national attire of the country

Key roles of national attire	Frequency	Percent
Symbol of identity	19	63.3
Brings Unity	10	33.3
Promotes local clothe industry	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

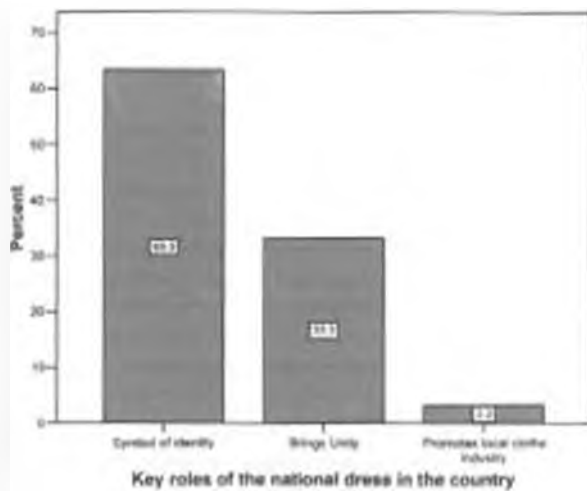


Figure 12: Key roles of the national attire of the country

Criteria to be considered when choosing national attire

The criteria to be considered when choosing national attire should include creativity, wear ability, and impact. Half (50%) of the respondents said that Impact should be the first criteria. 40% said wear ability should be the criteria while 10% said creativity should be the first criteria. From the analysis of the finding, the proposed national attire is not user friendly. A number of men interviewed said that the final attire, while it looked excellent on the table, was not practical. "It is just not suitable especially if a man wants to be active during the time he is wearing it," said Steven Mwaure a sales executive. "The cloak that goes over the shoulder and one arm looks uncomfortable. A man wants to feel free when he's moving around. Ann Kihul, a banker said her satisfaction lay in national attire modern outlook and one can not get the Kenyan feel. The women outfit if worn against the backdrop of other national attires from other countries like Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, South Africa and India to mention just a few will not stand out. Designer Sally Karago was disappointed with the final attire. She said the garment was too model specific and it was hard to see a market woman or a labourer wearing our national attire and feeling comfortable.

Table 13: Criteria to be considered when choosing national attire

	Frequency	Percent
Creativity	3	10.0
Wearability	12	40.0
Impact	15	50.0
Total	30	100.0

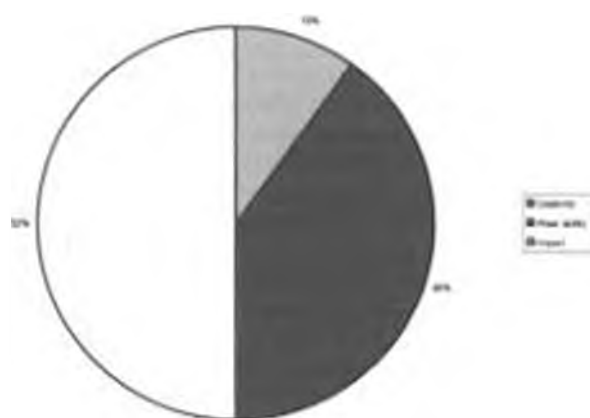


Figure 13: Criteria to be considered when choosing national attire

Unique property the national attire should have

63% of the respondents were of the opinion that design should be unique property the national attire should have. That is the attire should have a unique design. 37% said Colour should be the unique property. There were those who felt that the attire lacks uniqueness. Designer Sally Karago said that for women it is just a long straight dress and a cloak. She believes that Kenyan designers need to go back to the drawing board and come up with another design that is uniquely Kenyan. For men some of the respondents felt that the cloak is too restrictive, especially the hands. Men generally do not want to be inhibited by attire. Most of the respondents said that using the colors on the flag on the dress simply reduces it to a uniform. Color has a whole significance

depending on the mood of the wearer. Colour should therefore, be left to individuals. Many more Kenyans interviewed consider the red, green and black ankle-length robe and cloak for women and shirt with slashed collar and cape across the shoulder for men as both cumbersome and clumsy. Rather than forcing the attire on Kenyans, respondents argued that an important matter like the national attire should come from the people at the grassroots and crawl to the national stage instead of the powers that be forcing it on people. As a few people in the NARC government tried to do but ended up with attire that Kaparo described as lacking in seriousness.

Table 14: Unique property the national attire should have

	Frequency	Percent
Design	19	63.3
Colour	11	36.7
Total	30	100.0

Whether copyright claim kill the artists' morale

Most of the respondents were of the opinion that the copyright claim on the national attire would kill the artists' morale. 30% said that this would not kill the artists' morale. It is evident that designers contributed a lot towards the proposed national attire. However, when launching the dress, the government released the design into the public domain. The design of the attire is on a template and can be replicated by all local designers, tailors and manufacturers. The public has the right to the patent. Meaning they can use it any time, anywhere. The policy on the national attire therefore does not restrict them from designing costumes which can accommodate every Kenyan as this will make adoption easy. Kenyans interviewed were of the opinion that the government ought to have allowed designers to make and market the national attire to Kenyans as this would make adoption easy. This because they are the once who can easily reach the people.

Table 15: Whether copyright claim kill the artists' morale

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	21	70.0
No	9	30.0
Total	30	100.0

How widespread adoption of the national attire can be realized

Respondents provided how widespread adoption of the national dress could be realized. This included conducting awareness campaigns (37%), making the national attire cheap (53%), and enacting rules on occasions to use the attire (10%). The government needs to take more responsibility for the attire and market it aggressively, both in Kenya and abroad. Prices for the national attire should vary to suit every pocket. That is, fabric type and style used will determine the price. Mr Kaparo²⁷⁴ the former speaker of the national assembly is in record to have watered down the national attire when he demanded to know who had declared the shirt worn by the then minister national attire, where and when.

Table 16: How widespread adoption of the national attire can be realized

	Frequency	Percent
Conducting awareness campaigns	11	36.7
Making the national attire cheap	16	53.3
Enact rules on occasions to use the attire	3	10.0
Total	30	100.0

²⁷⁴ Internet (18 March 2008): <http://www.artmatters.info/fashion/article/reject.php>

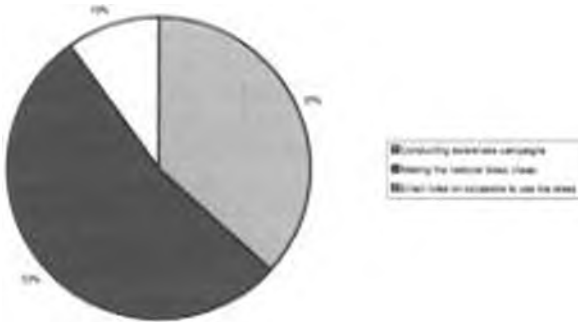


Figure 14: How widespread adoption of the national attire can be realized

Whether cultural influence can hinder choice of the national attire

Most of the respondents (83%) said that cultural influence hinders the choice of the national attire. 17% felt that cultural influence can not hinder the choice of the national attire. According to the research findings, there are more than 40 different ethnic groups in Kenya. Therefore, many different cultures are thus represented in Kenya. Apart from the 42 indigenous Kenyan tribes, we also have the Kenyans of Asian origin and the Europeans. However the country does not have a unique culture that identifies it and this resulted into the non adoption of the national attire. According to Magioga³⁷⁵, this lack of a unique culture is the direct outcome of diversity of the ethnic groups. With such diverse regional peoples such as the Swahili along the coast, several pastoralist communities mainly in the North and the different communities in Central and Western regions, having a mutually acceptable cultural identification is difficult.

³⁷⁵ Magioga M.S (2004): National Dress (ES) Chairman, African cultural network

Dash¹⁷⁶ has documented that this lack of cultural identification has brought problems in the quest for the national attire leading to poor adoption of the attire. According to Kaveke¹⁷⁷, a local designer, the number of tribes in Kenya poses a design problem for the national attire. To make matters worse, the cultures of the different tribes have been polluted by Western cultures. The basis of design is very challenging in terms of integrating all the communities. People from different tribes do not even know their traditional attire and even if they knew them they were very different.

Table 17: Whether cultural influence can hinder choice of the national attire

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	25	83.3
No	5	16.7
Total	30	100.0

Statement true of the reasons for poor adoption of the national attire

37% of the respondents said poor advertisement was the reason for poor adoption of the national attire. 33% said that it is the low cost of secondhand clothes and 30% said that it is the high cost of the national attire. Murlugi¹⁷⁸ of Scanad says non adoption of the national attire is as a result of various reasons. He says that the dress was not popularized by the founding fathers and leaders of the country. Zambians and Tanzanians identify themselves by their Kaunda suits because they were popularized by their founding fathers, Kenneth Kaunda and the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. The South Africans have their own unique mode of identity-the silky, flowing and flowery Mandela shirts because of their former president Nelson Mandela. The Congolese can be identified from a kilometer away and all are proud with their unique attire

¹⁷⁶ Dash (2004). East African Standard. 05 May 2004 Publication ID 27023

¹⁷⁷ The Saturday Standard. 25th November 2005

¹⁷⁸ Murlugi, M. (2004). Leave National Dress to Fashion Designers: Scanad Public Relations East African Standard. 05 May 2004 Publication ID 27023

code that identifies them as Congolese. From the above findings It is in the researcher's opinion that national attire can be realized when leaders take the initiative to popularize it.

Table 18: Statement true of the reasons for poor adoption of the national attire

	Frequency	Percent
High cost of the national attire	9	30.0
Low cost of secondhand clothes	10	33.3
Poor advertisement	11	36.7
Total	30	100.0

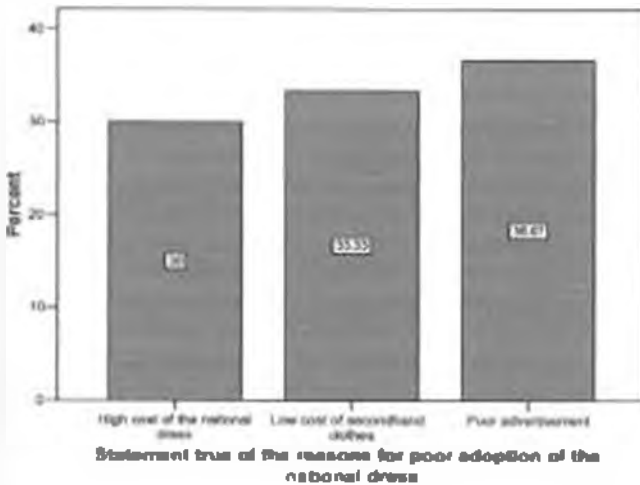


Figure 15: Statement true of the reasons for poor adoption of the national attire

What the respondent does not like about the national attire that was chosen

57% of the respondents who had seen the national attire did not like the design. 43% did not like the Colour of the national attire. Of those who said they did not like the design of the attire 37% said that designers need to go back to the drawing board. Of those who said they did not like the colour of the attire 30% said that this could reduce the attire into a uniform. This is in line with Sally Karago an authority in fashion who argues that the design of the national attire is not unique and it is just a straight dress with a cloak. 'Kenya is diverse with a unique culture and Kenyan designer

need to go back to the drawing board'. Stephen Mwaura a sales executive also agrees with these sentiments. he says that the men's cloak that goes over one shoulder and one arm looks uncomfortable and quite uncomfortable¹⁷⁹. This is because the proposed design of the national attire is not user friendly.

Table 19 : What the respondent does not like about the national attire that was chosen

	Frequency	Percent
Colour	13	43.3
Design	17	56.7
Total	30	100.0

4.2 Summary of Findings

This chapter has discussed the organization, analysis and presentation of data. From the analysis of results, the data reveals that the key reasons for poor adoption of the national attire include poor advertisement as about 37% of the respondents agreed to this. 57% did not like the design of the national attire while 43% did not like the Colour. The other reasons for poor adoption of the national attire included high cost of the national attire as about 30% of the respondents agreed to this. The low cost of secondhand clothes or (mitumbaa) also contributed to the poor adoption of the attire with 33%.

¹⁷⁹ The Saturday Standard, 25th October, 2005

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.0 Preamble

This study has examined the question of adoption of the Kenyan National attire both from the point of view of designers and the stakeholders. The study was in essence answering the question of whether the adoption of Kenyan attire can give Kenyans an identity.

In answering the question, the study examined national attires of other countries with specific interest in their process of evolution and adoption.

5.1 Conclusion

The research assumption of this study has been proved to be true. That adoption of the national attire can give Kenyan an identity. Consequently the search for the Kenyan national attire was a noble initiative with good intentions of finding an identity for Kenyans. It underlined the importance of having a physical symbol that would collectively define the more than 42 diverse tribes who identify themselves as Kenyans. In fact when asked about the significance of national attire, the majority said it was because it was about finding the things that define the Kenyan people. It was about finding an identity, a sense of belonging, the commonness and the co-existence for the Kenyan people. Most of the respondents (83%) said that cultural influence hinders the choice of the national attire. 17% felt that cultural influence cannot hinder the choice of the national attire.

One important aspect of national attire is that it physically defines a community. After 40 years of Independence, the fact is that Kenyans need something more authentically Kenyan; national attire that all Kenyans can identify with and be proud of cannot be challenged. Shammala¹⁰⁰ says that the creation of the national attire would brand Kenya but also adds that culture evolves and cannot be created. By this argument, the search for the

¹⁰⁰ Shammala, J. (2004); Submission to the Quest for Kenya National Dress, Letter to director of culture; Ministry of Culture and Social Services

national attire through the ministry of culture and Unilever Kenya Limited is misplaced as the people's culture is only one aspect of the social dynamics. The state should not be directly involved in the social dynamics for example credible governments all over the world will never try to enforce religion and methods of worship.

There can be more than one national attire in a country, a good example is the Ghanaian "kente" that is now known world-wide, belongs to the Ashanti people of Ghana but it is not the only national attire of the Ghanaians. The buusuti of Uganda also belongs to the Baganda people yet all wears it. Owing to the diverse and immensely rich character of the West Africans, there are numerous national attires that reflect the region from which the wearer comes from. The Northerners in Nigerians for example who are predominantly Muslims have a lot of Arabic influences in their costumes. However, countries, which are predominately homogenous, tend to have one unifying attire. Malawi on the other hand is intrinsically African though in the strict sense of the word they do not have national attire³⁹¹. However, the oneness of the peoples is obvious everywhere. The women wear essentially western styled outfits that are made and tailored from African prints and still manage to retain a very African look. This is because of their gracious African mannerisms.

Kenya is a diverse country with numerous ethnic groups. It is however in this diversity that we find our uniqueness. Just as the western world developed a dress code based on their historical dress, it is therefore in my view that designers of national attire should develop a mode of acceptable attires based on their traditional clothing. The national flag can form the basis of the Kenyan attire. However, when introducing the flag in 1963¹⁸², the then Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs the late Tom Mboya explained the

¹⁸¹ Shamalla, J (2004); Submission to the Quest for Kenya National Dress, Letter to director of culture, Ministry of Culture and Social Services

¹⁸² The Daily Nation, 31st July 2003; The News of 1961 as it was Reported at the Time, Kenya, 40

meaning of all symbols and colours on the flag. This was important to the people of Kenya who had been liberated from colonial authorities of that time. Today, these same meanings cannot be said to speak in the same way to the current generation. According to Shamalla an authority in fashion²⁸¹, the national attire cannot be narrowed down to specific colours as it will become more of a uniform, an outfit that cannot continually evolve and show the mood of the wearer. "How sad and mundane for a country that has given the world the Kikoi, the Masai beads, (that was copied by international designers such as Galliano) and the kiondo basket". Even the kikoi prints which are so quintessentially Kenyan have over the years changed from their traditional colours" says Shamalla. Just as a Nigerian would proudly wear his agbada to the office or a Ghanaian his kente, Kenyans should learn to cherish what we are in order to appreciate what others have as well, without relegating or degenerating what is ours.

Snowbille Mutembezi²⁸² an authority in African fashion says that the Maasai costume and beadwork is widely accepted as Kenyan. Kenyan designers should therefore capitalize on it so as to come up with the attire, which Kenyans all over can identify with. These can be incorporated in everything Kenyans wear and will be recognized as inherently Kenyan. The "Kente" of Ghana for example was taken from one particular ethnic group and popularized. The Maasai live both in Kenya and Tanzania but it was the Kenyan tourism market that put the Maasai on the world map. There is nothing wrong with wearing outfits made of essentially African print but always adorned with bead wear that is in essence Kenyan be it Maasai, Turkana, Samburu or any other tribe.

5.2 Recommendations

From the interviews conducted, the history of the Kenyan national attire has been marked with many obstacles to the realization of the national attire.

²⁸¹ Shamalla, J. (2004): Submission to the Quest for Kenya National Dress. Letter to director of culture; Ministry of Culture and Social Services

²⁸² The Daily Nation 3rd November 2007 Pg 3

The obstacles include lack of a cultural Policy and lack of agreement on what should identify the people of Kenya. This has caused a lot of debate from stakeholders, and especially the choice of the colours of the national attire.

As shown in these study findings, there can be two approaches to the search for the national attire. The first approach is by letting the attire evolve from Kenyans, meaning that no design team is selected for the work, as this will provide a better way for widespread adoption. Therefore the challenge lies in the fact that monitoring the evolution is not easy and makes the attire liable to change each and every moment there is an evolution.

The other approach is the one of letting designers to come up with creative ideas of national attires as it provides a systematic way of achieving national attire. This is because it can be controlled. However, as is evident in the current national attire, challenges may arise when marketing it because people can reject the design.

Options for adoption include, the one of providing guidelines for the type of fabric to be used for the national attire, but the design should be left free. However, this may perhaps not provide the identity it is supposed to provide for Kenyans. The diversity of the cultures in Kenya provides a design challenge of integrating all the more than forty cultures into one national attire design. Therefore, it is this researcher's opinion to have the option of either having different national attire designs or regional dresses for different occasions for example national celebrations, meetings and for daily wear.

The history of the Kenya national attire with its challenges therefore provides the show of how it is difficult to decide on matters of national importance in Kenya. Kenya has over forty tribes each with its own culture and ways of dressing. Within us there exists a tribal angle to issues of national importance so that national attire will be reduced to tribes. For a long time Kenyans have been divided on tribal lines and as long as we do not put our tribal thinking behind us, adoption of the national attire cannot be achieved easily. As designers look for some unifying issues in tribes, there is a problem of not having the identity, which people are looking for in the dress. This is because the attire may not possess qualities from all the forty-two tribes and some tribes may feel left out of the whole process. Designers of the national

attire must therefore look for something much deeper, which can unify Kenyans.

There is need for follow-up to this endeavor; companies for example are really not sincere in overseeing national attire project to its successful end. This is because their interest is to successfully market their brands and once achieved the idea of the attire is abandoned. While Uniliver Kenya is commended for having sponsored the Quest, the government did not seem to take this enquiry to the next level. It then remains that Kenya has not yet advanced its course in coming up with an adequate Kenyan national attire. This has resulted into the inadequate adoption of the attire by a majority of Kenyans. As stated above, the issue of the Kenyan national attire calls for further research so as to come up with universally acceptable attire.

Chapter six: Bibliography

6.0 Preamble

This chapter provides sources of information used in Chapter One of the Study, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings and Data Analysis. Sources of information in the Conclusion and Recommendation of the study have also been provided. The bibliography is arranged into books, Journals/Publication, Daily File, Thesis and References.

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7.0 APPENDIXES

Appendix I: Questionnaire for the Designers

Good morning/afternoon/evening interviewee,

My name is Beatrice Misati, a student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on factors influencing the choice of design of the Kenyan National attire. I am glad to inform you that you have been selected to participate in this study. The study is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a master's degree in art and design all the information you will give me is completely confidential and the information cannot be traced back to you. The interview will take about 30 Minutes

Signature.....

Instruction

Please tick where appropriate and fill in the spaces where applicable

Date of interview

Time of interview

Place of interview.....

Part I: Interviewee background

Gender: Male

Female

Marital status: Married

Single

Widowed

Separated

Education:

Some primary school

Primary school completed

Some secondary school

Secondary school completed

Training after secondary school

University

Age of the respondent (Tick appropriate age band)

16-24

35-39

50-54

65+

25-29

40-44

55-59

Refusal

30-34

45-49

60-64

Age

Other

Moslem

Other (Specify).....

Occupation.....

Organization.....

Part II:

1) What do you think is the consistency of national attire Kenya?

Yes

No

2) Did you participate in the quest?

Yes > Go to Question 3

No > Skip question 3

3) What role did you play in the design team of the national attire?

.....
.....
.....
.....

4) What do you think about the significance of the role of national attire in Kenya? In a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not significant at all and 5 is very significant

1 2 3 4 5

5) What do you think are the two Key roles of a designer in adopting national attire in the country?

.....
.....

.....
.....
6) Which of the following statement would best describe your opinion about the criteria to be considered when choosing national attire?

Creativity

Wear ability

Impact

Other (Specify)

7) In your opinion, what unique property should the national attire have?

Design

Color

8) In your opinion, can the no royalty, no copyright claim or other legal rights kill the designer's morale, creativity and innovation?

Yes

b) If yes, how?

.....
.....
.....
.....

No

c) If No, why?

.....
.....
.....
.....

9) Do you think available sources of inspiration are adequate for realization of national attire?

.....
.....
.....

10) In your opinion how can wide spread adoption of the national attire be realized?

.....
.....

11) Does cultural diversity hinder attainment of necessary motifs and design for national attire?

Yes

No

12) Which of the following is true of the reasons for poor adoption of the national attire?

High cost of the national attire

Low cost of second hand clothes

Poor advertisement

Inadequate involvement of Kenyans in the design

13) Which attributes of the design of the national attire most appealed to you?

Color

Design

Other (Specify).....

Appendix II: Questionnaire for the General Public

Good morning/afternoon/evening interviewee.

My name is Beatrice Misati, a student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on factors influencing the choice of design of the Kenyan National attire. I am glad to inform you that you have been selected to participate in this study. The study is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a master's degree in art and design all the information you will give me is completely confidential and the information cannot be traced back to you. The interview will take about 30 Minutes.

Signature.....

Instruction

Please tick where appropriate and fill in the spaces where applicable

Date of interview

Time of interview

Place of interview.....

Part I: Interviewee background

Gender: Male

Female

Marital status: Married

Single

Widowed

Separated

Education:

Some primary school

Primary school completed

Some secondary school

Secondary school completed

Training after secondary school

University

Age of the respondent (Tick appropriate age band)

16-24

35-39

50-54

65+

25-29

40-44

55-59

Refusal

30-34

45-49

60-64

Age

Other

Moslem

Other (Specify).....

Occupation.....

Organization.....

Part II:

1) Are you aware of quest for the Kenyan national attire organized by the ministry of culture and Unilever Kenya Limited?

Yes

No

2) Did you participate in the quest?

Yes > Go to Question 3

No > Skip question 3

3) What role did you play in the design of the national attire?

.....
.....
.....
.....

4) What do you think about the significance of the role of national attire in Kenya? In a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not significant at all and 5 is very significant

1 2 3 4 5

5) What do you think are the two Key roles of national attire in the country?

.....
.....
.....
.....

6) Which of the following statement would best describe your opinion about the criteria to be considered when choosing national attire?

Creativity

Wear ability

Impact

Other (Specify)

7) In your opinion, what unique property should the national attire have?

Design

Color

8) In your opinion, can the no royalty, no copyright claim or other legal rights kill the artists morale, creativity and innovation?

Yes

No

9) How do you think a national identity can be reflected in national attire?

.....
.....
.....
.....

10) In your opinion how can wide spread adoption of the national attire be realized?

.....
.....
.....

11) Does cultural influence hinder the choosing national attire?

Yes

No

12) Which of the following is true of the reasons for poor adoption of the national attire?

High cost of the national attire

Low cost of second hand clothes

Poor advertisement

Inadequate involvement of Kenyans in the design

13) What don't you like about the national attire which was chosen?

Color

Design

Other (Specify).....

Appendix III: Questionnaire for the Judges

Good morning/afternoon/evening interviewee.

My name is Beatrice Misati, a student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on factors influencing the choice of design of the Kenyan National attire. I am glad to inform you that you have been selected to participate in this study. The study is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a master's degree in art and design all the information you will give me is completely confidential and the information cannot be traced back to you. The interview will take about 30 Minutes.

Signature.....

Instruction

Please tick where appropriate and fill in the spaces where applicable

Date of interview

Time of interview

Place of interview.....

Part I: Interviewee background

Gender: Male

Female

Marital status: Married

Single

Widowed

Separated

Education:

Some primary school

Primary school completed

Some secondary school

Secondary school completed

Training after secondary school

University

Age of the respondent (Tick appropriate age band)

16-24

35-39

50-54

65+

25-29

40-44

55-59

Refusal

30-34

45-49

60-64

Age

.....

Moslem

Other (Specify).....

Occupation.....

Organization.....

Q. 1

How do you think a nation's identity can be reflected in the national attire?

Answer

Q.2

Is there any documentation that has been done locally concerning the Kenyan attire?

Answer

Q.3

What were the shortcomings in the design of the national attire?

Answer

Q.4

Where do you start in the design process?

Answer

Q.5

What did they achieve (designers) in coming up with the national attire?

Answer

Q.6

What discourses if any surround the identity-clothing discussions in quest for Kenya's national attire?

Answer

Q.7

Question

Is it finding our way or not from out of our way?

Answer

Closing remarks

Appendix IV

Questionnaire for the Sponsors

Good morning/afternoon/evening Interviewee.

My name is Beatrice Misati, a student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on factors influencing the choice of design of the Kenyan National attire. I am glad to inform you that you have been selected to participate in this study. The study is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a master's degree in art and design. All the information you will give me is completely confidential and the information cannot be traced back to you. The interview will take about 30 minutes.

Signature.....

Instruction

Please tick where appropriate and fill in the spaces where applicable

Date of interview

Time of interview

Place of interview.....

Part I: Interviewee background

Gender: Male

Female

Marital status: Married

Single

Widowed

Separated

Education:

Some primary school

Primary school completed

Some secondary school

Secondary school completed

Training after secondary school

University

Age of the respondent (Tick appropriate age band)

16-24

35-39

50-54

65+

25-29

40-44

55-59

Refusal

30-34

45-49

60-64

Age

.....

Moslem

Other (Specify).....

Occupation.....

Organization.....

Q.1

What promoted the idea of national attire?

Answer

.....

Q.2

Why was implementation of the attire so hastily done to coincide with the launch of sunlight brand?

Answer

.....

Q.3

What was Uniliver Kenya Limited's (UKL) mission in the project and was it achieved?

Answer

.....

Q.4

Phase one was achieved. Is Uniliver Kenya (UKL) going to be engaged in phase two to give Kenyans the most awaited attire?

Answer

.....

Q.5

Were there challenges in the whole process?

Answer

.....

Appendix V

Questionnaire for the National Management Committee

Good morning/afternoon/evening interviewee,

My name is Beatrice Misati, a student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on factors influencing the choice of design of the Kenyan National attire. I am glad to inform you that you have been selected to participate in this study. The study is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a master's degree in art and design all the information you will give me is completely confidential and the information cannot be traced back to you. The interview will take about 30 Minutes.

Signature.....

Instruction

Please tick where appropriate and fill in the spaces where applicable

Date of interview

Time of Interview

Place of Interview.....

Part 1: Interviewee background

Gender: Male

Female

Marital status: Married

Single

Widowed

Separated

Education:

Some primary school

Primary school completed

Some secondary school

Secondary school completed

Training after secondary school

University

Age of the respondent (Tick appropriate age band)

16-24

35-39

50-54

65+

25-29

40-44

55-59

Refusal

30-34

45-49

60-64

Age

Other

Moslem

Other (Specify).....

Occupation.....

Organization.....

Q.1

How was the whole process initiated?

Answer

.....

Q.2

What were the shortcomings of the process?

Answer

.....

Q.3

For which occasions will the national attire be worn?

Answer

.....

Q.4

What are some of the pertinent issues in the search for the Kenyan national attire?

Answer

.....

Appendix VI

Questions for the Government

Good morning/afternoon/evening interviewee.

My name is Beatrice Misati, a student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on factors influencing the choice of design of the Kenyan National attire. I am glad to inform you that you have been selected to participate in this study. The study is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a master's degree in art and design. All the information you will give me is completely confidential and the information cannot be traced back to you. The interview will take about 30 minutes.

Signature.....

Instruction

Please tick where appropriate and fill in the spaces where applicable

Date of Interview

Time of Interview

Place of Interview.....

Part I: Interviewee background

Gender: Male

Female

Marital status: Married

Single

Widowed

Separated

Education:

Some primary school

Primary school completed

Some secondary school

Secondary school completed

Training after secondary school

University

Age of the respondent (Tick appropriate age band)

16-24

35-39

50-54

65+

25-29

40-44

55-59

Refusal

30-34

45-49

60-64

Age

.....

Moslem

Other (Specify).....

Occupation.....

Organization.....

Q.1

What was the contribution of the government?

Answer

.....

Q.2

How were the concepts arrived at?

Answer

.....
Q.3

What was Unliver Kenya Limited's (UKL) mission in the project and was it achieved?

Answer
.....

Q.4

Phase one was achieved, is Unliver Kenya (UKL) going to be engaged in phase two to give Kenyans the most awaited attire?

Answer
.....

Q.5

Were there challenges in the whole process?

Answer
.....